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PROGRESSIVES AND CONSERVATIVES. TEMPORAL PATTERNS IN BULGARIAN LITERATURE FROM THE LATE 1940S TO THE 1970S.

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I.THE LITERATURE BETWEEN EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST AND INTUITIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

The thesis aims to analyze the problematizations of time in the Bulgarian literature and literary criticism between the late 1940s and the early 1970s. Due to the strong ideologization of the literary field during the totalitarian era, engagement with the literature of this period seems doomed to seek interdisciplinary approaches. The literary field in those years was heteronomous and this predetermined the need to analyze the external "laws" that took away its autonomy. Of course, we must point to communist ideology as the primary factor de-autonomizing the literary field. However, the relationship between literature and ideology in turn raises a series of methodological and practical questions. How do we "measure" the resistance of literature to ideology, and can we separate one from the other at all? At what level does resistance to ideology operate - literary (figurative and narrative devices, themes, style), meta-literary (concepts of literature, literary language, history) or extra-literary (social gestures, public and private behaviour)?

The work focuses on a specific problematic and thematic node, in which the whole issue of the relationship between literature and social life is examined: how literature creates models for the experience of time, how it structures the past, the present and the future as temporal landmarks working to construct certain individual and collective identities. And on the other hand, how does literature subvert the shared past and future by introducing the dimensions of private biographical time? On the one hand, literature integrates individual experience into a common framework. On the other, however, it can disintegrate ideological big pictures of the world (and time) by making manifest the conflict between personal and communal.

The first chapter of the study discusses the theoretical dimensions of several core concepts used in the work - and first and foremost the notion of time. Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of chronotope is chosen as a starting point. The development of the uses of "chronotope" in modern literary theory is reviewed and some of its internal limitations are revealed. Unlike "carnival," "polyphony," "folk laughter culture," "polyvoice," "foreign speech," and, of course, "dialogue" and "dialogicity," the concept of "chronotope" does not seem to have proved particularly productive. In general, the tendency in contemporary uses of chronotope is to "philosophize" it and place it on an ethico-epistemological plane. The thesis reveals several reasons for the problematic nature of the term 'chronotope'.

First, Bakhtin himself, in *Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel*, does not provide a strict definition, but rather describes historically different chronotopes. Bakhtin begins his monograph with the definition, "the essential interrelation between temporal and spatial relations, artistically mastered by literature, we will call chronotope", which he then does not justify theoretically, but develops historico-typologically. It is only towards the end of the text that he mentions the existence of extra-literary, "real chronotopes", which are actually represented in the world depicted by the work. Nowhere, however, does Bakhtin thematize this relation between "created" and "real" chronotopes. Bakhtin's strength lies not in theoretical conceptualization but in rhetorically persuasive analysis of specific authors and texts. In *Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel*, however, the examples stop somewhere on the border of the Enlightenment. Bakhtin's engagement with the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel passes through a different

conceptual prism, at the center of which is the problem of the foreign word. All this makes it difficult to apply the idea of the chronotope to material from modern literature.

Second, although he mentions the existence of extra-literary chronotopes, Bakhtin locates his study entirely and exclusively in the field of literature. In view of the increased interest in extra-literary contexts in literary studies in recent decades, this enclosure in the literary seems limiting.

Third, Bakhtin links chronotope and genre; in effect, his study *Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel* is an attempt at a new theory of the novel genre. However, genre theory itself has also lost some of its glory in recent decades - precisely because of the difficulty in relating genres to extra-literary discourses.

The problem of conceptualizing time has been addressed by another important theorist who has had a significant influence on the methodology of the humanities over the last 50 years, Reinhart Koselleck. If Bakhtin starts from literature and especially the history of the novel, Koselleck is immersed in historiography and its theoretical problems. In our search for a productive theoretical approach, we will here make use primarily of Koselleck's essay "The Space of Experience" and "The Horizon of Expectation," published in German in 1976. What preoccupies Koselleck is the question of how the past and the future permeate the present and constitute historical experience. Koselleck is interested in "historical time" understood as a specific experience of time, lived in the categories of temporality characteristic of people in a given historical epoch. According to the German philosopher, this "historical time" (completely different from the "empty" temporal extension along whose axis we order historical events) can be articulated and understood as a dynamic tension between the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation." With the notion of the 'space of experience' he conceptualizes the way in which the past is present in the present, while the 'horizon of expectation' denotes the future present in the present.

"Experience" and "expectation" are not symmetrical concepts. The space of experience almost overlaps with the immediate life-world; it is a "given" to the individual. The horizon of expectation, on the other hand, is continuously ubiquitous, constituted by hopes and intuitions about what ought to happen. It is the relation between experience and expectation that distinguishes one type of experience of time from another. The space of experience and the hold of expectation set the shared frame of historical time.

Koselleck assumes that the field of experience and the horizon of expectation are given to us as possibilities for understanding through language and focuses his analysis on concepts and their history. The dissertation assumes that in fictional and non-fictional literary texts of a given historical era, we can also find articulations of a 'field of experience' and a 'horizon of expectation'. The aim is to develop a toolkit for the analysis of 'historical time' (after Koselleck) in literature.

The work is interested in structuring experience and expectation as consolidating categories of community identity. This applies with particular force to the 'horizon of expectation'. In fact, the definition Koselleck gives of the modern age is precisely that - an age in which "the gap between experience and expectation is continually widening" (Koselleck 2004: 270). The temporal structure of Modernity is built on the ever-expanding asymmetry between expectation and experience - expectation seizes more and more territory from experience, continually overriding its validity.

This expansion of expectation at the expense of experience actually opens the door for modern ideologies. The future is not given to man as immediate experience, the yet-non-existent enters (and changes) the present thanks to ideologies setting the meaning structures through which the past, present and future will be thought.

In the Bulgarian literature and culture of the socialist period, the future is openly articulated as a programme and a goal - it is the explicit narrative of the desired future. On the other hand, however, this "future" is implicitly presented as "already happened," naturalized as an already lived experience. On the one hand, the literary text (and, of course, the meta-literary discourses of criticism, the "guidelines," party documents, and Zhivkov's speeches) explicitly introduces the instance of the future giving direction to the present. Until 1956, this was done quite directly. At the same time, the literary text implicitly presents the future as already having occurred, naturalizing it, masking it as an available, "real" experience. In the literature of the so-called "Stalinist" period, the future is quite tangibly present in the present; it is presented not as uncertainty and chance, but as reality.

The objectives of the study are, first of all, to trace the historical dynamics of the relation between the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation" in Bulgarian literature of the totalitarian era. It is not difficult to see that in the first decade of the socialist era, i.e. the Stalinist period of the regime, we have a total domination of the future over the present, where the horizon of ideologically structured expectation has completely subordinated the present and devalued the past and its adjacent experience. In the 1960s, however, a reversal took place and we see a rupture between the ideological postulates on the one hand and the actual literary production, which (especially in the face of authors such as Yordan Radichkov and Vasil Popov) radically cut the "horizon of expectation" out of the artistic world and enclosed it in the "space of experience". In fact, this essentially conservative, "reactionary" gesture gave rise to some of the most modern in style and grasp of literary texts in contemporary Bulgarian literature.

Although cautiously, we could also outline the cultural and political connotations of the "horizon of expectation" and the "space of experience". Translated into the language of temporality, these notions relate, roughly speaking, to the future and the past respectively. It would be hard to deny that "the future" is central to leftist political-philosophical projects. No less obvious, in turn, is the linking of conservative thought to the past. It is probably more accurate to say that modern conservatism struggles with the "left's" inherent tendency to devalue the past in the name of a utopian, ubiquitous future. Though schematic, we might sketch the following chain of interrelated oppositions:

Horizon of expectation - space of experience

Future - Past

Left Progressivism - Right Conservatism

Abstract - Concrete

Theoretical - Sensory

Ideology - Literature

Of course, concepts like "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation" sound too general for a literary study. In order to operationalise them, it is necessary to relate them to some more concrete levels of the structure of a literary work. Particularly important in this case is the role of narrative strategies - the type of narrator, the type of focalization, the temporal organization,

etc. Obviously, the "horizon of expectation" will be inserted into the work of fiction primarily through the instantiation of the narrator. In the "epic novel," for example, one of the most essential roles of the third-person omniscient narrator is to bring the future into the present, to set the "horizon" against which events in the present make sense. The "all-seeing" narrator is such (in relation to the literary period of interest) precisely in order to "see" the future. Correspondingly, in the 1960s we see the reverse case: the disavowal and removal of the 'all-seeing' narrator is directly related to the new role that the expanded space of experience is given at the expense of the shrinking 'horizon of expectation'. In the 1960s, especially in the fiction of Vasil Popov and Yordan Radichkov, we see an "unravelling of experience" that was made possible because the teleological horizon of the future was blocked.

II. THE COMMUNIST PROGRESSISM

If modernity is to be described in categories expressing a specific type of experience of time, the most important would be "revolution" and "progress." Different political contexts load "revolution" with a number of ambivalent and even negative connotations, so that very often it is replaced by descriptive expressions such as "new beginning," "break with the old," etc. Either way, however, Modernity is based on affirming the positive aspects of the break with the "old". This "break" can be articulated at the levels of social organization (traditional vs. modern society), form of government (monarchy vs. democracy), type of economy (feudalism vs. capitalism), cognitive attitudes ("prejudice" vs. "science"), ethical systems (collectivism vs. individualism), etc. Progress can also be thought of in different terms - as the emancipation (of reason from superstition, of self from community, of science from religion), as the improvement of the material conditions of life, as the mastery of nature... Regardless of the content invested in these terms, "change" and "development" become central axes along which political and intellectual debates in Modernity unfold. Literature does not remain on the sidelines, but generally tests the various relations between progressist discourses and human experience over time.

The political doctrine of "Marxism-Leninism" created by Marx and supplemented by Lenin offers its own version of modernity in which temporal concepts play an even more central role. "Revolution" is here thought of as the abolition of private property, the end of capitalism and the beginning of socialism, which in turn is a continuous ascent towards the "bright future" of communism. It is not just a mental scheme, but a discursive foundation on which the very legitimacy of the Communist Party rests. Time is conceived as shaped by society under the leadership of the Party. This mode of temporality involves several interrelated assumptions, viz:

(1) History is a process in which class contradictions inevitably lead to revolution, after which a continuous rise begins, which is what makes the future "bright," i.e., always better than the present and the past;

(2) This future can be achieved by way of rational planning of social life;

(3) The course of history cannot be stopped and is manifest in all spheres of social life.

The last point actually sets the basic modality in the ideological discourse of Marxist-Leninist ideology - the inevitability of the "bright future." The path of society is clearly oriented towards a desirable and achievable image of the future. All social life is encompassed by rationally planned change. Both material conditions and people are changing. It is the idea of a manageable future entrusted to a single subject - the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party

- that distinguishes communist progressism from the "bourgeois" progressism of Modernity. It is no coincidence that the ideologues of communism seem obsessed with the idea of ruling and directing the times. The link between the experience of time and the legitimation of the Party is central to communist power, and this is why an entire cultural industry has been created in the Eastern Bloc countries, interpreting the past and present in a way that confirms the core ideological narrative. The past and present are used as a reservoir of evidence-pointers proving the unified historical process. The past is set up to point to the future.

The need to maintain a teleologically structured temporal horizon gave birth to two types of social action very important in the culture of socialism-planning and celebration. Planning is the way to manage the future, and celebration builds a cultural memory that must "read" and "remember" the signs of the past pointing to the present and the future. The most common form of structuring the past is anniversaries. The anniversary identifies, provides continuity on an ideological level (identification with what September Nine, for example, symbolizes "then" and "now") and at the same time marks a distance in calendar time (some years have passed after all, certain things have happened to the collective subject - "the people"). "Continuity" is an instrument for the formation of a monolithic, unified collective subject. Naturally, this continuity is seen as identification with the "revolutionary struggles of the people."

If the past is controlled through anniversaries and "continuity of struggle," the suggestion of control over the future is achieved through planning. The march towards the future is divided into stages, each of which has its specific objectives. The five-year economic plans originally introduced in the USSR are not only an element of the planned economy of socialism, but also the basis for the ideological articulation of the temporal framework in which the "people" reside. Socialist society's obsession with planning and accounting permeates all spheres of social life, from the economy and social security to kindergarten work. Thus a common social time is constructed which must shelter individuals in its all-encompassing embrace.

We can summarize that in the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s, the "historical sense" of socialist society was built through the narrativized tribute to the "glorious fighters" of the past and the pride in industrial achievements - factories, power plants, roads, passes, etc. Accordingly, literature makes 'struggle' and 'construction' its thematic centres.

Progressist temporality is the main legitimating framework of the communist elite; it sets the normative supports of the discourse of official publicity. This directly affects the institutions and techniques of cultural memory production, respectively the discourses articulating the past, including literary history and criticism. Cultural memory is set to operate in a mode that maintains signs of development. An entire industry develops, reproducing "sites of memory" that are to act as testimonies, arguments for the irreversible "course of history."

The main mechanism by which literature will be reconciled with the ideological narrative is the doctrine of socialist realism. The founding definition, adopted at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 and subsequently enshrined in the Statute of the Union of Soviet Writers, places unambiguous emphasis on development, which also ensures the linkage between literature (the field of art) and social practice (the field of power). Socialist realism requires the writer not merely to reflect reality, but to reflect it in its development, and in so doing to participate in that development in turn. It functions as an enriching, transcending individual and historical

particularities generalized perspective on reality. It is the point of view of 'progress', carrying the knowledge of the direction in which changes are taking place at both the societal and individual levels.

"Development" takes two main forms - a positive one, "progress", and its mirror counterpart, "decline" (and its synonyms). 'Development', in its positive or negative form, operates as a basic operator at different levels of discourse - it is applied to large historical processes, but also to authors and their characters.

If "development" is the dominant term in the meta-ethics of literature, its analogue among the figurative repertoire of the first decade after 1944 is "the road." The road is a metaphor giving spatial expression to the notion of teleological, productive time. "The road" represents the construction of the self; it is no coincidence that this is the name of St. C. Daskalov's novel, one of the typical Bildungsroman novels of the post-9/11 era. The Road implies, on the one hand, a goal, and on the other, a community marching towards that goal. Accordingly, in the 1960s, when the great unraveling of the clear teleological model began, "the road" would provide a figurative resource for multiple complications and problematizations.

The progressivist temporal horizon also exerts a modelling influence on the past. Under the pressure of the prefigured future, the past breaks down into an "eternal past" (representing the dead heroes who are eternally alive in the memory of new generations and guide them along the right path) and an "unimportant past," i.e., zones of personal and collective experience that must be erased, or at least subjugated and secured.

III. EXCURSUS: HOW DOES SOCIALIST REALISM WORK?

In its explicit, articulated form, socialist realism functions less as an explanation of the world than as a framework legitimating the distribution of symbolic and economic capital in the literary field. It is the "legitimacy machine" that provides the system of criteria of value to which publishing house directors refer in their production planning and critics in their evaluative judgments. At the same time, because of the nature of totalitarian society, socialist realism ensures the alignment of the literary field with the political field. It is a discursive regulatory mechanism that legitimates the Party's control over the literary field. Socialist realism is not so much a way of thinking, a "picture of the world," as it is a discourse that legitimizes the exercise of power in the literary field of totalitarian society. This discourse includes a core of criteria or rules, "dogmas," along with established interpretive mechanisms for their application.

What needs to be stressed is that this is an entirely exterior, external to the literary field legitimating framework. Socialist realism provides a dual legitimation - that of the distribution of symbolic and economic capital within the field and that of the intervention of forces external to the field (i.e. the Party).

If one accepts this conception, it becomes clear that one cannot speak of "socialist realism" before the establishment of a Party monopoly over all social fields. In writers such as Smirnenskii, for example, there may be themes and images that superficially resemble the basic messages of the doctrine of socialist realism, but this is a superficial resemblance. "Socialist realism" is a product of totalitarian control over cultural fields and is impossible outside the context of the totalitarian state. It is another matter that poets like Smirnenski are readily acknowledged as the "progenitors" of socialist realism.

The fact that socialist realism plays the role of a legitimating framework for literary discourse does not mean that strict adherence to it is a guarantee of success. The same applies to ideology and positions in the social field.

The question of "merit" is central to the distribution of power and resources in a totalitarian society. In the absence of private property, an individual's status becomes completely dependent on his or her publicly recognized reputation. "Merit" is in fact the most important social capital an individual possesses. The regime itself, with its ideological apparatus, constantly maintains the attitude that socialist society is meritocratic, i.e. just, and this is its most important advantage over Western capitalism. Therefore, a major theme in the public space of socialism is the disparity between merit and status. In cinema and literature, in newspapers and at trade union meetings, this is what is constantly discussed - why status does not correspond to merit, why new bureaucrats displace old comrades, why bartenders earn more than doctors, etc. In fact, this is precisely the niche of permissible criticality that not only does not undermine the communist ideal, but gives it flesh and blood. The construction of the "bright future" is being carried further into the future, and the belief in it is correspondingly weakening, but the dream of a truly meritocratic, just society is not losing its validity for the social experience of the man of socialism. It is no coincidence that the mass discontent is not so much against unfreedom (felt by a narrow circle of intellectuals) as against "nomenclature" and "privilege," i.e., against injustice in the distribution of "goods."

'Merit', thought of in the perspective of Bourdieu's sociology, is nothing but an accumulation of social capital. The great internal problem of totalitarian society is the difficulty in objectifying social capital. In the absence of private property and civil rights, individuals cannot anchor their social position outside the redistributive power machine of the Party. Status is not "possessed", it is "given", and as it is given, it can also be taken away. "Merit" is what allows a certain objectification of the symbolic capital possessed - as it represents a publicly acknowledged history of the individual's social realization. It is for this reason, however, that they prove a threat to the functioning of power in totalitarian society. It turns out that it is not enough for the population to be deprived of private property and civil rights - 'merit' must also be constantly reaffirmed by the centre of power. No one can or should be assured that they will be able to attain a prestigious social status with their labour, talent and energy - the final word is always with the Party and, as far as the top echelons of the Party elite are concerned, with the Leader himself. From this point of view, one of the reasons for the collapse of communism can be sought precisely in the desire of the Party and ruling elites to secure and objectify the power and resources accumulated during the 1980s.

In the literary field, the strict adherence to ideological postulates, the constant recalling of the "laws" of Marxism, represents precisely an attempt to elaborate a "merit" that will ensure the preservation of positions. Paradoxical as it may seem, the constant appeal to "doctrine" is an attempt to achieve relative autonomy within the field. Being faithful to Marxist-Leninist dogmas rather than to the shifting power conjuncture seems the surer path to accumulating social capital. Yet the *Tobacco* case in 1952 vividly demonstrated that this was an illusion. Panteleye Zarev's criticisms of Dimov's novel seem quite "correct" from the point of view of the doctrine of socialist realism, which the Party itself has declared to be the only correct and permissible one in literature. Nevertheless, the famous article in the Workers' Work debunks Dimov's hapless critics - without refuting the substance of their arguments. It is the Party that judges who is wrong and who is right; the Party cashes in the chips played by the participants in the literary field. If adherence to

ideological postulates automatically added value to an individual's social capital, it would be a "merit" contingent on personal diligence and diligence, a kind of private property acquired by the individual and independent of the whims of Party chieftains. The fact that this doesn't happen, and that communist "leftists" are periodically reminded to know their place (Panteley Zarev was the first to experience it for himself), shows that the authorities intuitively perceive this kind of objectification of social capital as a threat. Ideology is not the programming code by which society functions - it turns out to be purely and simply a tool for the legitimation of partisan and specialized elites, and like any tool, it can be freely modified and even replaced.

The hypothesis proposed by the study explains why, despite the total ideologization of communist society, it does not freeze at the point of "properly" written novels and "properly" made films. It is obvious to everyone that Bulgarian literature continuously expanded its stylistic and thematic diversity in the period from the 1950s to the end of the regime. It is easiest to say that on one side was the government, which gradually loosened its grip, and on the other was the restless "creative spirit", which continually expanded its territory. Such an explanation is a universal indulgence for literature throughout the totalitarian period - its weaknesses would be the result of the pressures of power, and its achievements the result of achievements made despite the pressures. The logic of the literary field and its intersections with the field of power, however, is somewhat more complex. Power actually tolerates the "new" because it shifts positions in the literary field and makes "merits" and "possessions" uncertain. If the authorities were to follow Lenin's prescriptions for literature in a straightforward manner, the novel genre, for example, would have to remain at the level of Georgi Karaslavov's *Ordinary People*. However, this would turn Karaslavov and his ilk into some kind of private owners of symbolic capital that cannot be taken away from them. The breakthroughs of the "new", supposedly allowed despite the resistance of the institution, prevent this from happening. This goes some way to explaining why the period of socialism failed to develop a canon of its own. Although there are hierarchies that are reproduced or modified at writers' congresses and April literary discussions, the "successes" of contemporary literature are studied very little in school. "Canonization" is also an example of the "objectification" of symbolic capital, and perhaps this is why the "socialist canon" remains somewhat underdeveloped and undefined.

One of the most popular reminders of dependency during socialism, which has become a cliché, was "The Party made you a person!". In a totalitarian society, the all-encompassing control over individual social fields makes self-construction almost impossible. Even in the cultural sphere, adherence to ideological codes does not guarantee success. The redistribution of symbolic and social capital takes place not according to the rules of the field, but by virtue of a power conjuncture that is constantly shifting and difficult to describe historically. Paradoxically, both "dissidents" and straightforward Marxists find their status precarious. Both Radoy Ralin and Georgi Dzhagarov may lose their positions. Which, of course, does not put an equal sign between the two. Socialist realism should be thought of not so much as a system of beliefs, but as an extended system of rituals, the observance or contestation of which is an important part of the power games of the totalitarian world.

IV. WEDDINGS AND DAWNS - MODELLING TIME AND REALITY IN STALINISM-ERA POETRY

All contemporary studies note the highly ideologized character of the poetry produced in the period 1945-1956. In practice, it is in poetry that the doctrine of socialist realism manifests itself in its "pure" form. Painfully predictable in its choice of subject matter (the struggle, the construction, the Party, the leaders), Bulgarian poetry of the early 1950s seems to have been unapologetically absorbed in its propaganda function.

Paradoxically, at first sight, the poets fighting for the communist future seem to return to the historical origins of poetry as performative genrem making with words things – an oath, a promise, a lament... (One could make a whole anthology of poems dedicated to the death of Georgi Dimitrov and then Stalin). According to an idea started by the Renaissance poetry scholar Roland Green and then developed by Jonathan Culler in his famous book *A Theory of the Lyric*, the characteristic features of lyric discourse are precisely the "dialectical play between the ritual and the fictional" (Culler 2015: 7). The ritual here is in fact a set of performative speech acts: an oath, a blasphemy, a funeral dirge... Of course, the performativity of early 1950s poetry is of a different order; it employs a specific set of rituals whose function is to reaffirm the speaker's partisan position.

The performativity of lyric during Stalinism is obvious: lyric texts do not simply represent a fictional reality, but perform the speech act of "stating a position", which is an ideological actualization of the performative genres of "oath" and "promise". We are accustomed to calling this type of literature "declarative," which is a mannered way of describing it as "nonliterature," but in fact to understand it adequately we must perceive it first and foremost as precisely "declarative." The problem is that we are talking about "typical" declarations with clear social pragmatics. By the way, the model of the lyrical declaration does not come to nothing and does not end with the end of the "cult of personality". The confession of faith steps on the establishment of the confessional norm already in the 1930s, which is why many of the poets of the interwar period managed to successfully fit into the post-September literature. It is perhaps no coincidence that almost the only one who refused to adapt was Dalchev, just as it is no coincidence that "object poetry" came under attack in the second half of the 1940s, from which the poems of Valery Petrov would also suffer. On the other hand, "stating a position", but now in an unconventional, rebellious way, would become part of the discourse of the "young poetry" that emerged after the April Plenum.

