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THE NOMADIC SUBJECT IN MATVEY VALEV’S WORKS: NATURE AND MACHINE

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Introduction

1. Choice of Topic. Object, subject, tasks and methodology of the dissertation

The choice of topic of the present dissertation is based on an already well-established practice in Bulgarian modern literary science – the practice of rehabilitating and returning back into circulation authors who due to historical, ideological, aesthetic considerations have been marginalized and positioned in the periphery of the literary-historical discourse. In the context of this practice, the renewed interest in Matvey Valev, visible in the systematic efforts of a number of researchers over the last twenty years, is quite understandable.

The object of research is the topic of wandering, as well as the image of the wanderer in the work of Matvey Valev, perceived also as an approach to: 1) a deeper examination of other essential topics of Valev's work (nature, technology, female wandering, narrative identity, etc.); 2) a synthesized presentation of the various interpretations of the topic of wandering in Bulgarian literature between the Liberation and Second World War.

The subject of the study is extensive material from Valev's mature work (i.e. after his return from Brazil in 1934), covering a large part of his most emblematic works, as well as individual literary and journalistic texts from other editions and from the periodical press. Numerous literary and critical texts, important for the topics under consideration, are also included in the scope of the used literature.

The process of examination of the rich theoretical literature on the matter revealed numerous possible approaches for conceptualizing and interpreting the act of wandering. In the end, the so-called nomadology developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their joint work “A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia 2” (2009, orig. publ. in 1980) was chosen as a interpretative framework. Thinkers such as Henri Bergson, Paul Ricoeur, Georg Simmel, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Alfred Schütz are also drawn to the conceptual-theoretical scope of the study, as well as prominent researchers of issues related to nomadism, wandering, mobility, such as Tim Cresswell, Rosi Braidotti, Aida Engebriksen, John Durham Peters, Thomas Sutherland and others. The research uses a complex methodology, including methods such as typology, close reading, comparative analysis, the method of specific situations (case study), etc.

Compositionally, the study contains an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, and bibliography. The second part of the introduction presents a short attempt to establish the reasons

for the distinctly biographical standard reading of Matvey Valev's work, as well as an alternative reading – purposefully distanced from the (auto)biographical aspects of the so-called text-Valev and yet aware of its persistent, magnetic presence.

The first chapter presents a theoretical overview of the persistent dimensions and fluctuations in the notion of nomadism in the Western settled society from Classical Antiquity to the 20th century.

The second chapter is dedicated to typologizing the various manifestations of wandering that can be found in Bulgarian literature between the Liberation and the Second World War.

The third chapter presents the main reasons for the persistent critical perception of the standard main character in Valev's examined works as a migrant subject. Arguments are proposed for an alternative, more precise reading of this character through the prism of the nomadic model of wandering.

The fourth chapter examines, through the already established binary model, the opposition presented as fundamental to the works of Valev: nature–culture.

The fifth chapter analyzes some sexual and gender aspects of the text-Valev through the prism of the wandering act as a form of higher individual freedom and self-realization.

The sixth chapter deals with the function of language in the presented nomadic paradigm and with the tactics used by the nomadic subject in order to construct a narrative identity.

The conclusion serves as an opportunity for synthesizing the main supporting points and conclusions of the dissertation, as well as for emphasizing its results.

2. Matvey Valev: Biography's irresistible captivation

Researching the literary materials dedicated to Matvey Valev – from the early critical reception of his work to modern literary-historical studies – reveals a distinct trend, namely the increased interest in his biography at the expense of his bibliography. In this sense, the conversation about Matvey Valev can start from – and often ends with – Foucault's formulation of the author as an economic principle in the multiplication of meanings (Foucault 2016: 32). How can we explain this trend, noticeable also in the absence of a separate study dedicated to Valev's works? Various possible reasons can be highlighted, but here I will offer an alternative explanation – that the main obstacle to a more detailed and in-depth reading of the text-Valev is the author Valev himself.

If we turn our attention to the author Matvey Valev, it is not at all difficult to explain the attractiveness of his biography. Dimitar Valev – as is the writer's birth name – was a sociable, interesting person with a sense of humor and an adventurous spirit. He is also a true citizen of the world, having lived both in Berlin (1923–1930) and in Brazil (1931–1934), to which he dedicated some of his best works. For the researcher, intrigued by this adventurous biography, remains the difficult task to fill in its abundant white spots with the help of scant documentation. In fact, this is where the text-Valev comes to the rescue, as it's in no case shying away from referencing biographical facts, from simulating the author's voice register and winking conspiratorially at the reader. In addition, Valev was an extremely productive writer – for example, he published at least one feuilleton a week in the "Mir" newspaper between 1939 and 1942, and in other newspapers he published even two or three texts per issue (Tashev 2020: 283). Deadlines often pressed him, and then his wealth of experience and penchant for self-recycling came to the rescue.

In view of these characteristics, it seems that the standard, highly biographical reading of Matvey Valev is easily explainable, even justified. This reading invariably gravitates around the charismatic, dogmatic presence of the figure of the Author, and invokes the familiar words of Roland Barthes, calling for a productive 'death of the author'. However, not only the text-Valev sounds like an echo of the author's voice, but also the critical text fixed on it – as Barthes claims, "the realm of the Author is also the realm of Criticism" (Barthes 2003).

The conversation about the death of the author should also, of course, take into account the actual death of Matvey Valev. In the autumn of 1944, his name appeared in Boris Delchev's article "Fascism in our literature". This probably motivated at least partly Valev's decision to join a volunteer unit, and subsequently, on November 7, he died at the front. However, there is another, "unofficial" version of Valev's death. According to it, Valev staged his murder, fearing the reprisals that awaited him after Delchev's article. Valev deserted to the German army and, under a new identity, went to North-East Africa, and then to Cairo and Patagonia, where he lived until the 1960s. The open ending of this story can be seen as a continuation of the Author's unfolding politics, of his quest to fill every available discourse, every spatial or temporal interval.

One of the main goals set by the current dissertation work is to propose a reading of the text-Valev, resisting the intense autobiographical magnetism of its Author – a new reading of Matvey Valev, based on a conscious, albeit partial distancing from the author-Valev. Why do I choose to read the Valev text precisely through the topic of wandering? This is one of his main

themes, to which his writing returns repeatedly and unfolds multifacetedly. However, Valev's vagrancy is not a process that can be expeditiously deciphered and analyzed – there is no ready-made, "easy" key for this purpose, as is the case, for example, with the ideologically supported, socially justified vagrancy of Boris Shivachev. This is visible in the diverse ways in which the literary discourse tries to explain the incitement to vagrancy in Valev's works. This difficulty also stems from the fact that in the Bulgarian literary tradition there is no homogenous, coherent understanding of the already abstract concept of wandering, as it often means quite different things to individual researchers.

The choice of specific works on which the present study focuses is motivated by a twofold intention: to cover a relatively voluminous part of Valev's mature artistic work, as well as to present in a bright light both him and the most important aspects of his concept for wandering. The fact that these two goals – to present the most emblematic and distinctly "wandering" works of Valev – lead seamlessly to a homogeneous corpus of texts confirms the conviction of the present study that through the lens of wandering, the work of Matvey Valev can reveal its considerable potential.

Chapter 1. The Nomad through the Sedentary Gaze: From an Object of Observation to a Postmodern Subject

1. "Clanless, Lawless, Hearthless": The Notion of the Nomad in the Antiquity

When Herodotus describes the population of ancient Ukraine in his "History", he makes the following clarification: "To the east of these Scythian farmers, as one crosses the Pantikapes River, live Scythian nomads (herdsmen), who neither sow anything nor plow" (Herodotus 2010: 233). The father of the story does not leave much room for doubt about the fearsome, barbaric nature of these nomads, nor about its root causes: "The Scythians blinded everyone they caught: they are herdsmen, not ploughmen" (ibid.: 227).

Most evidence of nomads that has come down to us from Classical Antiquity shares two key characteristics. The first is their distinctly negative attitude towards the object of observation, and the second is their common origin. Significantly, with very few exceptions, these testimonies belong to representatives of the settled generation – "historians, geographers, military men and administrators with little sympathy for pastoral nomads" (Shaw 1983: 5). This fact somewhat naturally raises the question of how much sources such as Herodotus' "History" bear witness to

the actual nomad and how much – to the way in which he is observed and perceived, modeled and constructed by the prior expectations and projections of a *gaze* (per Sartre) that I will call sedentary.

