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Milena Angelova and Petar Vodenicharov

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The Traumas of Bărăgan and Siberia: Identity, Place Attachment and Resilience in the Deportees' Life Stories

Abstract: *In this article, we examine the relationship between traumatic memory, identity and place attachment through two case studies of deportation: from North Bukovina to the Soviet Union (in 1941) and from Banat and Western Oltenia to Bărăgan region of Romania (in 1951). Starting in the 1990s and continuing to present, the cultural trauma of deportation has been constructed discursively by the former deportees themselves, as well as by social groups such as Asociația Foștilor Deținuți Politici din România (AFDPR) [Association of Former Political Prisoners from Romania] and Asociația Deportaților din Bărăgan, Timișoara [Association of Deportees from Bărăgan in Timișoara], and researchers dealing with this problematic. This cultural trauma construction draws on the collective memory of a shared painful past. Trauma is an essential dimension of the identity formation in the case of former deportees seen as a community who shares it. Their collective identity is built on trauma discourse; confessing negative affect that burdens them. In this study, we explore Romanian deportees' experiences in space and related emotions within the system of communist oppression, both in Romania and the Soviet Union. Our research proposes a cultural perspective on memory and identity, and on individuals' attachment to places and resilience during traumatic experiences of their lives, such as deportation.*

Keywords: *historical trauma; political violence; human rights; deportations; communism; storytelling; identity formation.*

Introduction

In this study, we created a theoretical and analysis framework that can adequately describe and interpret people's emotional and cognitive bonds to places in the context of the traumatic historical event of political dislocation that has significantly impacted deportees' identity, place attachments and resilience. We present a qualitative study designed to improve the comprehension of place attachment under crisis situations, determined by extremist ideologically driven decisions. In doing so, the development of place attachment during such extreme crisis situations is explored through recollections of former deportees' life histories.

Our research integrates into the field of studies upon political forced relocations as repression methods, where place attachment is "critical, yet understudied" (Greer et al. 2020, p. 307). Such relocations can be considered disasters, which were defined as "place-based phenomena that alter the physical and social landscape, challenging how individuals understand where they live and their bonds with that place" (Greer et al. 2020, p. 306).

In previous research, people's relationship with traumatic places was investigated in the context of man-made and natural disasters (Erikson 1976, p. 153) and, more recently, in the case of political forced relocation of the Jews of Gaza (Dekel 2010; Dekel and Tuval-Mashiach 2012). These studies showed that the geographies of deportation memory and the geographies of place attachment intersect.

To our knowledge, place attachment has not been researched so far in relation to the memory of communist repression. For Romania, only a few studies focused on people's relationships with their relocation space (Văran and Crețan 2018; Bora and Voiculescu 2021) and none investigated place identity and place attachment in deportation spaces or where deportees had been taken from. In addition, a comparative perspective of place attachment research on the deportation of Romanian citizens to the Soviet Gulag and to Bărăgan, in Romania, is new.

To sum up, preserving and constructing place attachment in crisis situations has been under researched in general and, for the Romanian communist society, we are the first researchers to tackle the issue (Iovan et al. 2024). We analysed the narratives of the deportees in order to understand the process of creating new bonds with traumatic places, during and after their forced relocation. However, a study connecting

place attachment construction under drastic historical changes and individual and community identity has never been conducted. This paper aims at filling this gap.

Our research is interdisciplinary (History and Geography). It (re)presents the cartography of trauma in connection to these deportees' place attachments. Insights into cultural trauma related to Gulag deportations have been published so far in the fields of History and Cultural Studies. On the Soviet Gulag, Leona Toker's seminal work emphasizes the importance of literature in domesticating trauma as well as in making it known to the world (Toker 2000). In the same vein, Cristina Antoni wrote about the poetics of the Gulag and its connection to the Bessarabians' trauma of deportation (Antoni 2019). The trauma inflicted to the Romanians of Bessarabia by the deportation to the Soviet Gulag was recorded through a series of interviews and life stories by Ludmila Cojocaru (2016), Elena Postică (2016), and Lidia Pădureac (2017). They followed in the steps of Alain Brossat, Sonia Combe, and Leonid Moukhine (1991) and Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson and Anna Rotkirch (2003), and most recently of Tyler C. Kirk (2023) who examined the Soviet memories of Gulag through the lens of survivors' testimonies. The traumatic aspects of the Bessarabian deportations were analysed by Ludmila Cojocaru (2008, 2014), and Zinaida Bolea (2024). The Moldavian researchers point out that the traumatic events subscribed to the deportations were not isolated or unique events, because the deportations implied a continuum of traumatic events, which conditioned a lasting, cumulative trauma (Bolea, 2024). The trauma of Bărăgan deportation and its consequences were analysed by Smaranda Vultur (1997, 2011) and Claudia-Florentina Dobre (2020 (a), (b); 2024 (a), (b) (c)).

Sources and methodology

The sources used in the analysis are memoirs published by Anița Cudla (1904 – 1986), and Dumitru Nimigeanu (1906 – 1991), peasants from Northern Bukovina. At the time of their deportation, they were both adults and parents. Anița Cudla wrote her memoirs during communism (in hiding) as a request from her brother, a well-known Romanian intellectual who lived abroad, while Nimigeanu wrote his text and published it in exile, in 1958, in Paris. Anița Cudla's memoirs were published after the fall of communism in Romania, in 1991. The Bărăgan former deportees' interviews were collected and published in an edited book (Antonovici and Dobre 2016, 2024).

Based on these sources, our study examines the connection between political violence and place attachments, by qualitatively analysing and interpreting deportees' memories. As a result, we employed a social constructivist approach to place, place attachment and trauma in the context of small rural communities that coped with drastic changes and where inhabitants became resilient under harsh circumstances. Textual culture and oral transmission of knowledge about deportation are part of the local heritage, where this heritage is "a cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present" (Smith 2006, p. 44).

Space relates people and objects to their memories, as these all exist within a spatial setting. This process of bonding people and objects with memories in a certain space creates place identity, a sense of place, and thus place attachment (Lewicka 2008). Place identity consists of both communal (group) and personal aspects. Place attachment is an affective bond between people and meaningful places to them. This has been studied especially by environmental psychology and geography. It was defined as always a positive emotion connecting people to places, even under difficult circumstances. This positive emotion is developed towards significant places in people's lives. One of the strongest predictors of place attachment is length of residence: the longer people live in an area, the more attached they feel (Lewicka 2011). Positive connections to places form both at the individual and group levels (Scannell and Gifford 2010; Hernández et al. 2007; Lewicka 2008).

People's bonds to places appear in the routines of everyday life. Such bonds are shaped by individuals' previous social identities, experiences, and actions. Place attachment includes both objective and subjective sides of time. The human experience of time and space is an active one and, therefore, place attachment is a process, part of individuals' cultural background, where the tangible and intangible features of place can foster place identity, attachment and resilience (Lewicka 2014; Diener and Hagen 2022; Markuszewska 2022).

Various dimensions of place attachment appear in deportees' life histories: place identity, place dependence (i.e., economic; it refers to functional or practical connections that people have to places), and detachment (alienation from once meaningful places). Place identity is part of individual's identity. Individuals' place identity is integral to developing a sense of self; it "captures the emotional or psychological ties to place, and ways in which place is part of one's identity." (Greer et al. 2020, p. 317). Place identity also means identifying with place. Place

identity is “a construct of connection to place which is more stable than attachment; therefore, it is more difficult to modify in a short period of time” (de Jesús et al. 2022, p. 14). Place attachment develops easier than place identity, and it is based on place identity (de Jesús et al., 2022, p. 14).

Place attachment helps adaptation during and after traumatic experiences, building individual and community resilience and eventually shared identity. It is a catalyser for protective actions towards place and self. Place identity and attachment coincide in natives (characterised by rooted local identity), which is not the case with non-natives. Place attachment or people’s affective and cognitive bonds with their living environment provides a feeling of security and resistance to leave even in the face of high risks (de Jesús et al. 2022, p. 12). Research has already proved that residence time is the most important in measuring the strength of people’s attachment to places (Hidalgo and Hernández 2001). Rooted local identity (Lewicka 2014; Boğan et al. 2016, 2024; Diener and Hagen 2022; Markuszewska 2022) gives residents a feeling of control over dire circumstances due to their self-perception as more knowledgeable individuals (de Jesús et al. 2022, 12). Although attached, the non-natives do not necessarily include in their personal identity a layer of place identity that refers to the new place they affectively and cognitively bond with (Hernández et al. 2017). However, a place identity made of adverse events can prevent attachment to place. Therefore, people need to redefine themselves and former place attachments can enable a state of some stability in the face of existential hardships and insecurities.

Against this conceptual framework, we focus on the person, place and process components of place attachment (Scannell and Gifford 2010), based on deportees’ experiences and argue that place attachment can be identified and interpreted at the intersection of memory, trauma and identity. Place attachment is seen from a cultural perspective: through memory and pondering on past times, deportation and related trauma. Thus, place attachment depends on the situatedness in space and time of the social groups whose members are the deportees.

Building new identity through storytelling, place attachment, and resilience

In order to (re)construct their identity, the deportees rely on space. Space becomes place due to stories and experiences that are contextually meaningful for them. In this process, place attachment is created,

too. Places of the past are kept alive during deportation and after by bringing them into the present through storytelling.

Place attachment is based on familiar and secure environments, while the space of deportation in the Soviet Gulag is one of fear, hunger, cold, disease, death, and forced labour. However, when environment was more welcoming and similar to that of home, the adaptation/attachment might eventually occur as Anița Cudla's pointed in her memoirs:

"It was spring, they even gave us a piece of land, horses, a plough and we ploughed, we planted potatoes. Now we also felt that we had something of our own, the locals also encouraged us, they told us that if we lived there, we could also keep a cow, some goats. Finally, one could live there" (Cudla, 2024, 101).

"... work on the land was almost like here [Bukovina], to plough, to sow, to mow. There were cattle, horses, sheep, geese, chickens, in short, it was fertile land, and everything could be grown" (Cudla, 2024, p. 101).

However, as she and her three sons were eventually forced to move further north, place attachment to Siberia, which could foster new identity and resilience, never happened. Describing the harsh, physical environment at the Arctic Circle, Anița Cudla recounts:

"... only in the month of May did the soil start to get wet, the streams to flow and around the middle of June to clear the icy waters..." (Cudla, 2024, p. 182).

"... the frost was 40 degrees, a blizzard closed one's soul, and the snow was up to the waist" (Cudla, 2024, p. 182).

Although living there for a long period, deportees' lack of attachment to the Soviet Union deportation space only confirms the strenuous relationship they continued to have with the environment they inhabited, but also to local people and authorities. Nimigeanu recalls that the deportees' identity was criminalised during deportation, this also hindering attachment to place: "They called us only 'Romanian bandits'" (Nimigeanu, 1958, p. 95).

The impossibility of building new place attachment in the Soviet Union for the deportees from North Bukovina made them feel even more attached to their home, as only positive experiential spaces produced attachments, while enduring ties were created, transformed and persisted for long periods of time. The joy of returning to the familiar space and environment (even if difficulties occurred)(i.e. Northern Bukovina) is recounted by Anița Cudla in her memoirs:

"... we comforted ourselves that we entered the house we made, but in the garden, there were only a few trees, and the house was left

empty, only the walls and those also damaged. No table, no chair, no stuff. We put the blankets we had down on the ground, laid down and slept on the ground, we sat and ate on the ground.” (Cudla, 2024, p. 186).

Home ownership was very important in the rural area of Northern Bukovina, which was not exactly so in Banat, where many Romanian refugees from Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia did not receive ownership papers over the properties (many of these properties belonged to German ethnics who fled Romania or were deported to Siberia after World War II).

If they had feelings of being anchored in the place before deportation, deportees decided to return. Anița Cudla wanted to return home, while Dumitru Nimigeanu wanted, first of all, to escape the Soviet Gulag so that he could save his life and his family’s (wife and daughter). They were desperate to return. However, the moment was not entirely joyous because former deportees experienced also a feeling of loneliness in their village. The mixture of homecoming joy and stress is a reality deportees had to cope with:

“Heading home, I felt like a newcomer to the world, with no luck: everything destroyed ...” (Nimigeanu, 1958, p. 181).

“I was happy that I got to see the places where I was born, but then I was sad that I couldn’t find anyone from my family [...] The house was occupied, strangers lived in our house and I didn’t want to go in [...] Of course, many people were missing from the village...” (Cudla, 2024, p. 179).

The deportees who returned demonstrate a high level of place attachment even when they discovered that their households were ruined. The traumascapes of the village unfolded: no household artefacts were left; all family memorabilia disappeared, except the house for some lucky ones, and some land. They experienced sadness when seeing what was left from what they once knew, but happy to be back anyway. As natives, they feel that their respective place is part of their identity. They feel rooted. Due to this rootedness, they prefer to come back (i.e., in the case of Northern Bukovina) or leave the deportation space for other places than their former temporary location in Banat or Western Oltenia.

The role of place attachment is to build individual resilience, high resistance and adaptation to experiences of crisis, distress, and trauma. Through resilience and hope of change, place attachment to former places is maintained when deportees’ personal history is invaded by the

communist regime. Place attachment stories are a form of resistance, and resistance through place attachment is an identity feature in Northern Bukovina. During their deportation, for Anița Cudla and Dumitru Nimigeanu, we cannot identify a disruption in their place attachment caused by their involuntary and forced displacement. On the contrary, place attachment seems to have strengthened from “a distance”, since it appears in their writings as a factor for resilience, together with values such as family and faith in God.

For the deportees of Bărăgan, creating bonds to the new place and community represented one of the coping strategies of the dispossessed in order to survive, and to build their resilience (Figure 1).



Fig. 1. The Danube Valley near Bordușani village – place of deportation for Bukovinian people from Banat to Bărăgan. Source: photo by Vasile Zotic, 2018.

In the face of oppression, human solidarity and individual agency were manifest irrespective of any ethnic, religious, and class differences. Solidarity among deportees was a first step towards building a community in the new villages of Bărăgan. This solidarity and other types of interaction enabled the social ties that made life bearable and attachment to community and place possible:

“They made friends there at school. I want to tell you that the youth, as they were in that situation, were still having fun. Balls were organised at the farm” (Daria Gogu (Andronache), in Antonovici, and Dobre, 2024, p. 175).

Deportees recollect placemaking through solidarity and place attachment in the face of evil and danger and reflect on the trauma of

deportation and the social construction of place attachment at the individual level and community level. If, at first, they were left feeling adrift, attachment to the deportation village was possible. Their practices of survival and the resources they used in that process kept them together and also built their group identity and individual resilience. Former deportee, Vasile Sârbu, exemplifies this transition for his case:

“Fundata is something special for my soul. Fundata was equivalent to the completion of my childhood, youth, training – when I graduated as a doctor I also lived in Fundata – degree of knowledge” (Valeriu Sârbu, in Antonovici and Dobre, 2024, p. 210).

Place attachment is one of individual’s basic needs, relating to that of belonging, besides those of shelter, nourishment and security. Security and confidence are feelings associated with forming and maintaining place attachment (Ruiz and Hernández, 2014, p. 280). Having these needs satisfied, either at present or by recollecting past feelings, individuals become resilient:

“I don’t regret that I returned to Bărăgan to help my parents. I thought I was doing a very good thing, going with the 380 lei that we used to get, that 400 was the salary, 20 lei was the tax, we bought flour, my mother baked bread in the oven, and it was very good when she baked bread in the winter that it was warm in the house. It still smelled like food... I don’t regret it, I really don’t. You know, sometimes, with nostalgia, I go back to the past. Why do I return with nostalgia? Because I was with my parents, I was next to my parents and children don’t feel so much the hardships of life when they have their parents next to them” (Daria Gogu (Andronache), in Antonovici and Dobre, 2024, p. 177).

Place attachment is a source for identity construction in the case of those who remain or decide years later to come back to Bărăgan, the former deportation space, even after the interdiction of obligatory residence is lifted and the deportees are rehabilitated. When deciding to leave or remain in the deportation space of Bărăgan, places have a significant role and make even more transparent the fact that human agency has never been lost (Figure 2); the deportees are the constructors of their lives and life-stories.

This was true in the case of few of the deportees from Banat or Western Oltenia, who felt they had nothing to return to in Banat or Western Oltenia after being freed from the deportation in Bărăgan:

“After the lifting of the restriction, the Germans left, some to Germany, others back to Banat. The Bukovinians and Bessarabians,

because they were refugees, had nowhere to return to” (Greta Donțu (Anghelache), in Antonovici and Dobre, 2024, p. 144-145).

Thus, the post repressive setting of the Bărăgan Plain became home on the long term for some of the deportees, after deportation was annulled:

“They stayed in the same two-room house for maybe ten years. Then, when they decided to remain here, they also built a summer kitchen, a room, a shed, a pantry next to the house” (Greta Donțu (Anghelache), in Antonovici and Dobre, 2024, p. 143).