The teleological horizon permeating the discursivity of the Stalinist era manifests itself in both the ritual and fictional aspects of the poetic texts of the time. The compulsory "taking a stand", the performative oath of allegiance to the Party, are a response to the requirement to show a personal commitment to the historical vector pointing to a bright future. The fictional aspect (i.e., the thematic and figurative repertoire representing an albeit contingent but recognizable version of social reality) must in turn motivate the performative "pledge of allegiance." By representing wheat fields, construction sites and working people, the lyrical speaker implicitly (and explicitly) universalizes his choice to be "one of the people," part of that "generation-bridge" headed for "the shores of new centuries" (Penyo Penev, "We of the Twentieth Century")

Revolutionary struggle and peace-building are the thematic nuclei in the literature of the Stalinist era. The past is thought through the struggle, and this activates the familiar imagery of heroism and martyrdom, while the present is presented as the beachhead of the future. It could be

said that The Battle and The Struggle set the two main thematic registers in which both poetry and prose unfold until the mid-1950s. The Battle would give birth to the epic novel, and The Struggle to "brigadier poetry" and the "production novel."

In fact, much of the poetry of the early 1950s is poetry not of the "eternal new" but of the well-known old. Stylistic and thematic monotony is the price of recognizable partisanship and didacticism. In practice, this type of poetry relies on a few trite generative metaphors, the most trivial of which is "Change is dawn." This metaphor produces innumerable variations representing the beginning of the New Time as "morning," "sunrise," etc. We can even see it in the titles of two of the most iconic poetry collections of the period, Ivan Radoev's *Spring Dawn* (1953) and Penyo Penev's *Good Morning, People* (1956).

Dawn is nothing but a temporal synecdoche of the sun. The sun is a very appropriate image if we want to analyze the "re-education" of traditional natural imagery in the poetry of "pure" socialist realism. It turns out to be one of the central poetic images in Bulgarian poetry of the late 1940s - early 1950s. Most often the sun was used to signify the bright present, modernity, which is to say - the victorious revolution. Its role is to highlight the vivid contrast between the past, represented as night and darkness, and the present, represented as a day sparkling with light. Solar symbolism is traditionally associated with things like happiness, beauty, harmony, etc. In the poetry of Stalinism, however, the light of the sun is a super-natural light because it is part of the ideological complex built around the figures of the bright future and the new man. The sun turns out to be a sign of consciousness - and especially the consciousness of the happiness of living in the socialist present and working for the even happier future to come.

The sun in the poetry of the Stalinist period is not the "natural" sun of the cyclical cycle, but an ideological figure involved in the construction of the notion of a teleological time in which every historical present is a step towards the achievement of the desired future. The sun operates in the mode of "new sun", not "sun again".

A curious example of inverted relations between the "horizon of expectation" and the "space of experience" is offered to us by Stefan Tsanev's poem "Requiem", published in his 1960 book *Hours*. The hero of the poem is a "former man", to use a characteristic expression from the vocabulary of Stalinism. The personal time of the lyrical hero is not linear but circular-repetitive - "he comes back again", "every evening" (repeated), "he goes down the stairs again"... The hero is as if a negative copy of the cheerful, confident in the future, proudly standing in the open space of the morning characters of the "brigadier" poetry of the 1950s. He is old, weak, "hunched over", "hunched and trembling,/ suffocated with malice, weeping and coughing". Every night he returns to his 'shower room' - this is the bourgeois interior, the private space in which, in some almost delusional way, he is finally himself. Returning to this immanent personal time, completely disconnected from the social-historical, totalizing time of progress, he reacquires the "horizon of expectation" - "hopes rise in the dark." Indeed, his preoccupations are with the life of money in time ('loans and credits', 'calculating interest', 'unscanted policies'). The irony is that these financial instruments are long since invalid, just as the character's personal prospective time is invalid. The twice-repeated "profession is crossed out" in his calling card description strongly suggests that his social, communal life is undone. Therefore, the hero can only have a future in an illusory, sleepwalking way. Devoid of a community-founded future, the hero becomes not just anachronistic, but a-chronic - devoid of linear time, trapped in the circularity of meaningless

repetition. It is no coincidence that on a stylistic level, the poem contains images and tones familiar from Vutyimsky's poetry - a loneliness and objecthood in which hope figures only as a lonely, doomed, even seemingly perverse dream.

In “Requiem” we can recognize the key oppositions at work in the textuality of the Stalinist period.

Individual - collective

Solitude - companionship

Fatigue - cheerfulness

Closed - open space

Progress - repetition

Future - past

At the same time, this is a poem coming from a different era - although "historically doomed", the hero of Stefan Tsanev is presented as a man, there is drama in his existence and one can feel empathy for him, which the poems of the time of the "cult" do not allow.

On the basis of lyrical texts not only by Stefan Tsanev, but also by Lyubomir Levchev and Konstantin Pavlov, the study shows that perhaps the strongest part of the poetry written after the April Plenum actually "parasitizes" on the temporal-ideological model inherited from the poetry of the Stalinist period, complicating, inverting and travestying it.

If we are to summarize the peculiarities of the temporal modeling of the literature of the Stalinist era, we can identify two main modalities. Poetry in this period operates in a, conventionally speaking, 'discrete' mode - with binary oppositions in which change is thought of as a leap from one state to another, from the 'old life' to the 'new'. At the level of poetic imagery, this manifests itself as the exploitation of the figures of the Miracle and the Celebration and their variations such as the wedding, the morning, the spring, etc. The abrupt switch between the poles of the "old" and the "new", the past and the future, seems to shrink the present, reducing it to a zero point without duration. The future has scorched the present.

Fiction, in keeping with its generic characteristics, is committed to the gradual, "analog" progress and change. Here the "miracle" is at the level of the psychologically untrustworthy easy and seamless acceptance of the new. However, the past is still present - the characters have previous experience. This experience, however, is susceptible to processing, soft as clay under the sculpting fingers of the ideological project. The overcoming of the remnants of private-ownership thinking and the "hardening" of the young communist hero set the main thematic fields in the fiction of the early 1950s. It is the "renewal" of man that is the central theme of the literature of the Stalinist period, directly corresponding to the main ideological task to which the entire ideological sphere is subordinated - the construction of the New Man.

V. THE NOVEL OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1950S - THE EPIC AND THE HISTORY

The fifth chapter of the study is devoted to the epic novel of the 1950s and is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the manifestations of the progressist temporal model in the novels of this era, focusing mainly on the theme of the hero's awareness as a projection of teleological ideological time at the level of the individual. The second part of the chapter explores the genealogy of the notion of the epic/epic novel in 1970s literary studies, looking for its connections

both to the dominant ideological narrative and to the implicit tradition in thinking about the novel genre represented by Thomas Mann and György Lukacs.

History and class consciousness

Undoubtedly, the novel is a privileged genre in the literary field of totalitarianism - especially before 1956, but also after. The first and easiest explanation for the high prestige of the novel in this period would be that it was the genre that seemed particularly suited to fulfill the basic task of socialist realism: "the representation of reality in its revolutionary development." It is natural for the novel to depict a cast of characters ("the whole of society") situated in a large span of historical time, carrying within it the eventfulness of "historical development." But is this enough? In fact, "completeness" and "comprehensiveness" emerge much later as recommendable qualities of the novel.

The hypothesis that the study seeks to test is the following. During the time of post-Bulgarian Stalinism, novels were written and read in an organized way through the value prism not of the "epic" but of "awareness." Already Toncho Zhechev, in his study of the Bulgarian novel after the Ninth of September, notes as a "generic mark" of both successful and unsuccessful novels of the time of the "epic wave" precisely their "internal or purely external kinship with the 'educational novel', what the Germans call Bildungsroman" (Zhechev 1980: 38-39). When criticisms are levelled at a novel, they are usually based on findings of weakness and inconclusiveness in the presentation of 'awareness' and 'consciousness'. It is no coincidence that what Dimov adds in the 'corrected' version of Tobacco in response to criticism is Lila's mini-bildungsroman.

Social Realism attempts to suggest the notion of a world changing in a particular direction, and that which is most easily depicted as changing is the individual. Hence the endlessly debated theme of the 'positive hero'. According to their attitude towards this change, heroes are presented as "building up" or "degrading". This is intended to have an immediate educational effect - the 'building' hero becomes a positive example, the 'degrading' one a negative one.

But what is the specificity of the social realist "Bildungsroman"?

To gain insight into the genre's important transformations, we need to be aware of the nature and function of "awareness" in the ideological project of communism. In his famous 1923 book *History and Class Consciousness*, György Lukács articulated the idea that the class consciousness of the proletariat does not manifest itself at the empirical level, either as individual consciousness or as a kind of "mass psychology." Lukacs tries to prove that class consciousness has nothing to do with subjectivity, it is a relation to the objective reality of history (understood as class struggle). If classical Bildung means the achievement of individuation by way of the complex transformation of external events into internal experience, then communist consciousness will be the achievement of a supra-individual point of view, which is nothing other than consciousness of the historical vector that must lead humanity into the green pastures of classless society. From the standpoint of temporality, on the other hand, the awareness, respectively the "construction" of the new consciousness means the laying of individual self-consciousness (including the consciousness of change and "maturation") in an ideologically articulated supra-individual time frame.

However, the model of 'awareness' is built on two 'discrete', finite points - the beginning and the end, the 'unconscious' and the 'conscious'. Because the beginning and the end are foretold, what stands between them proves monotonous and tiring for the reader. Ostensibly "difficult, complex and contradictory," Garcio's growth in "Path" is actually controlled and predictable. This is the big

problem of writers like St. Ts. Daskalov or Georgi Karaslavov in *Ordinary People* - the hundreds of pages of "growth" are subordinated to the binary initial-final scheme and therefore lifeless as artistic functionality.

An important feature of the pedagogical discourse in Bulgarian novels of the early 1950s is that "growing up" is not an individual act - it takes place in "close connection with the party and the collective." The biographical time turns out to be situated in the temporal, controlled by the collective consciousness whose subject is the Party. Throughout his development the individual is under the eye of the Party. His path, even when he encounters different characters, representatives of different strata and worldviews, is not a path through a heterogeneous, atomistic society, but an "assisted birth" in which the collective Party subject plays a decisive role.

In terms of the negative characters, the novel of the early 1950s operates in the mode of a reverse 'Bildung' that is meant to represent the inevitable degradation, physical and moral, of the class enemy. It is this kind of negative "Bildungsroman" that Dimitar Dimov creates, presenting us with the moral and physical degradation of Boris and Irina, which comes as a result of choice, not simply of some original class "background." (As we know, Boris and Irina are presented at the beginning of the novel as representatives of the "petty bourgeoisie" who might well choose the path of struggle, as Boris's brothers do.)

'Awareness' represents the projection of teleological, future-oriented time at the level of the subject into fictional reality. This is the primary narrative device by which the suggestion of personal 'construction' or 'degradation' is achieved in the novels of the early 1950s. Most often the characters, or at least the important ones, at some point in the development of the action "realize" some truth about themselves and the movement of the story. They may realize the necessity of belonging to the struggle organized by the Party; they may realize, as in Tobacco, their own "doom," that is, their exclusion from the shared future. In the first case, "realization" brings a burst of energy, of the "vigor" imperatively demanded by the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party. In the second case, the protagonist realizes the collapse of his life path as a discrepancy between dreamed and received and as a consciousness of loneliness, of exclusion from the common flow of life. Degradation, in fact, appears as a maximally sharpened contrast between private and public time. Gradually isolating himself from the temporal horizon of progressive communal time, the hero loses perspective and future. Figuratively, this is represented as a surrender to vices - alcoholism, debauchery, gambling. These vices suggest that the "bourgeois" loses control over his destiny, ceases to be the subject of his actions. The individualistic life style in these novels paradoxically leads to a loss of the individual. The motif of over-indulgence plays a central role. Bourgeois individualism is thought of as based on the search for ephemeral pleasures, which inevitably become tiresome and lead to fatigue and boredom.

In "Tobacco" we generally observe two types of "realizations": of inclusion in the coming, unified new time (Pavel) and of exclusion, failure, unreality (Irina, Kostov). The consciousness of failure in the "condemned souls" annihilates the "horizon of expectation" - the hero no longer expects anything, because not only do experiences not bring him something different, but he also knows this and no longer has expectations towards life. In this type of awareness, there is a "space of experience," but this experience is lifeless, devoid of development and change. In the positive characters, "awareness" is an opening to the horizon of teleological time, and the present is swallowed up by the expectation of something even greater and grander that consumes the self.

For them, too, the personal past loses meaning; for example, the memory of the night in the villa recalled by Irina to Paul at the end of the novel fades in the light of the future. "Awareness," whether positive or negative, devalues the personal past (preserving those moments of it that connect the positive character to "comrades" and "struggle") and foregrounds the crucial role of the future as a meaning-setting horizon.

The awareness of the characters and the awareness of the writer: the operationalization of historical time in the discussion around "Tobacco"

The subject of awareness is thought at both the individual-concrete and the abstract-collective level. The characters, the 'people', but also the writers, the literature itself, are conscious. The subject of consciousness can be not only the individual and not only the people, led by its fighting vanguard, the Party. Literature itself, in its processuality, is called upon to declare its "awareness." As a genre best suited to accommodate all these 'realizations', the novel proves to be the most appropriate.

Strictly adhering to ideological prescriptions, the writers of the late 1940s and early 1950s took care to show "awareness" in both the characters they created and themselves. It is no coincidence that the novel genre experienced a quantitative flowering in the first half of the 1950s, the period of the most crudely ideologized literature, just as it is no coincidence that for the entire socialist period it is to the novel that the most important genre theorizations are devoted. On the one hand, the novel allows for the representation of processes of "growth" and "realization" in the characters. On the other, its very existence is a sign of the new, historical consciousness of literature that emerged as a result of the social changes led by the Party.

The study shows how the famous discussion of Tobacco can also be read as a map of the demands made on the novel in the Stalinist period of the totalitarian regime. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the arguments and counterarguments actually revolve around "awareness" as a dual problem - of the represented world and of the author's representational method/worldview. The doubts are to what extent Dimov has successfully presented "awareness" as a process of consolidation of "progressive" social strata around communist values in historical reality and to what extent he has successfully proved that literature in his person is really "socialist", i.e. sufficiently aware.

The discussion around "Tobacco" actually discusses how the fictional world of the literary work is to be reconciled with the dominant "regime of historicity" on the one hand, and on the other hand, who has the authority to determine whether this reconciliation has been achieved, and according to what criteria.

Criticisms of Tobacco take aim at various levels of the text, with the most significant indictment concerning the very organization of the plot, the choice of characters, and the relationships between them.

The lack of perspective, i.e., the consistent domination of the future over the present, has resulted in what critics of Tobacco consider an unacceptable expansion of the zone of human experience suitable for depiction. The accusations against Dimov of decadent "biologism" are well known. Although this thesis is mostly elaborated by Panteley Zarev in his report and in the review published in Literary Front, it is also contained in the statement of Maxim Naimovich during the discussions of the draft candidatures for the Dimitrov Prize in 1951, who accused Dimov of "not standing on a truly revolutionary basis, but developing questions on a biological basis" (The Other

Tobacco: 153). 'On a biological basis' means that Dimov has shown aspects of the human that seem ahistorical, immutable, and not subject to ideological treatment - all that is connected with the body and its life. Hence the accusations of "biologism", "Freudianism" and even "pornography". The "error" lies in presenting man as possessing zones that remain untouched by the teleological temporal flow of awareness.

Criticism of Dimov's method is presented in the form of concern for the writer - he has not sufficiently cleansed himself of "bourgeois influences", he has not "developed" and "realized" enough, but he is given the opportunity to realize his mistakes and correct himself in order to become a true socialist realist. The writer is reduced to his social function, which is subject to scrutiny, and by everyone - critics, writers, readers, the Party. Criticism, indeed the literary field as a whole, keeps a watchful eye on whether the teleological time of "realization" and "development" has sufficiently permeated and subjugated both the characters and the writer himself. Both writer and characters must be imbued with the common historical perspective.

But who is the legitimate authority to judge the extent to which this is so? The "critics" follow a strategy of asserting criticism as the arbiter of the degree to which the norms of socialist realism are realized in a literary work. The article in *Rabothichesko delo,* in turn, is a blow to critics and their claim to be the internal arbiter of the literary field. It brutally brings to the knowledge of the entire literary field that the arbiter has always been and will always be the Party. The denouement of the discussion actually crushes the timid attempt at partial autonomization of the literary field, built on the doctrine of social realism and the corresponding notion that the evaluation of the correspondence between the work and the method is the work of the critics, i.e., the writers after all.

The article in Worker's Work comes to remind us that only the Party can judge the correctness of the temporal coherence of the novel and the author with the teleological time horizon. This meta-temporality, giving direction to individual biographical trajectories, must be unified - and it is to this necessity that the figure of the Leader responds. The Leader is the one whose consciousness and gaze provide the homogeneous, unified time of the Party in which individual consciousnesses and temporal orientations merge.

The "epic novel" - a genealogy of the concept

This study genealogizes the term "epic/epic," which established itself as a genre definition for novels of the first half of the 1950s, It highlights, on the one hand, its saturation with ideological filler (the thesis of the decisive role of revolutions, especially the Ninth September Revolution, for the "maturation" of literary consciousness) and, on the other hand, reveals the actualizations of another, rather hegelian model of the epic, in which the ideas of wholeness, completeness, harmony are the leading ones. Although the great social novel seems the most appropriate vehicle for the representation of "reality in its revolutionary development" and for the fulfillment of the task set before literature, the education of the new man, the genealogy of the concept presents a far more complex and rich picture. Paradoxically, the "epic novel" turns out to be the most ideologized prose genre in the literature of socialism, yet its literary-critical uses work toward a crypto-conservative vision of man and the world.

This study analyzes in detail the two arguably most important monographs on the novel of the second half of the twentieth century - *The Contemporary Bulgarian Novel* (1978) by Boyan Nichev and the section on the novel in *Essays on the History of Bulgarian Literature after*

September Nine, 1944 (1979), written by Toncho Zhechev, subsequently published without change as a stand-alone book under the title *The Bulgarian Novel after September Nine* (1980). It was there that the notion of the "epic novel" began to become central, representing a certain type of thinking about the relationship between literature and historical time, between a fictional world and an ideological temporal horizon.

The germ of both studies can be traced back a little earlier, to the important year of 1974, the same year that marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Ninth September Revolution. Apparently not unrelated to the anniversary, Toncho Zhechev published the article "September Ninth and the Development of the Bulgarian Novel" in volume 4 of *Literaturna Misal*, and Boyan Nichev in volume 3 of the magazine. "The path of Bulgarian prose to large-scale epic forms". Both articles contain the idea that the main impetus for the emergence of the "epic novel" was the watershed historical events.

For both Nichev and Zhechev in the 1970s, the formula was "history - consciousness - (epic) novel." The meaning of the historical event under this conception is "revealed" to the epic novelist as self-evident and singular. Historical mechanisms become visible both in life and in literature, both for the writer and for his characters. The course of history has become knowable because the people are now masters of their fate. In both writers there is the binding of historical event, social consciousness and literary genre into a single temporal continuum. The deepening of class contradictions and the strengthening of the novel genre turn out to be two sides of the same process. Society's path to revolution and the novel's path "toward large-scale epic forms" run along the same teleological line.

In Toncho Zhechev, however, there is another aspect of the notion of the epic whose genealogy is different. The rise of the epic novel, according to the critic, can be seen as a kind of return to the spontaneous vernacular epic spirit. What we have here is something quite different: the spirit of the epic is "a sense of the world in its totality and indissolubility", and revolutions do not give rise to, but "revive" the epic spirit. We find implicitly present the opposition between the "naïve" (in which we have a blissful wholeness, a fusion between the subjective and the objective) and the "sentimental" (associated with the historical, reflective, critical consciousness), which leads back to Schiller's “On Naive and Sentimental Poetry”, a text that Zhechev has repeatedly quoted and said he highly values. We can assume that the formation of Zhechev's thinking about the novel is the result of the conceptualization of two intellectual influences, one overtly witnessed, the other covert.

The overt influence is that of Thomas Mann. Thomas Mann is extremely important to Zhechev; he refers to him in key texts. In fact, Thomas Mann in the 1960s was the main legal channel through which the conceptual legacy of the "philosophy of life" and Nietzsche re-entered intellectual life. In his monograph on the Bulgarian novel, Toncho Zhechev quotes at length from Thomas Mann's “The Art of the Novel”. Mann's authority must defend a complex of values so important to Zhechev, such as the absence of haste, slowness appearing as the kinetic equivalent of maturity, understood in turn as the natural expression of lasting, age-long accumulations in the field of spiritual experience. The invocation of this Thomasmanian slowness is a timid but symptomatic objection to the thrust of the teleological progressivist narrative. Textual analysis further shows that Toncho Zhechev had read Thomas Mann's texts in Russian translation as early

as the early 1960s, because he was quoting the German writer in his own translation and not according to the translations already available in the late 1970s by Strashimir Dzhamdzhiev.

Apart from the visible Thomas Mann, there is another intellectual presence that can provide an interesting context for Toncho Zhechev's reflections on the novel. We are talking about György Lukacs. Lukacs is mentioned extremely rarely by both Zhechev and Boyan Nichev. However, it is to Lukacs that the thesis of the epic as "totality/completeness" belongs; he is also the author who will insist on the link between private subjective time and objective historical time in the true epic novel.

To what extent did Zhechev know Lukacs and his work on the theory of the novel in the 1930s? Probably better than we can judge from the sparse citation. In the period 1959-1962. Zhechev was a graduate student in Moscow (at the Academy of Social Sciences and Social Management), and in 1962 he defended his dissertation there on "Problems of the Contemporary Bulgarian Novel." Probably the study "The Origin and Future of the Novel", published in the book *Ideas of Prose* in 1967, but dated "1960", was part of his "Moscow" activities. In the late 1950s, the most authoritative publication on literary theory in the USSR was the 11-volume *Literary Encyclopedia*, published between 1929 and 1939, where in volume 9, as part of the article on "The Novel," stands the text "The Novel as a Bourgeois Epic," written and signed precisely by Lukacs (Lukacs 1935b). It is hard to imagine that a young graduate student interested in the genesis of the novel genre would not look to this source. Moreover, this is not a dry encyclopedic article. In 1935, Lukacs presented an initial version of the article for the "novel" section of the New Literary Encyclopedia as a paper to philosophers and literary scholars of the then Academy, and the paper and the heated discussion, moderated by Michail Lifshitz, were published in Lukacs and Lifshitz's journal, *Literary Critic*, in the same year (Lukacs 1935a). However, Zhechev carefully avoids mentioning Lukacs by name. In fact, he does so only once, namely in the 1960 study “The Origins and Future of the Novel”, and then in the most banal and bland way possible: 'Starting with Lunacharsky, through a number of older works by Lukacs, Lifshitz, and ending with Dneprov, we see attempts at a historical theory of the novel full of optimism' (Zhechev 1967a: 6). The sentence, however, is a dodgy one. Lifshitz was a philosopher who wrote nothing on the theory of the novel. His only contact with the subject was his entry as moderator and therefore author of the concluding statement in the discussion of Lukacs's 1935 paper. Apparently Toncho Zhechev had read the publication of the paper and the subsequent discussions in the 1935 *Literary Critic*, and hence his memory of Lifshitz as one of those with "older works" on the theory of the novel. Toncho Zhechev's reason for not citing Lukács is not ignorance, but an understandable caution in those years: in the 1960s the stigma of "revisionist" still weighed on Lukács, and he was virtually absent from the rich critical literature on the novel in Soviet literary studies of the same period.