Modern anthropology recognizes that such attempts to analyze traditional societies are structuralist in nature, due to which they contain some significant risks. Rather than yielding empirically meaningful results, such analyzes may simply reproduce the already established views of the sedentary gaze – views artificially produced by the development of writing and literacy, and especially visible in practices such as cataloging and mapping, the production of tables, lists, and formulas. Herodotus' ethnographic observations illustrate well how such a structural analysis may work. The distinctly evaluative, ideologically tinged dichotomy between the two types of social order is particularly palpable in the case of the Scythians. The Pantikapes River (nowadays Ingul River in Ukraine) is a boundary line that maps the space and divides it into two separate, opposite parts: over here (Scythian farmers) and beyond (Scythian nomads). This boundary line territorializes the space and sets certain relations between the two parts – it turns one into a continuation, reflection, perversion, counterpoint of the other.

We must also point out that the way in which Herodotus perceives the nomadic population is not an exception to the ancient Greek thought, but on the contrary, it is completely representative of it, as we see from examples from Aristotle and Homer. In fact, in these well-established notions of the nomad, his enviable, harmonious relationship with nature is one of his few positive characteristics, if not the only one. Nomadism symbolizes a more primitive, but also a more natural mode of the human condition – it represents a counterpoint to the sedentary cultural progress, which gives much, but also takes away something in return.

These Western tendencies to perceive nomadism can also be traced on an etymological level. When Oedipus realizes his origins, he curses the shepherd who found him as a baby. The noun he uses, *βομῆς*, can be translated as *a shepherd*, but also as *a wanderer* – from here comes the word *βομῆδες*, *nomads* (Diggle 2021: 969). The negative connotations of *βομῆς* are even more pronounced in its secondary, colloquial meaning which was used for the prostitutes roaming the Athenian streets – a meaning that suggests an 'enduring pejorative association between femininity and mobility' (Peters 1999: 26).

2. *The Conceptual Nomad of XX Century: "Explicit Hero of Postmodern Thinking"*

Towards the middle of the 20th century, and especially in its second half, the presence of a conceptual, constructed theoretically rather than empirically nomadic subject was established – and this presence fascinated the postmodern and poststructuralist thought. In fact, it still attracts wide interdisciplinary interest in the fields of critical and literary theory, social and cultural studies, geography, political science, architecture, etc. The parallel reading of the literature on the "nomadic" question from Antiquity and from the 20th century causes some surprise in this regard – it makes us wondering what exactly has changed in the Western perception of nomadism. It is quite telling that, in essence, the Western notion of nomadism do not undergo a significant change – it “gradually transforms from a term of humiliation to a term of valorization, without its content changing much” (Sutherland 2014: 937). It seems that whatever caused the overturning of the nomadic paradigm had less to do with the representatives of this kind of population than with the sedentary gaze observing them. Perhaps in the relation of the modern Western man to this "ultimate form of the Other" his own turbulent changes shine through? Perhaps the attractive power of the center, so essential to the ancient Greek perception of the world, has weakened considerably within the framework of the modern state – or even has disappeared completely?

The conceptual nomad can be associated with a number of postmodern figures sharing, at least in part, his anxieties and visions of the present and future. As soon as we focus specifically on the figure of the conceptual nomad, however, in the birth certificate we will undoubtedly find the names of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) and the psychoanalyst and activist Felix Guattari (1930–1992). Their concept of the so-called nomadology acquires a relatively complete form – as far as possible for such a fluid concept, denying a priori the static state – in the second part of “Capitalism and Schizophrenia”, “A Thousand Plateaus” (1980), which is why here I will mainly focus on this book. Getting to know nomadology, even in a synthesized version, still requires reference to an earlier study, which provides Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas the necessary empirical background. The study in question is "Society against the State" (1974) – the most popular work of the anthropologist Pierre Clastres, which acquired a cult status among anarchist circles. Clastres believes that "stateless societies are the result of social mechanisms that develop and assert themselves to prevent the concentration of power"

(Engebrigsten 2017: 44) – in contrast to the state, which can be defined precisely by its inherent drive to assert and protect various authorities and their structures.

It seems that this possibility particularly resonates with Deleuze and with a certain aspiration of his, noticeable both in his independent projects and in those with Guattari. This is the aspiration to legitimize or continue a philosophical tradition which opposes the established philosophical discourse in French academic circles around the middle of the 20th century. This is why one of the main targets of this counter-canonical Deleuzean project is Kant's transcendental idealism. The nomadology that Deleuze and Guattari develop in "A Thousand Plateaus" is an attempt to subvert existing, rigid power structures and thought patterns, to expose their artificially formed constructions, but also to offer an efficient, creative alternative.

In this nomadological DNA we will also distinguish the imprints of some of Deleuze's alternative philosophical heroes. One of them is, of course, Friedrich Nietzsche, with whose ideas Deleuze engages at length, sometimes altering them almost beyond recognition. In the case of nomadology, the Nietzschean concept of *becoming* (in opposition to *being*) is of great importance. The other important philosopher here is Henri Bergson. Deleuze engaged with his works regularly throughout his career. For his work on nomadism, Deleuze borrowed from Bergson the opposition *actual–virtual*, which he also used in his other studies, for example in those dedicated to cinema.

The second part of "Capitalism and Schizophrenia" is an extremely curious and challenging experiment, in which a number of trends from Deleuze and Guattari's previous general projects are intensified. The ambitious authorial vision is stated in the manifest beginning of the book, in its first chapter: "introduction: Rhizome". The subsequently widely popular rhizomatic approach works against the standard tree-like structure of the book body (but also the established social operability, political system, etc.) with its distinctly mimetic characteristics.

The figure of the nomad fits into a series of concepts tied in one way or another to the rhizome, which in turn exist in direct, "anti-dialectical" opposition to a series of despotic, rigid structures. In the treatise on nomadology, this role is played by the State apparatus, against which is positioned the so-called nomadic war machine. The State apparatus feels a constant desire to integrate such an external phenomenon into its system mainly because it functions in this way (as the definition of Clastres states). Such forced assimilation and integration leads to the destruction of the nomadic machine, but this process is not one-sided – the war machine and the State apparatus exist in a state of constant struggle for supremacy.

Tracing the evolution of the Western perception of the nomadic over the centuries can offer some curious parallels. For example, the role of the game *go* in Deleuze's nomadology indirectly refers to Aristotle's "Politics". Nevertheless, on the playing boards of Aristotle and Deleuze–Guattari unfold two quite different, even diametrically opposed games. Aristotle's perception of the playing field is representative of the Western-centric, sedentary gaze that can see no harsher punishment than the isolation in the corner, in the peripheral space. Deleuze and Guattari deterritorialize the playing space – they overturn the chessboard, scatter the pieces to re-enact their fixed idea-experiment: what possibilities open up before us when we decode all familiar structural approaches? What happens when the sedentary gaze discerns its own dark projection and dares to finally turn on itself?

The nomadic theoretical perspective has been integrated and further developed in the work of more recent researchers such as Rosi Braidotti, who also coined the preferred term "nomadic subject". The consideration of the differences between the actual representatives of the nomadic population and the figure of the conceptual nomad is indicative of the main criticisms against Deleuze's theory - that in its pursuit of establishing the *sedentary–nomadic* opposition, it deals with the categories in question in a lighthearted and dangerous way. Taking into account these delicate features of the chosen theoretical framework, the present dissertation will allow itself to duplicate the Deleuzean approach and selectively borrow elements from both the postmodern concept of the nomadic figure and the empirically grounded knowledge of the lives of the actual nomadic population. Doing that, the present work will still try to keep its sedentary “blind spot” in check.

Despite all said so far, I have not yet derived a clear definition of the nomadic subject, whose profile was outlined in this chapter. Hopefully it has become somewhat clear that the nomadic subject cannot be defined without reducing, damaging – perhaps even fatally, irreparably – his theoretical-conceptual profile. Therefore, in the spirit of *go*, I will try to avoid this inherent paradox and instead of a single definition of the nomadic subject, I will propose multiple ones in the following chapters.

Chapter 2. “World and Home”: Variations of the Topic of Wandering in Bulgarian Literature until Second World War

In 1935, soon after his return from Brazil, Matvey Valev took on an ambitious project – the publication of an illustrated weekly magazine. This magazine never saw the light of day, but its title (“World and Home”) plays an important role in the present study – and more specifically in its attempt to distinguish and examine more thoroughly the various manifestations of the theme of wandering in Bulgarian literature until 1944.

From my initial, unsuccessful attempts at typology comes the conviction that such typology requires a certain abstractness and ambivalence, which are, after all, an essential part of the act of wandering. That is why the present attempt establishes a purposefully generalizing theoretical framework that could hopefully encompass the diverse, sometimes contradictory notions of wandering witnessed in literary sources, while providing an opportunity for their further concretization and deployment. This typology relies on the potent theoretical charge and tension between the concepts of *world* and *home* and on the different dynamic configurations between them, which in turn lead to fundamentally different models of personal and collective identity.