Fig. 2. Zotic family from Tereblecea (Northern Bukovina), deported to Lătești village (Bărăgan), 1965. Left to right: Zotic Aurel, Dubău (married: Zotic) Eugenia, Zotic Vasile, Constantin (married: Zotic) Elena, Zotec Arcadie, Zotic Constantin and their children Zotic Eugenia and Zotic Constantin Ilie. Source: personal archive of Zotic (married: Petcu) Eugenia, Fetești town, Romania. Reproduced with permission.

The pain of deportation is balanced by the love for Bărăgan of some of them. The places of their childhood come with memories of instances when deportees expressed attachment to people, places, animals, and objects. Therefore, some of the deportees experience mixed feelings towards the deportation space. “Suspended citizens”, out of

time and space, the Bărăgan deportees are special cases, out of the ordinary (Dobre, 2020, p. 12), concerning the relationships they could develop with space:

“I have to say that deportation marked me deeply. When I go to Bucharest, I never forget to sit down on the left side of the bus and, in passing, spot the former place of the village where we suffered through so many things. The village was located between a knoll which flattened out with time – if you go Bucharest you will see a knoll on the left side, after the intersection at Ceacu – and the first line of trees still visible in the direction of Bucharest. That’s exactly where Iezeru village was. I could go there in the evening, or at dawn, and find the very place where our house was, that’s how well I remember it” (Marcela Burlacu (Bent), in Antonovici and Dobre, 2024, p. 125).

However, for Bărăgan, we see a plurality of perceptions regarding what home means. Greta Donțu (Anghelache) does see herself as a native of Bărăgan, her attachment being built on place identity and on what she considers home: “where I opened my eyes” (Greta Donțu (Anghelache), in Antonovici and Dobre, 2024, p. 144).

Deportees’ stories show the nuanced and complex nature of memory when constructing a shared history of traumatic events. Trauma became part of their collective and personal identity. Through their connection to places, old and new, they form an imagined community who still lives within a traumatic memory.

Social identities nourish place attachment. Place identity, place attachment and social identity are entangled because place identity is a component of personal identity, and people tend to return or refuse to leave significant places because of this. Our explorations in memory, place and trauma reveal again that “places are inherently social” (Brown, 2022, 20). Therefore, belonging and familiarity are engendered by places and cannot be erased solely through material destruction. Sense of place is not destroyed by having their houses and villages destroyed. Nevertheless, the loss of place engendered trauma. Recovering place attachment means healing at the personal and community level.

Deportees’ sense of place comes through strong images of their homes and villages. The lost property (household, village), lost security and dismantled communities with the related identities, the destruction of their families affected the place identity of Northern Bukovina deportees who survived deportation and returned. When back home from the Soviet Gulag, they narrate their loss, contrasting it with the beloved past before deportation. Many deportees faced access limitations to what was once their place. They needed to buy back their houses, as

deportees' attachment and belonging was supported by old possessions. Through objects, individuals fasten themselves to places, even if those objects transform. However, personal reactions to drastically changed environments differed: Anița Cudla stays, reconstructs place urged by her place attachment, while Dumitru Nimigeanu leaves, for a free life, as his bond with the home place is weakened.

Place attachment to their homes enabled deportees to articulate their love and loss both in deportation and after they returned. Once back, the symbolic, emotional and institutional amends for the injustice done to them were barely there. No symbolic gestures and compassion are recorded by the former deportees after their rehabilitation, no official attestation of their loss. On the contrary, for many the deportation is a social stigma they will carry their entire lives. The disappearance of their village community as they knew it, of part of its people, of relatives, to some extent disrupts their place attachment and further inflicts pain and reinforces their trauma.

Conclusions

This article develops original points in the field of place attachment research, combining the geographies of memory with research on deportation. We bring valuable insights and new knowledge to the relationship between deportation trauma (forced political relocation), crisis periods (in a broad sense), identity and place attachment. We researched bonds to place and disruptions in the aftermath of an important change: displacement through deportation. The spaces of deportation are Siberia, Kazakhstan, and the Polar Circle in the Soviet Gulag for deportees of Northern Bukovina (of 1941), and Bărăgan region in Romania for deportees of Banat and Western Oltenia (of 1951). We used a common framework, that of interpreting deportees' memories about their relationships with space and social and personal identity.

When addressing questions to our primary sources, we connected the memory of communist repression with the concept of place attachment. Due to its temporal dimension, besides the spatial and social ones, place attachment is a significant presence of deportees' memories. Based on deportees' experiences, place attachment is dynamic, it is constructed and transformed throughout their lives. Deportations, as acts of violence against "the enemies of the people" during communism, impacted people's bonds with places and their social and individual identity.

Common culture is a key factor for creating attachment in the space of deportation. The cultural reality of deportation is acutely felt by deportees from Bukovina in a foreign space and culture, and from Banat and Western Oltenia – in an unknown and confined space, but within the Romanian territory and culture. However, in Bărăgan they were still in the same country. They were able to locate relatives with relatives, so together with the extended family. For Bărăgan, the sense of community was crucial in the formation of the deportees' new identity through place attachment. This feature was not possible to develop upon deportation to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and the Arctic Circle. For the Siberian deportees, the communal dimension of place was missing, while the individual one was extremely hard to create. Dislocation brought about a disruption in their identities, because place identity is part of who they understood they were, they identified with their home places (i.e., the family house, the village) and found nothing familiar in the space of their deportation. All they knew was that God and work could save their lives.

Their flashbacks in the past before deportation highlight fragments of life, images and events that defined their identity and place identity, respectively. Place attachment for their birthplace was one of the meanings and emotions from the past that they kept as worthy for both present into deportation and future. Place attachment reminded them of values worth striving for: faith, family, land, freedom – all that shaped their personal and community identities and self-esteem.

Experiences cultivated the meanings attached to place, which formed the identity of the place. Part of the place identity, and thus of the local heritage, place attachment was reflected in written and oral history sources. The function of place attachment, old and new, in place-based trauma was that of producing individual resilience, because place attachment manifested as a personal and community value, established on other values that supported and reinforced people's positive emotions in place.

The meaningful relatedness of place attachment consisted of the fact that it connected people to their past and to each other, when sharing similar memories and discourses about home places and/or deportation spaces. Remembering places enabled deportees' reflexivity about loss. We focused on individual trauma and on how, through narratives, it transformed into (group or) cultural trauma and it became an interpretative tool for events and places, for people's bonds to significant landscapes: traumascapes.

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Woman and Postcolonial Trauma

Abstract: *This article explores contemporary Georgian memoir literature as a powerful medium for representing postcolonial trauma through women's perspectives. Focusing on works from the late 20th and early 21st centuries, it examines how personal and collective memory intertwine to narrate the legacy of Soviet rule and the challenges of navigating post-imperial transitions. Women's memoirs document experiences of marginalization, violence, loss, and survival, while simultaneously constructing spaces for agency, reflection, and cultural resistance.*

The analysis highlights how female authors position themselves as both witnesses and participants in historical transformation, often reclaiming silenced or distorted narratives. These memoirs shed light on the shifting policies of the Soviet regime toward women, including state control over reproduction and sexuality, and the ideological instrumentalization of the female body. They also reflect on the gendered aspects of national memory and identity in post-Soviet Georgia, where the return to tradition frequently intertwines with efforts to redefine womanhood.

Drawing on postcolonial theory, trauma studies, and gender criticism, the article emphasizes the hybrid nature of Georgian memoir writing, which blends documentary realism with subjective introspection. Through close readings of selected texts, including works by Gogi Gvakharia, Lana Gogoberidze, and Ketevan Javakhishvili, the study reveals how women's voices in memoir literature contribute to broader cultural processes of mourning, resistance, and redefinition. Ultimately, these narratives serve as crucial testimonies of historical rupture and continuity, positioning women not only as bearers of trauma but as active agents in the reshaping of memory and identity.

Keywords: *politics of memory; postcolonial trauma; gender and tradition; Soviet ideology; hybrid genres; Georgian women's memoir.*

Memoir literature, the wave of actualization of which in Georgian literature was intertwined with postcolonial processes, became the formative force of numerous symptoms and memoirs, is actively mastering modern history and offering us memoir literature, a completely artistic invention. Therefore, in very many cases, the plot and problems

of modern Georgian literature and cinema are based on the second half of the twentieth century. To analyze the above processes, it is necessary to rely on an appropriate theoretical framework that examines the socio-cultural functions of memoir texts in the context of post-totalitarian experience, from the perspective of trauma and memory. The methodological basis of the study, which allows to analyze the discussed texts not only as literary events, but also from the perspective of historical trauma and the expression of memory, is represented by the following: memoir texts are examined in the aspect of collective memory about the traumatic effects of the Soviet dictatorship; we rely on the viewpoint of the famous American sociologist and researcher of collective memory, Jeffrey K. Olick, quoted in the research paper of Mariam Miresashvili, that “collective memory is a unifying force that unites the national consciousness and mentality of the country” (Miresashvili, 1924, p. 70), and also that “memory is the most important gift of our being; it is an ongoing dialogue between past and present that defines our individual and collective existence” (Olick, 2016, p. 10).

Our approach involves analyzing the main thematic elements of the text – repression, changing gender roles, national identity – through the practice of reading in detail. The study focuses on autobiographical discourse, as well as the ability of female authors to connect personal pain with the public one. We bring an understanding of historical context to the discourse of historical metafiction and fix the attempt to fill in the “blank spots” of memory representation through literary narrative.

In the study „Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History“ (1992) Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub argue that witnesses are special subjects who bear the burden of “unspoken” experiences – those that cannot be put into words – and, therefore, that testimony [...] exposes the paradox of trauma: it is both a saying and an unsaying, a witnessing and a silencing. Even trauma literature does not give us pure evidence. It gives us space to bear witness – and it is this space that shapes ethical responsibility (Felman, Laub, 1992).

The development of artistic and documentary (autobiographical) prose in certain eras and cultures is influenced by political, social and cultural factors. The history and political situation of Georgia (similar to the situation of other small nations) gave this genre of literature, in addition to the aesthetic function, social and political significance. This meant that in the absence of statehood, works in the memoir genre em-

phasized national interests and anti-colonialist protest. Besides the artistic and educational value, fiction and documentary texts have also become a tool of political struggle, participating in social-political processes. In this regard, such issues as national identity, anti-colonial protest and the politics of memory are relevant in Georgian memoir prose, which is represented by such works as “My Adventures” by Akaki Tsereteli, “Memories of a Shepherd” by Alexander Kazbegi and “On the Path of My Life” by David Kldiashvili. It is in these works that the colonial nature of the tsarist policy is revealed in the consciousness of the Georgian reader, acting as chronotopes of genuine historical figures and events, and the formation of collective memory is achieved. As Anthony D. Smith notes, “The rich ethno-history is a vital source of cultural identity and serves as a foundation for mobilizing collective political action” (Smith, 2008, p. 207).

They raise questions of national identity and the politics of memory. The focus is also on the individual and his or her inner freedom. A woman, regardless of her historical role or social function, is undoubtedly the main theme of all genres of literature (fiction, documentary, fiction-documentary). Based on texts of different genres, it is interesting to consider the retrospective review of how a woman experienced transitional periods under the pressure of tradition and ideology, how social and cultural changes affected her psyche. Another interesting subject is the observation of women's issues, of a regime that was created through revolutionary processes with the aim of breaking traditions, and how it subsequently turned that same tradition into a tool for achieving the own goals.

Although modern Georgian society is noticeably different from the past depicted in analytical texts, however, reflection is not yet complete, and certain inertias still cause a sense of trauma. It is precisely because of the interests of modernity that some historical events find their way into memoir prose (i.e., into the functional area of collective memory), while others remain in historical archives and the works of historians. As E.H. Carr reminds us, “The past is unknown; history is a representation” (Carr, 1961, p. 22), which highlights the constructed nature of historical narratives and the selectivity involved in what enters public consciousness. Soviet women, state policy towards them, feminism, and later propaganda of the “return of femininity” are important themes of anti-colonial protest. In countries such as Georgia, anti-colonial resistance begins with the revival of national history. Memoir prose is often actively used to depict traumatic periods and episodes, which

often feature an active character – a female victim, mother, or teenage daughter. Writers who lived in colonial conditions used history and memories to create collective memory. National collective memory was supposed to resist colonial policy, which is why the politics of memory was actively used in colonial and postcolonial literature. In modern reality, the politics of memory serves a different purpose, contributing to the formation of an image of a woman that fits into the context of our era.

When we talk about the soviet regime, we mean its impact on the destruction of traditional values and the renewed role of women in the new social order. This and other similar events „have radically changed the fundamental principles of the sociopolitical life of the country, broke the existing connections between people, weakened social cohesion“, says another Georgian researcher, M. Miresashvili, who examines those examples of modern Georgian fiction that represent the era of Sovietization (Miresashvili, 2024, p. 69-70).

Epochal changes lead to unpredictable processes. Memoirs also prepare surprises for the modern reader. In the first decade after the creation of the Soviet Union, the inertia of the revolutionary spirit was focused on free love and the backwardness of traditional family roles. The party gradually replaced the pathos of women's emancipation with propaganda of the purity of the family and the definition of the function of the family as a healthy unit of the state, complicating the divorce procedure, and earlier banning legal abortions.

For illustration, let us take a chapter *Adam and Eve* from the memoirs by Gogi Gvakharia "Tearful Glasses" (Gvakharia, 2013, pp. 36-47)., which is devoted not to the relationship between a man and a woman in the classical sense, but to the problems of a man and a woman under socialism, as well as such topics as the teenage problems, the relationship between the authorities and the creative personality, the authorities and the citizen, moralists and their Procrustean bed, protectionism, censorship, the relationship between father and son, fashion, modernity and timelessness, aesthetics, authorities, as well as local problems.

The leitmotif of this chapter is the story of an ordinary Soviet citizen. He lives in the barracks on Plekhanov Street. The point of intersection between Ketino and the author is the toilet at the Nakaduli cinema, although the motives for going there are different. Gogi drags out his time, from session to session, trying to save money on tickets, while Ketino has a more forgivable reason - satisfying a physiological need.

For this purpose, she often goes not only to this particular place, but also to "skirmishes in the neighborhoods" (there are no toilets in the barracks). Ketino's early pregnancy does not escape the attention of the authorities, concerned about public morality, and this story will put on the agenda the need to check the virginity of schoolchildren. Ketino becomes a victim of the wrath of her father, who adequately "thinks" about Soviet ideology.

In the postcolonial context, trauma is often not a single event but the result of long-term systemic violence, argues Stef Craps in the research paper *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (2013), that focuses on trauma theory, memory, and postcolonial theory. The author notes that trauma in the postcolonial context is an ongoing, everyday experience that impacts society as a whole (Craps, 2013).

The affirmation of tradition turned out to be a weapon of the regime. Too many stereotypes favored the strengthening of the regime. Therefore, after a certain period of time, the feminist wave in the Soviet Union changed direction and became a force advocating for the preservation of the state. Such a stereotype was the institution of virginity, the protection of which allowed the regime to control morality.

Communist propaganda, which treated propaganda posters as art, replaced the real female image with the type of a sexless working woman. In the Soviet Union, traditional symbols of femininity were hidden due to fear of the ancient tradition: Christianity in our country was spread by a woman educator, Saint Nino, and the most outstanding part of history belongs to a woman monarch, Queen Tamar. Women in Georgia received the right to vote in elections in 1918, even before the Soviet power. From history we know that many women played an important role in public and state affairs.

An interesting experiment was proposed by contemporary Georgian director Lana Gogoberidze in the direction of using memoirs as a multi-genre text and creating non-textual material. Oral traditions are often considered as a source that allows filling in gaps in history, especially when the regime has taken care to destroy documents.

Lana Gogoberidze is the author of many feature films, and the main theme, the leitmotif of which is the story of a mother and her child, of course, autobiographical in nature. Later, at the age of 94, she created a documentary based on her memoirs, "What I Remember and How I Remember It" (2020) and "For Whom the Thrush Sings" (2021). An interesting technique is a kind of simulacrum, namely, in the documen-

tary she offers us fragments from her own feature films (the plot is created from personal memories of that time), which helps the viewer visualize the memories.

Lana Gogoberidze's mother was the first female director in the Soviet Union, who managed to shoot three documentaries, but was later exiled to Central Asia and returned to her family only ten years later. The trauma of totalitarianism affects women of different ages, mothers and children in different ways, subjugating their psyche and subsequently determining their life path.

The director chose the words of Paul Eluard as the title of the documentary: "The night is never completely dark." The film touches on many issues at once, and also reflects the complexity of modern life. The author understands the feeling of solidarity as a social and individual component. Compassion and support are considered the truest test of humanity. The ability to manage to feel deeply someone else's pain means to know that perhaps today this pain is much stronger than yours.

The perception of beauty is the leitmotif of the film; a human is not only a chain of losses, but also a chain of acquisitions. The experience and memories of a tragic existence through beautiful shots, aesthetics, cinematography, art give the right to exist.