Toncho Zhechev not only knows Lukács's theory of the 1930s novel, but also places it at the basis of his own conception. Both Lukacs and Zhechev viewed the novel as an offspring of the new times that followed the Renaissance, hence the neglect of the varieties of the novel in the literature of antiquity that Lukacs's critics in 1935 drew attention to. The novel is "the child of a sense of transience" (Zhechev, op. cit.). The essential proximity, however, is different. Lukacs predicts a return to epic totality after the victory of the proletariat. The socialist revolution offers the possibility of a return to the epic unity of the past.

Lukacs' entire construction is based on the schema of "alienated existence in classless society (epic) - alienated existence under capitalism (novel) - overcoming alienation and 'tendency to epic' after the socialist revolution (epic novel)." Zhechev also welcomed the "novel wave" after 1944, seeing in it a revived "epic spirit."

Of course, there are also differences in Zhechev's and Lukacs's conceptions. They concern, above all, the role of the "world view". The "tendency to epic" in the socialist novel is, in his view, a product not of the worldview of the authors, but of the objective process whereby the proletariat becomes the subject of history, the new man overcomes the alienation that characterizes capitalism, and the whole of life turns out to be a fusion of the subjective and the objective, such as existed only in the distant times of pre-class society. Lukacs is alien to the notion that the "flowering" of the novel under socialist realism was due to the "correct" ideology acquired by writers after the proletarian revolution, a thesis Zhechev will defend in his book *The Bulgarian Novel after 9.09.1944*.

Toncho Zhechev thinks of the epic as a concept that can express two quite different things - on the one hand, the historical consciousness, i.e. the consciousness of history, of the relation between an individual and a changing social world (this is the essence of the novel according to Zhechev), and on the other, the ancient, blissful state of indissolubility between an individual and society, man and nature. Revolution begins to function not as a marker of the path to the teleological future, but as a "jolt" that "revives this spirit." This logic of the periodic rebirth of the "eternal" breaks with the progressist teleological framework and recalls the thought paradigm of the "conservative revolution" of the first half of the twentieth century.

The terms "epic" and "epicene" (or "epic," as it came to be established later) prove tempting to scholars like Zhechev and Nichev primarily because of the implicit notion of wholeness they convey. Behind this implicit wholeness lies the notion of an undivided, inalienable, collective and national consciousness that has not been disintegrated into separate subjectivities.

In fact, this notion of the epic was first introduced by Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev in his seminal 1964 article "National Tradition and Innovation." In the context of the debate on the relationship between the epic and the novel, Kuyumdzhiev stands on the "Bakhtinian" side, emphasizing not just the differences between the epic and the novel, but also the impossibility of returning to the "epic." If Boyan Nichev accepts quite calmly the notion of the "epic novel" as a synonym for the social novel, Kuyumdzhiev emphasizes the gap between the epic integrity that marked Under the Yoke and the secondary, reflexive-critical attitude of modern artists like Dimov, doomed to recreate an allied world of alien and hostile things.

In the end, it turns out that Bulgarian scholars of the novel regularly quote Bakhtin in their texts from the 1970s, but in fact follow Lukács's thought pattern without mentioning him. Both Zhechev and Nichev construct monistic conceptions of the novel based on the idea of a "consciousness" or "knowledge" in which people and creator merge. Such a position cannot accommodate Bakhtin's idea of polyvoice and polyphony.

The epic wholeness that came from Thomas Mann and György Lukacs in Zhechev and Nichev is in fact an aestheticized version of the dominant ideological concept of unity. According to Marxist-Leninist ideology, the unity or wholeness of the new society is conditioned by the fact that all aspects of social and individual existence are encompassed by a process of change with a clear teleological horizon. The whole of society is permeated by a unified temporal current, striving

towards communism. With the idea of the epic as the art of the inalienable fusion between individual and world, between author and work, another temporal perspective is introduced. It is based on the notion of a past that has special merits worthy of being resurrected. One of the possibilities is that the revival can be realized thanks to the Revolution, which makes people subjects of their own lives. The other possibility is to think of resurrection as an intellectual act, an art of memory, which is the privilege of both writers and true criticism. It is in this direction that the conceptions of Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev will develop.

We can conclude that the novel occupies a dominant position in the genre hierarchies of the literary field of the first half of the 1950s, insofar as it is conceived as particularly suited to fulfilling the normative requirements of literature at the time - education through the representation of revolution and progress. The personality structuring of "positive heroes - negative heroes" is based on the key ideological value - revolutionary development, striving towards a bright future. In the 1960s and 1970s, the high prestige of the novel persisted, but in a transformed form. A key role in this transformation began to be played by the notion of the 'epic' and, accordingly, the genre nomination 'epic/epic novel'. Individual scholars, however, invest different content in these concepts. For Boyan Nichev, "epic" means consciousness of the socio-historical conditioning of human destiny, and an epic novel is equivalent to a social novel. For Toncho Zhechev, the novel (with no particular emphasis on "epic") is the literary form that makes it possible to make sense of history; the novel, in his view, requires historical consciousness, i.e., consciousness of history. For both scholars, the Revolution (or more precisely, major social-historical turning points such as the April Uprising and Liberation (1876-1878) , the September Uprising (1923), and, to the greatest extent, September Nine (1944) provides the necessary vantage point through which the writer begins to grasp the procedural regularities of social development. Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev, on the other hand, adheres to a different conception of the epic, viewing the epic novel (Under the Yoke) as a resurrection of an unalienated premodern existence in which there is a fusion between the self and the world, between the artist and the world depicted.

In these shifting conceptualizations of the novel genre, the change of temporal patterns is clearly visible. The privileging of the novel initially rests on the idea of a teleological time horizon, whose most important indicators are the "realization" and "construction" of the new man, the fighter and builder of communism. This obligatory ideological framework continues to be present in the monographs of Boyan Nichev and Toncho Zhechev. Subliminally, however, another pattern emerges in which there is a kind of cyclicality - the epic novel is the medium "reviving" the ancient epic spirit of "wholeness and indissolubility." This is an idea that goes beyond the communist progressivist narrative and is one of many examples of the "new conservatism" that began to take shape in the mid-1960s. The "epic" turns out to be a critical concept that can participate in the formation of both the "official" and the "alternative" canon of the Bulgarian novel.

VI. THE TIME OF THE PHILISTINE

In 1961, the XXII Congress of the CPSU was held in Moscow, which adopted the famous Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with the planned achievement of communism in the 1980s. The Program was a voluminous document that, in addition to explaining the international and domestic situation and charting the paths of development in all spheres of life, also codified the new ideological narrative and vocabulary. One of the most important

formulas in the new party program, called to life in this historic forum, was that the goal of socialism was "the complete and ever fuller satisfaction of the growing material and cultural needs of the people (Program of the CPSU 1961: 14)

The theses of the XXII Congress of the CPSU were immediately repeated by the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party in 1962, which adopted an analogous program aimed at the 1980s as a living in communism. The formulation of "satisfaction of needs" is enshrined in the Programme adopted at the Tenth Congress of the BCP in 1971 and then in the 1971 Constitution of the PRB (as indeed in the 1977 Constitution of the USSR). The phrase of "ever fuller satisfaction of growing needs" sets a very substantially changed temporal framework of social and individual experience. The course of time began to be measured not so much and not only by the factories built, but also by the degree of provision of material goods. With this new, essentially consumptive "mode of historicity," the ruling communist parties in the USSR and Bulgaria actually traced the path for comparison with the "satisfaction of material needs" taking place in the West, under the class enemy. What seems like a catchy slogan actually aligns the temporal frame on this side of the Iron Curtain with the temporal frame valid on the other side - the criterion for progress or backwardness becomes material satisfaction. This turns out to be a fatal mistake, because the two systems thus become very easily commensurable - and commensurability does not work in favour of socialism. The ideological discourse imposes a standard of time perception in the everyday world that socialist economics cannot meet.

Almost immediately, party ideologues realize that "making do" will generate not only gratitude but also envy and resentment. It becomes imperative to remind ourselves that the main task remains the formation of the "new man" with a communist consciousness. The clinging to the material and the "rush" to "consume" are recognized as a danger which is also rapidly getting a name. It is, of course, about the notorious "philistinism" [*esnafstvo*]. A fundamental redefinition of the "enemy" from political to moral and aesthetic categories is underway. Thus the target of the moral criticality of literary discourse is gradually shifting from "imperialism" to the "superficial consumerism" of the new socialist society.

Stimulated by the party ideological apparatus, the "struggle against escapism" took various forms. One hypostasis of escapism is the passion for possessions and comforts that ensure a pleasant pastime. Its second hypostasis is fashion. Its third hypostasis is 'foreignism', understood as the fetishisation of Western goods and hence 'lifestyle'. In Todor Zhivkov's famous speech "Communist Ideality - the Highest Principle of Our Literature and Art" (1963), these three hypostases of escapism are interrelated.

The infatuation with "fashion" is conceived as a particularly dangerous version of escapism, permeating everyday life as well as literature and culture. One of the likely reasons that 'fashion' finds itself targeted by various discourses is that it is felt not simply as a retreat into the ahistorical private existence of 'light entertainment', but as a 'wrong', parodic version of the sense of the new, of change, i.e. of development. "Fashion" is something like a grotesque version of "great justice" - because it offers an alternative temporal mode committed to "progress" and the "progressive."

The slogan of fighting the new philistinism was immediately picked up by the socialist culture industry, especially in the mainstream genres of humour and satire, but the theme also had a massive presence in 'high literature'. Socialist culture developed two remedies for dealing with

escapism and "petty-bourgeois thinking." The first is the appeal to the past as a value corrective to the present; the second is creativity and "popular aesthetic education."

The doctrine of "universal aesthetic education" is the response of Party ideologues seeking to neutralize the growing discontent that the "ever fuller satisfaction" of needs seems to be lagging. In his monograph The Cultural Front, Ivan Elenkov showed how the official cultural policy of the communist regime, especially after 1970, was in fact an attempt to control growing consumerism. The scarcity of commodities was compensated by the romantic idea of the rhetoric of "anti-consumerism" awakened to new life. The key element is the concept of 'creativity'. The transformation of reality according to the laws of beauty adds a different temporal dimension to everyday life; it returns the linear vector to the escapist timelessness.

What does the literature offer as a response to the anxieties surrounding the new escapism? Outside of purely satirical and humorous invectives, the options seem to be two: the intellectual who has retained his spirituality and the organic man of the past. Sophisticated, vacillating intellectuals, and shifty peasants - these are the types that dominate the literature of the 1960s.

It is the intellectual who is charged with the task of offering a model for dealing with great and small righteousness, in whom the contradiction between individual self-fulfilment and the collective movement toward a bright future must be reconciled. There are many novels dealing with the doubts, hesitations and retrospections of the intellect, but it is in Lyubomir Levchev's The Intellectual Poem, published in 1963, that the issues we are interested in seem to be most concentrated.

The anti-Snuff pathos is the trademark of the leading representatives of the "April Generation"; in fact, it is precisely this "audacity" that made the newly emerging Lyubomir Levchev and Stefan Tsanev recognizable and at the same time "digestible" for the literary field of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The "ossification" they attack has two faces. On the one hand, "dogmatism", clichés, slogans emptied of content are rejected. On the other side, the "ossification" of the socialist man, the loss of the "revolutionary ideal", i.e. of the utopian horizon as the main orientation in the life-world of the individual, is targeted. In its purest form, the imperative of ongoing Revolution is unfolded in the poem "Fifteenth Unfinished" from Stefan Tsanev's Chronicles (1965):

Revolution in the World,
the revolution in us,
the revolution in me
continues.
(Stefan Tsanev, "Fifteenth Unfinished")

For the so-called "April Generation," at least for a few of its significant representatives, the communist "faith," elevated to the existential foundation of the Self, became a private domain and no longer necessarily verified by the community of believers. The April Generation are a kind of Reformation, in which the bearer of faith becomes the individual person, and the church (i.e., the Party) no longer appears as a binding mediator between the Self and the transcendent. This procedure leads to an almost obligatory exaltation of the Self, which in literary terms means a continuous self-sculpting, in other words, a posturing. The poets of the April Generation are constantly posing, usually quite sincerely - in their verse and public behavior. Even Konstantin

Pavlov "poses", albeit in a negative way, with wriggling and clapping. In fact, Pavlov's poetry can also be seen as a spectacularly grotesque inversion of the posturing in the poetry of his peers.

Resistance to "eisnachism," stimulated "from above" as a way of containing the consumerism that the socialist economy cannot satisfy, becomes the material for the consolidation of a socially prestigious role far beyond poets and poetry. As the bearer of "spirituality" in the 1960s, in an implicit way the intelligentsia turned out to be the real subject of the pedagogical discourse on the creation of the "new man." The accusations of "intellectualism" against the poets of free verse in the famous discussion are, among other things, the result of the intuitive feeling of the old generation of writers that the "intelligentsia" and not the "common people" were now beginning to be seen as the material for the "new man." The "April Generation", for all its oaths of allegiance to the Party, the people and "simple things", represents the first wave of elitism in Bulgarian culture since the time of the People's Republic. This disguised elitism would later be reflected in the mystical preoccupations of the circle around Lyudmila Zhivkova, and in the heroic self-stylization of some of the flag-bearers of the generation writing their memoirs in the 1990s.

The other type of opposition to the "landed gentry" comes along the lines of the reimagined clash between the rural and the urban. Through a careful analysis of Haitov's short story "A Tree Without a Root," the study shows how "organic man" in the person of the protagonist is contrasted with the alienated, consumptive everyday life of the socialist city.

Overall, the problematization of the communist ethos by the oncoming consumer culture in the early 1960s brings to life two literary types: the nonconformist romantic in poetry and the organic man in fiction. This led to the reactivation of literary traditions from the "bourgeois" past. Defenders of free verse turn to the depoeticizing strategies of the postwar avant-garde. Most of them, however (Konstantin Pavlov is the great exception), remain within the Romantic paradigm. In turn, the conservative aestheticization of the rustic, "organic" man awakened a whole complex of countermodern attitudes prevalent in the interwar period. Literature covertly enacts an aesthetic negation of the progressivist temporal framework as a whole. The leading writers of the 1960s and 1970s, and to an even greater extent the dominant type of interpretation of their works, replaced the image of historical time as a continuous ascent with the image of the dramatic rupture between the old and the new. This is a completely different mode of historicity, reminiscent in many ways of the "right-wing" cultural project of the interwar period. In the new discursive constellation, words such as "roots", "organic", "land", "identity" will play a central role, all of them representing the natural, which will be opposed to the "new", the "artificial", the "modern", the "Western", behind which in fact lies the individualistic complex of values.

VII. THE SPATIAL TURN

After the April Plenum, progressist discourse and its metaphors did not disappear, but somewhere in the mid-1960s they began to liberate zones in which spatial concepts and images, latently resisting linear historical time, invaded. If in the 1950s "places" (“TKZS”, factories, constructions) were temporalized, represented as entangled in the unified flow of teleological time, in the 1960s the opposite tendency became very tangible: historical time "solidified" into places, into specific and different topoi. In critical language as well as in fiction, "prolet" and "bereavement" fell out of fashion and gave way to spatial counter-metaphors - "valley" (with its terminological derivatives "regional" and "provincial") and "roots." Somewhat unexpectedly, the

characteristic vocabulary of the post-war avant-garde, the "primitive", a concept from the order of the temporal, which, however, carries a paradoxical anti-progressive meaning, also resurfaces. Literature begins to lay itself down in a web of conceptual orientations such as "center-periphery," "world-province," and, of course, "native-foreign." There is a process of linking works, authors, authorships, and semantic suggestions to space. Gradually, metaphors borrowed from geography (with the implicit suggestion of persistence, permanence, "character") begin to be adapted to the critical metaphors derived from history (and the modality of historical time). Spatialisation is also linked to a reassessment of the significant past, which begins to include things beyond the 'struggle of the oppressed for a better life'.

The work traces the functions of the spatial code, and in particular the metaphor of the "valley" in the critical texts of Tsvetan Stoyanov and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev. The main object of the analysis is Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev's article "National Tradition and Innovation", published in 1964 in volume 11 of *Septemvri* magazine, which can be defined as the first manifesto of neo-conservatism, which began to gain strength in the texts of Kuyumdzhiev and Toncho Zhechev from the mid-1960s onwards. The connection between the "simplification" of Kuyumdzhiev's literary-artistic language and the theme of the dangers of "intellectualism" is highlighted.

The "traditionalists'" turn to spatial metaphors is inevitable: in a culture in which teleological historical narrative officially dominates, it is impossible to appreciate the past as past, i.e. in a temporal mode. Unlike the right-wing conservatives of the interwar period, the "new conservatives" of the 1960s cannot idealize the past directly. The past can now be appreciated not as time, as "period," but only as space. Or as a cyclically manifesting primordial element.

The great linkage between "national identity" and "space," between "national character" and "valley," will be pushed in the famous 1965 discussion of national identity in literature. In his paper, Toncho Zhechev constructs the opposition 'naïveté - intellectualism', pushing precisely the connectedness to 'place' as the dividing mark. ('The life of the mind is always more universal, it is by birth international, less connected to a particular place, Zhechev 1966: 64). The connection to place is thought through the 'life of the feelings', thanks to which the writer becomes involved in the 'national ritual' and the 'tribal mentality'.

The connection between rootedness in 'place' and the wholeness of character was made as early as the 1930s, and will be found in its purest form in Spiridon Kazandzhiev 's famous essay 'The Collective Man' (1932). The argumentative structure in Kazandzhiev 's essay is quite different from that of Toncho Zhechev, and the reason is that Kazandzhiev can safely speak affirmatively of the social stability of patriarchal life because this "option" still exists as a real possibility in Bulgarian society. The connection to "place," the fusion between collective man and space in The Collective Man, is only one form of the general "staticity" that characterizes patriarchal existence. Conversely, modern life is characterized by movement and dynamism. It is on this opposition that Kazandzhiev builds the opposition patriarchal life - modern life, collective man - individual man. "Staticity" is in fact founded on repetition, and the lack of repetition fatally marks modern life.

It is "Thirst for Repetition" that Toncho Zhechev will name one of his most provocative essays, first published in issue 10 of the magazine. Just like in the case of Kazandzhiev, the "open" time of modernity is opposed both morally and aesthetically to the cyclical time of patriarchy. We can see how spatialisation, the anchoring of man and community to 'place' and its adjacent spatial

landmarks, is linked to the idea of repetition and cyclicality, which in turn turns life into an aesthetic reality possessing 'style', 'ritual' and 'etiquette'.

The circular repetition apparent in patriarchal life is nothing other than a mode of historicity that denies the "horizon of expectation" power over the "space of experience." "Slow" time guarantees existence both aesthetic and ethical dignity. Conversely, the future-imbued present is an accelerated, hurried time. This is what makes it unsustainable, morally and aesthetically ambiguous. Toncho Zhechev obviously shares the criticism of thinkers such as Vladimir Vassilev and Spyridon Kazandzhiev about the "fast" time of modernity not allowing life to "settle down." His anxiety about consumerism and memorylessness comes to the fore.

The difference between the conservatism of the 1960s (e.g., Zhechev's) and the conservatism of the 1930s (e.g., Kazandzhiev 's) is that the later form of resistance to the anxieties of modernity takes place within the private, individual perception of time. Breaking out of the 'hectic', chaotic time of progress is paid for by the isolation of the self from the general temporal framework. The "space" is that which enables rootedness in another, stable, slow-moving temporal layer. However, this rooting in the eternity of space is only thinkable as a private experience of the aesthetic order. The eternity of the 1960s is a lonely eternity.

In speaking of the 'space of experience', Koselleck makes an interesting observation: 'experience grounded in the past is spatial insofar as it is unified into a totality within which multiple layers of previous times are simultaneously given, without, however, specifying what comes before and what comes after' (Koselleck 2004: 260). Essentially, Koselleck's idea of the 'simultaneity of the discontinuous' starts from here, insisting on viewing the experience of the past as a geological slice in which different temporal layers are deposited. We can make the following, somewhat risky analogy. In periods when the "horizon of expectation," i.e., the presence of the future in the present, is highly reduced, it seems logical to expect the emergence of literary techniques that represent human experience as an assemblage of alternating layers of time. It is hardly a coincidence that in writers who cut the "horizon of expectation" out of their characters' lifeworlds, "stream of consciousness" emerges as a narrative device. It is also hardly coincidental that in orthodox criticism, strictly adhering to the ideologically formulated horizon of the future, we observe a strong anxiety about the "stream of consciousness" to the point of detecting it even where it simply does not exist. Maxim Naimovich speaks of the dangers of the "stream of consciousness," "primitive and crude in the extreme," in the story “Twentieth Century”, where in fact there is not a shadow of such a technique. Far more valid is the criticism of stream-of-consciousness in “Last Summer”, one of Radichkov's most commented works in the 1960s. Vasil Kolevsky, for example, in his speech at the conference on national originality, would argue that Efreitorov's "flashbacks and choppy chaotic stream of consciousness (...) could be the envy of Joyce's heroes" (Kolevsky 1966: 192). And Radichkov is not the only suspect. The other major author of this decade, also 'cutting' the horizon of the future both from the lifeworld of the characters and as the 'super-knowledge' of the narrator, Vasil Popov, has also been exposed by critics as carrying out ideological subversion through 'stream of consciousness'.

With the risk that any generalization carries, we can derive the following relationship. The shrinking and complete elimination of the future, i.e. the "horizon of expectation" as a temporal landmark that binds the community, leads to a re-emphasis of space and its determinants in the Bulgarian literature of the 1960s. Characters ceased to be characterized by their relation to the

vector of the "big" historical time, and began to be defined by the relations they established with "their" space. This "spatialisation" in turn contributes to the emergence of co-existing temporal layers in the literary text - represented through the technique of "stream of consciousness". Literature thus becomes a field of manifestation for the "simultaneity of the non-simultaneity," which is also an act of unstated resistance to the teleological, totalizing horizon of official ideology.

VIII. THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION OF THE 1960S

This chapter of the study traces the wealth of intertextual connections and mediated influences linking the literary and artistic work of figures such as Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev to the ideas of the so-called "Conservative Revolution," an intellectual movement that developed in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. The work seeks to answer the question of whether these are accidental or systematic, typological similarities.

The term "conservative revolution" gained its popularity in the second half of the last century thanks to Armin Möller's book The Conservative Revolution in Germany 1918-1932, published in 1949. At the heart of the "conservative revolution" was the intuition that the development of European society in the age of Modernity had led to an unprecedented spiritual crisis. For the new conservatives, the World War itself was a sign not so much of the crisis itself as of an as yet not fully realised possibility of a way out of it. What they oppose is the triumphant spirit of progress that marked most of the nineteenth century. "Progress" is in fact a spiritual regression, and a "revolution" is needed to reverse the trend of decline.

What are the negative aspects of "progress" according to this philosophical tradition?

In terms of society and social mores, Modernity is seen as a triumph of rationalism ("intellectualism") and material prosperity ("consumerism," "bourgeoisie"). However, the rationalisation of the world and the rise of prosperity lull the spiritual in man, making him lose touch with the eternal, the elusive, the authentic in himself.

At the level of the individual, Modernity manifests itself as "rootlessness", i.e. atomisation and alienation. Atomisation is expressed in:

- Detachment of the individual from the moral obligation to the community codified in "honour" and "tradition".

- Detachment of the individual from the community as spatial situatedness - separation from the land, from the "root".