1. A World without Home: the uprooted model of wandering

The first model of wandering we will look at is called the uprooted model. This one is probably most often associated with the notion of wandering in Bulgarian literature – here the fundamental relationship between world and home can be expressed through the formulation *a world without home*. Part of this pattern is the inert, chaotic, fruitless movement – whether external, internal, or some combination of the two – in search of the lost personal or collective center or root (in the form of Home, Motherland, Paradise, etc.). Often this mode of wandering has distinctly religious connotations and plays out some variation of familiar Judeo-Christian motifs: the motif of Paradise Lost, of Ahasuerus, of the collapse of the Tower of Babel, etc. Another common use of the model represents the experience of the uprooted subject of modernity (and more recently, of postmodernity and so on).

Perhaps this model was developed most persistently in the emigrant line of Bulgarian literature. Its genealogy could be traced, for example, to the folklore traditions of the so-called

Gurbet songs. We will find similar interpretations of the migrant experience in the writers of the Interwar South American wave such as Todor Tsenkov, Boris Shivachev and Samuil Strezov. We can probably extend our search to contemporary works such as "Refugees" by Vesela Lyakhova, "East of the West" by Miroslav Penkov, etc.

In a different way, the uprooted model of wandering is realized in the Bulgarian revival's revolutionary poetry, where the topos of home is again problematized as missing, utopian, impossible. Later, in the post-liberation literary landscape we will distinguish another emblematic example of this type of vagrancy – in the uprooted subject of the early modernism, manifesting as a "leaf torn away" (Yavorov), "homeless and lonely" (Debelyanov), etc.

2. World and Home: the travelling model of wandering

The second model of wandering is the travelling model. Here the world and the home exist in a static, stable configuration in which they have clearly differentiated functions – therefore the valid formulation here is *world and home*. It is expressed in the assertion of a fixed, definable identity, the core of which is present, unlike the previous model.

If we use Simeon Yanev's typology of wandering (see Yanev 2010), we can relate this pattern to the motif of the eternal return. Such a reading, in classic Deleuzian fashion, uses the original Nietzschean concept quite selectively, but the wandering experience of the traveler does indeed always end with a return, even when it is not explicitly presented in the text: a return home, a return to oneself and one's settled, normative identity.

Moreover, the traveling subject is somehow privileged, as opposed to the uprooted one. Even if we do not venture to pursue this line of reasoning, it is good to bear in mind regarding that “a particular vocabulary of travel is never innocent, it is always drawn into and related to larger structures of ideological, cultural and political relationships” (Grossberg 1988: 377).

A good starting point for tracing the genealogy of the second model of wandering are Svetla Gyurova's studies devoted to the Bulgarian revival's travelogues ("Revival Travels" from 1969) and pilgrimage literature ("Pilgrimage and Pilgrimage Literature" from 1996). We can look for early examples of the travelling model in Revival's poetry as well: according to Elena Nalbantova, the dominant motivation for the Revival's lyrical hero to set out on a journey, expressed in the

"irreconcilability with the slave fate", was preceded by individual cases of an alternative motivation – curiosity (Nalbantova 2012: 164).

With the introduction of this second model, the differentiation between the various manifestations of vagrancy is significantly complicated. Let's take for example Vazov's collection of poems "Italy" (1884), which can be read as a "diary about turning a wandering into a journey" (Shivachev 2018). The collection begins as an example of the uprooted model of wandering – right from the collection's opening poem, "Unexpectedly in the Sea." The appearance of Italy within the scope of the lyrical vision, however, leads to a distinct change in the emotional register of the experience. The wanderer becomes a traveler who is aware of the circular nature of his experience. This example also provides an additional question: can we actually consider travel as a type of wandering, rather than as a completely separate manifestation of *homo viator*, the traveling man? The current typology answers this question in the affirmative way based on two observations. First: quite often *wanderer* and *traveler* are used as partial synonyms in the Bulgarian literary dictionary, as is evident from the reception of "Italy". Second: the travelling model is often associated with a certain disciplined, pre-charted, performative manifestation of wandering. In the figure of the traveler and its derivatives - the tourist, *flâneur*, etc. – we find "the self-reflexive subject, searching for his identity and the trajectory of its development: the journey to himself and/or to the Other in himself" (Stoichkova 2022: 112).

The motif of eternal return is revealed not only in the circular pattern of this kind of wandering, but also in its cyclical nature, in placing the traveling subject in an inherited, archetypal role. The literary *homo viator* does not simply go on his own journey – his movement is repetitive, building up on an already established narrative and providing opportunities for referencing, complicating, replacing parts of already known routes.

Dalchev's poem "Evening" (1930) ends with a rhetorical question: "Why can't we at once be / both here and there – everywhere where / life beats mightily and endlessly?" (Dalchev 2008: 82). In this appeal, the captivating but ultimately temporary and limiting nature of the second model of wandering is evident. If we turn our attention to the third pattern of wandering, however, we will notice that it takes the traveler's coat, usually worn only on a special occasion, and turns it inside out.

3. *The World as Home: the nomadic model of wandering*

The last model of wandering is the nomadic model, and it functions according to the formula *the world as home*. This model is the most difficult one to define and describe, since escaping from any identification, analysis and structuring strategies is its very *modus operandi*. What would the genealogy of the nomadic pattern of wandering look like, if at all possible in this case?

The first direction in which we can go is witnessed in the late 19th century literature on the most popular peripatetic nomads in Bulgarian context – the Roma population. Usually, the attitude towards the Roma, witnessed in works of folklore, passes "through the opposition nomads–sedentary population" (Mirceva 2010). In the early post-liberation literature, we will find however the beginning of another trend – one focusing on the authentic, mythical connection of the nomad with nature, which asserts its neo-romantic fascination against the background of processes such as modernization and industrialization. During their journey "In the bowels of the Rhodopes", Vazov and his guide, the rentier Atanas, meet a noisy, carefree group of Roma folks in the forest. Vazov listens to their conversation and perceives these "children of nature" as heirs of a primitive, lost harmonious order, which – unlike the modern sedentary man – they still inhabit, "without nests, without ambition, without laws and without needs" (Vazov 2006: 159).

A second possible direction in which we can go to trace the genealogy of the nomadic pattern of wandering is through a popular folkloric and cultural image from the Slavic tradition – that of the wandering blind beggar singer. The character in question has many and varied manifestations, but it is very likely that some types of itinerant singers, for example the bearers of anti-clerical art such as the Polish Golyards, the Croatian Djaks and the Ukrainian beer brewers (see Mihailova 2006: 58–62), will prove to be a particularly apt illustration of the third pattern of vagrancy.

Let's focus on some features of this model. In his early essay 'Nomadic Thought', where Deleuze first tackled the concept of the nomadic, he wrote: 'The signifier is in fact the ultimate incarnation of the despot' (Deleuze 1978: 20). The nomadic model of wandering distances itself from and opposes this despotic signifier. It seeks to disorient the navigational and linguistic

systems of mapping, cataloguing, geolocating, etc.; to activate and intensify the polysemy and mimicry inherent a priori in language and sign.

In the second model, the journey was an event that temporarily took the subject outside the established order of being and its concepts. Here we have instead the aspiration to prolong this intermediate state, to maintain the ecstatic, expansive character of the event and to reformulate, reformat the normative static, sedentary mode of experiencing time and space. That is why we can define the nomadic movement as establishing a *line of flight*. The line of flight is one of the most useful devices in Deleuze and Guattari's terminological arsenal. It represents the subject's ability to make a liberating movement beyond the territorialized, coded, fixed striated space.

The nomadic subject differs from the travelling or uprooted subject, though it often assumes their guises. It is unknowable and unidentifiable, irreducible to the restrictive, repressive linguistic structures that model and fix the identity of the traditional narrator and his narrative. Although certain authors and corpora of texts show greater permeability to the nomadic model, it is most noticeable in isolated fragments, in short bursts of rebellion. This is probably why we will most often encounter it in poetic texts, whose economical but dense use of language allows for wide freedom of movement and interpretation.

To some extent, the State apparatus perceives the nomadic regime as a virus in its system. It watches for the its presence's symptoms with focused suspicion and does not hesitate to confront it – especially within the confines of a "little literature". In a small literature, Deleuze and Guattari believe, everything is politics, each individually (re)produced word acquires a collective value, because "what the writer himself says constitutes already a common action, and what he says or does is necessarily political, even if others disagree" (Deleuze, Guattari 2009a: 30). If a literary character decides to leave his small homeland, his personal affairs are not as important (or at all) as the common ones – he is already enacting a socially significant performance, valuing the collective community and being evaluated by it.