The director called the film "Waltz on the Pechora" (1992), "Farewell to the Past". With his film, the author seemed to open up, spill up everything that was in his soul, and freed himself from the burden of memories. The main metaphor of the film is exiled women wandering through the endless icy expanses of the Russian north. The young hero is the only survivor of a failed family. According to the magazine "Liberation", this film is a legacy that arose from a painful and at the same time responsible childhood.

Memoir prose is certainly one of those types of literary texts in which the cultural context of the work is the main connecting element of the composition of the work. In our article, we examined exactly this kind of literary material in which, thanks to a documentary, realistic depiction, the cultural context turned out to be extremely clear and made it possible to talk about the essential aspects of the problem, and not just about an artistic rethinking of life. The women we presented, reflecting on the Soviet era and showing us the complex twists and turns of women's life and awareness, are simultaneously good storytellers, main characters and chronotopes for fiction. We believe that no literary genre has revealed postcolonial trauma, the analysis of which is the present material, as reliably and clearly as literary-documentary, polygenre

texts, in particular memoirs, have managed to do. Women and work, women and education, women and civic responsibility, women and their reproductive function, women and creativity – these are the issues that the female authors of Georgian memoirs gave us the opportunity to reflect on and judge.

In 2012, the *Laboratory for the Study of the Soviet Past* (SovLab)¹ implemented the project "Lost History" which narrates stories not only about famous people, but also about ordinary "victims" of repression. The collection contains memories of three "genres": memoirs by repressed women (Minadora Toroshelidze, Kristine Sharashidze, Keto Khutsishvili and Raisa Mikadze), oral histories and memories about repressed women.

In 2009, within the framework of an international conference organized by DVV international and the Heinrich Böll Foundation, there was formed an initiative group that set itself the goal of developing the topic of the topography of Stalinism, terror and repression and starting research to create a documentary, educational route about Soviet terror and repression in Tbilisi. Later, in March 2010, there was created the Laboratory for Research on the Soviet Past. The organization was founded by Lasha Bakradze, David Gogoshvili, Giorgi Kldiashvili, Nino Lezhava, Ana Margvelashvili, Giorgi Shaishmelashvili, and David Jishkariani. Since then, the board of Sovlab has changed several times².

Since 2010, SovLab has conducted numerous studies on key issues of recent history that were distorted or erased from the collective memory of Georgian society by Soviet propaganda. The issues covered by the organization include the legacy of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its democratic institutions, the invasion and subsequent occupation of Soviet Russia, organized anti-Soviet resistance, totalitarian terror, the post-Stalin era, and the late Soviet period before the restoration of independence.

Historians began using oral histories in the 1940s, especially in cases where the available sources of "traditional" historiography are insufficient. Partially oral traditions formed the basis for Ketevan Javakhishvili's memoirs about her father, "*The Life of Mikheil Javakhishvili*" (1981, 1989). The stories and scenes described in these memoirs

¹ The Laboratory for the Study of the Soviet Past is a leading non-governmental organization that develops memory policy in Georgia and fights against the use of memory as a weapon of Russian disinformation.

² <https://sovlab.ge/about>

were later used in cinematography to depict that era (we are talking about Tengiz Abuladze's film "Repentance" (1984).

Cathy Caruth, one of the leading authors of trauma theory, believes that trauma is not just a painful event, but something that a person cannot fully comprehend at the time of its occurrence. According to her, "The traumatized, one might say, carry within themselves an impossible history, or they themselves become a symptom of a history that they cannot fully own (and which thus owns them)" – Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Caruth, 1996, p. 5). It is this kind of impulse that shapes the personality, the creator, like Lana Gogoberidze, who carries the traumatic experience of her ancestors into postmemory and returns to it again and again, regardless of age. In her work, the same story first becomes the inspiration for the creation of feature films, and then memoirs or autobiographical documentaries.

At the end of the 20th century, the genre of memoirs found a new life in Georgian literature. Under Soviet ideological censorship, it was seemingly forgotten, and this can be explained by the fact that the "sincerity" and "self-reflection" that create the emotional charge of a memoir, and therefore its literary value, contradicted the principles of socialist realism. In the so-called "Otepel Era" (era of warming), literature of this genre first appeared in dissident literature, and then in the public sphere, and became relevant as a way to fill in the "blank spots" of history. The artistic invariance of memories harmoniously intertwined with the new order of memory politics and played an important role in the representation of history. As an example, there can be examined the memoirs "My Father Mikheil Javakhishvili" by writer Ketevan Javakhishvili, published in Tbilisi in 1984. The author is the m of a Georgian classic writer and public figure who suffered from Stalin's repressions; she witnessed her father's arrest in 1937. The work is an interesting text from different points of view: as a historical source, as a chronicle of the writer's life and work, and from the point of view of the gender issue. The author tells how the wife and two daughters of a "people's enemy" continue to struggle for survival, first during the era of repressions and then during World War II. This is interesting both for its clarification of the gender restrictions of labor under socialism and Asian society, and in connection with the issue of access to education. "When my comrade Medea Abasheli heard our story, she hurried to us; not daring to enter the house, she stood by the fence and consoled us there. No one else came to us except Medea. Everyone was afraid to

talk to us, and therefore to express sympathy to the family of a people's enemy," (Javakhishvili, 1991, pp. 5-6) writes Ketevan Javakhishvili, and this passage clearly shows the influence of fear sown by totalitarianism on the moral stability of society.

One of the key terms in the literary discourse of trauma theory is "postmemory", introduced by Marianne Hirsch. She describes how traumatic experiences are transmitted from generation to generation, how they are reflected in memory, and how storytelling becomes a way of overcoming them, – in the form of confession and testimony (Hirsch, 2012). Obviously, Ketevan Javakhishvili's memoirs can be read from this perspective as well: although the text evokes memorable scenes from the author's childhood and, thus, also reflects her personal traumas, the narrative mainly aims to convey the life of her father and his traumatic experience. Here, trauma is presented not as an individual experience, but as an intergenerational response and a link between them. Adapting trauma theories to a postcolonial context requires a different analytical framework.

As Jennifer Yusin notes, the Western model of postcolonial trauma research, built around a single traumatic experience, fails to capture the systemic and long-term violence associated with postcolonial experience (Yusin, 2018). The effects of this violence are often passed down from generation to generation, and traumatic memory is imprinted not only on personal but also on collective identity, which is especially important when understanding cases such as Ketevan Javakhishvili's memoir, where a father's traumatic experience is revived in the daughter's narrative, or Lana Gogoberidze's films, where a mother's traumatic past is a constant companion to her present.

As Sylvia Pellicer-Ortín notes in her analysis of Holocaust narratives, the intergenerational transmission of trauma is not only a transmission of memory, but also the activation of an ethical impulse – the desire of descendants to continue to bear witness, regardless of whether they have had direct experience of it (Pellicer-Ortín, 2014). In her view, members of the second generation, growing up in the shadow of their parents' traumatic histories, simultaneously experience both a close connection and an alienation from this memory. Such a dualism – alienation and connection – is characteristic of the very same internal conflict that often manifests itself in narratives built on a traumatic legacy. Ketevan Javakhishvili's text also conveys such ethical tension: the author seems to be trying to rework the legacy of her father's trauma

through her narrative, which is not only a political and ethical gesture of personal survival, but also of preserving memory.

In our study, we find the connection between women and post-colonial trauma pertinent precisely because C. Caruth emphasizes the role of literature and narrative forms in overcoming trauma. In her view, both psychoanalysis and literature serve to reveal the boundaries that exist between knowledge and ignorance, memory and non-memory:

Literature and art provide the opportunity for traumatic experience to become a story, a narrative, which somewhat reduces its impact (power) on a person's life. Because of the falsification of history, memoirs from the Soviet period, especially those that were published only after the collapse of the Red Empire, are unique material for reconstructing history; in many cases, they are the only surviving testimonies: "I have presented the facts with all the truth, thanks to which my father's spiritual state, his pain, the oppressive environment that was created around him, and the unfair life in which he had to exist and work creatively became clearer to us. Finally, I described the tragedy that befell our family on August 14, 1937. I hope that this work will truthfully introduce future generations to the difficult and hard life of the writer, which, due to his tragic fate, he went through with suffering and ended with torture" (Javakhishvili, 1991, pp. 5-6).

Transitional periods, times of state and social changes are very impressive and sensitive for history, and therefore for collective memory. The so-called "icon of the world" is modified, the mentality of a person, the norms of his behavior, the worldview are changed as well. That is why it is unsatisfactory for him to view the history only with the help of facts, which are stubborn in themselves, but at the same time very dry, conveying the national tragedy. Therefore, the forms of expression are changed, the line between documentary and fiction is erased. Memoirs become poly- or meta-genre; they are overly carried away by the artistic flow and move from documentary prose to fiction. Fictional and documentary memoirs open the door to the theme of love, reflect everyday life and relationships between a man and a woman. Many of the topics raised in memoirs are unique to literature, especially in the context of socialist realism. Memoirs showed us the "kitchen" of Soviet families, for example, in "My Father Mikheil Javakhishvili" instead of the official stereotype of a Soviet woman, Ketevan Javakhishvili depicted the portraits of weak, intimidated and internally broken people, while art was supposed to depict a young, healthy, athletic person, a kind of symbol of the ideal of a Soviet citizen, not afraid of the

future, able to work and fight. The Soviet woman was supposed to be a multifunctional woman who had to raise people of the future, her main mission was motherhood and the construction of a socialist state.

If we look at the art of socialist realism with a critical-analytical eye and also consider documentary prose, we will see that the female image in any genre of fiction or non-fiction literature - painting or sculpture, theater or cinema, is loaded with symbolic functions designed to express official messages. It is worth noting that such art is belittled and less reflective of reality. The purpose of the image of a tough, artificial woman is to demonstrate the idea of gender equality, to emphasize the role that Soviet society assigned to women in the large Soviet family.

The weakening of the erotic content of a woman's femininity contributed to the strengthening of its social and economic function. In the Stalin era, a taboo was imposed on the manifestation of natural female passions, instead, there was created the image of a strong and sexless woman, which became the chronotope of socialist realism.

Memoirs written not only in the Soviet era, but also in the post-Soviet era, reviving this period through recollections, do not differ much from each other in their approaches. Comparing these two different time samples, we can conclude that the change is minimal. Although female authors of memoirs created in the post-Soviet period reflect on and discuss the pernicious tendency of women to submit to ideological dictates, their works do not have the level of sincerity that would be characteristic of their intimate, sexual images. This would be overcoming a taboo, and we would no longer be talking about the inertia of socialist realism.

Thus, as a result of our study, we can conclude that a woman was not only the victim of the regime in the Soviet period, but also that the postcolonial trauma limits them even in the modern era, forcing them to create under conditions of self-correction and an internal filter. All this reveals numerous markers of postcolonial thinking not only in literature, but also helps us better understand the role of a woman, one of the main components in the formation of modern society. Thus, memoir prose is the best tool for representing collective memory.

Our study emphasizes the following circumstance: communist ideology, which considered propaganda posters to be art, replaced the real female image with the type of a sexless working woman. In the Soviet Union, traditional symbols of femininity were carefully disguised. It is precisely because of the interests of the present that some

historical events fall into memoir prose (i.e., into the functional area of collective memory). The memoirs reliably, clearly and vividly revealed the problem of gender, in particular, the female gender; they covered such topics as a woman and work, a woman and education, a woman and civic responsibility, a woman and her reproductive function, a woman and creativity - these are the issues that the female authors of Georgian memoirs gave us the opportunity to reflect on and judge. Thus, as a result of our research, we can conclude that women were not only victims of the Soviet regime, but they are a consequence of post-colonial trauma, which limited them in the modern era, forcing them to create in conditions of self-correction and an internal filter. All this reveals numerous markers of postcolonial thinking not only in literature, but also helps us better understand the role of a woman, one of the main components of the formation of modern society.

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Religion and Women in Adjara

Abstract: *The attitude of Islam towards women's issues is not at all uniform. Two tendencies can be observed in it: the first, reactionary or conservative, which implies the aspiration that women's emancipation be limited to the framework of Islam, the second – radical, which tries to prove that the liberation of women in the Muslim world, the improvement of their socio-economic conditions, their inclusion in public and political life, do not at all contradict the norms of Islam. From this point of view, the issue of the relationship between religion and women in Adjara is very interesting, which we would like to discuss extensively in the presented work, especially since there is a lack of research on Georgian Muslim women in Adjara and their experiences in gender studies in Georgia. The presented research aims to discuss and familiarize the society with the experience of Georgian, Muslim women in Adjara. Although not all women follow permanent religious practices, Islam still remains an important part of their identity. Being a Muslim, along with identity, is a very intimate and personal inner spiritual state for Adjarian women and is not expressed in rituals or external attributes. Today, there is a relatively safe space for “revealing” Muslim identity in our Christian country, which we cannot forget about the early period. However, young people, including students, who have moved to the capital - Tbilisi from Adjara or other parts of the country, first test the waters and then talk about their religious identity, which is followed by mixed reactions.*

Keywords: *Adjara; women; religion; identity; politics.*

The Autonomous Republic of Adjara, located in the southeastern part of Georgia, along the Turkish border, has undergone a remarkable religious transformation in recent decades. Since the 1990s, the Islamic identity in Adjara has gradually begun to weaken. Namely, a large part of the traditionally Muslim population of Adjara has converted to Christianity in a fairly short period of time. While by the time the Soviet Union collapsed, the majority of the population of this region was Muslim, at least that was what was considered to be the case after seventy years of Soviet atheism. According to new data, approximately 65% of

the population of Adjara is Christian, and 30% is Muslim. Today, Islam has firmly established roots in the eastern mountainous regions of the republic (Upper Adjara), especially in the Khulo district, and to a lesser extent in the villages of the Shuakhevi and Keda districts, which is due to a number of subjective and objective reasons.

Is it appropriate to say a few words about when Islam became the faith of the Adjara population?! The history of Adjara under the Ottoman Empire is often described in three words: “Three hundred years of Ottoman rule” (Abashidze, 1993), this is how an Adjarian calls this period of history in their everyday vocabulary, and this is how we find it in historiography as well (Chavchavadze, 1877, Chavchavadze, 1880). Until the 1770s, the Adjarians were mostly Christians, and until the 19th century, the process of Islamization was relatively mild (Sanikidze, 1999, 12; Baramidze, 2010, 11). Before the Tanzimat (Arabic for order, a period of moderate progressive reforms in the Ottoman Empire from 1839 to the 1970s), 49 out of 54 villages in Adjara paid the “Mura-khasie” tax imposed on Christian clergy, which indicates the existence of Christianity during this period. Islam was adopted first by the nobility, and it spread more slowly among the lower classes. In Adjara, Islam first spread to Lazistan, the Chorokhi and Adjaristskali valleys, and most recently to Kobuleti (Akhvlediani, 1978; Baramidze, 2010; Shashikadze, 2002). The strengthening of Islamization in Adjara since the 1820s is associated with the introduction of social and tax systems by the Ottomans. It is precisely the new reforms – “Tanzimat” that most researchers associate with the further spread of Islam and the Turkish language in Adjara (Baramidze, 2010, 11; Akhvlediani, 1978).

It can be assumed that the most active period of administrative and cultural rapprochement is the first half of the 19th century (Akhvlediani, 1978). At this time, the Adjarian wealthy society are motivated to see more benefits at the Sultan's court and are active in implementing new reforms (Kazbegi 1977). Many Adjarians fought on the side of the Ottomans in the Crimean War of 1855. This period coincides with the further tightening of the Ottoman Empire's policy in Adjara, in particular, the banning of the Georgian language and Christianity (Sanikidze, 1999, p. 12). The oldest wooden mosques in Adjara date back to the 19th century. In 1871–1873, there were 141 mosques and 65 madrasahs in the Batumi, Upper and Lower Adjara, Churuksu (Kobuleti) and Gonio regions (Baramidze, 2010, p. 11). The growth of mosques and the representation of Ottoman culture in the coastal areas in the 19th

century can be attributed to the presence of the Ottoman army (Sanikidze, 1999, p. 12), as well as the plan to build a new city in the north-western part of the Batumi port of the Trabzon province during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz (Baramidze, 2019, p. 11). In the 1960s, there were 3 mosques in Batumi. Of these, 1 was considered an Ottoman and 2 were Georgian (Sanikidze, 1999, p. 13).

According to sources, prayers in the Thalia mosque were held in Arabic, but the language was foreign to the Adjarians. Worshipers, as well as students, learned parts of the prayer in Arabic by heart in the madrasa, but did not understand the content (Sanikidze, 1999, p. 12; Chichinadze, 1913). Turkish words entered the Georgian spoken language of Adjara, but they could not replace the native language. For centuries, the Georgian language has been a medium of daily communication, storytelling, and oral memory (Komakhidze, 2001). Language has been a mnemonic medium for the Adjarians to preserve their connection to “Georgian” in general. Language is the string of memory, by “sounding” it becomes possible to feel a sense of community and to grasp the idea of unity. We deliberately avoid a detailed review of the history of Adjara and touch only on the part that is related to the reasons for the spread of religion, in particular, Islam.