This "uprooting" is expressed in the diseases of modernity - individualism (privileging the individual over the community), intellectualism, the mechanical integration of spiritually and culturally unconnected individuals, cosmopolitanism, mercantilism, the devaluation of "duty" and "heroism." All this will be united in the word "liberalism". The "conservative revolution" is primarily anti-liberal because it conceives of liberalism as the quintessence of the progressivist spirit, and anti-modern because it thinks of modernity as the triumph of materialist liberal progressivism.

What are the solutions? What the conservative revolution proposes is a reintegration of the individual into the organic national community. This reintegration, however, is thought through the vocabulary of "spontaneity" and "experience" developed by the philosophy of life.

The "conservative revolution" in Germany of the interwar period can be represented as a network of interrelated concepts governed by a series of isomorphic oppositions.

Spirit - Soul
Reason - Intuition
Linearity - cyclicity
Intellectualism - spontaneity
Logic - instinct
Modern society - traditional society
Abstract individual - organic individual
Cosmopolitanism - nationalism

The right-hand member of all these oppositions is conceived as the threat that the modern world poses and which must be decisively overcome, even at the cost of "revolution".

It is clear from the review that the anti-liberal, anti-rationalist philosophy of the conservative revolution has an important temporal dimension. Progressive time, bringing continuous changes in the direction of emancipation and well-being, is opposed by a specific version of "eternity." This is a cyclically pulsating eternity in which the individual is not emancipated and instead of enjoying material, consumerist well-being, experiences the higher happiness of empathizing with the spiritual essence of the organic national community.

The typological similarities between the Bulgarian "right-wing project" between the wars and the German "conservative revolution," as well as the direct influences of figures such as Møller van den Bruck, Bachofen, and Paul de Lagarde on Yanko Yanev, are elucidated in Ivan Elenkov's magisterial book *Rodno i dyasno* (The Right and the Modern), in which the problem of the philosophical and existential aspects of "right" thinking in Bulgarian culture of the 1920s and 1930s was introduced for the first time in modern Bulgarian humanities. The present study, however, is interested not so much in the projections of the "conservative revolution" in the interwar period as in the strange incarnations of conservative revolutionary ideas in the era of "mature socialism."

The natural question arises to what extent Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev knew and were directly influenced by the texts of Yanko Yanev and Naiden Sheitanov, for example. To what extent is there a direct intellectual link between the "right project" of the Wars and the conservative revolution of the 1960s? In fact, Yanko Yanev is no stranger to the group of critics around Toncho Zhechev. On the whole, however, the writers we are interested in have no particular affinity for conservative interwar intellectuals; the "right" philosophical tradition comes alive in the cautious Bulgarian conservatives of the 1960s, mostly through the essays of Thomas Mann and through Russian "post-War" thought.

The first striking difference between the "original" conservative revolution and its socialist version of the 1960s is that when we talk about the texts of Toncho Zhechev, for example, we cannot explain them by the "war experience" that was key to "right-wing" philosophizing between the two world wars. However, one could say that the conservative revolution unfolds as a critique of Peace from the perspective of the ecstasy experienced in the War. It is not so much the liminal event (War, Revolution) that provokes this new conservatism as the "normalization" that occurs after this event. If we accept such a hypothesis, it could explain the emergence of a kind of "conservative revolution" in the face of intellectuals like Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev in the 1960s and 1970s in socialist Bulgaria. Obviously, they lacked the "experience of the wars". For them, the key is rather the utopian experience of the former patriarchal

togetherness, which the turmoil of social transformations after 1944 destroyed. "The 'experience of the wars' can be replaced by the experience (real or imagined) of patriarchal communal fusion because the underlying structural premise is present - the experience of a chilled, disillusioned present gripped by morally indifferent individualism and consumerism. Toncho Zhechev's Bulgarian Easter grows out of an inspired, empathetic reading of Petko Slaveykov's disillusionment after the apparent success of the establishment of the independent Bulgarian Exarchate. The bitter "taste of victory" is what we can assume Toncho Zhechev also experienced in relation to his present and immediate past.

After outlining the main elements in the philosophical platform of the "conservative revolution," the study turns to Vasil Popov's novel *The Time of the Hero*. The polyphonic structure of this novel refracts some of the most interesting and problematic intuitions in the intellectual atmosphere of the second half of the 1960s. Both the "rational-emotional" relation and the contemporary snobbery, alienation, even "valley" become part of the novel's whole.

The Time of the Hero is a representative text of an important trend in literary life in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s. Vasil Popov was writing a novel about intellectuals, which would motivate the appearance of essayistic, "ideological" passages. Tsvetan Stoyanov, on the other hand, creates philosophical dialogues, searching for a genre in which to play out the clash of ideas and worldview positions that excite him ("Orpheus," "The Second Part of the Conversation," "Chinese Chronicle"). Toncho Zhechev, on the other hand, creates essayistic novels in which the fictional framework allows free philosophizing on themes such as love, myth, and eternity. In fact, the theme of love (as a time-transcending force constitutive of human existence), central to *The Time of the Hero*, will be taken up by Toncho Zhechev in *The History and Theories of a Pygmalion* (1983). It is there that the idea that the incapacity for love and blindness to eternity are interconnected will be developed - one of the hidden suggestions of *The Time of the Hero* that we might have missed had the theme not been further developed by Toncho Zhechev.

This mixing of genres in search of a highly "intellectualized" literary form is no accident. In a totalitarian society with its idea-dominated (ideologized) culture, it is natural that resistance would also be in the realm of ideas, and that alternative "ideology" would refunctionalize, challenge, overturn key elements of the hegemonic ideology (for example, the notion of time and history as a line leading to a desired future built by human hands). The Bulgarian "conservative revolution" of the 1960s unfolded not as a project for an achievable world, but as an intellectual utopia. The attainment of "eternity" and fusion with the spirit of community is set in the context of the notion of authentic existence, and authenticity is thought of as an aesthetic phenomenon. This is why writers produce novels in which the hero is a writer and critics produce hybrid texts in which they can frankly afford to speak like philosophers. Including as anti-Marxist, conservative philosophers.

In an anthropological perspective, the conservative revolution can be thought of as a revolt against the abstract man of liberal modernity. Modernization has brought to the foreground an individual without enduring traits and ties to community, to time and space. Linearly conceived progress, emancipation from tradition and metaphysical frameworks all lead to a freedom experienced as an existential void. Even revolutions do not bring the promised new beginnings. What "new conservatives" like Moeller van den Bruck and crypto-conservatives like Toncho

Zhechev share is the disillusionment with a revolution that actually reinforces the "capitalist spirit" - individualism, the pursuit of material well-being, the rejection of tradition.

The "conservative revolution" of interwar, pre-Hitler Germany is an amalgam of interrelated ideas and rhetorical devices from which we will derive two basic premises - anti-progressivism and anti-intellectualism. Anti-progressivism entails a search for expression from the linear time of progress in the direction of cyclicity and eternal return. Anti-intellectualism, on the other hand, values the phenomena of the intuitive, instinct, "feeling," and unreflective "folk wisdom." The conflation of anti-intellectualism and anti-progressivism, in turn, leads to the aestheticization of a network of concepts associated with "the genus" and "the tribe," and hence with myth and carnival.

In the Bulgarian context, "intellectualism" became the centre of fierce debates as early as the discussion of the "young poetry" of the late 1950s. As a kind of continuation of the discussion on free verse, the important articles of Tsvetan Stoyanov "Bulgarian, Really Bulgarian" and of Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev "National Tradition and Innovation" appeared. It is good to see how the notion of "intellectualism" expands its content. Initially it refers to the opposition "emotional - rational" in poetry, but very quickly it becomes a prism through which to think "art" in general (Kuyumdzhiev in "National Tradition and Innovation") or literature in particular (as in the chapter "Nationality and Intellectualism" from Toncho Zhechev's magisterial text "National Identity and Literary Development"). Moreover, "intellectualism" is transformed from a characteristic of literature into a general cognitive approach to life in general and to tradition, culture, and national historical experience in particular - it is in this direction that "intellectualism" will be used in the texts of Kuyumdzhiev and Zhechev.

Initially, the "physicist-lyricist" opposition does not work as an opposition between rationally achievable progress (the future) and moral obligation to tradition (the past). The argument is about who is more important in the struggle to build the future - whether progress will be achieved through the "mind", of scientists and engineers, or through the "heart" of poets and artists. In the rhetoric of Stefan Tsanev and Tsvetan Stoyanov, for example, the most prominent advocates of free verse, the notion of a new, rational worldview occupies a key place - gigantic transformations require mind and knowledge, not sentimental exuberance. They are opposed by Ivan Burin and Nikolai Staykov, according to whom "intellectual" poetry is cold, "alien", unable to inspire man in the name of a bright future. Kuyumdzhiev, however, broadens the debate by introducing the theme of the excessive cultural burden of intellectualism. It is in "National Tradition and Innovation" that intellectualism is already linked to detachment from the "life" of old, declining civilizations. This is now a diametrically opposed strategy - intellectualism (and rationalism) are seen as fatigue rather than vigour, looking to the past rather than the future. Zhechev and Kuyumdzhiev systematically link intellectualism to fatigue and exhaustion, in contrast to Stefan Tsanev and Tsvetan Stoyanov, for whom intellectualism is a key element of the action-oriented, practical, world-changing contemporary "worldview" inscribed in the horizon of progressism.

This linkage between intellectualism and fatigue/powerlessness/exhaustion leads to Nietzsche and his diagnosis of the "Socratic disease" of man. As might be expected, the "mediator" between Nietzsche and the Bulgarian conservatives of the 1960s was again Thomas Mann. Suffice it to compare Kuyumdzhiev's definition of intellectualism with a passage from Zhechev and

Kuyumdzhiev's well-known article by Thomas Mann, "Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Our Experience." The resemblance is particularly evident in key epithets such as "Alexandrian/Alexandrianism". Kuyumdzhiev's association of intellectualism with illness is also a recognizably Thomasmanesque theme, discussed repeatedly in the German writer's essays and novels.

Intellectualism ultimately means self-reflexivity and a consciousness of historicity, of an end, of decadence. Its opposite is "naivete" or spontaneity. It is no coincidence that in Toncho Zhechev's paper from the conference on national originality in literature, two chapters are devoted precisely to intellectualism and "naivety", and to a large extent it is these that will provoke the most resistance and reactions.

Anti-progressivism cannot appear explicitly in the Bulgarian context of the 1960s and 1970s. That is why in the writing of Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev it takes complex rhetorical forms. The main connecting thread between them is cultural scepticism and pessimism - the doubt that material progress corresponds to "progressive" spiritual development. Over time, the insight into the disconnect between material progress and spiritual enlightenment becomes more explicit. Initially, however, anti-progressivism manifested itself at the level of thinking about literary tradition (and modern literature as its continuator) and cultural memory (with literary history as its primary vehicle).

The cultural pessimism of Zhechev and Kuyumdzhiev, exhibiting typical features of the German "conservative revolution," manifests itself in several persistent conceptual metaphors with which they think culture. The circle, the tour and the return, death and resurrection are the central figures in a discursive edifice that can safely be described as the most important philosophical alternative to official Marxism under the totalitarian regime.

The circle, the circumference and cyclicity gradually occupy a central place in the rhetoric of Toncho Zhechev's writing after 1965. The key to the deciphering of this idea, which is in Zhechev's heart, is to be found in the beginning of *The Bulgarian Easter*, where, on the occasion of the "Easter Action" of 1860, he remarks in passing that if the greatest holiday for the Catholic West is the Nativity of Christ, for the Orthodox East it is Easter. The impossibility of accepting a life in which there is no resurrection would be explicitly stated in the essay "Thirst for Repetition," published along with four other texts from the future book The Myth of Ulysses in September magazine in 1979.

Bulgarian Easter broadly rehabilitates the "evolutionists" of the Bulgarian Revival, permanently marginalized relative to the "revolutionaries" in the official historical narrative under socialism. It would be too superficial, however, to read the book as an apologia for the activists of the Church movement. Already in the preface, Zhechev speaks of the "inevitable sanctimony and radicalism" of the Tsarist circle, even in the case of activists who were otherwise "heavy merchants and ecclesiastics of high rank." The extreme politicization of public life, the break with traditional religious culture and ethos, is what Toncho Zhechev sees as the most dangerous disease of Bulgarian modernity. This "politicization" is in fact the subordination of all spiritual activity to rationally achievable, "progressive" goals. Knowing Thomas Mann's influence on Zhechev, it seems plausible to assume that the word "radicalism" in The Bulgarian Easter is more than a neutral label. "Radicalism" in Thomas Mann is synonymous with progressivism and liberal instrumental reason, and it is his resistance to the progressive reordering of life as more just and rich through

politics that leads him to title one of his most conservative books Notes of an Apolitical. And when Toncho Zhechev constructs the image of a utopian patriarchal past as a moral alternative to an unsustainable modernity rushing towards "enlightenment deliverance", his patriarchal Bulgarian turns out to be suspiciously similar to Thomas Mann's bourgeois. It is enough to compare Zhechev's apologia for moderation with Thomas Mann's words about "the middle" ("is not the German self the middle, the mean, the mediate") in his article "Lübeck as a Spiritual Form of Life," a text Zhechev undoubtedly knew.

Parallel to the figure of Ulysses, the Circle and the Resurrection occupy a central place in Zhechev's writing. The "circumambulation," suggesting a journey but also a return, is one of the key conceptual metaphors that emerged earliest in his writing. The expression "Magellanic circle" is a particular favourite of his. It appears in the 1964 article “Ivo Andric or the End of a Ghost”, a text that provoked the famous discussion of national originality in literature. Magellan would reappear a few years later, in 1970, in the important article "Nation and Intelligentsia" by Zhechev. There, Magellan is now the symbol of the true intellectual. "Magellan" is a critical metaphor that stands at the heart of the problematic of the relationship between "intelligentsia" and "people," between "discovery" and "tradition." Here the figure of Magellan contains in embryo the main themes of *The Myth of Ulysses*. It is no surprise, therefore, to find Magellan in the first text of a series of essays published in the journal *September* in 1979, which in turn would become the core of the future book *The Myth of Ulysses*. The privileging of Magellan at the expense of Columbus is explicitly inferred. The modern age itself has been called anything but 'Columbian', and the main danger facing moderns is precisely the forgetting of Magellan's (or Ulysses's) attempted return.

In the last text of *The Myth of Ulysses*, the essay "Back to Tradition," (also first published in 1979, but in *Literaturen Front*), we find the "Magellanic Circle" again. This time, however, it included a passage through the realm of the dead. In other words, the collection *The Myth of Ulysses* begins with the idea of the spiritual value of the "Magellanic Circle" and ends with it. In fact, the "first" and "last" texts of the book are somewhat tentative designations - as can be seen, both were published in periodicals almost simultaneously in 1979.

Zhechev symptomatically expands the meaningful content of the "circle." At first it is thought of as a rediscovery of the native ("Ivo Andrić or the end of a ghost"), then it becomes "a rediscovery of the Known and the Near" and finally it is now a communication between the living and the dead, a descent into the world of death and an exit from there "with the gifts, treasures and impulses of the living and the dead to the sunny, ever-living side of the world." Obviously, here the Circle touches on the idea of the Resurrection, seen as the spiritual salvation of the dead.

The "circle" and cyclicity in Toncho Zhechev's thinking take two forms. One is the "good" cyclicity of the Return, which is an enrichment, a linking of times, in the deepest sense - a resurrection of the dead. But there is also a "bad" cyclicity, a regressive circle that leads civilizations through ascent to decline. The descent of modernity into a "new barbarism" of soullessness and memorylessness is a key motif of Toncho Zhechev's mature texts. More to the point, it is close to Spengler's ideas about the birth, rise and decline of civilizations, so popular in the interwar period. However, Zhechev refers not to Spengler but to the progenitor of the idea of cyclicity in history, Giambattista Vico. Careful textual analysis reveals that Zhechev cites not the Russian translation of Vico's *The New Science*, but the preface by Mikhail Lifshitz in the 1940 Soviet edition. The study concludes that not only Toncho Zhechev, but a number of other

Bulgarian literary scholars of the 1960s and 1970s were much more familiar with Soviet literary studies, and its "dissident" offshoots, than the citations in their texts indicate. Vico and Lifshitz together participate in the construction of the concept, so important for Toncho Zhechev, of a society threatened by a new barbarism, from which we can only save ourselves by way of a spiritual effort that resurrects the past.

The word "resurrection," too "clerical" for the official vocabulary of the time, appears centrally in Zhechev and Kuyumdzhiev's texts, first in the context of the methodological debate about the nature and tasks of literary history. In the famous discussion around the writing of a new multivolume history of Bulgarian literature, held in 1977-78 at the Institute of Literature, both Zhechev and Kuyumdzhiev spoke of communicating with the past as a resurrection of the ancestors, as an expression of "filial inclusion" in their experience. At that time, the memory of the discussion around *Wild Tales*, in which Zhechev and especially Kuyumdzhiev attacked the "analytical", "cold", "structuralist" science presented by Nikola Georgiev, is quite fresh. With his text from the discussion of literary history, Kuyumdzhiev takes up this line again, rejecting the "dry" version of literary scholarship and history, which, in his view, only register the lifeless "ashes" but cannot capture the living "fire." Kuyumdzhiev does not accept the dispassionate historical determinism, the subordination of literary science to the "historical law" that mummifies the passions of the past into a soulless pantomime. Resurrecting action, not impious curiosity - such, according to Kuyumdzhiev, should be the attitude to the past of the true literary historian

Toncho Zhechev, in the above-mentioned discussion, also views literary history as called to raise the dead. With him the moral obligation is even more explicitly stated. Literary history is seen as "a filial involvement with one's own past, with the ancestors, which is tantamount to resurrection, resurrection for them and for us" (Zhechev 1977: 29). Both in time of writing and in figurative devices, these lines are akin to the "Thirst for Repetition". There, Toncho Zhechev views the task of resurrection not from a literary-historical but from a universally human perspective. It is not only the artists who must be resurrected, but people in general, human beings - and above all our loved ones, those with whom we are intimately connected and therefore our duty to them is the greatest.

The dream is an important element of the new artistic system deployed in the so-called "de-epicised fiction" of the 1960s. A key element of 'de-epicised' narrative is the refusal of linearity and chronological sequence. The dream becomes not just an alibi for the introduction of atemporal experiences, but a model by which narrative unfolds in authors such as Vasil Popov. "Non-objective" time enters the narrative by way of flashbacks, internal monologue, and "stream of consciousness." This type of artistic structure was met with the knife in the 1960s, when Radichkov was accused of a stream-of-consciousness Ivan Efreitorov that James Joyce himself might have envied. With Vasil Popov, however, the atemporality of the inner stream of consciousness transcends the plane of purely subjective memories and experiences and becomes "ontologized." In this way, the narrative reveals the layer of a "verisimilitude" that brings together individual existences and experiences. This 'verisimilitude' now requires a specific character. Of course, we are talking about Grandma Nedelya. In the key story "Moonlit Night" from *Roots*, the dream explicates the reversibility of time. The narrative here unfolds through the point of view of Grandma Nedelya, in whom past, present and future merge, and the dead are indistinguishable from the living.

The grandmother turned out to be an extremely important figure in the literature of the 1960s and 1970s. Even Boyan Nichev noticed the presence of the grandmothers in Bulgarian literature from the third quarter of the 20th century. In *The Contemporary Bulgarian Novel* (1978), he brings out a character line including Sultana from *The Iron Candelabrum* (1952), Grandmother Gyurgya from *The Price of Gold* (1964) , Baba Nedelya from Vasil Popov's *The Roots* (1967) and *Eternal Times*, and Baba Vida from Georgi Alexiev's trilogy *The Crossroads of Clouds* (1973), *The Spirits of Tsibritsa* (1976), and *Goreshnitsi* (1978), defining them as "a figurative archetype of Bulgarian national self-knowledge and self-assertion" (Nichev 1978: 509). These heroines are 'timeless', and through them we touch 'life beginnings' that take us 'beyond the boundaries of myth and legend' (Nichev op. cit.). What all these female characters have in common is that they represent the patriarchal and the 'timeless', and yet their inner lives are distinctly non-linear and non-historical. Characteristic of their inner world is repetition, the fusion of past and present, the reliving of life's peak moments derived from linear temporal continuity. The vectorial, future-oriented socio-historical and national-historical time in them clashes with the bloody or "spherical" time of eternity. The grandmother no longer merely symbolizes the Motherland - she symbolizes Eternity.

The ambivalence of the eternal, which is now stylized as a monumental "primordiality" and now becomes the subject of ironic modulations, manifests itself in its full glory in Radichkov. With the high degree of metafictionality and self-reflexivity that characterizes Radichkov's work, it is not surprising to find thematizations, ironic of course, of "truthfulness." The very title of his 1971 collection, *Rock Drawings*, brings together the monumental, the ancient, the "stone" with the unpredictable fluctuations of the individual. The story "The Goat" from the collection in question is one example of the complex and multi-layered handling of the "primitive," and it is no accident that it has attracted critical attention. Well before "The Goat", however, Radichkov introduces us to another "play of the pen" with the "primeval" - in the short story "Verblyud".

" Verblyud " is built on the ironic tension between the effort of chronicling, i.e. ordering in time, the information about the camel, and the principle atemporality and unchroniclability of the strange creature. The narrator cites chronicles and chronicles himself, but the camel slips into a series of heterogeneous, extemporal appearances and signs. The verblyud participates in cosmogonic narratives while explaining the strange appearance of the sewing-machine tinker. The verblyud is where orderliness and predictability collapse. He is pure negativity, and that is why his appearance most times in the narrative is associated with evil. "God creates, the verblyud destroys." At first glance, the Grandmother as a transformation of the birthing "time of mothers" and the Verblyud as a symbol of the destructive beginning seem to be opposites. Both images, however, stand outside social, historical time; in them, life and death are united. (It is no coincidence that Baba Nedelya does not distinguish the living from the dead). "The time of the verblyud " is like a dream, the text says, the heavens are filled with cities and crusaders, and even single, unique events are doubled, repeated-"there were two Golgothas and two graves of God." The verblyud abolishes linearity and with it the identity of people and events. In the simultaneous existence of all possibilities, even the sun loses its definition: 'it took the form now of a fish, now of an insect, now of a leaping grasshopper, now of a square'. The "times of the verblyud " are signify the eternal, the coexistence of temporal series, while apparently the "time" that people invent and divide into years is the linear time that should take us away from the "terror of the verblyud ".

Immediately after September 9, 1944, every other word in the public domain was "people" or "popular." Somewhere around the mid-1960s, however, came the rehabilitation of the "kin" [*rod*] and the "native." This can be explained by the socio-political context - the radical transformation of the Bulgarian countryside as a result of collectivisation and migration. The theme of the end of the "kinship world" [*rodov sviat*] became central to the literature and critical debates of the time. In addition to its historically concrete meaning, however, "kin" began to be used as a symbol of the enduring, time-transcending ethnic collective. The "kin" turns out to be both "dying" and "eternal."

The revenge of the "kin", which emerges from its subordinate position to the "nation", at least in some literary discourses, also leads to a dismantling and overturning of the basic narratives of the national past, including the narrative of the national Revival. In its most synthesized form, the logic of the Bulgarian national narrative is summarized in the famous verse from Vazov's ode Paisii: "from today the Bulgarian kin/ has a history and becomes a nation." The "becoming" of the "nation" is a function of the acquisition of historical consciousness, i.e. of a memory of the past. According to this logic, the "kin" is marked as the phase in which such consciousness is absent or underdeveloped. This hierarchical subordination was overturned in the 1960s in a number of texts by Zhechev and Kuyumdzhiev. "The people" becomes "the kin" again, and in doing so it emerges from history understood as teleologically oriented time. "The genus" begins to mean the pre-historical, the stable, the unchangeable. "The kin" comes to symbolize the primordial. It is not merely a concrete, historically limited patriarchal form of community, but a transcendent community uniting the living and the dead in an enduring continuity.