I will illustrate this intense symbiotic dynamic with an emblematic example of the nomadic model in early, post-liberation literature - the poem "Forgive" by Kiril Hristov. The seemingly impulsive nature of the poetic act is accompanied by a certain hesitancy – it gradually gains courage in the course of constructing the text, as is evident from the ellipsis in the first stanza. While the gaze of the literary nomadic subject is forever directed to the horizon of expectation, to

the limits of the upcoming and the potential, his peripheral vision does not stop looking around for the tracking mechanisms of the State apparatus. This is not an exception, but a rule in the functioning of the Bulgarian literary machine, which needs a certain justification, alibi in order to function in a nomadic mode.

How does the nomadic movement construct its rationale and alibis? Wandering is one of the big themes, for example, in the poetry of the early Bagryana, but there it always justifies its cosmopolitan, nomadic, foreign character through its attachment to the native. A great example is "Elements" (1925), as the entire poem is actually a rhetorical justification of the free, emancipated women's movement, as made clear by the last stanza. In a similar way, the native roots of foreign vagrancy were sought in "Cuckoo", "Descendant", etc.

According to Milena Kirova, the fascinating power with which the early poetry of Hristov subdues such different names as Vazov, Pencho Slaveykov and Georgi Bakalov is due to the fact that it expresses "the otherness of the Revival's thinking, the suppressed aspect of its cultural manifestation" (Kirova 2016: 377). We can probably describe in a similar way the principle on which the nomadic model of wandering usually functions in Bulgarian literature. In fact, in a review of the "nomadic" literature during the Interwar period, this perception of the nomadic as the dark side of the native stands out as a trend. We can look for it in the work of various authors such as Bagryana, Gabe, Valev, etc. We can also connect it with phenomena important for the period such as the "Native Art" movement, with Geo Milev's call for the barbarization of poetry and even more generally – with Spengler's rejection of the "compromised "Slavic soul" (Penchev 1998) in favor of an alternative, nomadic, secondary identification system of the essentially Bulgarian. Quite tellingly, this identification system was described by Botyo Savov as "Scythian" in his article "Scythian and Slavic in Bulgarian Literature" (1924). In general, it can be said that the attempt to typologize the manifestations of vagrancy in Bulgarian literature unfolds a wide-ranging field for the study of established and more unknown works and authors, for establishing intertextual dialogues between different literary periods and phenomena.

Chapter 3. Over Here and Beyond: Two Perspectives for Observing The Wanderer in the Text-Valev

1. Over Here: The Wanderer as a Migrant Subject

What exactly are we talking about when we talk about the wandering subject in the work of Matvey Valev? If we look at the examined works, we will inevitably note the affinity of the text-Valev to a certain type of main character, a wandering protagonist, who is present in many of the examined texts. A rather convenient way of thinking about this character is provided directly by the text-Valev – he is defined as an *etranjeiro*, a foreigner in the first chapter of "Farm at Sertão", entitled "The New Town". The growth of the city allows more opportunities for work, and there, "[w]here there are jobs and workers, there is no shortage of foreigners" (Valev 1988: 7). One of these foreigners is the main character of the novel: a Bulgarian who is known at home as Anton Viktorov, and in this foreign environment as Antonio. In this bilingual name, the ambivalent nature of the archetypal figure of the foreigner is evident – the Foreigner defined by Georg Simmel as "[e]nity of proximity and distance" (Simmel 2014: 144).

In fact, Antonio's (self-)identification as a foreigner provides us with the first possible explanation for a trend we will trace here – the tendency to perceive and interpret Valev's usual protagonist as a migrant subject. The present study does not see the reading of the main character in the text-Valev through the prism of his migrant experience as particularly fruitful, nor too correct in view of his distinctive characteristics. However, this does not mean that the critical attitude of interpreting Valev's foreigner as an emigrant is surprising or inadequate, on the contrary, it is justified for many reasons, and here I will focus on two main ones.

The first takes us back to placing Valev among the authors who "primarily proceed from their personal experience and embody themselves in characters related to them" (Nikolov 1941: 42) – i.e. to the reading of the text-Valev through an autobiographical key. The second reason is, in a certain sense, a consequence of the first and is again related to the traditional attitudes of the reception of Valev, more specifically, to the attempt to rehabilitate him during the socialist period (1944–1989). Valev's early work, mainly humorous and satirical, carries a strong social charge and openly declares his leftist convictions, which is also evident from the pseudonym with which he mainly signed himself at that time – Matvei Bosyaka. After his return from Brazil, Valev

abandoned not only his youthful *nom de plume*, but also to a certain extent his ideological convictions – or at least the extremity and explicitness with which he stated them publicly and artistically. Valev was perceived sometimes by the right as a leftist, sometimes by the left as not sufficiently leftist – he maintained this unprofitable position even after his probable death in 1944.

Of course, within the framework of the subsequently established totalitarian regime, no cosmopolitan or nomadic idea of vagrancy could find a place – that is why the aspiration to rehabilitate Valev, however modest in size and influence it may be, goes through the well-trodden and reliable path of a quite different wandering. The evidence for the ideological exoneration of the author is sought in two directions – through his work and through his life, or more precisely, his death. The vagrancy that Valev writes about has a "social underpinning" (Sestrimski 1975: 15), and the vagrant himself, according to an already established critical formulation, is described as a "round proletarian" (*ibid.*), who burns in the flame of some "Gorkyian bareness" (*ibid.*: 18). According to Sestrimski, Valev's characters are "carriers of healthy and pure humanity, they accept the world not so much in what is around them, in the present and the near, but in the tomorrow and the distant" (*ibid.*: 19). If this "healthy and pure humanity" does not tell us enough about the undertaken, well-established rehabilitating strategy, then it is clarified in the following clarification: "This humanity, this moral purity reminds us of the poetic world of Yordan Yovkov" (*ibid.*).

The definition of Matvey Valev as a humanist writer and the parallel with the benchmark "humanist" Yovkov undoubtedly aim at his (re)integration into the current cultural and ideological environment. In fact, the parallel between Valev and Yovkov is far from an accidental, isolated case and can be further developed in several directions: (1) both authors' inherent tendency towards cyclic narratives; (2) the integration of mythological and folklore motifs in the narrative, although in one case – Brazilian and in the other – Bulgarian; (3) the construction of characters in an archetypal-allegorical manner, strongly influenced by folklore traditions; (4) "impersonality of the poet" - the purposeful objectivity of the author's position sought by Valev and Yovkov, etc.

The second, biographical direction of exoneration, of course, represents the main, final stake in the story of the writer-prodigal son. Heroic death in the name of the fatherland is the great self-sacrifice, through which Valev will atone for the guilt of his biographical, ideological, creative wandering - in general, all his "mistakes and sins". Important in this regard is the clarification that A. Tashev makes while considering the topic of Valev's death – he actually had reasons to fear for

his life after September 9, which can be seen as an additional argument why he would desert from the army. The hypothesis of Valev's escape and his subsequent emigration to Egypt and Argentina is extremely interesting and actually more plausible than it seems at first glance. This alternative plot of Valev's desertion and his subsequent escape represents an important antithesis to the rehabilitative plot presented here, which despite its well-intentioned motives - and in fact precisely because of them - restrains and frustrates Matvey Valev's mobile momentum, puts him in a passive position, stops him within a representative reading that both initiates and thwarts the further rehabilitation of the author. As for the specific problem of the vagabond subject in the Valev text, the discursive strategy undertaken develops, encourages and even to a certain extent officializes, "consecrates" its prolonged (and continuing) interpretation through the prism of the migrant experience.

2. Beyond: The Wanderer as a Nomadic Subject

Let's now pay attention to a second, alternative perspective – and experience the interpretive potential of this wandering subject not through his emigrant being, but through the specificity of the nomadic experience. How could we prove that Valev's wandering subject possesses the characteristics of a nomadic rather than a migrant subject? This is a comparison a clash between the first, uprooted model and the third, nomadic model of wandering. What better way, then, to measure their interpretive potential than through the already derived formulation "world and home"? Home as a center of attraction constantly draws the migrant back, whether physically, mentally or emotionally. That is why we can assume that the specificity of the migrant experience will be particularly evident in one event of primary importance for him – the return home.

Valev's story "Guest from the Sea" offers us just such a plot. At the beginning of the story, the main character, Toma, who has worked as a sailor for a long time, returns to his native village. As such a long absence suggests, Toma is initially enveloped in the "thick fog of oblivion" and is greeted as a stranger, an *etranjeiro*, a foreigner. Subsequently, the newcomer is recognized and the plot gets, at least seemingly, on a well-trodden path – the prodigal son has returned home and brings with him bold ideas for the renewal of the run-down, indebted farm. Toma plans to settle down and use the income from the developed farm to build a new house, as he expects soon the

arrival of Fredinha, his Portuguese fiancée. And although his relatives have some skepticism about these ambitious plans, it is silenced by the locked chest that Toma brings with him. "A whole fortune lies in that box!" he declared mysteriously (Valev 1940a: 64).