Based on the research topic, we will focus mainly on issues that concern the self-identification of modern Georgian Muslim women and their attitude towards existing dominant perceptions. In this regard, the first thing we will touch on is the significance of the current modernization of Islam in relation to women. It is very difficult to be a woman in the Muslim world, especially in the early period, when the inequality of women with men in Muslim society was reinforced by the Quran and Sharia (Gelovani, 2005, p. 79-91).

The process of modernization of religion was inevitable and was conditioned by the fundamental changes taking place in public life. Some Muslim ideologues share old, traditional views, while modernists condemn women's lack of rights, confinement, and the necessity of wearing the veil. However, traditionalists and modernists have in common that they consider the requirements of the Quran and Sharia to be obligatory and recognize Islam as an ideology for all times. Here, we will note that it is difficult to find a book or an author that deals with this ideology and belief in a crude, uninformed, or categorical manner. It is enough to recall the modern American writer, Jean Sesson, and her series of books “The Diaries of an Arabian Princess,” where the author tells us about the difficult situation of women, following the example

of generations, and consciously refrains from subjectively discussing Islam or its ideology, while, to some extent, the novel reveals an attempt to use religion as a weapon (Davitadze, Mazmishvili, 2023). Both traditionalists and modernists believe that national identity can be preserved by adhering to Islamic dogmas regarding women (Shaydullina, 1978, p. 9). So, what do modernists prefer regarding women's issues? It mainly concerns issues of marriage and divorce, wearing the hijab, family law, and the participation of Muslim women in socio-economic and public life (Esposito, 1982, p. 138).

One of the greatest representatives of the Muslim Reformation is Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897), who reinterpreted Islamic dogmas, including those regarding women. He recognized that all Muslims had the right to freely interpret the Quran, and that the cause of a nation's backwardness could be religious fanaticism and tyranny. For the equality of men and women, the liberation of women from the veil and the appearance of a woman's face are paramount, and do not necessarily mean a decline in morality (Saadawi, 1980, p. 170).

In the modern community, in the conditions of scientific and technical progress, Muslim women have actively participated in public life. It is noteworthy that some Muslim ideologists consider the problem of women at the modern stage absurd, and Muslim ideologists point to several surahs of the Quran (4:1,126; 66;10, 11; 33:35) and argue that the equality of women and men in public life was recognized precisely by the Quran. In addition, in their opinion, the social status of a woman in society is determined by the fact that she is a mother and a wife, that a woman has the right to participate in public activities, but only if this does not prevent her from fulfilling her main function. We believe that education is the force that leads society towards progress. Writers undoubtedly play a major role in all problems, and in this case, in the issue of women's emancipation. We cannot help but recall the Egyptian writer Kassym Amin (1863–1908), of Kurdish origin, who said: "A nation cannot be free if women are oppressed in it"! (Saadawi, 1980, p.171) Women's education was a top priority for him. It is the issue and role of education that is one of the central issues of our research in the society of Adjarian Muslim women, along with the modernization of Islam. We studied and got acquainted with the situation of Muslim women of different ages and experiences living in Adjara. Direct conversations and sociological surveys revealed that Islam, as a religion and a way of life, occupied a large place for them and continues to do so today. Not all women follow permanent religious practices, but Islam

still remains an important part of their identity. Being a Muslim, along with identity, is a very intimate and personal inner spiritual state for Adjara women and is not expressed in rituals or external attributes.

Islam has long been silent and hidden in Adjara, because of the Islamic faith, Adjarians needed to prove their being Georgians as well as their loyalty. Today, compared to earlier times, there is a relatively safe space for “revealing” Muslim identity in our Christian country, however, young people, including students, who have moved from Adjara or other parts of the country to the capital, Tbilisi, first test the waters and then talk about their religious identity, which is followed by mixed reactions. In the recent past, young or old people from Adjara were often called “Tatars”, which is why they had to constantly prove their identity. Even today, looking at a woman wearing a headscarf expresses surprise and mixed reactions.

The objects of our study were both women living in rural areas and city dwellers, including students. In the reality of Adjara, in the highland villages, where women's education was considered a low priority, teachers played a great role in convincing the girls' parents of new perspectives on knowledge and education. Thus, the appearance of the "new woman" both in literature and in real life was not long in coming. Before we discuss the issue of education of Adjarian Muslim women, we consider it appropriate to say a few words about religious education in general. In terms of religious education, we can distinguish three main models – confessional teaching in religion, teaching about religion, and public education without a religious subject (Flensner, 2017, p. 18-20). In Georgia, since 2012, initiatives have been emerging to establish interreligious teaching and teaching the history of religion in public schools, however, “the introduction of a confessional teaching model into the Georgian reality necessarily implies placing a number of religious groups in a marginalized position. Given the public and political climate, under the implementation of this model, it is expected that even the second largest religious group – the Muslim community – will not be able to obtain institutional support from the state to create opportunities for confessional Islamic education in public schools. “The introduction of a confessional model in Georgia means not only promoting dialogue between religious groups, but also further alienating them in the social and political sphere” (Mikeladze, 2021, p. 111). Given that the disclosure of religious identity is still sensitive in Georgia, when choosing a specific form of scientific teaching about religion in the

Georgian context, more emphasis is placed on the role of the teacher as a neutral facilitator of dialogue.

The stories of elderly women in the rural population of Adjara are similar, how they were unable to continue their education after graduating from school, the main reason for which is the religiosity of their fathers. The barrier created by religious or non-religious views is not foreign to the life of the women in today. This problem is different in different regions and villages of Adjara. As surprising as it may be, parents of girls who want to continue their education in the capital of the country are more likely to send their children to study in neighboring Turkey than in the capital. We are less familiar with the motivations for going to Turkey for education, as well as the programs offered by the Turkish state itself, and we believe that the issue of receiving education (including religious) there is deeply complex and multi-layered, with a political and social character. We assume that this may be related to the desire to receive a thorough religious education and Turkey's policy regarding preferential study conditions, which include language study along with professional study. In any case, getting an education is a way of emancipation for some girls, however, in a Muslim environment, a kind of impact or result of getting an education, later, is often wearing the hijab, which is perceived by society in different ways. But behind the cultural image of a woman wearing the hijab, society needs to see the new practice that has already emerged. In particular, with religious education, young people have acquired a kind of independence, a higher social status, even within the family. Are Muslim women wearing headscarves alienated from members of Georgian society today? Many people think that the religious symbol for a woman – the hijab, a headscarf – is a yoke imposed by her husband and is an expression of slavery and submission. We were interested in what Muslim women in Adjara themselves think about this issue? Regarding this and other issues of interest to us, we got to know and studied the views of several women, the existing problems and challenges related to their religiosity. We will introduce you to the views of 60-year-old Guliko Zoidze, a resident of Upper Adjara, 43-year-old businesswoman Eka Shantadze (Ananidze), a resident of Batumi, and 20-year-old Salome Artmeladze, a student of English Philology at BSU, on the following issues, which we have formulated in the form of questions:

1. What does Islam mean to you? And what problems do you think Muslim women in Adjara face?

2. What is your attitude towards the headscarf (hijab) itself and what is the reaction of society to wearing it?
3. How accessible was education for you and what path did you take to get it?
4. Do you feel like a “stranger” among the people around you, as you did in the recent past?
5. Do you feel safe and do you have religious freedom?
6. What problems and challenges do you face on a daily basis or in the long term?

Guliko Zoidze, a resident of Upper Mountainous Adjara:

‘I know the past and history, but Islam is my faith today, my religion, I serve it faithfully, I observe all the rules and perform prayers. I was raised in Muslim traditions and I don’t even remember at what age I started to wear a headscarf. Therefore, it has been my inseparable attribute for as long as I can remember. I also went through Soviet collectivization and restrictions because of religion. Where I live, there are fewer people around me who react to wearing a Hiaajp, but in the cities my traditional dress and headscarf often become the subject of unnecessary attention, I would also like to note that my adopted Christian relatives treat my service and love of religion with respect. I felt alienation and excessive scrutiny more in my early years, especially when I was in the capital. At such times, my native village was a place of freedom and relief, where many, like me, served Islam; I did not get an education, of course I wanted to, but our generation obeyed our parents, and there was poverty before, our parents taught us more about handicrafts, and we were also satisfied with our fate; Today I really have a feeling of religious freedom than in my early years, I am happy with the fact that they no longer look at me as a stranger and there is a tendency to accept people like me, although I would like to be accepted as a full member and not be subject to judgment at all; I have already gone more than half of my life, I have endured enough difficulties, hardships, and the burden of family, during the difficulties of life in the countryside, faith and service made me strong, capable and gave me hope. I am grateful to the world for my five children and I wish everyone happiness!’



Businesswoman from Batumi - Eka Shantadze (Ananidze)

‘I started serving Islam late, despite the fact that my family was a believer. My life changed after I decided that I should start a family at the age of 17, which was connected with the decision of my parents. The opinion of my parents was important to us and their decision rarely changed, because we believed that the family wanted our well-being, however, I must admit that when I learned that the family with which I was connected by fate were believing Muslims and, of course, I had to share the family tradition and rules, I had some unpleasant thoughts about how much I would be able to give up and change my lifestyle. I was not given the opportunity to continue my studies at the beginning, as I have already said, I started a family early, I was 17 when I got married. I have no secondary education. I am a mother by profession.

After raising five children, I wanted to do something and started my own business. My husband’s support was immense, I express my gratitude to my family for their support. It is necessary to work a lot on yourself. Our main problem is that I am a housewife and that’s it, we no longer work on ourselves, we just do ignore it. When we get married, we stop there and stop developing ourselves. I also raised five children and then started working on myself. I have a lot of plans and interesting

ideas. It's not working out perfectly yet, but I have to fight for development until the last minute. I have to do everything, so I won't stop. I think every woman should be active and definitely create something. Since I opened the store, I have become more spiritually uplifted and more confident. This has doubled since I became a student at Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University and got a degree in vocational education in beekeeping. I can admit that studying at the university was also a challenge for me. Whether it was the gossip of my peers about my dress and headscarf, or the views of acquaintances and friends about my choice and religious service. I would tell women like me who wear the headscarf to be themselves, stay confident and strong. First of all, they should be educated, nothing will work out without education. This has been an obstacle and a source of fear for me my whole life, so I could never stand up for and defend my faith, my headscarf and my clothes. If I had had the appropriate education, I would have defended myself better. I want us to have many educated and successful Muslim women. Not just those who stay at home, but those who are busy with their own business, active. Moreover, I really want to see Muslim women in politics as well. Nowadays, I can boldly say that I have overcome all the difficulties of adapting to a new life and have coped with all complications. I feel safe and have freedom in terms of religion. The only challenges for me are the social situation and rights of women in the upper mountainous regions, the severity of their work, and the lack of access to education'.



Salome Artmeladze, a student of English Philology at Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

‘Islam is not just a religion for me, it encompasses a deep worldview, cultural, and social system that has been formed over the centuries on the basis of divine revelations. Accordingly, Islam is not limited to a specific belief, but plays an important role in shaping human relationships and instilling respect for each other. It is on the basis of these values that we try to understand what the purpose of human existence in this world is and what the purpose of our existence is. Islam is based on five fundamental principles: faith (Shahada), prayer (Salat), fasting (Ramadan), charity (Zakat), and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). These principles determine not only the spiritual life of the believer, but also their social responsibilities; the headscarf is an important part of Islamic culture and religion, expressing a woman's modesty, identity, and faith. However, in modern society it is often perceived as a symbol of oppression or restriction of women's rights, which, in my opinion, is not true. Many Muslim women choose to wear the headscarf, considering it a manifestation of personal freedom, dignity, and faith. I wear a headscarf, and in my opinion, the headscarf is not a barrier to illiteracy or failure and a symbol of limiting women's rights, but rather gives me greater inner confidence, which can later become a kind of guarantee of success; As for my education, I can boldly say that I am completely free in this matter, and nothing has hindered me from receiving an education, as evidenced by the fact that today I am a second-year student of English Philology at the Faculty of Humanities. I have plans and ambitions regarding my career, and I will put all my effort to make my goals a reality; As I have already mentioned, there is at least a partial stereotype regarding clothing, especially the color black, why should a Muslim woman wear black? And of course, I have also been the object of this “misunderstanding” many times, why I am a young girl dressed like this and have there been any facts of violence against me? I believe that others should respect my choice and I am glad that society is gradually becoming more tolerant and less interested in other people’s personal lives; I would like to note that I consider myself quite safe, because I am not a victim of any violence. On the contrary, the Islamic religion, serving it, is my free choice, and I can confirm that I have absolute religious freedom; As for the long-term prospects, I can't say anything yet, because it's a matter of the future, although I have positive expectations that whatever stereotypes remain towards Muslim women, will slowly disappear completely, and I and those like me will no longer feel

alienated from society and will be full and equal members of society like everyone else’.



Solidarity, mutual assistance and support of all Muslim women during obstacles and difficulties have always been making things easier. They still have to deal with challenges, for example, some Muslim women live with a dual identity, for example, in schools, both students and teachers still have dual roles, school textbooks focus on devastating battles and invasions in relation to Muslim countries, the image of Muslims as enemies is formed, and the history of Georgian Muslims is completely ignored in them. It is precisely the feeling of shame and neglect caused by this that is associated with living with a dual identity.

Along with women's religious issues, we must also consider their social situation: the life of women in rural areas, especially in the upper mountainous regions, is quite difficult, family obligations and physical (sometimes hard) labor do not leave time for development and self-care. It is even less worth talking about their involvement in politics, because in villages, towns, and cities there is a widespread perception that politics is more a matter for men than for women. In reality, there are few mechanisms that would ensure women's involvement (Gaprindshvili 2014). From this perspective, the existence of the “Solidarity Community” in Adjara, which represents civil society and whose mission is to increase awareness of the region (Adjara), present cultural heritage, strengthen social and civic engagement, support the self-organization of the Muslim community, and promote the establishment of solidarity practices, is very important. The organization’s goals are: to research the religious identity, rights issues, and history of Georgian Muslims; to study and protect the rights of women and eco-migrants; to protect and promote cultural heritage; and to promote regional and community development. The organization is focused on building a solidary, just, and inclusive civil society, where representatives of all social groups will be able to protect their rights and live a dignified and safe life.

Religious diversity can truly be considered a historical and cultural wealth of Adjara. Religious tolerance is also evidenced by the fact that most families have representatives of both religions (Christians and Muslims). They celebrate both Easter and Bayram, and even visit the graves of the deceased during both holidays. Families prepare festive meals characteristic of both religions. In the villages of Upper Adjara, Christian and Muslim shrines function side by side and create a different local color. Nevertheless, the society does not go unnoticed by a certain tendency towards Islamization in the region, which part of the society perceives sharply and confirms its unyielding position with public speeches, especially opposing the construction of mosques, while others devote extensive letters to the impending dangers.



Protest against the Al-Aziz Mosque. March 31, 2012.
<https://netgazeti.ge/news/13488/>

Thus, the attitude towards women in Adjara in terms of religion is not uniform and two tendencies are observed: the first, conservative, implies the aspiration that women's emancipation be limited to the framework of Islam, which is more noticeable in the highland regions of Adjara; the second - different from conservative, tries to prove that

in the Muslim world of women, the improvement of women's socio-economic conditions, their inclusion in public and political life, does not at all contradict the norms of Islam. And the challenges remain: religious nationalism; socio-economic problems; lack of employment and entertainment due to housework, the lack of long-term programs against violent environments; fewer opportunities to engage in politics; the lack of access to education due to financial problems or early marriage; it should be emphasized that the named problem or challenge is defined by class, gender, and ethnic or religious characteristics.

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Muslim Women under the ‘Care’ of the State Women’s Organizations in Bulgaria (1950s–1980s)

Abstract: *The article examines the policies towards ethno-religious communities led by the totalitarian state in communist Bulgaria in the 1950s-1980s. Specifically, the work of the state women’s organizations (the Women’s Department of the Fatherland Front and the Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement) for the ‘cultural elevation’ of Muslim women in the country (Turkish, Bulgarian Muslim and Roma women) is studied. Based on archival documentation originating from the structures of the women’s movement, the goals and results of long-term interactions, the motivation of the participants, the reflections of the activities in a political, social and cultural context are analyzed. Along with the main issue, the following are commented on: the nature of the so-called communist feminism and its participation in the assimilationist plans and processes in Bulgaria; the degree of inclusion of political mobilization of Muslim women through the women’s movement and its potential for supporting the social mobility of marginalized communities. The study uses a social historical approach and uses primarily on primary documentation.*

Keywords: *Muslim women; Bulgaria; communist feminism; totalitarianism; assimilation.*

Introduction

Methodological framework. The article examines the policies towards ethno-religious communities led by the totalitarian state in communist Bulgaria in the 1950s–1980s. Specifically, the work of the state women’s organizations (the Women’s Department of the Fatherland Front and the Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement) for the ‘cultural elevation’ of Muslim women in the country (Turkish, Bulgarian Muslim and Roma women) is studied. Based on archival documentation originating from the structures of the women’s movement, the goals and results of long-term interactions, the motivation of the participants, the reflections of the activities in a political, social and cultural context are analyzed. Along with the main issue, the following are commented on: the nature of the so-called communist feminism and its participation in the assimilationist plans and processes in Bulgaria; the degree of inclusion of political mobilization of Muslim women through

the women's movement and its potential for supporting the social mobility of marginalized communities. The study uses a social historical approach and uses primarily on primary documentation.