The most rhetorically effective use of "kin" as a signifier of the full-blooded prehistoric existence of ethnic community and its "millennial point of view" is found in Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev. In “National Tradition and Innovation”, the modern artist is presented as having tragically broken with the warm community of the clan. What is new in Kuyumdzhiev's work is that he builds a model of engagement between the artist and the community, at either end of which stand the "genus", i.e. pre-modern society, and the "city" (i.e. modernity) respectively. Between these two poles have disappeared the intermediate phases of "national" and "class" consciousness that are fundamental to the dominant Marxist account of the relationship between art and society. The "kin" and its amplifications become a symbol of the lost "golden age." In Kuyumdzhiev's work, the epithet "national" is present, but in strange syntagms - "national ritual", "national ideas", which, however, have their origins in the "mythological roots of the tribe". On the other hand, albeit under the guise of metonymy, Kuyumdzhiev's text dares to challenge the cornerstone of historical materialism - the Revolution.

In his subsequent important texts, for example, in the two articles on Radichkov in 1970 and 1972, Kuyumdzhiev complicates the argument by linking the "kin" to Bakhtin's "carnivalesque." He interprets Radichkov's laughter as an expression of "the great primitive poetic power that is carried not by the individual but by the genius of the tribe." Radichkov is here no longer an individual artist, but a medium - through his mouth "speaks the ancient merry spirit of the tribe". Thanks to Radichkov, the "ancient-peasant view of the world" is revealed to us, we are given access to "an eternity enclosed in itself" (Kuyumdzhiev 1970: 45).

"Kin" and its synonym "tribe" saturate the critical writing of people like Kuyumdzhiev and Zhechev. The radically anti-Marxist interpretation of "kin" and "people" (in the complete absence of "class") scandalised orthodox Marxists; the academic Todor Pavlov himself poured out his indignation in an article eloquently entitled "Revolution is not a bustle, it is not a paradox", but, strange as it may seem, generally speaking no one paid attention to these criticisms. "The kin" is entering the vocabulary of literary criticism en masse, beginning to symbolize a collective community that stands beyond history and appears as a counterpoint to modernity along the lines of "authenticity - inauthenticity."

The central problem that concerns Toncho Zhechev as a literary critic and moral philosopher is the transition between patriarchal and modern, between communal and individualistic. He refracts the history of Bulgarian literature itself through this angle. This is particularly explicit in his later article "Introduction to the Historical Poetics of New Bulgarian Literature" (1988), where he opposes the famous "Theses on the History of New Bulgarian Literature" (1987) by Nikola Georgiev, and especially the famous sentence "There was no transition from folklore to literature in Bulgaria in the 19th century."

The key thing about Toncho Zhechev is that the transition between traditional and modern is thought largely in the categories set by Schiller in “On Naive and Sentimental Poetry”. This specific type of thinking of the transition from "epic, naive patriarchal generic consciousness to individual, Renaissance consciousness" will inevitably affect the conceptualisation of the key theme for Bulgarian cultural consciousness - the Revival/ Renaissance. Accepting, albeit with qualifications, that our Revival is essentially a version of the European Renaissance, Zhechev abruptly breaks with the traditional "dream-awakening" opposition of national-ideological discourse in relation to the Bulgarian Revival and its later variations based on the "unconscious-conscious" opposition. For Zhechev, the Revival should be thought of not as a push away from some zero level, from the non-existence of "dream" or "unconsciousness", but as a dramatic transition between equivalent states in terms of values, described in the language of the opposition "patriarchal - modern". It is precisely the theme of the bitter fruits of "progress", the sense of the costly price and even the loss with which "victory" was paid, that set the parameters of the revolutionary new, or more precisely "conservative revolutionary" model of understanding Bulgarian history proposed by Toncho Zhechev in The Bulgarian Easter.

In fact, the germ of the whole book is contained in Zhechev's famous article on Petko Slaveykov and his poem "The Spring of the White-footed" - "The Bulgarian Ulysses and the Truth of His Return", which originally appeared in *Literaturna Misal* in 1968. In this text Zhechev interprets one of the most significant works of Revival literature as an insight into the temptations and drama that historical development, i.e. the Revival itself, confronted the Bulgarian spirit. Zhechev sees in Slaveikov's poem not just a clash between a chaste Bulgarian and a hostile ethnic Other, but a Faustian plot. The vizier tempts Gergana with the prosperity provided by power and wealth, but for Zhechev this is in fact the prosperity of the modern, industrial, consumerist world. Therefore, in Zhechev's interpretation, the "sarai", "kapii" and "minderi" that the vizier promises to Gergana are fundamentally identical with the goods of modern life. In the face of the vizier and Gergana are contrasted not civilization and its absence, but two civilizations, one of which, that of Gergana, precedes the other. Gergana symbolizes the totality of the pre-reflective, "naïve" (after Schiller) state for which modern, "sentimental" man will feel a deep and overwhelming longing.

It is no coincidence that the third part of Toncho Zhechev's study of “The Spring of the White-footed” is devoted to the problem of sacrifice. It is accepted to believe that with The Bulgarian Easter Toncho Zhechev performs a reversal in Revival thinking, "rehabilitating" the evolutionary, "diplomatic" strand of it, which during totalitarianism was marginalized at the expense of the "revolutionary" wing. In fact, Zhechev does not simply resurrect the "other" wing of some comprehensive movement for national consciousness, but rather quite explicitly raises the question of the price of progress, including "consciousness." The Revival is a construction that builds in its foundations the shadow of Gergana, i.e. the happy patriarchal, pre-reflexive, "naive" civilization - this is Toncho Zhechev's implicit thesis. In his article he not accidentally interjects the story of the child's tear from *The Brothers Karamazov*. Historical progress, manifested at the levels of national consciousness and the construction of modern statehood and culture, was paid for with the sacrifice of what is most dear to us - Gergana, i.e. naive patriarchal harmony. Hence Zhechev's all-important imperative about the debt we owe to the ancestors, to the dead - reverence and spiritual communion with the dead must atone for the original sin of Bulgarian Modernity.

At the end of the chapter "The Conservative Revolution of the 1960s," the study attempts a recapitulation-what, in the end, does this reconciliation between the "original" conservative revolution in interwar Germany and its Bulgarian version in Zhivkov's Bulgaria give us? The work dwells extensively on the mediating role of Thomas Mann, but looks for typological, structural similarities. If we rethink the notion of the constitutive role of the War and its subsequent crisis, we might interpret the "right project" as a product not so much of the frontline experience as of the experience of peace and growing prosperity. The "conservative revolution" is based on an imaginary crisis opening up a field and direction of action in the space of Modernity. The literary-philosophical "project" of Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev is an ethically underpinned and aesthetically calibrated attempt to invent a past to compensate for the void that has opened up in the self-experience of a culture increasingly less engaged with the future.

IX. PAST RETURNING AS ETERNITY

In the second half of the 1960s, the turn to the past and the "native" in Bulgarian literature radically rearranged the hierarchies and stakes in the literary field. The present expanded to take in the past. If in the Stalinist period of socialism the future dominated the present, now it is the past that possesses greater aesthetic density. The "space of experience" takes its revenge. In this, the past begins to be present not merely as a memory or knowledge of a bygone reality, but as a presence in the present. The past appears not as past, but as eternity - and accordingly calls into being new narrative techniques that respond to this super-task.

Particularly interesting is the resurrection of a concept characteristic of postwar modernism, around which fierce polemics quickly flared in the 1960s. What does "primitive" (and the derivative adjective "primitive") mean in the critical vocabulary of the period?

"Primitive" and the turn to the primitive and the primal in general were initially discussed in relation to decadent Western literature. Minko Nikolov's *The Crisis in the Modern Western Novel*, published in 1961, will prove to be very important. Nikolov adheres to the official conception of Marxist-Leninist literary studies of the "decadent" character of bourgeois art, which, lacking an optimistic historical horizon, is doomed to revolve around pessimism and decadence. On the other hand, however, Minko Nikolov introduces names, ideas, and an overall narrative that will be

continued and transformed by Bulgarian literary criticism. Traits and characteristics that Nikolov identifies as inherent in the "modern Western novel" will be recognized in works by Radichkov and Vasil Popov. Perhaps it is from Minko Nikolov that the anxiety about the "stream of consciousness" that so disturbed critics in the 1960s originated. It is particularly significant that Minko Nikolov introduced the theme of the primitive, linking it in a paradoxical way to the idea of the exhaustion and weariness of Western culture.

Minko Nikolov introduces the tense correlation between "primitive" and "intellectualism", very important for the critical debates of the 1960s. As we have seen, the thesis of intellectualism as an expression of vital and historical exhaustion, a weariness inherent in civilizations in decline, is one of Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev's central ideas. The "primitive" in turn appears as a "temptation" for the intellectually sophisticated but sickly Western culture. Neo-primitivism, the "new barbarism" are in fact the product of the desperate search of the intellectualized, desiccated, alienated from life and historical progress man. This is why critics will interpret the manifestations of the primitive in writers such as Vasil Popov or Radichkov precisely as a borrowed from Western literature, imitative posture of "tired intellectualism."

The "primitive" and "intellectualism" intervene in the critical narratives of the 1960s and 1970s by way of initial differentiation followed by adaptation and refunctionalization. Initially "decadent" features (such as the "stream of consciousness" and the interest in the "primitive") are recognized in the new Bulgarian authors and critics sound the alarm: decadent Western influence! Gradually, however, negatively marked categories such as "primitive" or "myth" are domesticated, lose their negative denotations and connotations, and at one point are even included in the affirmative part of the critical vocabulary. Or they are replaced by their neutral synonyms, which denote, however, a changed attitude towards the same phenomena. (For example, as we shall see in the case of *Wild Tales*, criticism bypasses the very dangerous term "primitive", choosing to affirm the "wholeness" and "naturalness" of Haitov's characters).

The study looks at the case of Vasil Popov's short story "The Pig Farm" to show how in the early 1960s the "primitive" was ruthlessly defeated as a negation of "progress" and the "growth of the new socialist man." Particular attention is paid to Maxim Naimovich's 1963 article "On the Sinewaves of the Pathless," a sprawling critical text that directly carries out the "policies" Zhivkov unleashed in “Communist Ideality, the Highest Principle of Our Literature and Art”. Maxim Naimovich's article set an interpretive pattern that would be followed by critics such as Lyuben Georgiev and Ivan Spasov in their attempts to deal with *Fierce Mood*.

Orthodox critics attacking the "primitive" usually synonymize it with "instinct" and "unconscious", which in turn already makes the "primitive" close to the "stream of consciousness". These synonymies are possible because we are all talking about things that stand outside historical time and are therefore not subject to pedagogical treatment. The "primitive", the "unconscious" and the "instincts" are all aspects of the unchangeable, the "animal" in man - and this is clearly stated in Minko Nikolov's book.

Sparks around the "primitive" flared at the 1965 conference on national originality in literature. Toncho Zhechev found a way to free himself from the discrediting weight of "instinct" and "subconscious" by replacing "primitive" with "naive," bringing the content of the concept into the field of ethics and aesthetics. This move, however, was unravelled by vigilant Marxists such as Bogomil Raynov. The apologia of the "naive", spontaneous, rooted in the "spirit of the place"

creativity was recognized as an apologia of the primitive not only by Raynov, but also by the then chairman of the Union Georgi Dzhagarov. Their statements attacked the "primitive" as a notion denying historical development. The "primitive" means leaving social-historical time (and the narrative of it), which, according to Marxist thinking, have a universal character and, accordingly, incorporate Bulgarian literature into world literature. Regionalism as spatial closure and "primitive" as "closure" in time, isolation from the historical wind, have proved to be closely linked by official criticism.

In the second half of the 1960s, the "primitive" and, in general, the problem of the representation of man and his spirituality outside the teleological, shared time of the emerging communism, was being dug up in a multitude of new concepts, which contributed to its "normalization." The content of the concept is partially preserved, but the word itself is replaced by more benign critical labels. For example, the "wholeness" and "monolithicity" of Haitov's characters are referred to as qualities conditioned by their belonging to the now passing "male times". In Radichkov's case, critics introduce terms such as "grotesque," "myth," and "carnival" to denote the apparent "untimeliness" and general lack of relevance to the historical time of the characters in *Fierce Mood*. In a slightly more subdued way, similar operations are also taking place in relation to the texts of Dimitar Valev, Yordan Valchev, Ivailo Petrov from the same time... In various ways, the value charge of the "primitive" is being refracted and a bundle of unconditionally positive connotations is accumulating around the notion of the primary, integral heroes of the past. A representative portion of fiction in the second half of the 1960s found itself preoccupied with the "untimely," dapper man, a wreck of some unnamed and indefinable bygone time.

Marxist criticism does not leave these thematic, and hierarchical, regroupings unanswered. In the early 1970s, several critics attempted to bring about a "sobering" by trying to resist the emerging cult of the primordial integrity of the past. Thus appeared the article "Rural" fiction: speculative bookishness and completeness of representation" by Alexander Spiridonov, ("Plamak", 1970/n.14), Chavdar Dobrev's "In the Captivity of the Basin" ("Literary Front", no. 42, 1970) and Simeon Hadjikosev's "Contradictory Processes" ("Literary Front", no. 38/ 1972) Both thematically and in terms of time of writing, we should also place in this list Lyuben Georgiev's article, "The Risks of Artistic Distortion" ("Plamak", 1971/no. 9), devoted to Radichkov's *Gunpowder primer* and *Rock Drawings*, but dealing explicitly with the problem of the primitive.

The strategy of these articles is to expose the articulation of the human outside of social-historical time in the texts of authors such as Haitov, Radichkov, and Vasil Popov, a problem that Marxist criticism has, in their view, failed to notice. The introduction of some abstract, classless, ahistorical "primeval" into the "literature of the valley," they say, is in fact a return to the "primitive." Although the positive reception of Haitov, Vasil Popov, and Radichkov does not use the term "primitive," zealous Marxist critics detect its presence and set about exposing it. As Lyuben Georgiev would write: 'Now the goat and the fart become the standard for "modern" world-view and world-relations. (...) The aim is to achieve the primitive by all means and at all costs.' (Georgiev 1971: 84).

Alexander Spiridonov has been the most consistent in exposing the hidden conservative agenda in the acute literature on the village. In a certain sense he can be seen as the antipode of Toncho Zhechev. If Zhechev worries that Radichkov, for example, is "a strange romantic, busy

chopping down the romantic willows of the past," Spiridonov insists that the face of the past is in fact Nane Stoichko.

All four critics explain the emergence of the nostalgic-idealizing and grotesque-primitivist representation of the past in the literature of the second half of the 1960s as a reaction against the alienation and "coldness" of human life that came with urbanization. The vigilance of orthodox Marxists is easily explained. The subversive potential of the primitive lay in its incompatibility not just with socialist realism but with the central pedagogical narrative of the construction of the 'new man' within a progressivist temporality. However, the indignations and reservations of Alexander Spiridonov, Chavdar Dobrev and Simeon Hadjikosev do not receive much response. The normalization and aestheticization of the primitive is gaining increasing force. On the one hand, "primitive" and "primitive" are discreetly replaced by a new order of concepts and expressions that mitigate the rupture with the teleological time that "primitive" implicitly carries - "wholeness," "organicity," "monolith," "myth," "grotesque," etc. The other important strategy is to present the "primitive" not in itself, as a complete world, but in its tragic encounter with the new times. Krastyo Kuyumdzhiev is mainly responsible for the imposition of this thesis.

It was on the dramatic clash between old and new that Kuyumdzhiev built his interpretation of Haitov's characters in the famous discussion around *Wild Tales* in 1973-74. There he, in general terms, reduced "man's times" to a moral corrective to compromised modernity. To a large extent, this discussion began as a "replay" of the polemics about the primitive of the second half of the 1960s. However, attention gradually shifts to the methodology of literary-historical inquiry. The "primitive" has dissolved into a powerful complex of notions of the aestheticized "organic" past, and it is now difficult to debate it.

After the turbulences of the 1963-1965 period, there was a period of rapid rearrangement of hierarchies in the literary field, in which the "rebels" of the first half of the 1960s were formally introduced into the socialist canon. Vasil Popov's *Roots* and Nikolai Haitov's *Wild Tales* were published in the same year, 1967, and seemed to mark the final establishment of a complex of notions that would dominate the next decade. A key role in this complex is played by notions such as "organic", "natural", "rootlessness", "primordial", "eternal"... Two years later, Radichkov would be awarded the Dimitrov Prize for *Gunpowder primer*, the book that seemed to remove the question marks from the author of *A Fierce Mood*.

Although riding on the crest of the same receptive wave, rediscovering the value of the "native" and the "idiosyncratic," the differences between the great storytellers of the 1960s should not be ignored. Nikolai Haitov and Vasil Popov, for example, are symptomatic not only of the "turning to the roots", but also of the diametrically different approach that can be followed in developing the subject. With his systematic use of the skit in *Wild Tales*, Haitov makes the past part of the immediate, personal experience of the hero. The past here is the decisive event that has changed his life trajectory in one way or another. This past is recalled in the act of narration, simulating oral communication. At the same time, the past, according to the laws of "natural" oral communication, is clearly distinguished from the present. The "past-present" opposition is implicitly emphasized by the narrators, and criticism will amplify and conceptualize it, bringing forth the "legendary" past as a moral and aesthetic counterpoint to the present.

Just a year after its publication in late 1967, *Wild Tales* received half a dozen positive reviews, and critical attention to the collection did not cease until the mid-1970s, when the famous discussion unfolded on the pages of *Literary Front* and *Literaturna Misal*. Already in the first reviews of Haitov's collection, two persistent motifs are found. The first is the emphasis on the connection of the characters with the place - the Rhodope Mountains. "Regional", introduced in the mid-1960s by Toncho Zhechev and which caused so much discussion, is already used here as the highest praise. "Haitov knows the soul of the Rhodope", Ivan Tsvetkov states in his preface to the second edition of *Wild Tales* from 1969. Toncho Zhechev will title his review "Wild Tales and the Spirit of the Rhodopes" and publish it in the "regional" magazine "Rodopa". Simeon Sultanov, on the other hand, in 1971 (in his article "Thoughts on the Poetics of Nikolai Haitov") titled Haitov "the discoverer of a world" - "the land of Orpheus". Toncho Zhechev, on the other hand, christened his review of Wild Stories "Nikolai Haitov and the Spirit of the Rhodopes" (Zhechev 1971). Curiously, Haitov is named as the first discoverer of the Rhodopes, although 3 years before Wild Tales appeared Anton Donchev's novel Time Divided, in which frantic efforts were made to present the "Rhodope" identity as the most stable element in the characters' character.

The second recurrent motif in the early critical reception of *Wild Tales* is the emphasis on the naturalness and naturalness of the characters. Stoyan Iliev puts it most succinctly and emphatically: 'Haitov reveals to us the great spiritual richness that is hidden in the world of the "natural man"' (Iliev 1969: 252-53).

'Natural man' in 1969 means many things, but perhaps the most important implication is 'inalienable man'. In 1967, Tsvetan Stoyanov's book The Threads that Break. The Problem of Alienation in Literature and Social Psychology in the West," which, given Tsvetan Stoyanov's authority, has hardly been without influence on literary thought. Haitov's characters are seen as an alternative to what Stoyanov describes as the fate of man in bourgeois society. Panteleye Zarev directly states, "Haitov's heroes do not know alienation" (Zarev 1975a: 55).

In fact, the reception of Tsvetan Stoyanov's ideas can be reconstructed from the reception of Haitov. Each of Haitov's reviewers conceives of alienation from a different angle. For Stoyan Iliev, modern alienation comes from the differentiation of labor and the standardization of life, the rationalization of life (almost Weberian). This is why he brings to the fore the unordinary, the "shaky" in Khitai's characters. For many critics, the most important sign of the naturalness of Haito's characters is their speech - fresh, primal, alive. Toncho Zhechev introduces the opposition between the "primitive-poetic" and the "reasoning-flat" consciousness, and according to him (quite following Schiller) art is that which "returns us to the pure and sweet childlike view of the world and life" (Zhechev 1971: 202). Somewhere here is also the source of that interest in the spiritualizing, mythmaking word that would dominate Radichkov's interpretations in the 1970s and 1980s, and this concept would find a particularly complete form in Encho Mutafov's book on Radichkov, and especially in its revised edition of 1995, where Radichkov is seen as the prime master of a "primordial", pre-subjective word that confronts the anthropocentrism of Western civilization.

Apart from the sufficiently visible motifs of the "spirit of place" and "alienation", we will also encounter a hidden leitmotif in the first critical texts on Wild Stories. In fact, critics of the late 1960s read Haitov as the new Yovkov. And not the Yovkov of the older Marxist readings of critics like Peter Pondev, but the Yovkov as the "fascist" Vladimir Vassilev sees him in his article "From

1920 to Today. Everyday Realism. Georgi Raichev, Elin Pelin, Yordan Yovkov", published in *Zlatorog*, 1933/n.2,3,4. It is about curious similarities in one very specific point - the characterization of the characters of "Old Mountain Legends" as whole and natural. Vladimir Vassilev's description will be seen multiplied in the perception of Haito's characters in the late 1960s.

But with which Yovkov is Haitov paired? Interestingly, the notion of Yovkov as a universal humanist is imposed not before, but almost in parallel with the critical assimilation of Wild Tales. In the first years after 1944, Yovkov was viewed with suspicion. Critics such as Peter Pondev are seen as attempting to demystify the "eternal" and the "psychological" in his work by presenting moral issues as hidden social problems. It was only in the mid-1960s that attitudes began to change and the cliché of the "humanist Yovkov" took shape. Simeon Sultanov's contribution to the new public image of Yovkov was particularly great - in addition to being the author of the literary monograph Yovkov and His World (1968), he was also the editor-in-chief of the new 1970 edition of Yovkov's collected works and the author of the preface to the first volume, entitled Yovkov's Longevity. It is there that we will encounter the significant words:

Yovkov gives us a sense of eternity.

(Sultanov 1970:16).

If we look at the case of Yovkov's rediscovery as an exponent of "Bulgarian eternity" in the late 1960s, we see that he is again, as in the interwar period, being projected as an alternative to modernity. Yovkov's heroes are once again brought into opposition with the incomplete, mobile and plastic, i.e. morally reproachable, modern man (as it was in the 1930s). Accordingly, all that Sultanov attributes to Yovkov, for example, is also seen in Haitov. It is no coincidence that Sultanov himself is one of Haitov's apologists and interprets his work in the same key. That is why Vladimir-Vasilev's interpretation of Yovkov fits so perfectly with the admiration for Haitov's Wild Tales.

For Vladimir Vassilev, Yovkov's works are the high point in a trend that marked the cultural climate of the interwar period - the overcoming of pre-war individualism. According to Vassilev, individualism had three main aspects: the individualistic ethic (egoism); the mental schemes with which intellectuals approached the world (intellectualism); and the attempts at a sophisticated, complicated form (mannerism). All three aspects of individualism are overcome in Yovkov, according to Vassilev. Criticism of the 1960s, while appreciating the "naturalness" of Haitov's characters, was in fact looking for a cure for similar "diseases." Except that the roles are played by different actors. The individualist ethic is recognized in the selfishness and "effeminization" of the new socialist middle class; intellectualism is exposed as the dogmatic imposition of schemes on life (the main form of criticism allowed for Stalinism) or the eager following of fashionable theories (Toncho Zhechev's concerns). The mannerist aspect of individualism is recognized in authors who break with the narrative tradition of realism, using "modern" techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, conventionality, the grotesque, etc. Haitov is hailed as a healer of the ills of modernity - just as "right-wing" critics such as Vladimir Vassilev, Georgi Konstantinov, Spiridon Kazandjiev and others saw Yovkov in the 1930s.