Instead of getting down to work, however, Toma gradually explores the existing boundaries. Toma's restless wandering is prompted by the reterritorialization of habitable space; from the transformation of the "flattened", snow field into a striated space. Deleuze and Guattari define these two types of space precisely as smooth and striated. The sea that Thomas has traversed as a sailor is a smooth space; the snowy field – too. The village, on the other hand, is a space of fixed movement and established boundaries, drawn by its boundaries, fences and traditions.

Soon Fredinha informs Toma that she is ready to come in his village – in the beautiful new home that he will build for her. Of course, Toma instantly thwarts this opportunity to fix a personal identity, to realize the narrative he has readily constructed for himself and played out to his new listeners since his return. Instead, he shoulders his priceless box and leaves without even saying goodbye. As for the chest, it does not contain any fortune, but bags of seeds and catalogs of agricultural machinery. By all accounts, however, it seems that for Toma, the wandering character, these seeds and catalogs do represent the most valuable state, the virtual one – that of potential, unrealized possibilities.

We can probably conclude that Toma is not a representative example of a migrant subject, of the one returning home – he is rather the foreigner who remains unknown, incomprehensible to his fellow villagers and his family. And if this character's attitude toward his home doesn't tell us much, it's probably because of the way we view home. For the representative of the settled society, of the striated space, the home is Bachelard's center of attraction, around which all subjective movement and perception of space is organized. For the nomadic subject, home also exists, but in a completely different way: it is both nowhere and everywhere; it is a mobile home; it is, in John Durham Peters' apt phrase, "always already there" (Peters 1999: 21).

So far, I have mainly focused on characters like Toma and Antonio Viktorov, who are examples of foreigners, emigrants. And yet this type of characters, despite their numerous and distinct presence, represent only one of the manifestations of the nomadic subject in the text-Valev. To them we can count other types of heroes who cross the sea meridians and the impenetrable jungles of the "land of eternal summer", such as the cowboy or the casador (hunter). Other varieties of the nomadic subject are the modern cowboys who have replaced the faithful horse with a

machine: such as the aviator, the ship captain, the sailor. We have enough reasons to add the fisherman to them, from which it follows that the constant mobility, the act of wandering of the nomadic subject in the text-Valev, although extremely significant for him, is ultimately only a symptom, an external manifestation of his essence.

3. Over Here and Beyond: Parameters for Outlining the Reality of the Text-Valev

Valev himself sets this formulation for the spatial perception of his work. "Over Here and Beyond" is the title of a collection of short stories from 1940, which consists of a chapter about "beyond", i.e. works situated in Brazil and inspired by his stay there, and a second chapter with works from "over here", i.e. stories focused on the Bulgarian reality. Subsequently, this convenient approach to distinguishing between the two types of texts was also adopted by their professional readers. But this binary relationship should not be thought only in the paratextual plan of typologizing and categorizing Valev's works, because we will discover the opposition over here–beyond and inside them. A particularly telling example can be found in the story "Manoel the Hunter". From it we see that Valev's nomadic subject does not share the settled faith in the letter of the law, because he perceives it as a socio-legal construct, as a kind of optical illusion, the impact of which is lost when crossing the border beyond. And while the transgressive nomadic subject asks absolute contempt and skepticism towards the letter of the law as "empty words of a book", the guardian of the borders in the text-Valev not only follows it inextricably, but manages to read the world only through its semiotic cipher. This type of rigidly settled thinking, presented in its extreme version, is illustrated particularly well by the image of the watchman in the story "From There Begins the Field."

It can be said that the text-Valev largely perceives and reproduces reality in a two-part, dichotomous mode. The reality inhabited by these characters functions on both an immanent and on metaphysical level as a series of binary oppositions: here and beyond, city and field, nature and culture, male and female, fragmentary and whole, settled and nomadic, and so on. There are three important features in this mode of action and depiction of the text-Valev: (1) the extremely orderly manner in which the elements of the plot are placed on both sides of the dividing line; (2) the available binary oppositions are not subject to synthesis; (3) the Valev text is extremely intrigued by the intermediate, liminal space, by the intersection between the two oppositions. The text-Valev is interested not only in the differences between here and beyond, but perhaps even more – in the

possibility of shifting the borders and crossing them, reshaping them, in the possibilities of delineating lines of escape between them.

Chapter 4. Snakes, Butterfly Collages and Radio Waves: The Man of Modernity between Nature and Technology

Nature plays a role of primary importance in the text-Valev. We might consider it as (1) an essential theme developed regularly and variously in these works; (2) one of the main characters in them; (3) one of the main tactics (according to de Certeau) by which the nomadic subject realizes his lines of flight. It's noticeable that the usual destination of the text-Valev is not the favorite of the literary traveler crowded, multifaceted modern metropolis, but Sertão – the Brazilian "deep back", the remote part of the country.

This chapter will present some characteristics of nature (and then of technique) in the Valev text, mainly in the context of the dialectical framework described in the previous chapter. My focus in the first part of the chapter will be mainly on the Brazilian nature, since in it these characteristics are particularly vivid. Bulgarian nature also plays an important role in the works from here, but it serves rather as a background, there is a certain decorativeness in its depiction. This is especially visible in the harmonious, nostalgic mode of presenting the Bulgarian nature as a fairy tale.

1. The Wild Nature in the Text-Valev: Luscious and Cruel

In the texts under consideration, wild nature is presented as lush, cruel, full of life. On the one hand, this nature is vital and bewitching, bountiful and excessive. Bright colors, lush vegetation, diverse and bizarre – at least to the eye of a foreigner – animal species abound in this mode of depiction. Moreover, the evergreen tropic seems to contain within itself some prehistoric, life-giving energy. It is especially visible in the landscape descriptions. Brazilian (as well as Bulgarian) nature is animated, it has sensibility and consciousness. Another thing is striking about such landscape descriptions. Wildlife is not just animate and anthropomorphic, it is extremely mobile. All its manifestations - forest, sun, moon, sea, etc. – cannot stand still, they do not stop making various movements. A continuous, dynamic, vital movement is a sign of the life-giving energy that nature possesses. And by all accounts, this energy is "contagious" – the walk in nature

fills the human subject with life, models his moods and actions, restores forgotten, repressed desires and feelings.

This transfer of energy is often indicated and stated by the text-Valev, sometimes quite explicitly. This vital energy, inherent in wild nature, is particularly important for the problems considered here - for the understanding of wandering in the text-Valev, but also of the mimetic model by which it constructs its reality. We can see that this reality might as well be subjected to a successful Bergsonian reading, an approach to which would be precisely the concept of the tireless, creative vital impulse (*élan vital*). This vital urge – or life energy, as I will also call it in the context of the text-Valev – can be found in various places throughout it. We encounter it not only in mobile, animate wildlife, but also in the movement of the human subject. Its absence is no less revealing than its presence.

Wildlife is not only alive and lush, but also dangerous and cruel. It has a direct impact on the lives of the characters - it seriously complicates human work, hides countless dangers. It is presented as a whole consciousness in a dominant, aggressive position towards man. These two main characteristics - generosity and cruelty - are bound together, as is evident in the argument between the two farmers in “The Friend Rudolph Hoppe”. This ambivalent charge is well represented in one of nature’s manifestations, to which Valev gives a special symbolic role - the snake.

The observed works abound in encounters with snakes – some unfortunate, others just eerily fleeing. The coral snake plays an important role in one of Valev's most influential Brazilian stories, “Dedico”, which, with minor adjustments, also becomes a chapter of “Farm in Sertão”, entitled “The Beauty of the Tropics”. In this story, a small child named Dediko goes out to play in the yard of the house and sees on the ground “[t]he most beautiful of the snakes” (Valev 1937: 65). The child is instantly subdued by her eyes, which shine like “two points of glass” (ibid.), as well as by the innumerable scales, which under the light of the sun “shine in a multi-colored light: red and violet, blue and yellow, gray and green.” (ibid). The coral snake is represented as the personification of wild nature, both lush and cruel, beautiful and impenetrable. Behind the glazed black points, some kind of final, complete union with nature is visible, which is impossible after a certain stage of evolutionary and age-related development.

We can now form a more coherent view of the role of wildlife in these texts. It is presented as a monolithic, god-like phenomenon with its own consciousness and an ambivalent influence on

man. To some extent, his situation in this environment actually refers to the image of Eden - eternal greenery and abundance, a sense of wholeness and connectedness with the surrounding world. At the same time, however, this state of bliss is also a subordinate position - the people, "devout, willless", are under the control of archaic, magical thinking and in a state of evolutionary stagnation. When people defy this natural order that keeps them "poor and pious, listless and lazy," when the power dynamics in the human-nature equation change, so does the nature of man himself to some extent.