Political and social context. Immediately after the coup d'état in the autumn of 1944, the Fatherland Front (FF) government that came to power began a transformation of the women's movement in Bulgaria. The central and local leaderships of the largest organization, the Bulgarian Women's Union (BWU), were replaced by representatives of the FF, some members were expelled and arrested, the organization was renamed the Bulgarian People's Union of Women (BPUW) and became highly politicized. After the destruction of the democratic opposition and the establishment of a totalitarian regime, headed by the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), in 1950 the BWU was disbanded and the women's movement came under the auspices of the FF in the form of the Women's Department (Marcheva, 1995; Marcheva, 1998). During this period, it finally lost its feminist character, as it subordinated its aspirations for women's equality to the political tasks of the regime. Even when in 1968 on the instructions of the BCP it was re-established under the name Committee of Bulgarian Women's Movement (CBWM) (Macheva, 2011a), it operated without autonomy, as one of the many organizations of the party-state, which had to keep certain groups of the population in subjection and control their public activity. In this sense, in 1950-1989, a transformation of liberal into communist feminism was noticeable in the Bulgarian women's movement, which was practically a pseudo feminism¹. This could be argued by personalities of the leaders of the women's movement: Tsola Dragoycheva – Chairwoman of the BPUW and of the Women's Department (1945-1968), was an influential political figure in the same period as member of the Politburo of the Central Committee (CC) of the BCP and a long-time Minister; Elena Lagadinova – Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the CBWM (1968–1990), also enjoyed political trust from the authorities as a former partisan and long-time member of the State Council (1971–1990) (see Marcheva, 2005; Marcheva, 2011b; Daskalova, 2016).

Mass organizations in the totalitarian state were completely subordinated to its goals. In this case, women's formations followed its economic, social and cultural policies. They became a tool for social engineering, taking actions against religion and working for the assimilation

¹ For the debates on this issue see Daskalova, 2012, 486-493, who justifies for the opposite view.

of ethno-religious minority communities (Ivanova, 2002; Gruev, 2003; Gruev, Kalionski, 2008; Brunbauer, 2010; Kabakchieva, 2009).

The Women's Movement in Communist Bulgaria and the Mobilization of Muslim Women (1950s–1980s)

Establishment of women's societies with the participation of Muslim women. The political change in 1944 left the BWU with 171 branches – 118 urban, 9 railway and 44 rural (Daskalova, 2012). This required the new BPUW to take rapid measures for its massification, while at the same time taking control of the leadership positions in the branches and 'purging' them of pro-German sympathizers and those accused of pro-Nazi actions². The appeal for massification also affected the regions populated by Muslim women. Until then, there were no societies with their membership in the BWU, except for the special fund at the headquarters called 'The Education of the Rhodopean Pomak Woman', which was closed in 1947³.

In 1945–1950, the BPUW carried out a rapid mobilization of women, tripling its membership and turning it into a mass totalitarian structure. The activities were supported by the women's committees established in December 1944 at the district committees of the FF, formed on a party principle by Bulgarian women who knew Turkish and were usually teachers in Turkish schools⁴. Until the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty (1947), the slogans for the re-education of women in the spirit of people's democracy and the fight against fascist remnants were in progress. The process gained particular momentum in 1949–1950 in response to the order of the BCP to the BPUW to mobilize all women without distinction of nationality, religion and political beliefs, and to begin to educate them politically and civically, to raise their everyday and cultural level, and to detach them from the influence of religion⁵.

Table 1.

year	mem- bers	total num- ber of branches	number of rural branches	branches of Muslim women
1945/06	200 000	2 050	1 900	

² ЦДА [TsDA, Central State Archives], ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 26, л. 8.

³ Пак там, а.е. 24, л. 7.

⁴ Пак там, ф. 28, оп. 1, а.е. 516, л. 1.

⁵ Пак там, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 24, л. 14.

1945/12	240 000	2 810	2 630	
1946	300 000	3 513	3 313	
1947	407 000	3 860	3 540	
1948	426 651	3 900	3 570	
1949	610 000	4 551		1873 in Krumovgrad district, 1420 in Kardzhali district, 1120 in Momchilgrad district
1959				42 in Targovishte district, 4100 Turkish women; 13 in Silistra district, Turkish villages

Source: ЦДА [TsDA, Central State Archives], ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 14, л. 31, 35; а.е.27, л. 118; а.е. 24, л. 14.

Some of the rural societies noted in Table 1. were founded in 1948–1949 by Turkish, Bulgarian Muslim and Roma women. The first ones emerged in Chepino, Chepelare, Kardzhali, Momchilgrad and Ardino (1945), and subsequently affected Southern (districts of Kardzhali, Momchilgrad, Ardino, and Gotse Delchev) and Northeastern Bulgaria (districts of Targovishte, Razgrad, Shoumen, Tutrakan, Ispirih, and Provadia)⁶. In 1949, 45 societies of Turkish women were registered with 7945 members, and the best-organized Turkish women were in Krumovgrad (1873), Kardzhali (1420) and Momchilgrad districts (1120)⁷. Most societies were founded by Bulgarian women – local teachers, school principals, municipal officials, nurses, telegraph operators, wives of military officers and employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who dominated as chairs and in their governing bodies until the end of the 1970s. For example, in the Kardzhali women's society, founded by many Turkish tobacco workers, they only reached the position of deputy district chairs⁸.

When establishing societies, the BPWU acted situationally (campaigning for the BCP in the elections for the 7th Grand Assembly and for municipal councils), and also used various state initiatives: literacy of the population in the Rhodope Mountains, seizure of grain and agricultural products from producers, early sowing of tobacco, competition

⁶ Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 138-139.

⁷ Пак там, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 27, л. 118.

⁸ Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 108, 116-117, 138-139; ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 26, л. 153 гр.

in the implementation of the two-year economic plan, brigade movement, even when celebrating the new women's holiday – March 8th⁹. The founding and initial activities of the societies took the form of entertainments, parties, concerts, meetings, talks, courses, gatherings, demonstrations, giving solemn promises, etc., and according to most reports they were met with enthusiasm and delight and were visited en masse¹⁰. Rarely does official documentation include information about the fear of young Muslim women to participate, due to prohibitions from their husbands, and about the gathering of older women only on Fridays; about the dissatisfaction of Roma women with the outfits; about protests by Turkish women about the lack of fabric for sewing veils and clothing and because of their forced labor in the fields on the festive Friday. Even fewer are the admissions about the impossibility of forming societies or about those that practically do not work due to 'unhealthy moods'¹¹.

Training of active women activists in the women's movement.

Already after 1945, the BPUW began to attract agitators and instructors to work among the Muslim population. At first, they were Bulgarians who spoke Turkish. The inclusion of Turkish or Tatar women was problematic until the end of the 1940s, and this greatly hindered mobilization¹². In 1949–1950, the first full-time instructors were appointed: Elmaz Tatarova – sister of a communist hero, who later made an upward career in the CC of the BCP, and Muzafer Ibryamova/ Ibraimova (Aliieva) from Pleven¹³. Subsequently, their number increased to 3 in the Board and 14 in the district committees in Shoumen, Omurtag, Razgrad, Provadia, Dulovo, Isparih, Kubrat, Rousse, Novi Pazar, Sevlievo, Sliven, Aytos, Karnobat, etc.¹⁴ Their commitment was to visit the vil-

⁹ Пак там, а.е. 337, л. 7-8; а.е. 339, л. 206-206гр.; а.е. 43, л. 96-97; а.е. 14, л. 61-70; ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 140; ф. 28, оп. 9, а.е. 45, л. 14-15, 20-21, 34-34гр., 42-43.

¹⁰ Пак там, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 27, л. 118; а.е. 24, л. 45.

¹¹ Пак там, а.е. 43, л. 102; а.е. 339, л. 51; а.е. 24, л. 180; а.е. 14, л. 73.

¹² Пак там, а.е. 14, л. 10.

¹³ Пак там, а.е. 26, л. 53, 56-57; а.е. 25, л. 69. Elmaz (Blaga) Tatarova (1926-2009) - head of the 'Work among Turks' Sector at the Women's Department of the CC – BCP (1951), instructor at the 'Work among Turks' Department (1955) and at the 'Propaganda and Agitation' Department (until 1979), employee of the 'National Minorities' Department (since 1962) of the CC – BCP, member of the National Committee of the FF, Vice-Chair of the Board of the CBWM (1979–1982), candidate member of the CC – BCP (1966–1989).

¹⁴ ЦДА, ф.7, оп. 1, а.е. 27, л. 119; ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 118.

lages in districts, to hold meetings and assemblies, and to directly campaign on current issues: autumn sowing, implementation of plans and competition between collectives, women's rights, etc. There they answered pressing questions about agricultural pensions, rations in kind, the organization of kindergartens, etc.¹⁵

Since 1950, when the women's movement transitioned to the FF, a targeted recruitment of agitators and activists began to form local women's committees. Usually, these were Muslim women elected as people's (municipal) councilors, awarded as champions for their industrial or agricultural work ('high-achieving women'), teachers, etc.¹⁶

In addition, courses were organized for district activists, in which, by decision of the local FF committees, young women up to 20 years old, members of the Communist Youth Union (64%), the BCP (10%) or the FF (18%) were enrolled. Their education was up to primary (38.2% had completed 4th grade, and 20.6% had completed 7th grade). Most were co-operative farmers. In schools in Gotse Delchev, Velinograd, Chepelare and Smolyan they underwent intensive training aimed at introducing them to the communist ideology and its vision for the women's movement. From these graduates, agitation groups were formed, which gave lectures in Turkish, led literacy and homemaking circles and reading groups¹⁷. For example, in 1958 in Silistra, Turkish women numbered 525 (21%) of all activists. After the decision of the Executive Committee of the FF to work with the Roma population (1958), Roma women were also attracted as agitators¹⁸. In 1959, the district women's committees included about 29 Turkish and Roma women (an average of 11% of their composition), and their number in the local ones was significant. Usually these were teachers, students or officials in the FF, most of whom were members of the BCP (Table 2).

¹⁵ Пак там, ф. 7, оп.1, а.е. 27, л. 119; а.е. 26, л. 56-57, 153 гр.; а.е. 14, л. 61-70.

¹⁶ Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 108, 123; ф.7, оп. 1, а.е. 26, л. 153 гр.; а.е. 14, л. 10; ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 44, л. 16, 39-65. Examples are Ayshe Mestanova from Jebel, a striker in the tobacco industry who became an organizer in the National Committee of the FF (1949), and Fatme Gul from Silistra, a holder of two Orders of Labor, who was attracted to the activists.

¹⁷ ЦДА, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 339, л. 49-50.

¹⁸ Пак там, ф. 28, оп. 15, а.е. 27, л. 157-157гр.

Table 2.

District Women's Commissions, 1959	number of Turkish women	number of Roma women	rate, %
Plovdiv	3	0	12
Sliven	3	2	
Bourgas	1	0	
Blagoevgrad	0	2	
Pleven	1	1	10
Dobrich	5	0	
Rousse	3	0	
Shoumen	2	0	
Isperih	6	0	
Total	24	5	
Local Women's Committees, 1959			
Sliven	3	1	
Silistra	150		

Source: ЦДА [TsDA, Central State Archives], ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 139; ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 45, л. 23-25, 234-316.

At the end of the 1950s, these paid or voluntary collaborators of the women's committees came up with dubiously exaggerated data about their extensive work with Muslim women: for example, they reported that in 1959 in the district of Madan they held 700 meetings with 25 thousand women, in the district of Momchilgrad – resp. 486 with 10895 women, and in the district of Krumovgrad – resp. 150 with 4500 women¹⁹.

During the restructuring of the women's movement in 1968 – separation from the FF and separation into the CBWM, more Muslim, Tatar and Turkish women entered its Board and municipal structures: Elmaz Tatarova, Nadie Ferhadova (Nadia Asparuhova), Saliha Adilova-Elihmanova and Muzein Dorgudova became members of the Board, and the first two were also its vice-chairs. This participation of as many as 4 women is the result not of true empowerment, but of the escalation of the assimilation process against the Turks, Roma and Bulgarian Muslims in the country, in which the party-state sought allies among their intellectuals and of support in the state mass organizations. The members of this governing body met exactly the expectations of

¹⁹ Пак там, а.е. 26, л. 57-60.

the authorities, ignoring their ethno-religious identity in favor of party-political affiliation²⁰.

Muslim women in the focus of the women's movement in communist Bulgaria (1950s–1980s)

The so-called communist feminism in Bulgaria completely served the totalitarian government and its social engineering projects. Part of them was the fiction of ‘building’ a society without religion and the ambition to create an ethnically homogeneous nation-state, populated only by Bulgarians.

The official beginning of the atheist policy in the country was given in 1957 by a decision of the Political bureau (PB) of the CC of the BCP, although the previous decade was marked by a clash of ‘godless’ communism with all denominations in Bulgaria. This also applies to Islam, which was also associated with the possible influence of neighboring Turkey. For this reason, all Muslims were viewed simultaneously as carriers of ‘bourgeois remnants’, potential spies and enemies of the government. However, they must form the ‘backbone’ of the new class of cooperative peasants, and therefore it is planned to ‘erode’ their religiosity.

For this purpose, the BCP and all its affiliated organizations began to work continuously and methodically. The women’s committees of the FF were no exception. Motivated by atheistic propaganda, their leaders accepted religious identity as ‘religious fanaticism’, which was a major obstacle to the inclusion of Muslim women in the ‘socialist way of life’ and, in the longer term, to their ethno-religious assimilation (Brunbauer, 2010, p. 308-375, 441-448). From the perspective of extremely negative social stereotypes, women from minority communities are described as standing ‘culturally low compared to other women’, who need to be influenced ‘according to all the rules of cultural elevation’²¹

In the 1950s and 1960s, women's committees primarily ‘targeted’ the veiling clothing as an important symbol of Muslim women's religious identity (see Gruev, Kalionski, 2008; Nazarska, 2009; Muratova, 2012; Petkova, 2015; Burnaski, 2019). Since 1958, when the status of a national minority of Turks was revoked and when the PB of the CC of the BCP decided to impose ‘European clothing’ on all Turkish women in honor of the 15th anniversary of the coup d’état of September

²⁰ ПаК там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 111-112.

²¹ ПаК там, ф. 28, оп. 18, а.е. 50, л. 83-88, 147-154; оп. 16, а.е. 48, л. 59.

9th, 1944, women's committees began a comprehensive agitation aimed at unveiling. In their speeches at meetings and in personal conversations, the agitators and activists unequivocally stated to the tobacco workers that they expected them not only to fulfill the five-year economic plan in a shorter time and to achieve higher yields. They should work in the fields without veils, and that those awarded state orders and medals should serve as an example²². The women's committees carried out similar propaganda during the organized 'friendly Bulgarian-Turkish celebrations', evenings, dinners, sittings with literary and theatrical programs, etc. on the occasion of Women's Day – March 8th²³. In the 1960s, many of these events were held under the motto 'the veil – an enemy of the Turkish woman'²⁴. Turkish and Roma women themselves were involved in the broad campaign to replace veils with secular clothing. Because of these actions in 1959, 348 Turkish women in the Targovishte region gave up their veils, and according to other data, probably exaggerated, about 60-70% of women in the Silistra region. Success was noted in the Kardzhali and Targovishte regions too²⁵. On the other hand, in the 1960s, women's committees reported religious resistance, supported by men among the Turkish women in the Bourgas region and in the Bulgarian Muslim settlements of Blagoevgrad region.

An atheistic focus was also given to the courses for activists and for 'increasing domestic culture' (in sewing and cooking), conducted by the women's committees in the 1960s²⁶. The center of their syllabi was the introduction of secular clothing, but content of lectures touched on a wide range of religious issues, for example, 'scientific and reactionary nature of religion; harmful influence of religious rites; role of the family in atheist upbringing'. During the training, the leaders purposefully explained the need for new dishes that violated religious taboos, as well as the benefits of abortions, forbidden by Allah. According to them, 'we there must fight them [the Bulgarian Muslim women in the Smolyan region] because they give birth to many [babies]'²⁷. The

²² As early as the 1950s, the women's movement encouraged Muslim women to ignore religious prohibitions - to plant tobacco on the holyday of Friday and to work with men in the fields.

²³ ЦДА, ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 47, л. 13-15, 44-49, 61-70; оп. 15, а.е. 26, л. 3-8, 15-17, 23-25, 57-60.