The interpretation and canonization of both Yovkov and Haitov is based on a corpus of isomorphic oppositions:

Past - Present

Completeness - fragmentarity
Morality - immorality
Dedication to community - individualism
Altruism - egoism
Beautiful - ugly
Natural - artificial
Eternal - transient

Positively marked are the values associated with the past. However, this "past" is historically undefined, it is not tied to a certain "stage" or "phase" of society's life. We can call it a 'patriarchal past', but its characteristics are not tied to a particular historical period or typology (e.g. that of 'feudal' society). The characters of both Yovkov and Haitov are seen as patriarchal, but it is a patriarchy merging with eternity. "Millennial" is a favorite word of critics of this period. Something more. "Past" and "present" in this matrix are of a different order. Modernity is "historical" and actual. The past is ahistorical and is actually present not as a "period" but as an aesthetic complex. The present as real time is opposed to the eternity of the past, which has an entirely aesthetic, abstract character.

In this way, the "patriarchal" emerges from its doomed historical position and becomes a timeless, universal phenomenon. A phenomenon that is revealed to us not just in "the life of yesterday" (in which there is scarcity, ignorance, exploitation, etc.), but is given to us through the specific medium of art, of literature. It is, however, art masquerading as the immediate, authentic experience of the people and the "common man." This is why the sketch form chosen by Haitov proves so successful. The contact with the "vast unconscious moralistic culture" (Toncho Zhechev) of the natural pre-modern man passes through the staging of spontaneous, immediate, "wild" speech.

X. EXCURSUS: WHY DON'T "MATSAKURTSI" BECOME "WILD NARRATIVES"?

This chapter of the thesis examines a relatively private case, Assen Christoforov's memoir novel *Matsakurtsi*, which shows similarities to *Wild Tales* in some aspects but remains peripheral to the literary canon. An answer is sought to the question of why Assen Christoforov's text, which appeared only ten years earlier, turned out to be "untimely".

If we were to ask why *Matsakurtsi* remains outside the canon, the quick answer would be: because of the author's "origins" and because of its unclear genre status (a bifurcation between fictional and documentary). But can we go beyond these self-evident answers? In the first place, it is not ideological correctness that makes a work "canonical" in the 1960s. The affirmative reception of Haitov and Radichkov, let's say, actually goes completely against the official postulates of socialist realism. There is even an implicit "oppositionalism" in their works, which were quickly imposed and became canon - and it is in their critique of the progressist temporality of official ideology.

There are a number of similarities between Haitov's *Wild Tales* and Assen Khristoforov's *Matsakurtsi*, which provide grounds for looking for the outlines of a "dialogue" between them.

- The emphasized locality - Hristoforov's book in its first edition even bears in its title the name of the place (the old name of Govedartsi), transformed into a designation of its inhabitants - "Matsakurtsi".

- the original narrative. In *Matsakurtsi*, however, it is the author who narrates, and in *Wild Tales* it is the characters. This will prove crucial in view of the future fate of both books.

- The 'border situation' - the characters are explicitly split between the new and the old, and very often have an awareness of this historicity.

No less significant, however, are the differences.

If at the end of the 1960s Haitov was hailed as the new Yovkov, this was impossible for Christoforov ten years earlier. For Christoforov, the scheme of oppositions pitting the "natural" man of the past against the "artificiality" of modernity does not work. In the most general terms, the "matsacurshchina" he describes, i.e. "the old," includes ignorance, a tendency to deceit and violence, sometimes laziness and even cruelty. For Christoforov, the "new" has a specific socio-historical meaning - and that is collectivisation, the process of forced co-optation of land and property in a village. It is this historical framework that sets the context for the story of this "Robinson without Petcan," as the narrator defines himself. In this format, the "new" cannot be attacked directly, let alone by a "former man" like Assen Christoforov. According to the book, what failed collectivisation was precisely the trickery, the "matsakurshchina", the ignorance and the scams.

If both books are about characters in the transition between old and new, it turns out that the new has different dimensions. For Haitov, it is the "new" of the artificial, the compromising, the urban, the consumative. For Christoforov, the new is collectivization. It is no coincidence that for the hero in the story "A Tree Without a Root," collectivization is already a thing of the past in which he has actively participated on the "right" side.

The diametrically opposed modes of representing the opposition between "past" and "modernity" lead to a number of private differences between *Wild Tales* and *Matsakurtsi*.

A. The Image of Woman. In Haitov's case, she must be won over by a display of masculinity, which sometimes involves violence (a willingness to inflict and endure it). In *Matsakurtsi* women are easily given away, and violence has no aesthetic quotient. We have a scene in which a father-in-law beats his daughter-in-law, which in turn unlocks accounts of instances in which the father-in-law takes sexual advantage of her. The scene between Vucidei and the pretty Gena is the closest we get to the Haitovian, but it's relegated to the background, to the zone of the ambiguous and the shameful.

Б. Money. They are only relevant to Haitov's characters when it comes to honor, to "a word given." "Before my word," I cry, "gold makes no steam!" ("Men's Times"). The Mazzacurans are calculating and willing to do anything to earn a few extra bucks.

B. The legendary past. There seems to be a kind of temporal despondency in the world of *Matsakurtsi* - the new offers mainly disappointments, but there is nothing to admire in the past either. Matsakursi remember nothing significant of their communal history.

Г. The cultivation of nature. In Haitov’s writings this is a quality of the "wild" heroes, presented in opposition to the urban idlers. In *Matsakurtsi* it is attributed to the narrator who, like Robinson, builds a house, makes a garden, breeds a dog, goats and chickens, etc.

There is also a key difference in the use of the first-person narrative. All of the stories in Khaitov's collection are in the style of primitive narrative, and accordingly the language of the characters and the work evokes critical approval. It turns out that primitive narrative in the 1960s is "legitimate" when it is rendered in the fairy-tale mode, i.e. as "vernacular speech." To be

canonically successful, the primal narrative must be made available to the "wild," authentic subject, the uncorrupted by civilization. The opposite, the Robinsonian position of "civilized among savages," is "untimely."

Matsakurtsi and *Wild Tales* demonstrate two different destinies of the marginal of the 1960s. Assen Christoforov's book remains outside the circle of officially recognized "high" literature, while Haitov's enjoyed unprecedented success among critics and audiences alike. The success of *Wild Tales* is also largely due to its well-moderated measure of opposition to the then Marxist narrative with its progressivism and universalism. In the late 1960s, Haitov and Radichkov were read by critics in a way that reinforced a vision of collective, communal identity derived from the past. The newly constructed "canon" critiques modernity, offering aestheticized patriarchy as therapy for a growing sense of value decay. The literature of the late 1960s now implicitly declares that the present does not offer an integrating community narrative and image. And it turns to the past - not as a realistically attainable model, but as a source of tragic conflict between the patriarchally ordered whole man and the new times.

XI. THE PACKING OF RADICHKOV: GROTESQUE, MYTH, CARNIVAL

This chapter of the study traces the history and implications of two adaptations - Raditchkov's incorporation into the literary canon of the early 1970s and the introduction of the terms "grotesque," "myth," and "carnival" (after Bakhtin) into the critical vocabulary at the same time.

It is known that some of Radichkov's texts in the first half of the 1960s provoked violent disagreements on the part of orthodox criticism. Radichkov's originality as a storyteller put the Marxist-Leninist theoretical and applied toolkit to the test. Critics responded to the ironic call to "Be incredible!" by trying to unravel the reasons for the strangeness and "improbability" of Radichkov's stories, especially those in the collection *A Fierce Mood*.

A cornerstone of Marxist-Leninist literary doctrine is the link between character and historical moment. Therefore, the specificity of Raditschko's narrative will very quickly be deduced from the particular ahistoricity and atemporality of his characters. The feeling that Radichkov's characters are not situated in the "right" way in relation to historical time leads critics to resort to the then condemnatory qualifications such as "stream of consciousness," "myth," and "primitive." Ivan Spasov is particularly consistent in exposing the ahistoricism and temporal decontextualization of Radichkov's characters. It was he who would probably be the first to use the term "mythologizing" to address Radichkov, albeit as a negative characterization, quite in the spirit of the Marxist model of literature at the time. The characters' lack of socio-historical credibility makes the belonging of Radichkov's texts to "realism" in general, not to mention the "socialist" one, highly problematic. Criticism is therefore looking for a way to rationalise Raditchko's "pen games" and find an "alibi" for them that would secure their subversive charge.

The first and easiest solution is to declare the stories of *A Fierce Mood* a variety of... humorous literature. According to the aesthetic notions prevalent at the time, only satire was allowed to hyperbolize individual features, and hence "unrealistic", "grotesque", "deforming" narrative. The problem is that apparently Radichkov does not distinguish between "serious" and "humorous", but constantly mixes them. Stoyan Karolev argues against this mixing. To put it more generally, criticism in the mid-1960s fell into the impossibility of interpreting Radichkov

affirmatively, observing the doctrine of socialist realism about typical, socially and historically conditioned characters. Either Radichkov is a "realist," but then he inexcusably caricatures the rural socialist worker, or he is something else that does not fall within the classification grid of socialist realism. Unless it's labelled "humorous literature".

The attempt to fit the collection *A Fierce Mood* into the ghetto of humorous literature remains unsuccessful. However, Radichkov, after *The Gunpowder Primer*, can no longer be easily neglected. His work motivated a "paradigm shift" in literary criticism and became an important resource in the redistribution of symbolic capital in the literary field of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The solution comes with the actualization of a whole host of new concepts - grotesque, myth/mythologizing, primitive, parody and carnivalesque. All of these notions were born out of a sense that time in Radichkov's world was radically alien to the linear, progressivist model of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Chronologically, the terms "grotesque" and "grotesque" (often bundled with words like "deformation" and "deformation)" appear first. They are meant to describe the peculiar monotony of Radichkov's characters in *A Fierce Mood*. In general, "grotesque" and "grotesquely" are used descriptively, evaluatively neutral, although writers such as Lyuben Georgiev express concerns about where "deformation" might lead. A more serious theoretical justification of the grotesque can be seen in an article by Stoyan Iliev entitled "Radichkov's Heroes" ("Literary Front", no. 24 of 1966). In it, the critic finds a serious alibi for the Radichkov aesthetic scandal - the resistance against "cult dogmatism". The whole article is constructed as an attempt to explain the "abnormality" of Radichkov's characters, who, measured by the measures of traditional logic and aesthetics, would appear to the reader as "idiots". This is why the critic introduces concepts such as grotesque, parody, one-sided seriousness, informality, incompleteness.

In fact, this seemingly theoretically unpretentious article by Stoyan Iliev contains all the new notions that criticism will mobilize in its attempt to deal with Radichkov - the grotesque is thematized, parody is mentioned, and it is not difficult to recognize the idea of the carnivalesque behind an expression like "festive folly". These three notions will now be picked up and developed into a comprehensive theoretical and interpretative model by Encho Mutafov, Nikola Georgiev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev. Nikola Georgiev will deal with parody and the parodic in "Nane Vute's Transformations" ("Septemvri", 1968/No.6), Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev will offer a reading of Radichkov through the carnivalesque in "Ivaylo Petrov's Small and Big Illusions" (*Plamak*, 1970/No.24).) and "Two Paradoxes about Radichkov", (*Literaturen Front*, N 8709, 12 Oct. 1972), and Encho Mutafov will dwell on the grotesque in his article "The Ambivalent in Yordan Radichkov's Prose", (*Literaturna misal*, 1973/no.3).

The grotesque as a concept was used readily in those years by other critics. Toncho Zhechev also worried that the grotesque really removes the artistic image from its temporal locality. For him, the particular weightlessness of the grotesque is the result of the breaking of the threads with historical time, respectively with the past and its experience.

The real theoretical grounding of the grotesque, directly linked to Bakhtin's concepts, is seen in Encho Mutafov's 1973 article "The Ambivalent in Yordan Radichkov's Prose". Starting from the notion of 'ambivalent', for which he is also indebted to Bakhtin, Mutafov proposes two terms as a key to Radichkov - 'ambivalent-ironic beginning and grotesque realism' (Mutafov 1973: 44). Encho Mutafov extensively references, and at times distinguishes himself from Bakhtin, but

expresses a preference for the term 'grotesque' rather than 'carnival'. Already here one can see the desire to distinguish from the "carnivalesque". Skeptical of the "carnival worldview," Mutafov readily adopts the "grotesque" as a theoretical key to Radichkov.

Regardless of their disputes, critics writing about Radichkov in the second half of the 1960s sooner or later came to Radichkov's laughter. However, Radichkov's laughter has been interpreted primarily as a moral problem. Is Radichkov's laughter justified - and who is the object of his ridicule?! The objections go in two directions. For orthodox Marxist critics, Raditchkov's laughter is often unacceptable because it "caricatures" the contemporary Bulgarian peasant. In general, the critics of the mid-1960s listened carefully to what Todor Zhivkov said in his 1963 speech, "Communist Ideality - the Highest Principle of Our Literature and Art," where, on the occasion of Vasil Popov's "infatuation" with modern Western literature, it came, according to Zhivkov, to "denigrate our reality." Of course, this was the case with The Pig Farm, but works such as Radichkov's *A Fierce Mood* were also feared to contain a "caricaturing" of contemporary rural reality.

If for orthodox Marxist critics the atemporality of Radichkov's characters is a problem because of the broken link with the teleological temporal horizon of communist ideology, for Toncho Zhechev this atemporality is charged with a dangerous tendency towards nihilism in relation to the past. Zhechev's anxiety is that Radichkov has laughed at the patriarchal Bulgarian bequeathed to us by classical Bulgarian literature. Zhechev shifts the critical debate from the question of the representativeness of Radichkov's characters (as, for example, Stoyan Karolev's inquiry a few years earlier) to the problem of the moral justification of Radichkov's laughter over the past.

Thus, in the late 1960s, Raditchkov found himself attacked from two sides - for his deviations from the realist method and for his deviations from the worship of the moral virtues of the patriarchal past. Raditchkov's "vindication" from these charges requires a radical change of theoretical tools. The solution, as already suggested, turns out to be Bakhtin.

After being interned and condemned to silence for years, Mikhail Bakhtin returned to the Soviet and world literary scene with the publication of *Dostoevsky's Problems of Poetics* (1963) and *Rabelais and the Popular Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (1965). It is striking how quickly in that pre-internet era Bakhtin's ideas entered the vocabulary of Bulgarian literary studies and criticism in the second half of the 1960s. In 1965, Stoyan Karolev cited the second edition of Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky, which "came out three years ago" (i.e. in 1963), as an example of logical and reasoned critical language - and precisely in polemic with the "impressionistic criticism" practiced at the time by Zdravko Petrov and Toncho Zhechev. The following year, again, Karolev used Bakhtin's notion of "double-speak" twice, once in an article on Emilian Stanev (compared to Tolstoy and Dostoevsky), and once more in an article on Radichkov.

The great Bakhtinian reading of Radichkov will be undertaken by Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev in two of his articles, with very slight additions included later in the chapter on Radichkov in the two-volume *Essays on the History of Bulgarian Literature after September Ninth 1944*. These are the articles "The small and large illusions of Ivaylo Petrov" (*Plamak*, 1970/no. 24) and "Two paradoxes about Radichkov" (*Fatherland Front*, no. 8709 of 12 October 1972).

To a large extent, Kuyumdzhiev takes his cue from Toncho Zhechev's intuition of "laughter and tears" and Stoyan Iliev's implicit Bakhtinianism in Radichkov's 1966 The Heroes. The most famous phrase from Kuyumdzhiev's reading of Radichkov's laughter is perhaps the sentence "This is the carnival laughter of the village saying goodbye to its past." According to Kuyumdzhiev, Radichkov's laughter is not individual, but supra-individual; it is the product of an extra-temporal "ancient rural view of human history" (op. cit., p. 45) that is "more ancient than religions, the state, ideology, history." Radichkov's laughter is born in the clash between this millennia-old rural point of view and modern times - it is, however, the collective laughter that mocks both the old and the new. It is a trans-personal, communal laughter happening "in the village forum at the carnival." It is here, in a footnote, that Kuyumdzhiev refers to Bakhtin's book on Rabelais.

For Bakhtin, the carnival is an overturning of "official seriousness," a suspension of the hierarchy of power based on the religious teleological order. Carnival introduces the cyclical time of the "ancient neighborhoods" (Bakhtin), rejecting the linear time of the Church. Kuyumdzhiev generally does not deploy the subversive potential of the carnivalesque. What, in fact, is the "top" that is carnivalesquely lowered in Radichkov's version of the carnival? What Kuyumdzhiev implies (it could not be otherwise) is that carnival, carrying within it an "ancient rustic view of human history," offers an alternative to revolutionary progressivism. This archaic view, "forbidden" by official progressivism, views historical development as a vanity, an illusion of progress.

In his 1972 article "Two Paradoxes about Radichkov," Kuyumdzhiev already modeled an experience detached from its individual bearers, which he would call "Radichkov's Laughter." It remains deliberately unclear whose laughter this is - that of the characters, that of Radichkov, that of the reader who laughs as a result of the comic effects of Radichkov's writing. Laughter is ontologized, and Radichkov - turned into a medium. ("Through Radichkov this ancient spirit of the earth speaks"). It is this transindividual laughter that is the subject of the carnival.

Kuyumdzhiev radically changes the very understanding of history. He introduces a grand binary scheme in which the gradual-gradual course of historical development is replaced by the opposition of two typologically different consciousnesses, two worldviews - patriarchal and modern. The development of human societies is seen not as a class struggle and an alternation of "structures", but as a clash of two civilizations, diametrically opposed in their relation to time. One is the millennial rural civilization of cyclical time, the other is the modern civilization of progress and linearity.

Kuyumdzhiev's heretical ideas about circular time in Radichkov's work obviously clash with the basic tenets of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Not anyone but Todor Pavlov himself, the academician-doyen of Marxism in socialist Bulgaria, "takes a stand" in an article with the eloquent title "Revolution is not a bustle, it is not a paradox" (*Narodna Kultura*, 1972/No. 45, 4.11.1972). Venko Hristov also intervenes with his no less eloquently titled article "The Camel - the Main Problem of Our Literature?" (*Literaturen Front*, no. 7, 1971). Both Pavlov and Hristov "refute" Kuyumdzhiev's constructions, which, in their opinion, are in conflict with Marxism. But no one listens to them. Instead of being pushed to the periphery of the literary field, as would have happened before 1956, Kuyumdzhiev and Toncho Zhechev accumulated institutional importance. It was not just their posts at the Institute of Literature, but the fact that it was in fact they who were entrusted, together with three other critics, to write the academic history of recent Bulgarian

literature - the two-volume *Essays on the History of Bulgarian Literature after September Nine, 1944* (1979). This combination of heretical ideas and successful career advancement speaks volumes about the reorientation of values toward the "native" during the time of "mature socialism."

XII. THE DIONYSIAN, THE FEAST AND THE SACRIFICE

In Tsvetan Stoyanov's representative texts, the myth of Dionysus appears explicitly in *The Threads That Break* - when the exposition reaches Nietzsche and his "attempts at salvation." His interest in the myth of Dionysus, however, is far from exhausted with this book. In 1968, one year after *The Threads...*, the booklet *The Wisdom of Ancient Myths*, written by Tsvetan Stoyanov in co-authorship with Zdravko Petrov, was published, oriented to a wide range of readers. One of the chapters, written by Stoyanov, is entitled "The All-conquering Dionysus" and begins with the admission that this myth is perhaps "the muddiest to tell", because in it "the eternal narrative of life and death reaches even greater depths, and no matter how it is interpreted, something richer always remains, something that eludes interpretation" (Stoyanov 1968: 67). After the retelling of the mythological corpus of stories related to Dionysus, in which the curse on Thebes and the clan of Cadmus occupies a central place, the author makes a final reflection on the myth of Dionysus that goes far beyond the purely 'popular science', 'educational' horizon of the book. Dionysus ultimately turns out to be the symbol of alienation overcome.

In fact, if we look at Tsvetan Stoyanov's unpublished essays written in the 1960s, we see that the myth of Dionysus is indeed his cherished theme. In the philosophical-dramatic dialogue “Orpheus”, written in 1963 but published only after the author's death, Dionysus appears explicitly, as the voice that the waiting Bacchanalian Orpheus hears and with which he polemicises. The textual similarity between passages from “Orpheus” and *The Wisdom of Ancient Myths* is obvious.

It is in “Orpheus” that Tsvetan Stoyanov has expressed most freely, most personally his understanding of Dionysus as a symbol of the ecstatic achievement of being through death. Dionysus also appears in the dialogue "The Second Part of the Conversation", a text published more than 20 years after it was written, where Botev and Karavelov argue - a wholly fictional philosophical dispute, mostly concerning the nature of the "Bulgarian soul". Here Dionysus is posited as the source of the eternal Bulgarian hereticism. It should be noted, however, that in this dialogue the "Dionysian" acquires rather ambiguous connotations - due to the several "aggravations" that came with the Bogomils and then with the Turkish slavery, it actually turns out to be the origin of Bulgarian nihilism according to Karavelov from the dialogue.

But do Dionysus and the Dionysian have a conceptual meaning in Tsvetan Stoyanov's writing, or are they just a spectacular critical metaphor, a rhetorical ornament? By the way, in those years Dionysus and the "Dionysian" were almost always used without reference to Nietzsche, which is understandable in view of ideological oversight. Ostensibly, reference is made to the myth as a cultural reality, though in fact the German philosopher's wording is used. The philosophical origin of the concept is carefully erased.

In order to clarify the "systematicity" of the Dionysian in this specific literary discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, we must look for its relation to other concepts and intuitions. The first question is - and what is it that would correspond to its counterpoint in Nietzsche's original conception - the Apollonian? In the book *The Wisdom of Ancient Myths*, the chapter on Apollo is

written by Zdravko Petrov, which is an indirect indication of Tsvetan Stoyanov's disinterest in the subject. The Dionysian in Stoyanov's writing generally means the opposite of frozen form, of beauty, of all that is described by the metaphor "the invisible salon" from the essay of the same name. Apollo's is in fact the beautiful - but in the early 1960s the beautiful was recognized as a mask of violence, a falsity concealing structures of power. The Apollonian maintains a clear boundary between the poet/thinker and being, privileging the self as the subject of knowledge. In totalitarian society, however, this position is already occupied by the Party and poets cannot occupy it without aligning themselves with it. Hence the "drama" of the lyrical subject in the poetry of the April generation, who now sculpts himself as "more knowing," "more moral," "purer" than the authorities, now repenting of his vicious intellectual pride. The Dionysian ultimately has political stakes as well; it offers a radically different alternative, refusing privileged distance from being altogether. Dionysus is the mask the partisan bureaucrat cannot put on.

In Tsvetan Stoyanov's critical project the Dionysian enters into various conceptual constellations. The first and not very original link is between the Dionysian and the idea of "poetic madness", i.e. true creativity. In the early 1960s, discussing creativity and creative freedom was the ideologically acceptable way to challenge rigidity and "dogmatism" in the intellectual sphere. The rehabilitation of things such as contradiction, complexity, and the search for the new, which are tactically described as essential features of "true communism," is underway. This is an important part of the strategy of, for example, the defenders of free verse in the famous discussion of the early 1960s. A broad conception of 'true communism' as irreconcilability to the status quo is constructed - and so we find, say, Lenin, Lorca, Columbus and... Dionysus standing in a row.