2. The Otherness of Nature: The Obedient Nature in the Text-Valev

One day, Antonio Viktorov, the main character in "Farm in Sertão", decides to take a walk in the mountains. The Brazilian nature presented during this walk is not wild, but tamed, cultivated. A progressive, materialistic worldview has invaded this garden of paradise, as evidenced by the presence of the English mining company. It seems that subdued nature has not only lost its sounds, but also its dominant position over man. He has mastered its formerly aggressive function, as is evident in the work of the mining company and the lumberjack.

In Antonio's actions we can find an aspiration to restore the lost sense of wholeness, connectedness to the natural world. Of course, such a romantic project cannot be successful in the conditions of subdued nature. It is indifferent to Antonio - it does not initiate contact, it does not synchronize with his inner experiences. Along with its colors, sounds and temperament, tamed nature has lost the ability - or rather the desire - to connect with man. Antonio is the modern man who has lost the potential for self-realization around nature; he turns out to be a foreigner, a stranger to the "otherness" of nature. That is why he fills it artificially with his presence through the cry, through his name; he tries forcefully to stage, to restore his presence in the paradise he has left. Moreover, Valev's foreigner is usually doubly alienated – because of his modern identity and because of his emigrant existence. He is cut off both from the earth and from his own land. Perhaps that is why the tragedy of the deterritorialized modern man is such an integral part of Brazilian prose and of the text-Valev in general.

Antonio's birth name – Anton Viktorov – is written only three times in the novel. Its first appearance is related to the purchase of a ticket, which requires the corresponding identification by providing the official first and last name. The other two mentions are part of the scene

considered here, from the fragment with the arborglyph. Anton(io) carves his birth name in the tree, in the middle of the silent, domesticated nature - where he is no longer present.

The tragedy of modern man, torn in half between nature and culture, is witnessed in yet another way, through another encounter during this walk in the mountains – with a butterfly. The butterfly is a moving, delicate landscape, encapsulating in miniature all the otherwise vast beauty of the tropics – and also incredibly fragile. Man has found a way to cultivate this beauty, to send it to the "great cities" and to replicate it in a permanent, static ornament, but the glasses covered with colorful cutouts depict only "sweet landscapes" in which decorative images of palm trees and palaces the observer will only recognize the world that he already knows. For the modern man, according to Valev, the unification between nature and culture is impossible. For him there remains only the possibility of walking around the already controlled, striated space of cultured nature and tearing, cutting, carving, shooting in search of his lost authenticity - only to conclude, like Dalchev, that "I'm not there anymore".

3. The Machine-Repetition: The Negative Aspect of Technology in the Text-Valev

The text-Valev shows a distinctly ambivalent attitude towards technique, in which we can distinguish two well-known Interwar trends on the subject. On the one hand, we have the strong skepticism regarding the technical innovations entering the Bulgarian way of life and their perception as a frightening, soulless alternative to the traditional patriarchal, essentialist life experience. The second interwar trend is expressed in the visionary, cosmopolitan apologia of the new technologies, which perceives in their development countless new possibilities for the development of man himself, a potential for the improvement and facilitation of his existence. Matvey Valev is among the main apologists of the machine, but nevertheless, in his works there are enough examples of both mentioned tendencies. I will examine and typologize them, referring to an important distinction for Deleuze, to which his dissertation is also devoted (see Deleuze 1999) – that is the distinction between repetition and difference.

I will begin with the first manifestation of the technique, which I call the machine-repetition. Generally speaking, this is the "bad" machine in the text-Valev – bad because it stops, slows down, interrupts the flow of the life impulse and involves it in the production of repetition. The person caught in the space of the repetition machine has extremely limited possibilities of

movement - he usually stays in one place and performs a monotonous, boring, meaningless activity. We have already paid attention to a character who inhabits such a space - this is the guard from "The Field Begins". But the guard still has some possibility of action - it is activated precisely at the moment when he sees Maria and the extinguished flame of desire rekindles in his chest. In general, desire is an important element of the text-Valev - its appearance often signifies the recovery, the intensification of the vital urge and, accordingly, carries an extremely positive connotation.

Within the text-Valev, the appearance of desire reaffirms the interrelationship between the vital urge and nature. Space removed from nature acts in the opposite way, restraining and impeding the flow of desire. We find it presented in most detail in the third part of the story "At Anchor", which also bears the indicative title "SOCONY" (an abbreviation of "Standard Oil Company of New York"). The American oil company is the ultimate refuge of the repetition machine. Like a prison, the factory is surrounded by a "high wall around which the guards roam day and night" (Valev 2022: 244).

To some extent, the factory arrangement acts as a principle antithetical to that of *élan vital* – it presents life (or the lack of it) as an automated, mechanized order with a predetermined set of outcomes. In fact, Bogdan's activity in the factory is almost indistinguishable from the activity of the dozens of machines that perform automatic, repetitive movements around him. The work process in the packaging factory is described in a similar way in "From There Begins the Field". Implicit in these descriptions of the repetition machine is the existential fear that the next step in human evolution belongs not to *homo sapiens*, but to the half-man, half-machine cyborg; that man-made artificial intelligence will gradually overtake it. It is striking how much interwar collective attitudes resonate with our contemporary anxieties and predictions, motivated by the rapid development of programs such as the Chat GPT chatbot. There are rumors in the packaging factory that a "special" machine will arrive from Germany that will be able to tape the boxes by itself.

Let's go back to the oil factory. Repetition is a key element of its operating model. We see it in the workflow; in the line of prematurely leaving, crippled workers; in the factory itself, which is one of "eighty similar factories, both double and ten times the size, around the world" (ibid.: 245). Unlike the transmission belts and wheels that absorb his vital energy, "tremble and run, whistle and cry" (ibid.), Bogdan has only one wish - not to cut off his fingers. The mutilation would prevent him from returning to the open sea. In fact, the only desire of which the nomadic subject

is capable in the space of the repetition machine is to escape from its vicious cycle, to leave this space. The danger of mutilation is an important motif in the context of understanding the repetition machine – of understanding it as a final, atrophied form of the cultural situation that neglects, objectifies its creator. The fragmentary nature of modern human experience is not limited to its thinking, identity or memory - the very integrity of the human body is problematized and the severed finger is not perceived as a unique, irreplaceable part of it.

Yet a close reading of Valev's text shows that the machine does not necessarily lead to negative, dystopian consequences because of its mode of functioning and because of the ways in which it modifies the man and the world. Depending on the circumstances and the environment in which it is positioned, the machine in the text-Valev can subjugate, "machinize" man through its repetitive, sedentary work program, but it can also facilitate, in an almost transhumanistic manner, the process of his "humanization", revealing new directions and spaces for free movement.

4. The Machine-Difference: Technology as a Nomadic Tactic

Perhaps the most representative example of the machine-difference in the text-Valev are vessels - ships, steamboats, boats. In them, that vital impulse, characteristic of wild nature, is especially distinct. Most often, the presence of this energy is illustrated by movement, but it is not the enslaving movement-repetition of "bad" technique, but a liberating, inspiring, "winging" movement. Another sign of the presence of life energy is the animism, the animacy of nature or technology. The spirited nature of the vessels is evident in their names as well as their descriptions – in the same way that it was true of wildlife.

We will also find the machine-difference in the airplanes in which "people of all colors and countries and cities" ride (Valev 1940b: 84). They cross space as swiftly as Shishmanov's Ahasuerus, as if with a superhuman, supernatural snap of the fingers: "They wake up in London, have breakfast in Berlin, lunch in Sofia and dinner in Ankara" (ibid.). This teleportation-like rapid-fire movement can also be seen as an example of a larger-scale trend brought about by the development of modern technology and media. It is a process that Deleuze calls counter-actualization, or virtualization. This process is opposed to the standard process of actualization, in which virtual matter, virtual content, is realized in concrete, actual structures through "intensive operations of individuation" (Ott 2019: 315). In the context of the considered works, counter-

actualization will represent a process of teleportation, multiplication, deconcentration, degradation of the fixed identity. In the behavior of Valev's wanderers we will often find an attempt at counter-actualization, but it is particularly clearly attested in two cases. The first is from the story "Citizens of the World" and is actually one of the author's most iconic and often quoted excerpts. The process of counter-actualization is presented a little differently in the second example - it is from the story "Passenger".

Earlier in the research, it was already discussed, albeit in passing, another characteristic aspect of the nomadic experience - its creative potential. Deleuze and Guattari, as well as other theorists dealing with the issue, see the nomadic in this sense as a counterpoint to the stagnant structures of the settled status quo, and to some extent to the capitalist model of the "culture industry" (per Adorno and Horkheimer). We will also find the creative aspect of the nomadic in the technique-difference, as is especially evident in Valev's story "Wings of Freedom". In the author's interpretation of the legend of the master Manol, Valev presents the liberating flight of the master as delineating a line of escape, but also as a pre-modern opportunity for absolute, unapologetic creative emancipation.