²⁴ Пак там, оп. 16, а.е. 48, л. 86-105.

²⁵ Пак там, а.е. 45, л. 26-28, 45-46.

²⁶ Пак там, а.е. 48, л. 59. For the courses of domestic culture, see Brunbauer, 2010, p. 364-365; Muratova, 2012; Petkova, 2015.

²⁷ ЦДА, ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 48, л. 71.

‘re-education’ also included the prevention of early marriage – another tradition sanctioned by Islam, but which the activists denounced as ‘hooliganism’²⁸.

In the 1970s–1980s, the new women's formation – the CBWM, actively participated in the introduction of the new socialist holiday-ritual system, which was constructed according to the Soviet pattern and was imposed with the resources of all party-state institutions, the BCP and its satellite mass organizations. Basing on ‘For further improvement of the work among the Bulgarian Turks and their full inclusion in the Bulgarian people in the struggle for socialism and communism’ resolution (1969) the PB of the CC of the BCP gave an explicit task to the CBWM to work for ‘fuller inclusion’ of Turks ‘in the economic, socio-political and cultural life, for increasing their labor and socio-political activity, for raising their class-party, patriotic and international education, for their personal improvement and moral improvement’²⁹.

For this purpose, in the 1970s, when Bulgarian Muslims were forcibly renamed, with the instructions of the Board, all district and municipal councils of the CBWM began to work against ‘religious prejudices’ in cooperation with the committees of the FF and the so-called houses for socialist life and culture³⁰. In the Blagoevgrad, Smolyan, Pazardzhik, Lovech and Plovdiv regions, thematic exhibitions, lectures, conferences, meetings and conversations were held against the naming of children with ‘Arabic names’, in ‘helping’ mothers' decisions not to have many children and explaining how to use ‘family planning’³¹.

Despite their intentions, the district leaderships of the CBWM did not report any successes. In a report on the work of the local committees of the FF and the CBWM in Smolyan (1970), the impossibility of defeating ‘domestic conservatism’, i.e. the adherence to early marriages, girls dropping out of school after primary education, the unquestioning compliance with the authority of parents and husbands, the young women’s failure to comply with the statement that veils and shalwars were ‘scars left over from Turkish slavery’. The activists of the CBWM reported that it is impossible to ‘influence and accelerate to the necessary extent the process towards the voluntary and internally convinced restoration of Bulgarian names’, despite their arguments that they were

²⁸ Пак там, л. 73.

²⁹ Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 5, а.е. 75, л. 20.

³⁰ Пак там, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 124.

³¹ Пак там, оп. 4, л.18; а.е. 36, л. 5, 15, 30; а.е 59, л. 31- 34.

'imposed on them during Turkish slavery' 'with violence, with sword and with fire', by the 'shameful, disgraceful and barbaric assimilationist policy of Turkish feudalism'³².

The CBWM followed the established direction in its work with Muslim women in the late 1970s, when party policy was directed towards the assimilation of Bulgarian Turks. As noted by the chairwoman of its Board, Elena Lagadinova, the CBWM must 'find its special place in the great task of integrating Bulgarian Turks into Bulgarian politics', i.e. Turkish women should feel 'what the state does for women, for the family and for children', and form a socialist consciousness within themselves. 'Working with delicacy and intelligence', she advised. In 1977, the leadership outlined strategies for separating Turkish women from family households, where they were under the influence of 'domestic conservatism', speaking Turkish, listening to radio broadcasts in Turkish, living in isolation and wearing traditional clothing. It was proposed to turn them into factory workers, to increase their employment and enrolling their children in kindergartens, where they will be under the supervision of Bulgarian teachers. The CBWM was planning to initiate the introduction of 'decent work attire for Bulgarian Turkish women' and to insist on the introduction of a unified ritual in weddings with the aim of 'incorporating their holidays and traditions into ours'³³.

As early as October 1985, when the forced renaming of Turks with Bulgarian names began, at the suggestion of Nadia Asparuhova – a Board member and a Turk by origin, the CBWM discussed the opening of language and political courses for Turkish women, who were considered as mothers of key figures in replacing the Turkish language with Bulgarian³⁴. In 1987–1988 the district and municipal chairs, instructors and the CBWM Board members, together with activists of the FF, and the ministries of education and health, agitated in favor of the assimilation process in Turkish population districts (Rousse, Razgrad, Shoumen, Targovishte, Dobrich, and Silistra). They published articles in the press, gave lectures in 'family clubs', led 1400 courses on 'domestic culture', held thematic meetings dedicated to the 'education of a patriotic young generation', etc.³⁵.

³² Пак там, л. 85-118.

³³ Пак там, оп. 5, а.е. 75, л. 1-7.

³⁴ Пак там, ф. 1Б, оп. 89, а.е. 45, л. 13-20.

³⁵ Пак там, оп. 63, а.е. 37, л. 32-34; ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 320, л. 5-9.

In the summer of 1989, when mass protests of Muslims began in Bulgaria and the totalitarian state proceeded with their complete deportation to Turkey, the CBWM activists made trips to monitor the mood of the population. In their meetings, they propagated that it was not the state policy of assimilation, but the efforts of the capitalist West to ‘erode socialism’ that were to blame for mass emigration³⁶.

Conclusion

The Bulgarian women's movement was subordinate to the totalitarian party-state and served its goals and policies. In contrast, in the previous period in the 1950s–1980s, it managed to mobilize Muslim women and include some of them in its hierarchies, but it encountered increasing resistance from шрен, as it got involved in the policies of social engineering and replacement of the ethnic and religious identity of Muslim women in the country. In the 1960s–1980s, it fully supported and worked in favor of the assimilation process.

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³⁶ Пак там, л. 63-67.

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The Spontaneous and Forced Assimilation of the Turkish Women in Urban and Rural Environment during the Socialist Period in Bulgaria (Examples from the Svishtov Region)

Abstract: *During the totalitarian communist regime (1944–1989) in Bulgaria, inconsistent policies of displacement, targeted integration, forced and coercive assimilation were implemented to reduce the size of the Muslim communities in the country. Their renaming in 1984/1985, called „Revival Process“ by the state authorities, was a continuation and final stage that ended in the re-settlement wave to Turkey during the summer of 1989, defined as „ethnic cleansing“. The article presents the life trajectories of two Turkish women in rural and urban environment, which are very different but also similar, because of their reactions to the forced assimilation measures including the change of their personal names. The paper discusses how the state policy influences their ethnicity and integration into the local Turkish and Bulgarian communities.*

Keywords: *Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria; communist regime; spontaneous and forced assimilation.*

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Естествена и насилствена асимилация на турските жени в градска и селска среда през социалистическия период в България (примери от района на Свищов)

Преди 40 години, в рамките на политиката на насилствена асимилация спрямо мюсюлманите в България, се извършва задължителна кампания за замяна на турско-арабските и персийските

им имена с български и славянски. *Българизацията* на общностите, изповядващи ислямска религия (турци, помаци¹, кримски татари² и голяма част от ромите), „скриването“ и трансформирането на културното наследство от Османския период (1396 – 1878 г.) са постоянна линия във вътрешната политика на българската държава още от края на XIX и началото на XX век, и най-вече – след установяването на независима българска държава през 1908 г. През тоталитарния комунистически режим (1944 – 1989 г.) се изпълняват непоследователни политики на изселване, целенасочена интеграция, принудителна и насилствена асимилация, насочени към намаляване на числеността на мюсюлманските общности в страната. В началото на 80-те години на XX век мнозинството от помаците и ромите са принудени да „спазват“ друг начин на живот, разграничаващи ги от ислямската религия и турските културни влияния, включително личните им имена са заменени с български. Преименуването от 1984/1985 г., наречено от комунистическите власти „Възродителен процес“, е продължение и финален етап от провежданата асимилация. Засегнати са най-вече турците, кримските татари и малкото помаци и роми, успели да запазят мюсюлманските си имена. В идеологическата пропаганда се използват тезите, че в България няма етнически малцинства, че те са потомци на ислямизирани българи през Османския период, че те трябва да бъдат „възродени“ към истинския си български корен. Прилага се управленска програма от мерки, целяща етнокултурно обезличаване и интеграция в състава на „единната социалистическа нация“. Тя обаче е неуспешна, което води до последния акт на комунистическата власт през 1989 г., наричан в българските научни изследвания „изселване“ и „Голямата екскурзия“, или като едно от най-големите по своя мащаб „етнически прочиствания“ в световната история. В рамките на няколко месеца, от май до август, са изселени над 320 000 турци и други мюсюлмани с туристически визи от България и получили бежански статут в Турция (Kamusella, 2019).

¹ Наричани в българските научни изследвания „българи мюсюлмани“, „българи мохамедани“, докато в чуждите – помаци, българоезични или славяноезични мюсюлмани (Вж. Lubanska, 2015). В настоящата статия ще се използва самоопределението на по-голяма част от общността им.

² Те са известни и наричани в научните изследвания и само като „татари“. Предците на съвременните татари се заселват в България предимно от Крим след Кримската война 1853–1856 г. (вж. Еролова, 2010, с.25-100).

40-та годишнина от т. нар. „Възродителен процес“ ме накара да си спомня, да преосмисля неговите ефекти и последици, както и да насоча вниманието си към индивидуалния опит и преживяване, и по-конкретно – към две жени от турската общност, чийто живот протича в селска и в градска среда.

Методологични и теоретични рамки на изследването

Днес са направени редица исторически изследвания върху политиката на насилствена асимилация на турците и другите мюсюлмански общности между 1984 и 1989 г. в България (Eminov, 1997; Стоянов, 1998; Бюксеншютц, 2000; Маева, 2006; Груев и Калъонски, 2008; и др.). Те акцентират предимно върху осъществяваните мерки за етническо обезличаване. В периода на т.нар. „Възродителен процес“ са проведени също така редица етнографски изследвания (напр. АИЕФЕМ, а.е. 1307-III), от които можем да говорим по-скоро за обратния ефект на асимилационната политика и „възраждането“ на отпадащи традиции, практики и нагласи на мюсюлманите. Все още недостатъчно дискутиран остава начинът на живот на засегнатите мюсюлмани преди и след 1984/1985 г. Въпреки опитите за демографско инженерство³ или на „етническо прочистване“ на комунистическата власт, делът на мюсюлманите според официалните данни се запазва. Според статистическите данни 938 418 (13.35%) от общо 7 029 349 души са мюсюлманите („мохамедани“) през 1946 г., а в първото преброяване след 1989 г., в условията на парламентарна демокрация, 1 110 295 д. (13%) от общо 8 487 317 души посочват, че изповядват ислямска религия (НСИ, без дата).

От началото на 1990-те години до днес, в условията на продължителни периоди на икономически и политически кризи, сред мюсюлманите, а и в цялото българско общество, се наблюдава идеализиране на социалната сигурност през социалистическия период, дори и парадоксалното чувство на носталгия (Тепавичаров, 2019). Под „повърхността“ на тази *носталгия* съществува обаче и друг наратив – този за асимилацията.

За дефинирането на „асимилацията“ на дадена общност съществуват десетки научни схващания (Karimi and Wilkes, 2023), датиращи от 1920-те години (Park, 1914) и използващи примери за имигранти или етнически малцинства в различни части на света

³ За термина „демографско инженерство“ вж. (Weiner, Teitelbaum, 2001, p. 54-64).

(Hirschman, 1983). Тя може да бъде планирана или непланирана, да се осъществи без или чрез различни видове принуда (Ballard, 2015). Обосновават се противоречиви възгледи за това дали асимилацията е *двупосочен социален процес*, в който човек или малцинство биват асимилирани в група или общество, като двете страни (асимилираната и асимилиращата) си взаимодействат, но едната може да бъде по-засегната (Fichter 1957, 229), или е *еднопосочен процес*, в който „социално доминиращите групи определят условията за интеграция (Young, 2002, p.216). Една от най-известните класически теоретични концепции е тази за прогресивната приобщаваща асимилация на американския социолог Милтън Гордън (Gordon, 1964). Нейната употреба често се прави с уговорката, че тя се нуждае от допълнителни обяснения (вж. Williams and Ortega, 1990). Според М. Гордън, асимилацията включва седем взаимосвързани етапа: 1) културна асимилация (малцинството възприема език, облекло, музика и други културни елементи и практики от обществото мнозинство); 2) структурна асимилация (участие на малцинството в социални, икономически и други структури на мнозинството); 3) брачна асимилация (висок брой на сключените бракове с представители на мнозинство); 4) идентификационна асимилация (развитие на чувство за принадлежност с мнозинството); 5) възприемане на нагласите (липса на предразсъдъци); 6) възприемане на поведението (липса на дискриминация); 7) гражданска асимилация (липса на конфликт за власт и норми, напр. контрол над раждаемостта и др.). Първият етап – културната асимилация, може да се появи без останалите стадии, но ако структурната се появи, едновременно или след културната, то тогава и останалите етапи на асимилация настъпват (Gordon, 1964).

Спрямо събраната теренна информация, отнасяща се до ситуацията на мюсюлманите в България и политиката спрямо тях, концепцията на М. Гордън изглежда релевантна, но все пак тя би могла да се приложи условно, тъй като представителите на различните етнически общности, изповядващи ислямска религия, живеят в различни части на страната (град или село, планински, полски или морски район, в гранична зона или вътрешността на страната), компактно или разпръснато, повлияни са по-различен начин от идеологическата пропаганда и технологичната модернизация, имат различна степен на образование, религиозност, към тях се прилагат различни целенасочени мерки в различни периоди от

време. В рамките на седемте етапа, бихме могли да отнесем количествени или качествени данни за отделните мюсюлмански общности, за да проследим степента им на асимилация. В този контекст настоящото изследване се фокусира върху качествени данни, като чрез два случая (*case studies*) от турската общност се търсят индивидуални отговори на въпросите: дали и по какъв начин осъществяват политически мерки на насилствена асимилация в периода 1984/1985-1989 г. рефлексират върху естествената асимилация на турците в българското общество? Какви промени настъпват в резултат на т.нар. „Възродителен процес“ – интеграция в състава на „единната българска нация“ или утвърждаване на малцинственото самосъзнание? Дискутирайки две различни, но пресичащи се жизнени траектории, на две жени в градска и селска среда, смятам, че изследването би внесло допълнителни нюанси към наратива за жертвите и пострадалите от т.нар. „Възродителен процес“. Разглежданите случаи не представят драматични житейски обрати, а по-скоро страховете и разочарованието на турски жени от т.нар. „работническа класа“, които се стремят да продължат да живеят по същия начин, по който са го правели преди 1984/1985 г. Дискусицията върху личните истории на тези две жени, които са двете ми баби, се основава на автоетнографски подход (Ellis, Adams and Vochner, 2010), който комбинира биографичен и етнографски метод на изследване (Vochner, 1984, p. 595; Maso, 2001). Акцент е поставен върху техните преживявания, социален и професионален опит, важни моменти в живота им, които са ми разказвани от тях самите, както и от майка ми. Също така са включени и мои наблюдения и спомени за културните им порядки, представи и нагласи, отношенията им с представителите на *нашата* турска общност и на заобикалящото ни българско население, както и за възпитанието, което се опитвах да ми дадат. Моята роля в изследването е едновременно и на внучка, и на изследовател (Agar, 1985, p. 12).

Животът на Рузие и Фатме/Гюлтен между естествена и насилствена асимилация

В хода на това изследване и в подготовката на настоящата статия следва да направя няколко уточнения. Въпреки че имам чувство за принадлежност към турската местна общност в родния ми град Свищов, досега съм се въздържала от проучвания в нея, тъй като не бях убедена дали мога да поставя дистанцията, необ-

ходима за едно обективно научно проучване. От друга страна, спомените ми, разказите на близките ми за отминали периоди биха били източник на информация, който не е бил достъпен за други изследователи. В допълнение на автоетнографския подход, интервюта съм провеждала с двете жени, с цел събиране на съпътстваща и обяснителна информация за фотографски материали, които притежават. Част от тях дигитализирах през 2011–2012 г. и 2014–2015 г. в рамките на проект „Документиране на прединдустриалните елементи в културата на малцинствата в България през 20 век“, финансиран по програма „Застрашени архиви“ на Британска библиотека (EAP500). Изборът ми да се фокусирам върху личните истории на две жени – майката на баща ми, баба Фатме/Гюлтен, и майката на майка ми, баба Рузие, като два контрастиращи, но и допълващи се случая, очертават не само пространствата на турската жена в селото и в града, но и промените, които настъпват в мисленето и начина им на живот, както и на техните семейства, преди и след 1984/1985 г. Разбира се, техните съдби не са представителни за жените в турска общност в България, но все пак смятам, че биха допринесли за разбирането на живота на турците в Северна централна България, мястото им в българското общество и „сблъсъка им“ с т.нар. „Възродителен процес“. Преди да бъдат представени разказите за баба Рузие и баба Фатме/Гюлтен е важно да бъдат отчетени характеристиките на двете селища, в които протича по-голяма част от жизнените им пътища, и които най-вероятно оказват влияние върху етнокултурната им и гражданска идентичност, както и възможностите им за образование и професионална реализация.