Beyond its rather trivial use as a symbol of nonconformism and creative combustion, Tsvetan Stoyanov links Dionysus to two very important figurative complexes for the 1960s - The Feast and The Sacrifice. The celebration of anniversaries of key events in ideologically formatted history is a very significant part of the anthropological landscape of the communist era. It is no coincidence that some of the emblematic "dissident" poetic texts of the time risk inverting celebratory ritualism, showing it to be absurd and empty of content - for example, Stefan Tsanev's “Rehearsal for a Parade” and Konstantin Pavlov's “Alchemists”. It is in this context that the emergence of an alternative conception of celebration is striking. The communist holiday is necessarily accompanied by a specific type of ideological omiletics - a ritual speech explaining and reminding the meaning of the celebration, which at the same time reminds and reproduces the structure of power. The alternative conception of celebration in the 1960s emphasized non-hierarchical, horizontal communal experience. This 'celebration' began to function as a metaphorical signifier of true, free communication - which in turn is a key element for all creativity according to Tsvetan Stoyanov.

Celebratory communication, implicitly or explicitly signified as a Dionysian Bacchanalia, turns out to be an extremely seductive metaliterary concept and rhetorical figure not only as a signifier of free, non-hierarchical, ecstatic communal communication, but also as a conceptual complex containing within it the idea of the Sacrifice. It is, however, a particular kind of archaic sacrifice, distinct from the ideologically motivated sacrifice of communist martyrology. The sacrifices in the modern ideologically constructed pantheon have the function of uniting the community within a clearly discursively shaped identity. Tsvetan Stoyanov, and as we shall see, other Bulgarian intellectuals of the mid-1960s, discreetly introduced into intellectual debates an

older conception of the victim, in which "community cohesion" is not a means but an end in itself. The Dionysian here is a way of restoring the notion of the tragic in its classical form. In short, one of the important hidden events in Bulgarian intellectual history in the 1960s was the attempt on the part of the "young", unorthodox poets and critics to purge the Celebration and the Sacrifice of their casuistic, "party" connotations.

In the discursivity that developed in the second half of the 1960s, the "national" continued to describe historical, progressive time and consciousness, but the "generic" (with its variations of "tribe," "tribal," etc.) also came on the scene, and an overall vision of the unchanging, cyclical time of rural eternity built upon it. In his interpretation of Raditchko's work, Kuyumdzhiev uses these two conceptions of social time, but amplifies them to the extreme and thus makes them incompatible. One social time is the circular, cyclical time, the "eternity" of the patriarchal cosmos. The other time is the linear time of history. The two times do not flow smoothly into each other; they are only united at the point of carnivalesque communal action.

What connects the two different temporal frameworks, the progressive and the conservative-cyclical, is the idea of "sacrifice". In Radichkov and his laughter, Kuyumdzhiev sees the doom of a society, a way of life, experienced by the perishing subject as a carnival. Indeed, in this reading of Radichkov, Kuyumdzhiev joins Bakhtin's carnival with the Nietzschean notion of the "Dionysian." Radichkov's laughter is not merely nondifferent, it is a "spirit of the earth," of the chthonic. This conflation is made possible because a particular logic is at work in both Bakhtin's carnival and Nietzsche's Dionysian, according to which the "destruction of the individual principle" unleashes vital forces, ecstasy, and appears as a paradoxical affirmation of life through death. Kuyumdzhiev in effect uses Bakhtin's "carnival" and Nietzschean "ecstasy" as interchangeable concepts. The effect of these rhetorical tricks is a very unusual image of "the people." The "people," systematically portrayed as dedicated to labor, the preservation of patriarchal virtues, and the struggle for freedom, turns out to be able to participate in Nietzschean ecstatic sacraments in which laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, life and death are indistinguishable. Radichkov, in turn, is seen as the impersonal medium who gives voice to this ecstatic community. In Kuyumdzhiev's 'Bakhtinian' articles on Radichkov, the switch between patriarchal and modern times is made through the ambivalent revelry of the carnival - a revelry that carries with it the horror of death and in this strange way comes close to the Nietzschean notion of the Dionysian.

The theme of sacrifice occupies a central place in the "conservatives" Zhechev and Kuyumdzhiev. We can safely say that in their texts a hidden moralistic critique of modernization processes unfolds, which means - also of communist "progress" and "struggle" in general. We are talking about a new conception of the victim in history, which no longer includes just the usual heroes who consciously gave their lives for a certain idea and are therefore carefully preserved in the collective memory, but the innocent victim, who can be an entire class, or a way of life, or a worldview. Radichkov's "carnivalization" is part of a profoundly non-Marxist - but also non-liberal - strategy for dealing with the problem of the victim. The "conservative revolution" in thinking about literature of the 1960s introduced a paradoxical temporal structure opposed to linear communist progressivism. The historical time of "the people" and the nation is contrasted with the ahistorical, cyclical existence of "the kin." Accordingly, the transition from the ahistorical time of the kin to the historical time of the nation is thought of not as a smooth and conflict-free passage,

but as a tragic act, a sacrifice. Nietzsche's Dionysian and Bakhtin's Carnivalesque play a key role in this conceptual construction.

Toncho Zhechev unfolds the theme of innocent sacrifice (as opposed to consciously sacrificing revolutionaries) in his famous study of Petko Slaveykov and “The Source of the White-footed” , "The Bulgarian Ulysses and the Truth of His Return," published in 1968 in *Literaturna Misal* and subsequently republished in several of Toncho Zhechev's most representative books. There he pays special attention to the "inexplicable", not directly related to the dialogue with the vizier, embedding of Gergana and ultimately interprets it as a metaphor of the death of the Bulgarian patriarchal world sacrificed in the name of modernity.

The sacrifice, thought in the tragic perspective of the Dionysian, is what constitutes the community as a unified body. Zhechev's and Kuyumdzhiev's texts implicitly suggest that the national community is constituted not simply by "consciousness" but by the sacrifice of patriarchal innocence and "naivety" offered at the altar of progress. It is precisely the sacrifice of the patriarchal past, an act that cannot be "repaired", "undone", that obliges us not just to remember but to "resurrect" those before us because we are who we are as a community because of their sacrifice. Such is the moralistic conception of national history of Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev.

To sum up, the concept of "Dionysian", which probably originated with Tsvetan Stoyanov, in the 1960s and early 1970s fulfilled many interrelated functions in the thinking of Bulgarian intellectuals and literati. From a purely literary point of view, one Dionysus, that of laughter and carnival, solves the Radichkov problem. The other Dionysus, signifying the ambivalent affirmation of life in death, becomes the instrument for critically dealing with Furnadjiev's Spring Wind (a central text in the corpus of so-called "September literature").

At the same time, the Dionysian finds itself at the center of a range of larger philosophical problematizations concerning the situatedness of the self in community and time. The Dionysian signifies rebellion against rigid thought patterns and ideological stamps. This non-conformism, however, is implicit in the idea of tragic, sacrificial selfhood. Dionysian sacrifice opens access to another, cyclical eternity of eternal return and repetition that cannot be contained within the linear, ideologically constructed time of the glorious past and the bright future.

The idea of cyclicity and repetition resisting the linear time, empty of meaning, will be fully developed by Toncho Zhechev in his 1984 collection *The Myth of Ulysses*. Incidentally, somewhere in those same years, a few thousand miles to the west, Julia Kristeva published her famous essay "The Time of Women" in 1979, where she also introduced types of time - cyclical-biological and monumental - that offered an escape from the constraints of linear time. For Kristeva, linear time is oppressive because it is masculine, because it is the time of history, power and language, and the alternative is thought to be possible within the confines of female identity. For the intellectuals residing in Zhivkov's Bulgaria, resistance to linear historical time was a form of dissent from the ideological modeling of historical time and thus of personal and communal identity. Both intellectual projects, however, have a common root in Nietzsche and the related philosophical tradition. This is the third function of the Dionysian in its Bulgarian version of the 1960s. Apart from being a hermeneutical tool in the interpretation of literary texts incompatible with the Marxist-Leninist interpretive paradigm, apart from being a form of resistance to

ideologically structured historical time, the Dionysian throws up a bridge between the culture of socialist Bulgaria and the forbidden "right-wing", Nietzschean philosophical tradition.

XIII. THE RESURRECTION OF THE "PAGAN"

One of the curious twists in the discursive fields of the 1960s and early 1970s was the rediscovery of the "pagan" cultural and spiritual heritage. In the discussion of the ethnogenesis of the Bulgarians in the historiographical discourse of this period, there is an increased interest in the "non-Slavic" formative elements - Thracian and Proto-Bulgarian. The dominance of the "Slavic" is discreetly challenged. And this is not surprising. The actualization of "Scythian", "barbarian", "Thrako-Orphic" roots is very characteristic of epochs in which the "idiosyncratic" and the "native" are sought. The "Slavic" does not work well in the autochtonist discourse because it does not emphasize the unique, but incorporates us - into the family of Slavic peoples and languages, above which looms the mighty silhouette of the USSR. What is particularly important for the purposes of this study is the link between the "pagan" and a particular temporality opposed to the progressist temporal framework of the advance of communism symbolized by that same Soviet Union with its leading element of the "Slavic" within it.

The rise of Thracology (in a strictly scientific and general cultural sense) is often interpreted as a direct consequence of the new configuration in the political and ideological field implemented by Lyudmila Zhivkova and the circle of intellectuals close to her. This study considers the case of the "Thracian" as an element of an overall discursive constellation centred around the "pagan", which took shape as early as the late 1960s, when the possible influence of Lyudmila Zhivkova was negligible. The "pagan" in turn fits into the context of the "alternative" conservative discourse that emerged in the 1960s, which opposed official Marxist progressivism. The "pagan" in a certain sense appears as a complement to the "patriarchal", which in the second half of the 1960s increasingly emerged as a value counterpoint to modernity with its moral amorphousness, consumerism and inauthenticity. The "pagan" is part of the complex of the "eternal", which in the 1960s began to displace the idea of progress from the value field of literature, history, and national self-description discourses in general. As with the abstract and universalized "patriarchal," the "pagan" enters into an implicit contradiction with Marxism's basic conception of the class character of every society and culture.

Three books that appeared in the same year, the much-heralded 1968, are the focus of attention. The first is Emilian Stanev's novel *The Legend of Sibin, the Prince of Preslav*, the second is Mikhail Arnaudov's impressive study *Stefan Verkovich and Veda Slovena*, published as volume 52 of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences' *Collected Works of Folk Art and Folk History*, and the third is *The Song of Sitalk*, a popular exposition (with an element of fictionalization) of Thracian history written by Alexander Fol.

In Stanev's novel, paganism is present as a counterpoint denoting the now lost state of harmonious fusion with community and nature. Sibin has the consciousness of belonging to a people that "the Byzantine Church had killed with Christianization," i.e., he is a fragment of a community that no longer exists. What does exist is Bogomilism and official Christianity, the communities of the "Byzantine Jesus" and the "heretical god" - both unsatisfactory to the spirit of Sibin. The pagan is not simply opposed to the Christian, but both to "official" Christianity and to its Gnostic-Manichaean version of the Bogomils. Sybin himself is unable to choose between God

and Satanail until the end; the only consolation is the memory of the lost harmony of old. In fact, the novel introduces the theme of the "pagan" only at certain points, setting a horizon of lost harmony that is very reminiscent of the way patriarchal idyll functions in rural-themed fiction-through nostalgia for something doomed. Paganism is lost, it belongs to the past and is inarticulable.

A much more central place is occupied by Satanail, the creator of the visible world, the demiurge of the Gnostic myth, with whom Sibin constantly dialogues, as he will do with Enyo-Theophilus in the writer's next novel, Antichrist. Satan is not the "pagan", he symbolizes the sensual and the rational, corporeality and beauty (but also death), he is one pole in a dualistic system, at the other end of which is the transcendent God. Criticism, however, tends to identify Satanil with the pagan, i.e., to confuse dualistic tension with the harmony of pagan pantheism. The "pagan" has so obsessed critics such as Pantelei Zarev that they transfer it from Tangra to Stanev's Satanil.

In 1978, Encho Mutafov in his book *Time and Artistic Unity* consistently viewed the goat from Radichkov's *The Goat* and Satanail from Emilian Stanev's *The Legend of Sibin* and *Antichrist* as modern "mythologems" denoting the primordial and the "pagan." According to Mutafov, Satanail is "the unity of life" (Mutafov 1978: 63), he is "in the nature and contradictions of things, in destruction and creation, beyond dogmas and is their enemy", he is "above moral and psychological categories and is more abstract than they". According to Mutafov, both the goat and Satanael are a particular type of extra-fabulist characters who manifest themselves at the level of the characters' consciousness. Mutafov explicitly stresses that Stan's Sataniel is not borrowed "off the shelf" from Bogomil dualism, but is a symbol of a dialectic "dictated by contemporary views of man and history" (p. 63).

What Zarev and Mutafov have in common in their rhetoric is the word "dogmas." Both see the goat, Satan, and the pagan in general as symbols of something that goes beyond cultural norms and ethical systems. As we know, the only permissible criticism of communist ideology under totalitarianism is the charge of "dogmatism," i.e., the imposition of artificial rational schemes on living life. From this point of view, the "pagan" can be seen as a rehabilitation of full-blooded life suppressed by the sanctions of the ideological scheme. However, precisely because it is too abstract and rooted in an idealized folk community, the "pagan" in turn becomes a reduction and a schema.

In short, the "pagan" offers a resource for challenging ideological dogmatics and the power it legitimates. This potential subversiveness of the "pagan," however, is usually tamed by the dominance of the national-ideological narrative. The "pagan" and the "antichrist" at some point realize the primacy of duty to community and homeland. The other ploy for the ideological domestication of the "pagan" is to place it invariably within the "primitive," the "former," which means that pagan vitality will be a rebellion against the shackles of ideologies characteristic of class societies, e.g., Christianity, but not "developed socialism."

However, the "pagan" is not limited to the genre of the historical novel; we find echoes of it in the fiction of Radichkov and Haitov. "The "pagan" functions as a symbolic signifier of the primordial, the primitive - but as a component not just of the individual psyche, but of the "ethnogenesis" of the Bulgarian soul, in the words of Dynekov in his preface to *The Legend of Sibin*.

As part of the complex of the primitive and the primordial, the "pagan" stands for the immutable, the unchangeable, and the ideologically unprocessable; it operates in a mode of confrontation with modernity, fragmenting human identity. Pagan sensibility brings people together and ideology divides them.

Mikhail Arnaudov's book on Veda Slovena is intended as a double act of homage, once to Ivan Shishmanov, who failed to publish his research on Veda Slav, and a second time to Stefan Verkovic, the revivalist on whose reputation, according to Arnaudov, the "stain" of Veda Slovena's publication weighs. Arnaudov wants to reopen the Veda Slovena case to close it once and for all. His strategy is to present Stefan Verkovic as a naive victim of the teacher Ivan Gologanov - the man who recorded the songs.

Arnaudov's book, however, proves to be a travesty - the Veda Slovena page cannot be so easily closed and closed. In 1981, in the pages of the newspaper "ABC", suddenly "Veda Slovena" was mentioned again. The main initiative was taken by Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev. However, he was not the only one who critically reassessed the axioms on which folkloristics, inherited from Arnaudov, was based. The most important element of this "rehabilitation" is the call for a new attitude towards folklore. It is folklore that is the "door" that opens access to phenomena preserved in the community memory from the deep antiquity. "Veda Slovena tempts researchers and the general public precisely as a gateway to pre-described antiquity. Attempts to re-actualise it are based on the desire to rethink key oppositions of national culture such as 'Christian - pagan' and 'written - oral/prescriptive'. The expansion of national cultural memory beyond the reach of written sources is manifested in relation to a variety of themes and forms different discursive fields. The "pagan" turns out to be an alternative not only to the "Christian" but also to the written and the "learned". The active entry of swastika into fiction since the 1960s works in a similar direction. Literary, even often "elitist-literary" cultural practices constantly toy with the "freshness" and "wisdom" of oral, folkloric types of communication.

The idea of the necessity of extending national historical time back to the mysterious unscripted pre-Christian antiquity will be found explicitly stated in the preface to Alexander Foll's 1968 novelized historical reading, *The Song of Sitalk*. Thracian enriches the genealogy of the Bulgarian with an indigenous millennial culture that developed in these lands. Alexander Foll was an important figure in the discursive turn in historiography, folkloristics and art history that rediscovered the Thracian heritage in the early 1970s. The year 1972 was particularly important. It was then that the Institute of Thracology was founded, the First International Congress of Thracology was held, a major overseas exhibition "Thracian Art and Culture in Bulgarian Lands" was organized (the following year the richly illustrated volume "Thracian Art" by Ivan Venedikov and Todor Gerasimov would be published), and the book by Evgeni Teodorov *The Ancient Thracian Heritage in Bulgarian Folklore* was published. In this regard, it is imperative to note Dimitar Angelov's book *The Formation of Bulgarian Nationhood* (1971), which officially rehabilitated the "Thracian" component in the ethnogenesis of the Bulgarian people. The magisterial aim of the "Thracian" discourse is to establish continuity between the Slavic-Bulgarian Middle Ages and Thracian antiquity.

What role does the "pagan" play in the balance between ideological orthodoxy and artistic innovation?

First, the "pagan" legitimates a moderate hedonism. Unlike the "patriarchal" with its labor asceticism, the pagan makes ideologically permissible semantic fields such as intoxication and eroticism. The unbridledness of the Thracians is something that is repeatedly emphasized in Alexander Foll's popular science texts on the Thracians. Fol openly draws an opposition between the Roman culture of contemplation and the Thracian culture of intoxication. (Similar ideas will be found in the late Encho Mutafov).

Apart from unbridled primitiveness, the pagan can also mean a healthy dose of pleasure in the beauty of life and earthly joys. Paganism is thought of as a free surrender to life's joys, and Christianity (but also any state ideology) as asceticism, self-denial. Against this naïve notion of the happy hedonism of the pagan rebels Toncho Zhechev, who offers a much more adequate reading of the interpretation of this theme in Emilian Stanev.

Second, the affirmation of the "pagan" as a symbol of some intuitive, immanent philosophy of life is a form of resistance to the ideological cage in which everyday life is enclosed. Emilian Stanev's embittered "anti-pagan" character Tihik is nothing but a 13th century Stalinist. "Pagan" in the context of the 1970s is a word denoting that which opposes "dogma," the "bookish" and the "cerebral." The target here, albeit covertly, is not just Christianity (which was completely neutralized as an ideological threat under socialism), but above all ideological schemes in general, taking man as a "blank slate" or clay for modeling. The pagan (and the goat) represent the unchangeable and uncontrollable side of human nature.

Furthermore, the "pagan" with its assumed eternity provides a temporal niche where linear, vector historical time is as if suspended. Not surprisingly, already in other times, Alexander Fol published a book entitled *Man in Species Time* (1998). There he speaks of "mythological," "cyclical," and "linear" time, making the bold hypothesis that these are not some historical rudiments but anthropological realities. According to Foll, man can choose the type of "time" he inhabits, and can reside in several times simultaneously.

A separate theme is the combination of the Thracian Dionysus with Nietzsche's Dionysus, which now behave as something separate, now begin to merge - for example, in Krustyu Kuyumdzhiev.

Thirdly, the "pagan" provides continuity with the people and the time before 681. But why is this important, is it just for the sake of patriotic pride in becoming even more ancient than we think? The element of legitimation through an increasingly long and backward-going history is not unimportant. But there is something else. A category such as "pagan" allows for the introduction of a hypothetical type of collective memory that is distinct from traditional historiographical and literary discourse based on written sources. Thracian and Proto-Bulgarian spiritual heritage is not, by and large, manifest in texts. It must be reconstructed on the basis of indirect evidence, for example folklore. This type of knowledge of the past requires a new type of interpreter who not only reads texts but also unravels traces. That which is being rehabilitated and opposed to "scholarly" knowledge is collective oral memory - this appears as an important motif already in Anton Donchev's *Time Divided,* figures as a central point in the argumentation of the defenders of Veda Slovena, to become a methodological "tool" for the researchers expressing the Thracian or Proto-Bulgarian in the folklore that has reached us. This legitimation of "folk" memory as the bearer of historical tradition actually legitimates a specific type of intellectual, an interpreter of this "folk" memory in opposition to the disciplinary discourse of historical science, literary studies,

and linguistics. In this context, the attacks on "dry" academic scholarship that relies solely on "sources" become clear.

XIV. EXCURSUS: EROTICISM UNDER SOCIALISM

This excursus analyses the poignant sensitivity of Marxist criticism to eroticism in literature. The problem is not Marxists' shyness, but their anxiety that the representation of sexuality in art is a manifestation of a "biological" conception of man. The panic in the face of sexuality (and, more precisely, towards eroticism as sexuality freed from "socially useful" functions) is in fact a panic in the face of the "eternal," the uncontrollable by consciousness (and by ideology) in man. Underlying the "biological," "reactionary," "bourgeois" conception of man is the recognition of zones that defy ideological treatment.

In terms of temporal modelling, eroticism turns out to be so dangerous because it is irreducible to objectifiable, social time, still less to the progressist time of official Marxist-Leninist ideology. In this sense, the history of eroticism in socialist literature can be unfolded as a history of coming to terms with a directionless private time alien to the duty to community.

Eroticism can be seen as a breaking down of the framework within which the socially acceptable placement of the sexual takes place. It is therefore normal to expect it to make difficult inroads into literature, even after the 'April Fools' revival'. On the other hand, the renewed interest in the "primitive" and the "wild" in the 1960s seems good ground for a breakthrough of the erotic in shy Bulgarian literature. Why didn't the cult of the simple, the authentic, the "wild" that developed in the 1960s include an erotic element?

The horizon of the rediscovered "native" in the 1960s was the patriarchal community. Eroticism is permissible as long as it remains invisible, implicit, dissolved in the "natural" and "the natural." Its differentiation is interpreted as exaggeration, deviation and even perversion because it no longer serves the collective but is a value in itself. Explication of the erotic aspect in gender relations turns out to be tied to individuation. This is what makes eroticism unacceptable.

It is implicitly and explicitly assumed in the literature of socialism that the individuation of the hero is achieved only through his relation to the "ideal" or communal ethos, not through his sensory experience, including erotic-sexual experience. In order to understand how erotica (however tentative) functions from the 1960s to the 1980s, we need to place it in the context of the oppositions "individual-collective" and "past-contemporary." On the one hand, the erotic is most often tied to the individualistic, "bourgeois" complex, i.e., the erotic appears when "anti-people" characters are portrayed. On the other hand, the erotic can be one of the temptations facing the individualist hero; it is another test that the communist Odysseus must overcome on the way to his ideological Ithaca. Eroticism is a temptation, a danger, an ordeal. Not for the "soul" but for the moral and political integrity of the hero. Therefore, the types of eroticism that permeate Bulgarian literature in the 1960s correspond to the different types of subject who are successfully or unsuccessfully seduced.

Eroticism entered the chaste Bulgarian literature of the 1960s and 1970s in broadly four ways.

Channel 1. The lusty Greek.

Historical novels written in the 1960s and 1970s very often feature the figure of the despot, a relatively independent boyar who is torn between selfishness and duty, between boyar egotism and a consciousness of the State's supremacy. The motif of sexual temptation occupies an

important place in these novels, described in detail at the edge of what is acceptable for the norms of socialist culture. The seduction usually comes in the form of an experienced Byzantine harlot. Erotic attraction is firmly tied to the foreign and exotic (the motif goes back to Vazov's historical novels).

In fact, the Greek in the historical novels is a masked bourgeois. She is selfish, willing to put a price on her love and, most importantly, she is detached from the national community. This is an image similar to the bourgeois "femme fatale" we know from Dimov's novels. It is analogous to the way in which Greek women in historical novels and bourgeois ladies in novels about the recent past tempt simple-minded men.