Chapter 5. The Natural Woman, The Man-Machine and Wandering as Coniunctio: Sexual and Gender Dimensions of the Text-Valev

1. The Female Wandering in the Context of the Interwar Literature

Female wandering is a motif that we will encounter in the works of Vesela Strashimirova, Bagryana, Gabe, Olga Chavova and others. Such examples show us that the nomadic drive that infects interwar literature has no particular gender pretensions. Even on the contrary, in the works of women authors of the period, the wandering experience stands out with a particularly distinct frequency and intensity, with an ostentatious intemperance in which we will easily identify a need for overcompensation at the expense of previous literary periods. The act of wandering does not represent for the female subject a simple donning of a "masculine" traveling costume, an opportunity for self-actualization through a practice traditionally perceived as a male privilege. Female wandering is accompanied by a specific mode of experience, which is seen as independent from the male, and sometimes even superior to it. When we talk about the women's movement, we

should not forget that "enduring pejorative connection between femininity and mobility" (Peters 1999: 26), attested already in the colloquial meaning of the ancient Greek lexeme *νομάς*.

What do the female characters in Valev's mature work look like against the background of such examples? It seems easy to conclude that the idea of femininity in the text-Valev largely overlaps with attitudes established during the period (and well before it) on a social, cultural, even scientific level among the Bulgarian public. Without much effort, we will read Valev's female characters through this familiar, tendentious dialectical prism - according to it, the feminine plays the role of the negative of the masculine, and femininity paints with its delicate brush the finishing touches of masculinity in order to complete the portrait of the modern man.

Bearing in mind these contextual clarifications, we can return to the particular case considered here and ask ourselves: is wandering inherent to Matvey Valev's female characters as well? The likely answer to this question would be that the act of wandering is not inherent in these heroines, and when they do perform it, it is with male assistance. And yet, we cannot so easily conclude that the Valev text allows or, on the contrary, thwarts and sanctions the possibility of free female movement. To arrive at the answer, we must first consider two main models of identity through which the Valev text personalizes femininity in its heroines: the natural woman and the woman-home.

2. The Natural Woman, the Man-Machine and the Vital Force

To a large extent, the "natural" pattern of femininity can be interpreted through the same dichotomous framework that we applied to the manifestations of nature in the previous chapter: ie. we have both a primordial, wild modus of femininity and the tangible, constructive process of its cultivation, enculturation, civilization.

The connection of femininity with wild nature in the text-Valev is especially clear in a certain type of character, which will not amaze the modern reader with its progressiveness - this is the type of the young girl who has not yet become cultured, civilized through her contact with the man, the city, the social environment. The closeness to nature is visible even at the level of physical description of the heroines, but the young girl does not just look like nature - she resembles it, as she is still a part of it at some organic, genetic level.

The story "People by the Shore" also vividly presents the differences between the two manifestations of the natural woman – the wild woman and the domesticated woman. The main

character, the fisherman Lazar, is torn between his feelings for the young Galinka and Mrs. Adelina – a plot configuration in which the fundamental for the text-Valev conflict about the modern man, torn in half between nature and culture, shines through. Through the images of Galinka and Adelina, the transformation of the wild natural woman into a domestic one is presented, a key aspect of which is the gradual weakening of the life-giving, natural female energy. If we follow the life path of such heroines in the years after marriage, we will find however that it is not so much a question of extinction as of a silting and weakening of their inherent life energy. This is especially evident with the appearance of one of the text-Valev's favorite plot motives, about the love triangle between a husband, his wife and a tramp.

In this configuration, the husband usually represents industrial progress and the development of capitalist culture in their negative extreme, in a sterile, settled way. His strictly graphed, uniform, financially secure daily life is the antithesis of the premarital life of the natural woman, but also of the existence of the standard protagonist in the text-Valev - the wandering subject. Another version of the character of the sedentary man can be found in the image of the medic. He personifies a different aspect of the profile of the modern sedentary man - the medic is well educated and financially well off, professionally realized, but as if he is "operated" by a certain sensitivity and empathy. The doctor observes a scientific distance that distances him from nature, from the authentic experience of intimacy and which often results in physical, spatial distancing.

In fact, a sedentary lifestyle is never a positive experience in the text-Valev. In the various versions of this plot, the wife is always lonely and unhappy - she has already completed her transformation from natural woman to domestic woman and inhabits the deserted family house abandoned by her husband. Always busy with work, he only comes home in the evening, if at all. But the most direct expression of lost life energy is the inability to create, to continue life itself. In the love triangle plot, childlessness betrays the robotic nature of the modern machine man, his inability to produce life the way he produces capital, resources, etc. This is confirmed by the appearance of the third participant in the love equation – the wandering subject, who has not lost his life energy, nor the ability to pass it on.

At this point in our observations, we can turn again to Bergson's concept of *élan vital*. It seems that the wandering subject also possesses this vital energy inherent in wild nature and, accordingly, in the natural woman. Therefore, we can conclude that the act of wandering in the text-Valev represents a synthesis – even if only temporary – between the authentic, lost existential

wholeness and the modern, fragmented human experience. Therefore, it is not surprising that we will find in the wanderer other traits symptomatically recognized as "feminine", including by the text-Valev itself: for example, the heredity of life experience, as well as the intuitive connection with the progeny and the protective instinct originating from it.

3. *The Woman-Home, the Possibility of Coniunctio and Becoming-Wanderer*

Valev's nomadic subject regularly gives us reasons to wonder along with him about the reasons and goals of his wandering. In his spoken hopes and imagined scenarios, stopping, settling down is frequent and usually involves the company of the housewife, the woman-home.

It is not difficult to see that just as the woman cannot normally carry out movement, the man in the text-Valev – and the wandering subject in particular – does not possess the ability to create a place, a home. The "male" place of residence is usually temporary, but even when it is not, it does not bear the characteristics of a home and is not perceived as such. The "feminine" place, on the contrary, has the characteristics of a home, even if it is only of a temporary nature. This is especially clearly noticeable in the topos of the women's quarter, which sailors, cowboys, etc. visit regularly in the Brazilian works. The ambivalent status of this half-house is detailed in the story "Urubu", the plot of which also retells the "Sacred Bird" chapter of "Farm of Sertão". But the woman in Valev's texts doesn't just take care of the place. She literally turns the place into a home - her approach, arrival transforms the space. We observe this transformation, for example, in "The Lie of Jose Verismo", something similar we also find in the blissful dream of Gervasio during his "Wedding Night".

However, with the same insistence with which Valev shares his wanderers' visions of settling down and settling down, he also shows us their impossibility. The opportunities that the wandering hero has to share his fate with the woman-home and to indulge in the peaceful family life longed for by his settled counterpoint are thwarted by the text-Valev with an obsessive persistence. Sometimes the reasons for the disruption of the expected happy ending are purely objective, (supposedly) insurmountable obstacles predetermined by the plot, and in other cases the joyless development of events is self-initiated by the nomadic subject himself. Indicative of this direction of reasoning is a common motif in the considered works, which we can call the motif of the long engagement. The nomadic subject who claims to strive for personal, family happiness, but is not actually ready for it (or for the realization that he does not really want it), often seeks the intermediate state, the attempt at counter-actualization in the form of engagement – stretched into

time and never leading to marriage. Important for the discussion of unrequited love are also the cases in which the text-Valev realizes the potential of the happy ending. In fact, it's made quite clear that love is possible, but only when it happens to someone else – not the main character (and often the narrator) wanderer.

As for the wanderer's shared happiness, it is expressed in the exceptions. Although his love experience almost always ends in failure, with a tragic sense of predetermined doom, the text-Valev also provides examples of a happy union between opposites, of a successful process of coniunctio – at the end of "People on the Shore" and the story "At anchor". In these two endings we see the actual possibility that the Valev text provides for the nomadic subject to realize his personal happiness. This is the fate of shared wandering, the unification of movement and space, the connection with the significant other that does not, however, result in settling down.

Chapter 6. Road and Story.

Nomadic Subject's Narrative Identity

1. The Nomadic Model of Wandering and the Early Bogomil Raynov: (Narrative) Differences between the Forbidden and the Allowed Road

Earlier in the current dissertation, the perception of nomadism as a lower socio-evolutionary step compared to sedentarism was already touched upon – for perceiving it as a primitive, underdeveloped version of government, individuality, approach to ontological reality, etc. Now I will look again through this lens in order to present some observations that don't stand out otherwise.