Новград е малко село, разположено от двете страни на главния път между гр. Свищов и Русе. Въпреки че отстои на около 60 км от Русе, то е част от административно-териториалната структура на Русенска област. Най-близкият град до Новград е Свищов, част от Великотърновска област, като разстоянието между тях е 19 км. През социализма двете селища тогава са част съответно от Русенски окръг, Разградска област и Великотърновски окръг, Ловешка област. Независимо че попадат в различни управленски административни структури, културната, образователната и социалната активност на жителите в Новград е ориентирана предимно към по-близкия Свищов. През годините числеността на новградчани варира между 800-1000 души. Етническият им състав включва българи, турци, роми с преферирано турско самосъзнание

и татари, придошли от с. Дебово, Плевенско, а религиозният – православни християни и мюсюлмани-сунити. В пространството на селището двете религиозни общности могат да бъдат обособени условно в две части, като от лявата страна на главния път Свищов – Русе живеят мюсюлманите, а от дясната – българите. Не ми е известно тези две части да имат свои неофициални названия. Още през социалистическия период българите и турците са обединени от заетостта им в земеделския поминък и изградените индустриални предприятия. В селото има църква „Св. Димитър“, както и месджид. Имало е и старо училище до църквата. Неговата сграда е построена през 1890 г. Там първоначално се е помещавало българското начално училище до 1943 г., а през 1927 г. в една от класните стаи се учредява и народното читалище „Христо Ботев“. Впоследствие то е било местено в различни частни и общински сгради до 1965 г., когато е построена специална сграда в центъра на селото. Читалището функционира активно до днес. В старото училище за определен период се е помещавало и турското начално училище по спомени на местните турци и по архивни източници (ДА – Велико Търново, ф. 183, оп.1, а.е. 10). През 60-те години сградата е превърната в музей, в който са експонирани археологически артефакти, исторически документи, даващи информация от делата на Хаджи Димитър и Стефан Караджа до местната работническа младежка организация (РМС). След 1989 г. музеят е затворен и заради липсата на материална поддръжка постепенно изпада в много лошо състояние до 2022 г., когато е реновиран и превърнат в етнографска експозиция. Българското училище през 1943 г. е превърнато в прогимназия „Алеко Константинов“, което към днешна дата ще бъде затворено, заради липсата на ученици.

Любопитен факт от историята на близкото минало в селото, за който допринася и читалището, е изграждането на култ към руския и съветски държавник, организатор на Октомврийската революция и първи министър-председател на Съветския съюз – Владимир Илич Ленин (1870–1924). През 1974 г. местни жители българи и турци с доброволни дарения и труд построяват голям около триметров паметник в центъра на селището, който може да бъде видян и днес. По името на Ленин са били наименувани местната детска градина и трудовото кооперативно земеделско стопанство (ТКЗС). През първата събота и неделя на ноември всяка година в селото се провежда общоселски празник („сбор“), чиито корени най-веро-

ятно трябва да се търсят в храмовия празник, посветен на св. Димитър, който се е отбелязвал на 8 ноември по стар стил преди 1944 г., но след установяването на комунистическия режим най-вероятно е бил отнесен към Октомврийската революция, чиято годишнина се отбелязва на 7 ноември.

В миналото не са сключвани смесени бракове между представителите на различните етнически общности с изключение на турците и татарите, а днес има няколко между българи и турци. Въпреки съществуващите етнокултурни пространствени и брачни *граници*, до голяма степен общата трудова заетост, общите паметници, общата празничност, участието в общи културни и образователни структури създават чувство за локална принадлежност. В това село са родени и двете ми баби. В моите детски спомени от летните ми ваканции, в селото не е имало престъпност и вратите дори не се заключваха. Българските и турските деца растяха заедно и често ходеха на разходка до близката река Янтра или на кино в читалището „Христо Ботев“.

Свищов е малък град, център на община, в която са включени 16 селища. Историята на Свищов е известна с нейните будни и активни личности като Филип Сакеларевич (неизв. дата на раждане –1812), Драган Цанков (1828–1911), Иван Шишманов (1862–1928), Алеко Константинов (1863–1898), Цветан Радославов (1863–1931) и други, както и дарители, благодарение на които се основани търговската гимназия „Димитър Хадживасилев“, стопанската академия „Д. А. Ценов“, както и първото българско народно читалище „Еленка и Кирил Д. Аврамови (1856). Всеки жител още от ранна възраст е възпитаван в местните училища да познава и да се гордее с тези имена. Важни предпоставки за икономическото развитие на селището през социализма са химическият комбинат „Свилоса“, заводът за винопроизводство „Винпром Свищов“ (днес “Винарна Свищов”), консервната фабрика, търговските предприятия, както и Селскостопанската академия „Д. Ценов“, в която се обучават български и чуждестранни студенти. През годините населението варира между 30 000 – 50 000 души, но днес е един от най-бързо обезлюдяващите се градове. Етническата структура на населението включва българи, турци и турчещи се роми, а в религиозно – православни християни, протестанти и католици, и мюсюлмани сунити. По спомени на местни турци преди 1944 г. е имало няколко махали с мюсюлмани, но в резултат на преселването на турците към Турция през 1950/1951 г. общността

им намалява, като днес тя е между 5 и 6 процента от общия брой на населението като цяло. Най-голямата запазена махала на мюсюлманите се формира около т.нар. „Баир“ джамия, която функционира и до днес. Тя е известна под името „Чифте кафене“, заради кафенето и сладкарницата на първия етаж от частен дом. Малка част от турците и ромите мюсюлмани са добре образовани и интегрирани в различни обществени сектори. Сред турците още през социалистическия период има лекари, учители, банкови служители и т.н. Т.е., бихме могли да кажем, че още преди т. нар. „Възродителен процес“ мюсюлманите са част от местната общност, поддържайки добри социални взаимоотношения, изградени в контекста на трудовата им заетост, съседски и приятелски контакти. Общоселищният празник е ежегодният панаир, посветен на един от най-практикуваните поминъци – грозде- и винопроизводството. Той се провежда в центъра на града всяка година през последната събота и неделя на септември. Повод за среща е на местните жители, както и на тези, които живеят в други населени места. Тук следва и да се каже, че за собствениците на лозя, включително и турци, важен празник е и Трифон Зарезан, отбелязван по традиция на 1 февруари. Въпреки чувство за локална принадлежност на християни и на мюсюлмани, подобно на Новград, така и тук, смесени бракове между представителите на отделните религиозни и етнически общности почти не са сключвани. След 1989 г. стремежът към брачна и религиозна ендегамия отпада. В Свищов съм живяла до 1993 г., а след това често посещавах града, заради близките си.

Разказът за Рузие Махмудова (1935 – 2022), с. Новград

Баба Рузие е родена през 1935 г. Тя има още две сестри и брат, който умира млад. Тя завършва турското начално училище в селото. Не е посещавала българско училище, заради което беше неграмотна писмено, но говоримо владееше разбираем български. Омъжва се през 1950 г. за Кемал Шабанов. Имат три деца – две дъщери и един син. Тъй като е била много малка, когато се жени, баба Рузие израства в семейството на дядо ми, и започва да възприема рода на дядо му като неин. Помня, че с по-голямо уважение се отнасяше към неговите роднини, отколкото към своите, а никога не се е опитвала да ме сближи към последните. С изключение на двете ѝ сестри и техните семейства, почти не познавам никой друг

от нейния род. Семейството на дядо Кемал е било уважавано в турската и в българската общност. Неговата баба Юзюле е била ходжа (в смисъл на самоука в религиозното познание). Месджидът, който мюсюлманите в селото наричат „джамия“, е в съседния на къщата на семейството на дядо заден имот. Неговият баща е бил пощальон. Имал е файтон, с който е пътувал до Свищов и обратно до Новград. Той е починал млад и аз съм го виждала само на портретна снимка със съпругата му – прабаба ми Фатме. За времето си тази работа е считана за „престижна“, тъй като е била свързана и с научаване на новини и информация от града. Поне с такова впечатление останах, когато кметът на селото дойде на погребението на дядо Кемал и разказа, освен за дядо, и за баща му.

След женитбата на баба Рузие и дядо Кемал, те заминават да живеят в гр. Свищов за около 10 години. Първото им дете, леля ми, се ражда там през 1957 г. По спомени на баба Рузие, тогава са били „бедни години“ и са се завърнали в с. Новград в края на 50-те години. Майка ми е родена през 1960 г. в местната здравна служба. Баба Рузие започва да работи в местен цех за производство на телени мрежи и пружини за легла, където работят местни българки и туркини. С дядо ми заедно построяват къща тип „образцов дом“ пред старата си кирпичена и по този начин предният им двор се разполага на улицата, на която живеят българи. По този начин имотът има два изхода – преден централен и заден. Пространството на дома им попада между българската и мюсюлманската махала, което според мен е ключов фактор за определяне на социалните им контакти освен с турци, така и с българи, както и за научаването и практикуването на български език. Спомням си, че баба Рузие се събираше както и с местните туркини пред дома на съседката ни в задния двор, така и с българските си съседки на пейките пред техните къщи. Най-често съм я чувала да споменава за две нейни приятелки. Едната беше туркиня, нейна братовчедка и съименничка, която тя наричаше *Ааретим* (в прев. приятелката ми), а другата беше съседката леля Стефка. По задушниците баба Рузие получаваше варено жито и други храни, тя пък, от своя страна, на нашите празници ходеше да им раздава мекици. Детските ми спомени са, че на 6-и май отбелязвахме Хъдърлез, а българските съседки – Гергьовден. Обща практика беше да се коли агне – курбан. У дома правехме специална кирпичена пещ, в която печехме освен нашето месо и това на съседите. В дома на баба Рузие се отбелязваха и религиозните празници – Рамазан и Курбан Байрам. Тогава

се посещаваха гробищата и се приготвяха определени храни, сред които баклава, мекици, бухти и други. Празник беше и селският събор, когато много роднини посещаваха дома на баба и дядо, а тя приготвяше по няколко кофи с кюфтета. Беше гостоприемна, но предимно при посещенията на роднините ни.

Дядо Кемал работеше като тракторист в местната земеделска кооперация. Той е имал мотор в началото на 60-те години и с него се е придвижвал до околните градове Баба Рузие ми е разказвала, че са ходели с него заедно по банкети. За първи път се е возила на този мотор, когато са отивали на банкет до Русе. Тя обаче се страхувала и не знаела, когато имало завой, каква стойка да заеме и се накланяла неправилно. Дядо Кемал се ядосал и я оставил на автогарата в гр. Бяла, откъдето тя да се придвижи с автобус до Русе.

Дядо Кемал беше много трудолюбив, скромен и сравнително заможен. В неговия род имаше репутация на строг, но справедлив. Неговата дума не се оспорваше от нито едно от децата му, внуците му, сестрите му или племенниците му. Моята майка ми е разказвала, че е отстъпвал само пред неговата майка – прабаба ми Фатме, а баба Рузие винаги е мълчала и се е съобразявала с решенията на прабаба ми и дядо ми. Имам смътни детски спомени за прабаба Фатме, която почина някъде в края на 80-те. Тя живееше в кирпичената къща. Винаги носеше шалвари и беше забрадена с бяла памучна кърпа, чиито краища бяха извезани на една кука. Тя не е работила никога, а дядо е трябвало от малък да работи, за да се грижи за семейството. За разлика от нейното облекло, баба ми Рузие почти винаги е била облечена с пола, дълга малко под коляното и не се е забраждала. По нейните разкази – това е било изискване на дядо Кемал, който ѝ бил казал: „живеем и работим сред българи, не може да ходиш облечена с шалвари“. Обличаше шалвари, които сама си шиеше, само в случаи на *мевлиди* (събирания на жените мюсюлманки по повод на религиозни възпоменания, в които изпълняват различни молитви). Забраждаше се, без да си покрива изцяло косата, освен в случаи на мевлиди, така и ако имаха гости от Турция, и за постоянно – след като дядо почина през 1999 г.

Баба Рузие имаше специфична религиозност, практикуваше битова форма на ислям и имаше някои вярвания, противоречащи на ислямския канон. Тя знаеше да се моли на арабски и турски, държеше да се женим за мюсюлмани „от нашия миллет“, да се спазва традицията на сунет (обрязване) при момчетата. Спомням

си, че на мевлиди правеше забележка на другите жени в каква последователност да се изпълняват молитвите на арабски език. В същото време знаеше как да бае срещу уроки, да лекува чрез народни средства и някои ирационални практики. Ако я болеше стомаха, тя отпийваше малко ракия. Ако мен ме болеше стомаха, ми даваше чаша с чаена лъжичка сода бикарбонат, в която е капнала оцет. Като малка имах и малък „кокоши трън“ (брадавица, кожно образувание) на една от дланите си. „Лечението“, което баба Рузие ми приложи, бе да заколи пиле и да зарови кост от него под камък на близкия кръстопът. Тя почиташе и паметника на Вл. Ленин. Участвала е с доброволен труд при строежа му и беше против разрушаването му след 1989 г.

Светът на баба Рузие се простираше до Свищов, Русе и Никопол, като предпочиташе най-много да си стои къщи. Това бяха граничните точки на познатото ѝ пространство. Смяташе, че в този район живеят чисти турци, с които трябва да се женим. Тя държеше да се спазва брачна ендогамия. Тя не е пътувала извън тези градове. Дори не обичаше да ни идва на гости в Свищов, особено ако е с преспиване.

За зимата на 1984/1985 г., когато се провежда смяната на имената, ми е разказвала повече майка ми и по-малко баба ми. В Свищов този процес се провежда по работните места на мюсюлманите и предхожда по време преименуването в Новград. Когато началникът на майка ми ѝ казал, че трябва да си смени името, тя отвърнала „че не може да вземе такова решение, без да е говорила с баща си“. Много скоро след това следва и акцията по смяната на имената на мюсюлманите в Новград. Тя се извършва през нощта, като органите на реда са посещавали семействата къща по къща. Няколко мъже оказват съпротива и биват затворени. Единият от тях скоро след като бива освободен, умира. Веднъж попитах баба ми – не са ли са се противопоставили на смяната на имената, а тя ми отвърна: че „никой нито се е радвал да си сменя името, нито е било доброволно“. Синът на баба, вуйчо ми, по това време е отбивал военната си служба в Бургас. Баба Рузие и дядо Кемал са намерили начин да се свържат с него по телефона и са му казали да не се противопоставя на смяната на името, за да не му се случи нещо лошо. Българското име на баба е било Роза. Въпреки наложените забрани за употреба на турски език и спазване на религиозни ритуали и практики, тя е продължила да си говори на турски в дома си, на публични места с представители на турската общност, но по-тихо,

както и на българо-турски с българските си съседи и колеги. Спомням си, че когато ѝ гостувах, постоянно ми се караше, ако говоря на български език вкъщи. Родена през 1979 г., израствайки в български квартал, и посещавайки детска градина и училище с доминиращ брой на българските ученици, познанията ми по турски език ставаха с времето все по-слаби. Във времето установихме с баба ми комуникация, в която аз ѝ говорех на български, а тя на мен – на турски език.

През лятото на 1989 г., увлечени от изселническата вълна, с дядо ми решиха да се изселят в Турция при техни роднини, установили се в малкото градче Муратлъ, намиращо се в близост до Текирдаг и Одрин през 30-те години на 20-и век. За майка ми думата на дядо ми беше „закон“ и тя също беше решена да замине. Бяха наели камион, който да побере най-необходимите мебели и вещи. Всичко останало подарихме на българските си съседи. Малко преди да тръгнем, започнаха да се завръщат и първите наши роднини, заминали от Новград към Турция. Те не се бяха адаптирали там. Периодът на преминаването на границата и хилядите изселници ги бе травмирало по някакъв начин. Тогава дядо ми Кемал в последния момент промени решението си и се отказа да замине, заради факта, че „в Новград поне имат покрив над главата си, а в Турция не се знае“. След 1989 г., баба Рузие и дядо Кемал върнаха турските си имена. След това те не говореха за този период между 1985 – 1989 г., а ако ги попитам – отговаряха лаконично.

Разказът за Фатме/Гюлтен Татарова (1942 –)

Майката на баща ми по паспорт се казва Фатме, но предпочита да бъде наричана в турската общност Гюлтен. Тя е родена през 1942 в с. Новград. Майка ѝ, прабаба Зейра, е била туркиня, а баща ѝ, прадядо Феим (с татарско име Пеим) произхожда от кримските татари от с. Дебово, Плевенско. Преди установяването на социализма, той е бил ятак, помагал е на комунистическата организация. След като се установява комунистическо управление в България, той е назначен като партиен секретар на местно държавно земеделско стопанство в с. Вардим (ДЗС – Вардим), което се намира между Новград и Свищов. Баба ми е учила основно образование в българското училище в Новград, а след това на 16 г. е назначена за библиотекар в ДЗС – Вардим. На 17 години се запознава

и се омъжва за дядо ми Ахмед, който е бил от заможно семейство в Свищов. Имат две деца – син (баща ми) и дъщеря (леля ми).