The "natural" and the "pure" are the usual epithets through which the national-characterological is described; these are the marks of the ideal national "biomass". But why does it seem devoid of erotic potential? Why is it that it is the foreign that appears to be attractive and not its own? We could invoke the trappant explanation that the 'forbidden' is always more attractive than the 'permitted'. The framing of erotic attraction as something outside the regulatory confines of the socially approved model of sexual life and reproduction, and therefore more interesting to the reader than the usual marital activities, is a device used in literature centuries before the period of 'mature socialism'. What is specific in our case is the linkage between "betrayal" (the rejection of the duty of fidelity to the State and the ethnic community it symbolizes) and "infidelity" (the rejection of the duty of fidelity to one's partner in a married couple sanctified by patriarchal tradition). Both transgressions are a device for describing an individual who places his personal self-development above community norms. So, if for Marxist discourse in the context of the bourgeois state, eroticism is yet another "opium for the people" that distracts them from the task of class consciousness, for the cultural attitudes of the mature socialist period, it is already subversive and dangerous to the duty to the collective produced in the norm.

Channel 2. The conscious feminine

The bourgeois women disguised as Greeks in historical novels are not naïve; they usually know the power of their prettiness and consciously manipulate men with it. The "folk" erotic is unconscious, the "bourgeois" self-reflexive and conscious. The awakening of femininity is almost an obsession in Emiliyan Stanev. It is not difficult to detect a certain fixation on the woman aware of her beauty, looking at her nakedness in a mirror. Almost identical examples can be found in *The Peach Thief* (1948), *Ivan Kondarev* (1958-1964) and *The Legend of Sibin* (1968).

Awareness of one's own body (and its desires) seems like a seductively threatening travesty of the ideological or class consciousness so prized in Marxist discourse. After the April Plenum, an implicit problematization of "ideas" began in the literature, no longer thought of as uniquely "progressive" or "reactionary," but now bound by ambivalent labels such as "dry," "reasoned," "fanatical," "speculative," etc. The partial relativization of the intellectual also means a partial rehabilitation of the corporeal. For Emilian Stanev, the question of the conflict between the corporeal-sensual and the spiritual-imaginative is key, which is probably why erotic moments appear suspiciously often in his works. The erotic, in fact, turns out to be the most effective way of conveying the beauty of the natural - a beauty opposed to the intellectual, the spiritual, the abstract, the "masculine". The appeal of the woman who has discovered her sexuality is actually a version of a more general philosophical complex at work in the literature of the 1960s and especially the 1970s - the opposition between the sensual and the abstract, the real and the ideal.

Channel 3. Eroticism as a challenge to the hero-seeker of spiritual truths.

In Emilian Stanev, and to some extent in Pavel Vezhinov, the main question that torments the "seeker" hero can be formulated as follows: is the meaning of life immanent or transcendent? The genesis of this question lies in the so-called "overcoming of the cult" and "dogmatism" in literature. Violence in the Stalinist period is presented as the fanatical following of an idea, where the idea becomes detached from "life" and consequently begins to destroy it. It is a conflict between the abstract, "cool" idea and life, containing through the imagined community of "the people" an immediate wisdom dissolved into existence. The conflict is initially played out as a social-ideological conflict - intuitively in Dimov and quite consciously in Emilian Stanev in *Ivan Kondarev*. But then Emilian Stanev removes this conflict from its ideological concreteness and in his "medieval" philosophical-ideological novels poses it as a religious-metaphysical question. In Bogomilism, for example, Emilian Stanev is attracted by the idea of Satan as the creator of the visible world - respectively of the beauty of the world. Hence the ambivalence in the attitude to beauty and its opposite - the transcendent, utterly otherworldly truth. The question in *The Legend of Sybin* and *Antichrist* is where does beauty come from - is it the imprint of God or the work of Satan? In this so important a question naturally feminine beauty and attractiveness will prove the central argument.

In The Legend of Sybin we see an important trend - the attractive Calomela, whose forms and sensations are described in great detail by the narrator, is actually a rather abstract image - she is not so much a woman as an allegory of the feminine. Sexuality and individuation are bound up in "negative" characters such as Zoya and Anna in Donchev's *The Tale of Samuel...*, while Stanev's heroines are attractive without being morally stigmatized, but their individuality is removed, they are allegories. This is important because we see it in a rather ambitious novel already from the 1980s - Anton Donchev's tetralogy *The Tale of Khan Asparuh, Prince Slav and the Priest Teres*. There, Zemella and Lada continuously generate erotic tensions and rivalries, presented with piquant detail, but overall their femininity is highly allegorized and abstracted.

Channel 4. Modern Seductresses

Although erotic descriptions appear in Bulgarian literature of the 1960s and 1970s primarily in the historical novel, such descriptions can also be found in contemporary literature. There, however, they are reframed in a specific way, mainly because they are tied to new notions of alienation and the mechanization of human life, including in the intimate sphere. In the fiction of Pavel Vezhinov and Bogomil Raynov in particular, we observe an attempt to de-eroticise the sexual, which implicitly must suggest that the modern sexual revolution actually takes away from the "miracle" of sexual intercourse by trivialising and sheepskinning it

Radically new to the realm of the erotic is Pavel Vezhinov, who manages to separate beauty and erotic appeal in his novels on a contemporary theme in a reasonably convincing way. The erotic in Vezhinov often takes more than surprising forms, as exemplified in The Barrier and *Little Family Chronicles*.

The semantic fabric of Vezhinov's late novels is woven around the opposition of the material and the spiritual, or even the sensual and the supersensual. The erotic is charged with the function of representing the seductiveness of the material. Vezhinov's narrative technique is an emblematic example of what Russian formalists call "defamiliarization"-representing the object (in this case, the female body) in a way that removes it from its usual semantic associations and presents it to

the reader in a new light. In this case, the ideological task of prosaicising the 'mechanical', 'incomplete' sexual act of the modern age paradoxically unlocks the possibility of using a technique that is distinctly 'modernist'. Ultimately, the prosaic description of sex scenes makes them more concrete and believable - and perhaps more erotic.

From this review it can be concluded that in the literature of socialism the erotic appears as a by-product of the pursuit of some "high" ideological or philosophical task. In fact, the literature proceeds nervously around sexual themes, in contrast to the far more relaxed attitude shown towards this topic by the First Party and State leadership. In his famous 1978 “Letter to the Central Committee of the Dimitrov’s Communist Union of Youth, Todor Zhivkov remarked wryly that "questions of sexual culture, of the sexual education of the younger generations, continue to stand almost criminalized before the public." "Sexual culture" and "sexual education" were used by Zhivkov as synonymous constructs, inscribed in the ideological model of the construction of the New Man. Zhivkov embedded sexuality in shared, social time. Literature, however, as we have seen in previous chapters, already shuns the embedding of the human in the progressist, rationalist narrative of a bright future. On the other hand, however, the wariness of eroticism persists because literary memory remembers the linking of the sexual to "drive" and "instinct," and of the individual and the pleasurable. This is perhaps why it was not until the beginning of the changes that eroticism invariably appeared as "bourgeois eroticism" and therefore as temptation. This temptation usually distracts (or tries to distract) the individual either from the realization of his class or ethnicity and community or from the attainment of metaphysical truths and "spirituality" as such. Eroticism challenges duty.

XV. FIGURATIONS OF TIME: AN ATTEMPT AT RECAPITULATION

At first glance, both the "communist progressivism" of the 1950s and the "conservative revolution" of the 1960s seem like things of the past of purely academic interest. In fact, albeit in a transformed form, the basic temporal patterns we have explored so far continue to operate in our modernity. The fact that the main ideological opposition today is again between "liberals" and "conservatives", between "progressives" and "reactionaries" - and the dividing lines are becoming ever deeper - speaks for this. The difference is that contemporary progressivism relies more on a technological-moralist vision of the future, with human rights and responsibility to the ecosystem at its core. Minorities and nature now stand in the role of the "exploited" of classical Marxism. Contemporary progressivism, however, is no less radically rewriting and undoing the past than its communist predecessor. The rewriting of history from the absolutized point of view of an imagined morally outraged community is in some ways reminiscent of the revolutionary enthusiasm after 9/11. Today's "conservatives," on the other hand, attempt to contain the boundaries of traditional sexual, communal, and national identities, elevating them to the rank of some kind of "eternity" or at least "pre-determination" that is not subject to progressive engineering. And just like in the 1960s, the "native" is once again at the center of public debate.

Precisely because the "native" somehow connects the discussions of the 1960s with today's debate, it would be appropriate to once again look for the specificity of conservatism in figures like Toncho Zhechev. Obviously, the complex of notions including concepts such as "native", "organic", roots" and "eternal" is inaccurate to call "nationalism". The intellectual turn in the 1960s, actualizing conservative and counter-modern attitudes of the interwar period, was identified

in Chapter VIII as a form of "Conservative Revolution." To escape the political ('fascist') implications of the term, we might introduce a slightly more neutral concept - post-authotonism.

Autochthonism is a term that is relatively uncommon in Bulgarian humanities, although it occurs with high frequency in English-language studies of nationalism and national cultures. But why "post" and who is the "original" autochthonism? The prefix in this case indicates not only a distance in time, but also a difference in the social imposition of the autochtonist discourse. Classic Bulgarian autochthonism unfolded in the interwar period. As an illustration, we will use Yanko Yanev's essay "East or West," published in 1933 in *Zlatorog*.

"We stand impotent" is the diagnosis that Yanev gives to his modernity. Having rejected both the West and the East as possible directions for our development, he concludes that "only one path remains - the path towards ourselves." According to Yanev, the true self-determination of the Bulgarian people is yet to come. In order to embark on the path of its rebirth, the Bulgarian people must follow a "policy of cultural and purely racial consciousness, conditioned by the inner peculiarity of our tribe, by its cosmic primordiality, which has nothing to do either with the mysticism of Slavs or with the intellectualistic mechanism of Western man" (Yanev 1933: 179-180).

Autochthonism takes a distinctly essentialist view of the nation (the "inner particularity of our tribe"), usually placing "its own" in some third position vis-à-vis the great opposing patterns of civilization. We are between the "East" and the "West." In Yanko Yanev we see how, in fact, both the communist East and the capitalist West appear as forms of rationalizing modernization, severing ties with "cosmic primordiality." This autochthonism sets the cultural identity of the Bulgarian "right" by raising national, "tribal" particularism against the universalism of Western intellectualism and progressivism on the one hand, and against the universalism of Bolshevized Marxism on the other. The Bulgarian "right project" in the inter-war period was formed in the context of the severe "left-right" political split. Philosophers such as Yanko Yanev denounced consumer capitalism and democracy as threats undermining the foundations of European civilization, but at the same time saw Bolshevism as no less dangerous an enemy and a symptom of the general crisis.

In the 1960s, new autochtonists like Toncho Zhechev could not openly attack Marxism. Inevitably, their conservatism was crypto-conservatism, and Toncho Zhechev dared to speak openly anti-progressive only in the late 1970s with the essays of *The Myth of Ulysses*. Therefore, the post-authotonism of the socialist period focused mainly on the threat from the West - alienation, loss of memory and tradition. This strategy secured support from the official ideological apparatus, which generously funded the scourging of capitalism, whatever the form, and turned a blind eye to the apparent resurrection of the anti-modern, 'fascist' attitudes of the 1930s by the autochtonists. Crucial here is the theme of alienation. The problematic of alienation opens up the possibility of both a discrete critique of communist progressivism on the one hand and an actualization of an anti-bourgeois and anti-liberal discourse that links the conservatisms of the 1930s and 1960s on the other.

But what is the difference between autochthonism (including its "post" version) and nationalism? Nationalism can use concepts and ideas of the autochtonist discourse, but this is not necessarily the case and depends on the national and historical context. Autochthonism is distinctly counter-modern, while nationalism may be counter-modern, but it may not. (Very often nationalist

and modernising ideologies are inextricably linked, as is the case, for example, with Kemalism in Turkey). Authotonism usually offers the utopian vision of a society standing outside a progressist, linear time frame. Nationalism, on the other hand, employs teleological narratives based on the idea of historical time as having purpose and direction, oriented towards a desired change, and possessing a clearly delineated ideal horizon - most often the ultimate goal is the birth of national consciousness, the attainment of a collectively experienced sense of belonging and duty. Finally, nationalism is primarily a discursive strategy legitimating certain political elites, whereas autochthonism can play a similar role, but its effects are usually limited to the fields of art, literature, and philosophy.

Following this wholesale distinction between nationalism and autochthonism, we might draw a line separating the last decade of the socialist regime in Bulgaria from the previous two decades. To put it bluntly, the 1980s was an overtly "nationalist" period, while "post-authotonism" remained closed in the 1960s and 1970s.

Fundamental to the discourse of autochtonism is the opposition between the traditional and the modern, presented in the Bulgarian intellectual tradition most often as a clash between the rural and the urban. The nationalism of the 1980s (and not only) preferred to bypass this conflict. The difference is evident in the choice of themes and character types. Writers of post-authoritarianism usually create characters standing between traditional and modern. In the 1980s, however, novels and especially films appeared that shifted the action far back in time, so that modernity disappeared from the equation and the conflict shifted to the traditional "own-foreign" opposition of national ideology. Films like *Khan Asparuh* and *Time Divided* deal with a segment of linear historical time located at a safe distance from the present. Historical super-productions affirm the state and the strong ruler or leader as a condition for the preservation of the nation and its "well-being". The literature of autochthonism of previous eras shows no interest in this direction.

The culture of socialist post-authotonism is difficult to orient in relation to the familiar axes of "official-oppositional", "borrowed-authentic", etc. We might consider the problem in the light of Bourdieu's theory of social fields. In the literary field, autochtonism is used as a means of asserting relative autonomy. 'Roots' provide a support for resistance to ideological demands external to the field, imposed on literary production by the party-ideological apparatus. Post-gotonism provides a resource for the re-ordering of positions in various social fields through the introduction of a new set of ideas and images that deprive the old communist "leftists", who are empowered to interpret social processes and their artistic representations, of ground under their feet. In the literary field (and in cinematography), post-neoconism strengthens the position of artists and intellectuals, erecting a shield against external (i.e. party) authorities.

In addition to party ideologues, autochthonism provides protection against "outside influences." It works as a discourse that minimizes the impact of cultural products and values coming from the West. As early as the early 1960s, the isolation of Bulgarian culture from the world began to crack. Foreign "goods", spiritual and material, inexorably changed the way of life. In this context, post-authotonism can be seen as an attempt at cultural "protectionism", targeting both the "mass" and the "high" market of cultural products. From this point of view, post-authotonism is a discursive mechanism for establishing a closed, regulated market for cultural values. Against Hollywood and the supermarkets, the autochtonists oppose a national identity that is often hybridized with the officially imposed agenda of "life as creativity." The elitist

autochtonism and the aesthetic education programs of Lyudmila Zhivkova intersect in the theme of overcoming consumerism.

It would be unfair, however, to see in autochtonism only a fence guarding the properties of local cultural elites. It is all too easy from the perspective of liberal theory to reduce the new conservatism of the 1960s to a naïve nostalgia for an imagined idealized collective community. Post-authotonism actually awakened to new life two important types of cultural energy that vitalized national culture. We will call them the "will to appearance" (in Stefan Popov's phrase) and the "will to eternity" (paraphrasing Geo Milev's "dream of eternity" from his article "Modern Poetry"). The will to appearance insists on the search for the nationally idiosyncratic, which, however, must not just be "discovered", but "manifested", even "created". The national-characterological in philosophers like Toncho Zhechev and writers like Vasil Popov or Yordan Radichkov cannot be reduced to idyllic patriarchy. The literature of post-authotonism presents the national-characterological in the perspective of the tragic.

No less interesting is post-authotonism's handling of the "eternal." We have seen how in Toncho Zhechev the idea of cyclic eternity unfolds, or how in authors like Vasil Popov the model of a parallel "temporality" works, which competes with linear social time. It is the handling of this anti-linear, anti-progressive temporality that is one of the bridges that connects the Bulgarian post-authotonism of the 1960s with the "philosophy of life", Nietzsche and the "conservative revolution". Post-authotonism covertly rehabilitates and renews philosophical and literary traditions that the official Marxist-Leninist doctrine has tried to completely erase.

Moreover, the post-authotonist complex of values and themes stimulated a creative originality previously unseen in the stagnant cultural field of socialism, in which socialist realism continued to officially dominate. It could be argued that the research approach proposed here presents in a new light the relationship between 'tradition' and 'innovation' in the 1960s and to some extent 1970s. "The Time of Cyclic Eternity connects in an important way the apologists of "tradition" such as Toncho Zhechev with some of the most radically new in their writing artists of the same time such as Vasil Popov and Yordan Radichkov. In the 1980s, the relative opening up of art and the humanities made this function of post-authotonism anachronistic and ultimately redundant. It is hardly a coincidence that it was at this time that autochthonism "solidified" and a more traditional type of nationalism came to the fore.

It might be objected that by introducing a term like "post-authotonism" we are purely and simply repackaging some of our observations. Refining the term helps to delineate the boundaries of the phenomena and how we view them. As has become clear, it is important to distinguish between "nationalism" and "autochthonism." The term "conservatism", for all its charm, is not unproblematic either - it may suit Toncho Zhechev, but it is hardly appropriate to address Vasil Popov, for example. This is not a matter of terminological nitpicking, but an attempt to better understand the specific form of the "dream of eternity", entering a critical mode in relation to the progressist temporal horizon of that era. This could also provide us with an approach to a better understanding of the contemporary, sometimes extremely dangerous forms of conservative nationalism (such as that offered, for example, by the much-celebrated Alexander Dugin) that have emerged since the fall of communist regimes in some former Eastern Bloc countries.

It is very difficult to locate a phenomenon such as post-autochtonism in the coordinate system "conformism - dissidence". It would be equally inaccurate to interpret the "conservative

revolution" of the 1960s as both a socially toothless form of escapism and as a dissident "resistance" against the government and its dominant ideological discourse. The problematization of progressist linear temporality gave birth to a new "conservatism" that exploded conventional attitudes in literature and in thinking about literature. At stake is the rehabilitation of the complexity of human identity through the introduction of specific, non-traditional forms of memory of the past, both personal and communal. Myth, "stream of consciousness," the speaking of archaic, culturally inarticulate types of experience through the aesthetic paradigm of the "carnivalesque" or "Dionysian"-this whole spectrum of themes and literary practices leads to a new conception of the human that finds itself in complex tension between its present and the voices of the past. In contrast to the communist progressivism of the 1950s, where we have an alignment between the socio-political project and the strategies of literature, in the 1960s literature elaborates its own time, which is detached from the shared temporal horizon elaborated by ideology and power. It is an experience entirely laid in the field of the aesthetic, of artistic re-creation in and through literature.

This study has attempted to problematize the notion that cultural conservatism is an a priori collectivist model of thinking and is therefore "dangerous" because of its proximity to collectivist ideologies such as fascism or nationalism. The Bulgarian "conservative revolution" of the 1960s was an individualist "practice of the self" rather than a collectivist project, even though the "traditional world" and "organic community" are an important part of its conceptual repertoire.

What do the "problematizations" of the time give us in terms of reading the processes in Bulgarian literature of the period under study? If the study had simply reasserted the already formed conceptual relief in the metanarrative of literature under totalitarianism, we could hardly call the chosen approach "productive". The specific analyses, however, problematise some key oppositions of contemporary literary history dealing with this period, such as 'cazio-alternative', 'ideology-literature', 'conservative-modern'. Temporal problematizations offer another level of conceptualization that does not conform to the structurally defining oppositions of literary historical narrative. For example, "progressivism" can produce propagandistic poetry, an almost pure form of "socialist realism," but it can also provide the hidden armature in complex and multi-layered texts such as those of Lyubomir Levchev or Konstantin Pavlov. Similarly, the conservative turn to the native and the "valley" can be realized in mediocre works and even more mediocre interpretations, but in some cases it turns out to be a channel for the reappropriation of the tradition of Nietzsche, cyclical conceptions of time and civilizations, and modern "philosophy of life" in general, which has been excluded from literary discourse. When, for example, we place Toncho Zhechev in the same discursive field as Thomas Mann, Djord Lukacs and Arthur Møller van den Bruck, it is not simply out of a desire to reclame the "Europeanness" of Bulgarian literature from the totalitarian period, to remove from it the stamp of its sometimes acknowledged, sometimes silenced provinciality. More important to us is the opportunity to show the hidden recycling of such fragments of the intellectual and artistic experience of the past that the doctrine of socialist realism has seemingly removed from circulation. The figuralization of time and its incorporation into various conceptual constructions is also a work of memory - and in this sense a resistance to the forgetting that time brings.

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

1. The dissertation offers a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the processes in literature and the literary field in the period from the late 1940s to the 1970s through the prism of the problem of time.

2. Two main temporal models, linear and cyclic, are outlined and their transformations in literature and literary criticism of the period under study are traced.

3. The key role of the progressive-linear model of time in the critical operationalization of the doctrine of socialist realism is analyzed.

4. A new analytical paradigm is proposed for the novels of the early 1950s through the theme of "awareness" and the model of the Bildungsroman, while tracing the complex genealogy of the established notion of the "epic/epic novel"

5. The semantics and discursive function of terms such as "primitive," "valley," "escapism," "paganism," "grotesque," "myth," "Dionysian," etc. in the vocabulary of period literary criticism are explored.

6. The critical reception of writers such as Nikolai Haitov, Yordan Radichkov, Vasil Popov is analyzed as a symptom of the changing temporal patterns in the literary discourse of the 1960s.

7. Introduces the distinction between nationalism and autochthonism in order to present a more precise explanation of conservative elements in the literary consciousness of the 1960s and 1970s

8. It reveals the richness of intertextual connections linking the critical texts of authors such as Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev to the so-called "Conservative Revolution" of the interwar period.

9. Texts of critics from the 1960s and 1970s, rarely studied nowadays, such as Simeon Sultanov, Stoyan Karolev, Stoyan Iliev, Minko Nikolov, Alexander Spiridonov, whose concepts and interpretations turned out to be an important part of the ideological exchange during the period under study, are analysed.

10. Proposes a new reading of a number of key works by Radichkov, Haitov, Vasil Popov, Konstantin Pavlov and others, analysing the complex handling of temporal issues in them.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1. "Resurrection - Literary History as a Dream". - *Literature as Destiny. Proceedings in Honour of the 80th Anniversary of Professor Simeon Yanev*, University of St. Kliment Ohridski", 2022, ISBN:978-954-07-5582-3
2. "Nature and Communism. The Image of the Sun in Bulgarian Poetry of the First Half of the 1950s" - *"Above it the Day Rises", or on the Image of the Sun in Bulgarian Literature and Folklore*, Faculty of Slavonic Philology, 2022, ISBN:978-619-7433-62-3
3. "The Genus vs. the People (the Conservative Revolution in the Texts of Toncho Zhechev and Krustyo Kuyumdzhiev)" - *Critique and Humanism* , vol. 56, issue 1, 2022, ISSN 0861-1718
4. "The National-Erotics of Socialism" - *Love under Socialism*, Center for Academic Studies, 2015, pp. 207-223, ISBN 978-954320-494-6
5. "Canon and Accommodation. The Packaging of Radichkov," in *Domination and Accommodation. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference of the Faculty of Slavic Philologies*, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski", 2018, pp. 11-20, ISBN 978-619-7433-06-7
6. "The spatial turn", - *Literature: pleasures and challenges. Jubilee collection in honor of Professor Milena Kirova*, University of St. Kliment Ohridski, 2018, ISBN 978-954-07-4573-2
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