In his article "Reflections on Bulgarian lyrics after the war" (1933), Dalchev reports the emergence of a new, cosmopolitan (or "geographic", as he calls it) sound in Bulgarian poetry. In the comparison between Bagryana and the poets (renegades) of "New Path", we will notice an argument that is key to the perception of the nomadic model of wandering as inferior and immature - the lack of explicitly stated social commitment, of a socio-critical thread woven into the textual fabric. In a similar way, we can consider the cosmopolitan attitude towards technology.

An excellent example of this socially critical view of the nomadic model of wandering is presented by the early Bogomil Raynov. One of the main motifs in Raynov's debut book, "Poems" (1941), is precisely the act of travel, wandering - there it appears in different variations, with

obsessive persistence. The text-Raynov – in this early context referred to here – presents the adventurous, the traveling, the cosmopolitan experience as vital to the human experience, and with apparent relish, as if almost against its will. We will easily find that one of the reasons for this self-censorship is precisely the perception of the nomadic model of wandering as socially and ideologically immature, infantile.

Wandering in the text-Raynov is allowed only as a type of game, as in the poem "Wooden Horse" or in the youthful memories from the beginning of the poem "Autobiography". But the frivolous, privileged life of the anonymous citizen of the world is bourgeois obsolescence – there's no longer need, nor even possibility for such wandering desire. Awakened from the reveries of youth, dispersing in various and numerous directions, the lyrical speaker reaches his fixed identity, his disciplined, rectilinear movement – and declares, but now in the first person: "now my path is as clear, / as a pencil-drawn line" (Raynov 1949: 44).

As for the traveler who fails to give up his desire and mature in time, the sentence is severe and unappealable - such a scenario describes the poem "Traveler". This need is reformatted and channeled into more acceptable, proletarian forms of travel in the latter parts of the poem "Journey." The text-Raynov frankly hesitates how exactly to construct this antithesis of bourgeois experience, which further reinforces the impression that the first eight parts of the poem are not simply an ironically constructed, edifying plot. Through the explicitly critical, implicitly ambivalent (schizoid, Deleuze and Guattari would say) way in which he treats the subject of wandering, he makes clear again its interdependence with the act of narration, with the telling of stories. The text-Raynov contemplates with nostalgic detachment the children's game of pretend and the donning of "costumes" that come with it. However, he strongly condemns the continued existence in this intoxicating, counter-actualizing, romantic mode and sees it as infantile and insufficiently self-aware. In the end, however, the dialectical way out of the unfolding ideological conflict once again involves telling stories, going on a journey, and hoping for a certain costume. And while in Raynov's poetry the attitude towards this costume, which is an indivisible element of the narrative act, is ambivalent, the text-Valev can easily be perceived as an ode, as a praise of storytelling.

2. *“Wondrous Adventures of Much Passion and Much Heroism, and Many Dangers Indeed”*: Narrative Identity in the Text-Valev

The narrative act is of fundamental importance for the text-Valev. A key topos in this case is the pub, and deep in the jungle - the campfire, around which the exhausted workers gather at the end of the day and tell each other "experiences of people and fictions about saints" (Valev 1975: 31), "spectacular stories" and "fantastic sea battles" (ibid.: 104) and "strange things" in general (ibid.: 83).

In these examples, the process of storytelling is not just a narrative technique for conveying information necessary for plot development or peering into the psychological depths of characters - it is an event, and an addictive, intoxicating one at that. Indicative of this line of thought is the observation made by Malcho Nikolov: "Only the unbridled tendency of the author to necessarily express himself on everything that affects him... to "talk" explains the artistic lack of form of some of his works, which are rather material for short stories, "studies", hastily thrown sketches and anecdotes' (Nikolov 1941: 43).

This peculiarity, this kind of discursive frankness is a fundamental characteristic of the text-Valev. It allocates a disproportionate amount of space to the topics that concern it in particular, for example in the form of natural descriptions and storytelling. The storyteller in Valev's texts meets his listeners in the pub, but he is not part of their social environment, he resides somewhere on its periphery. In fact, these types of storytellers don't just tell stories - they tell themselves as stories. They use the narrative potential of their unexplained, unmapped autobiography to simulate, taste, and share different variants of their identity.

We shouldn't be surprised by the current interdisciplinary interest, especially heightened in the fields of psychology and narrative therapy, in the construction of narratives, in the ways in which our narratives change our perceptions of the world and ourselves. The genesis of the interest in the narrative process can be sought at the end of the great narratives proclaimed by Lyotard, insofar as the narrative of an authentic, sustainable personal identity is central among them. Paul Ricoeur is one of the authors who seek a solution to this complicated equation in the concept of narrative identity - in the life stories that the individual tells about himself, constructing a single, believable, credible narrative with which he temporarily identifies himself. In this unceasing process, the individual "borrows from history as much as from fiction, turning his life story into a

fictitious story, or if you prefer, into a historical fiction comparable to those biographies of great personalities where history and fiction are intermingled" (Ricoeur 1991: 73). A well-told pub story is not very different from a film screening, follows similar narrative rules and contains the possibility of producing an event, even a sensation.

In general, the Valev text is highly intrigued by the elusive, fluid nature of the word – or at least of the spoken word. These "nomadic characteristics" disappear to a certain extent during the structuring and officialization of the written word – after all, official history has always been written "from the perspective of settled people and in the name of a unified state apparatus" (Deleuze, Guattari 2009b: 36). That is why the written word - letter, passport, document - is in constant conflict with the spoken word, the free word, which does not want to sacrifice its fruitful potential.

The text-Valev is not content simply to narrate "incidents" or "adventures" – it speaks of "wondrous adventures of much passion and much heroism, and many dangers indeed " (Valev 1975: 105). In this sense, the author's unbridled tendency to "talk" is not only a disadvantage, but also an advantage. The text-Valev remains fluid and organic despite its written nature, destabilizing it and giving it evasiveness in various ways: through storytelling and visions, through the preponderance of dialogism over psychologism, through its anthological nature and preferred first-person narration, through its intense autobiography and auto-recycling practices.

The work on the current dissertation provoked me to ask myself again and again why the topic of wandering has such a key role in the text-Valev. The last answer proposed by the dissertation is as follows: the importance of the theme of wandering in the text-Valev does not originate only from the presence of a predominant amount of main characters, who can be defined as nomadic subjects. The text-Valev itself also behaves as a nomadic, wandering subject - a close reading reveals in it many of the characteristics by which we define its most iconic characters. Instead of striving to build a recognizable appearance, the text-Valev tries out different faces, hopes for different costumes, which make it difficult for it to be integrated into the striated space of the rigid canon, which recognizes only specific, clean narratives. And if we have enough reasons to perceive the unbridled tendency of Valev's text to "talk" as a shortcoming, it can also provoke us to think: about wandering as an opportunity for creativity or for ideological, spiritual, physical escape.

Conclusion

The theoretical-conceptual paradigm constructed and refined for the purposes of the present work turned out to be more productive and fruitful than the initial expectations. It helped to outline several potential lines of additional research, standing out due to the need for a wider deployment of the conclusions reached, as well as due to the possibility of introducing the specific theoretical and conceptual toolkit in a wider thematic and temporal scope. The hope of the present work is that it has somehow managed to illustrate what rich possibilities the work of Deleuze and Guattari provides – generally in a theoretical-philosophical plan, but also specifically in the context of literary studies.

Of course, the main focus throughout the entire study – sometimes explicitly, other times implicitly – was on Matvey Valev. The purposeful distancing from the author's presence led to a focus on the selected works of Valev, to a conscious and measured distancing from the autobiographical and biographical layering of the literary and critical discourse, even to their activation in favor of the research's goals. In conclusion, I must point out that despite the voluminous number of Valev's works examined, this study represents only the tip of the iceberg. Acquaintance with Valev's life, attractive "like an adventure novel", and with his extremely productive and diverse work confirms the impression that they will tempt and further provoke the academic community in the future.

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Contributions of the dissertation

1. The dissertation contains a synthesis of not well known and rarely used in Bulgarian literary science concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, which would prove to be a good basis for future research.

2. The work represents one of the first attempts of a Deleuzean reading of Bulgarian literature.

3. The work offers the first attempt at a detailed and in-depth typology of wandering in Bulgarian literature, striving to cover its various manifestations in the period from the Liberation to the Second World War.

4. The work analyzes the reasons for the distinctly biographical traditional reading of Matvey Valev and offers a new reading of his work, consciously distanced from the figure of the author.

5. The work examines in depth the topic of wandering in Matvey Valev's works, but also uses it as a starting point for a detailed analysis of other topics, motives and key features in his work.

6. The work carries out an intertextual dialogue between Matvey Valev and other authors (both popular and peripheral), positioning Valev's work as representative, and in some aspects even innovative and contributing to the literary-historical period under consideration.