В Свищов баба Гюлтен първоначално работи в консервната фабрика. По същото време завършва вечерно търговската гимназия „Димитър Хадживасилев“. Участва за кратко и в групата за тюркски фолклор „Бирлик“ към читалището в града, където са изпълнявали предимно азербайджански песни. С дядо строят къща на главната улица в махалата „Чифте кафене“, която обзавеждат впоследствие по „модерен“ за времето си начин с две вътрешни тоалетни. Разказвали са ми, че са едни от първите, които са си купили телевизор „Опера“ и много съседи са ги посещавали, за да гледат телевизия. Също така тя е имала и фотоапарат „Смяна“, с който постоянно е снимала баща ми и леля ми, както и мен, когато съм се родила.

След като завършва средното си образование, баба Гюлтен става член на комунистическата партия. Впоследствие започва да работи в предприятието „Търговия на едро“. Спомням си, че тя ме е водила на работното си място, намиращо се в производствената зона на града срещу ЖП гарата. Входният портал бе охраняван, а след него имаше алея, от чиито две страни бяха монтирани около десет черно-бели портрета на т.нар. „ударници“ – работници, преизпълнили петилетния предварителен план за работа. Фотографията на баба ми също беше сред тях. Тя работеше в склад за платове и имаше достъп до т.нар. „дефицитни стоки“. Когато бях малка не разбирах какво значи „дефицитна стока“, но въкъщи чувах това словосъчетание често. Тогава за мен това беше стока, която не всички имаха – шоколади, мебели, техника и др. Например, веднъж (да съм била 4-5 клас) една от учителките ми ме накара да отидем при баба ми за дамски чорапогашници. Впоследствие разбрах, че и това е „дефицитна стока“. В допълнение може да се каже, че след като леля ми се омъжи за българин от с. Масларево, Великотърновско, тя започна работа в близкия до селото Кореком, намиращ се в комплекс с мотел и ресторант. Тогава не знаех какъв тип е този магазин, но знаех, че от него се купуват шоколадови яйца. От дистанцията на времето, разсъждавайки, не изключвам баба да е „уредила“ леля ми на това работно място.

Спомените от детството ми и след това за баба Гюлтен са, че тя беше водеща и инициативна в семейството, властна съпруга, майка и свекърва. Заедно с дядо ми те поддържаха много социални контакти. Знаех, че е посещавала чужбина, но тогава не знаех

какво значи „чужбина“ и че не всеки има право да напуска България. При прегледа на архива ѝ със снимки през 2011 г., установих, че е посещавала Югославия, Румъния и Турция. За медения месец на майка ми и баща ми през 1978 г. им е „уредила“ визи за Турция, въпреки че тогава там е било военно положение и почти е било невъзможно просто да се отиде на екскурзия в капиталистическата ни съседка.

Когато съм се родила, майка ми я е попитала в болницата как да ме запише – „Фатме ли“?, но баба отвърнала: „Какво Фатме?! Йелиз ще се казва, с „Й“. Майка ми за първи път чува това име, но ме записва грешно в края на името ми със „с“ вместо „з“. Баба Гюлтен ми е разказвала, че името ми го е избрала по това на известната по това време в Турция поп певица Фатма Йелиз Екер, известна под името Йелиз. Още от детските си години си спомням, че баба Гюлтен искаше да се отличаваме. Тя постоянно си шиеше модерни за времето си дрехи и мен също ме водеше при шивачката ѝ. В тази част от детството ми през социалистическия период или до 10-годишна, като единствена внучка, не бях лишена от нищо. В Свищов баба ме водеше редовно на театрални и музикални представления в местното читалище. Освен че ме караше постоянно да пиша красиво на български и да чета, ме насърчаваше и да се включвам в артистични представления още от детската градина и впоследствие в училище. Всяко лято с дядо ми ме водеха на почивка в Несебър или Вършец. Предпочитаха Вършец, където отсядаха под наем при един и същ човек – леля Радка.

Баба Гюлтен е вярваща, но не е човек, който е спазвал и спазва религиозно поведение. Винаги е носела само светско облекло. Забражда се само когато посещава мевлиди и когато ходи на мюсюлманските гробища. След като дядо почина, за разлика от баба Рузие, не започна да носи постоянно забрадка. По отношение на празниците, баба Гюлтен и дядо ми Ахмед ме научиха само да си честитим, аз трябваше да целувам ръка на по-възрастните. За разлика от баба Рузие, баба Гюлтен отбелязваше всички празници, включително и тези характерни за българската общност в Свищов – Нова година, Трифон Зарезан, Баба Марта, 8 март, 1 юни, градския панаир. Макар че бе омъжена за турчин, което най-вероятно е по настояване на родителите ѝ, баба Гюлтен не държеше децата ѝ да спазват брачна ендогамия. „Позволи“ на леля ми да се омъжи за българин през 80-те години. На мен също не ми е препоръчвала да

се омъжа за турчин, но когато бях малка ме насърчаваше да си играя с деца, които са от „нашите“ или българчета. Въпреки че баба ми и дядо ми в Свищов имаха чувство за принадлежност към българското общество като български граждани, те имаха силен респект към предците си и привързаност към роднините си в Турция.

Сред българската общност баба бе известна с името Фатме, а в турската – като Гюлтен. С нея сме имали специален разговор за смяната на имената. Първо я попитах как може да е била член на партия, която ни е сменяла имената? Тогава тя ми каза, че искрено е вярвала в идеите на партията, но до смяната на имената. Това е и най-голямото ѝ разочарование, за което си спомня с гняв. Била е привикана от началника си, а на масата е имало голям дневник, в който са вписвали имената и кутия с бонбони. Избрала си е името Грета. Твърди, че тогава е „захвърлила“ партийната си книжка. Мисля че негативните емоции, които тя изпитваше, се дължат най-вече на факта, че е трябвало да се отрече от културното наследство на предците си, от името си (дори и да не го харесваше), избрано от родителите ѝ, което беше една от символичните ѝ връзки с тях. След 1985 г. тя продължава да работи в „Търговия на едро“ до към 1990 г. Тя запазва социалните си контакти сред партийните активисти. Помня, че хората продължаваха да я наричат Фатме. Веднъж един учител в основното училище ме попита „Как е баба ти Фатме?“. Тогава не знаех, че се познават и бях много изненадана, че я нарича с това име, защото знаех, че не трябва да казваме турските си имена.

Помня, че в периода 1985 – 1989 г., а и след това, баба Гюлтен не спираше въщици да ми говори на турски език. Както по-горе казах, живеейки в български квартал, в другата част на града, аз говорех предимно на български език и забравях турския. Дори понякога ми викаше „гявурка“ (в прев. „неверничка“, но се използваше в смисъл на обидно название за българка). Освен че ми говорех на турски, и двете ми баби са ме наричали винаги с турското ми име. Произнасяйки го, те не са акцентирали на първата буква от името ми „й“, заради което до връщането на имената ни, когато съм била на 10-11 години, винаги съм си мислела, че се казвам Елис. Преди 1990 г. никога не съм виждала цялото си турско име изписано. Все още пазя съдебното удостоверение, с което турското ми име е върнато, но не открих никакви документи за промяната му през 1985 г.

В хода на изселническата вълна през лятото на 1989 г., въпреки че има много близки роднини в Турция, баба ми Гюлтен не искаше да емигрира в Турция, не искаше да напуска работата си, която и носи определен социален престиж, къщата си и Свищов, приятелките си. Освен това, нейните родители бяха възрастни, а тя беше поела грижите за тях.

През лятото на 1993 г. баба Гюлтен и дядо Ахмед ме заведоха за две седмици в Истанбул да ме запознаят с роднините ми и да посетим различни културни забележителности, както и гробове на турски държавници. Преди да отидем баба Гюлтен ми каза, че Турция не е такава, както я представят тук, в България. Не е изостанала държава, а е много по-модерна от България. През 2015 г. дядо ми Ахмед ми сподели, че вече с баба ми са възрастни и че той иска да продаде къщата в Свищов, да заминат за Турция и да се установят в някое село в района на Измир. Така щели да бъдат близо до неговите племенници (децата на брат му, който бе починал), а и баба щяла да е близо до нейните роднини, най-вече до първата си братовчедка си, която ѝ бе като сестра. Баба Гюлтен категорично не се съгласи, казвайки че няма да изостави дома си.

Дискусия върху двата случая на изследване чрез теорията за прогресивната приобщаваща асимилация на М. Гордън

Представените случаи на две жени от турската общност, Рузие и на Фатме/Гюлтен, чийто живот протича през социалистическия период, съдържат данни, чрез които може да се проследи условно степента на тяхната асимилация в българското общество преди и след 1984/1985 г., според концепцията на М. Гордън.

Етапи на асимилация	Рузие	Фатме/Гюлтен
Културна асимилация	в малка степен	до голяма степен
Структурна асимилация	в малка степен	до голяма степен
Брачна асимилация	не	не
Идентификационна асимилация	в малка степен	до голяма степен
Възприемане на нагласите	отчасти	до голяма степен
Възприемане на поведението	отчасти	до голяма степен
Гражданска асимилация	отчасти	отчасти

На пръв поглед, баба Рузие, чийто живот протича предимно в с. Новград, е по-неподатлива на асимилационни процеси, тъй като селската среда тогава предлага ограничени възможности за развитие. Ранната ѝ брачна възраст и положението ѝ в семейната йерархия също са фактори, които определят образователното и професионалното ѝ развитие. Независимо от създаденото общо чувство за локална принадлежност и социалните взаимодействия, обединяващи донякъде българите и турците, баба Рузие остава носител на културното наследство, включително и познания на предците си, и съответно тя е по-интегрирана в турската общност, отколкото към българската. За разлика от нея, баба Фатме/Гюлтен, която от 1959 г., от 17-годишна до днес живее в града, се възползва от съществуващите възможности за образование, професионално и културно-социално развитие. Подобно на баба Рузие, брачният ѝ партньор също е от заможено семейство, но по-важен факт за нейното първоначално израстване и самочувствие се оказва партийната принадлежност на баща ѝ. Водещи ценности в живота ѝ са както силното уважение към предците ѝ и културното им наследство, така и към партията до 1984/1985 г. Почти през целия си живот тя съчетава традициите на общността си, от която идва, и културните влияния от страна на българската общност в Свищов. Технологичният прогрес и модернизация през годините, които засягат повече града, отколкото селото, до голяма степен определят нейната „отвореност“ и приспособяване към новите материални условия и социални взаимоотношения. Политиката на насилствена асимилация, с която двете жени се сблъскват като част от турската общност в периода 1985–1989 г., на практика забавя хода на тяхната естествена асимилация до този момент в българското общество. „Връща“ ги в различна степен към техните етнически традиции. Те остават неприобщени към социалистическата нация, засилвайки отношението си към Турция, като страна на „майчината нация“ и родина на техните близки родственици. Запазването на турския език, употребата на турското име, участието им в мевлидите на местните мюсюлмани се явяват най-устойчивите механизми за поддържането на етническата им идентичност и общностна сплотеност. Именно те определят и доминирането на междинните отговори по индикаторите за асимилация на М. Гордън.

Заклучение

Смяната на имената никога не е наричана от моите родственици, както и от представителите на другите мюсюлмански общности, с които във времето съм се запознала, „Възродителен процес“. Това название се счита за обидно, напомнящо за причинената през близкото минало травма, заради наложените от държавната власт мерки и санкции, но и срам от различната етническа и религиозна принадлежност. Преодоляна ли е тази травма? Периодът между 1984/5–1989 г. може да се определи като време на *общностна травма*, изпълнен с преживявания и емоции, които могат да засилят ефекта на събитието в индивидуалния опит. По думите на Джефри Александър, преживяването на травма може да се разбира като социално значим процес, който определя моралните и материалните последици за общността/колектива, идентифицира жертвата и приписва отговорност на причинителя. Въобразяването и пресъздаването на колективната/общностната идентичност се променя по същия начин, по който се преживява и преосмисля травмата (Alexander 2004, p. 22). Според разгледаните случаи, двете жени се опитват да продължат начина си на живот отпреди 1984 г. Те по-скоро не са склонни да си припомнят за времето, когато са били с български имена между 1984/1985 и 1989 г. Темата е деликатна и избягвана. Много често *Преименуването* и *Изселването* се сливат като две събития, случили се по едно и също време, независимо че между тях има няколко години. Най-вероятно това е и механизъм за преодоляване на травмата, която преживяват именно през тези няколко години, носейки българските си имена, ограничавани да говорят на родния си език и да извършват обичаите си или като период на раздвоение – между вменения срам за произхода им и чувството им за етническа принадлежност и уважение към предците им. До голяма степен този период наподобява „черна дупка“ в паметта и устните разкази, която Сергей Ушакин обяснява като „афазия“ (в смисъл на липса на желание за вербална комуникация) по примера на изследването си в постсъветското руско общество, което, за да конструира отново идентичността си, акцентира върху героичните събития в историята на Русия и СССР, не-говорейки за травмите и катастрофите (Oushakine, 2000), каквато е например Чернобилската авария (Erolova and Tsyarupkina, 2023). По същия начин говорят за миналото си и двете турски жени, опитвайки се да „пропуснат“ индивидуалната и общностната си травма. Все пак паметта за нея трябва да бъде запазена, за

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Memories in the Present: The Post-Memory of Assimilationist Policies Toward Muslims in Bulgaria (1960s–1970s)

Abstract: *This article explores how memories of the assimilationist policies targeting Muslim communities in Bulgaria during the 1960s and 1970s are transmitted across generations. Drawing on the concept of "post-memory," the research examines the ways in which the children and grandchildren of those affected by these policies engage with the traumatic past – through stories, silences, cultural practices, and acts of remembrance. It investigates the lingering presence of state-imposed identity erasure and its emotional, social, and cultural afterlives in the present, with a focus on Pomak communities. The analysis contributes to broader discussions on memory, trauma, and minority identity in post-communist contexts. In order to explore how these traumas are transmitted, made sense of, and interpreted within the family, in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of the so-called "generation after". The study employs a qualitative methodological approach that reveals the intimate ways in which the past continues to live in the present through narratives, silences, and everyday practices.*

Keywords: *Bulgaria; forced assimilation; Pomaks; post-memory; generation after.*

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Спомени в настоящето: „постпаметта“ за асимилационните политики към мюсюлманите в България (1960–1970-те години)

През последните години се публикуваха редица изследвания, които се фокусират върху различията между поколенията по отношение на спомнянето и мемориализацията и които оказват влияние върху „мобилизацията на усилията за търсене на истината и справедливостта“ (Lacroix & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013). В тези изследвания се въвежда и терминът *постпамет*, въведен от Мариан

Хирш в началото на 1990-те години (Hirsch, 1992; 2008; 2019), отнасящ се до символични междупоколенчески връзки за предаване на памет (Papadopoulos, 2014; Alloa, Bayard, & Phay, 2016). Дефинитивно той описва отношението, което „следващото поколение“ (*generation after*) има към личните, колективните и културните травми на тези, които са били преди него – към преживяванията, които представителите му "помнят" само чрез историите, образите и поведението, сред които са израснали (Hirsch, 2008, p. 106; Renker, 2022). Разработвайки *постпаметта* първоначално като концептуален граничен случай в дискусиата за предаването на историческата травма и свързаните с нея сложни въпроси за изцелението и забравата в контекста на Холокоста, в по-късни изследвания М. Хирш разширява примерите за травматични насилия и породената от тях в общността „тревожната връзка между семейните травми и техните последици на индивидуална, обществена и институционална основа“ (Hirsch, 2024). Става въпрос за това, как насилието от миналото се обработва при следващата генерация? (Trupia, 2025, p. 65). Такава постановка на въпроса е приложима и в контекста на други форми на насилие и колективни травми, каквото е държавното насилие към мюсюлманските общности в българския случай.

Периодът на комунистическия режим в България (1944 – 1989 г.) е белязан от насилствени асимилационни политики срещу мюсюлманските общности (турци, помаци, роми), които оставят дълбоки травми в личната и семейната памет. Тези практики, особено интензивни към помашката общност¹ през 1960–1970-те години, са част от идеологическия проект на БКП за изграждане на „единната социалистическа нация“. В научните търсения по темата през последните десетилетия се публикуваха много и сериозни изследвания, чийто обект е държавното насилие към мюсюлманите от близкото минало, както и преживяванията на хората по време на провеждане на асимилационните кампании (Иванова, 2002; 2013; Груев, М., А. Калъонски, 2008; Аврамов, 2016; Пашова, Воденичаров, 2011; Келбечева, Муратова, 2021; Зафер, Чернокожев, 2015; 2023 и др.).

¹ Асимилационните политики от близкото минало продължават да са важен тематичен фокус в интердисциплинарните дискусии за *помашката идентичност*. Обобщено представяне на тези дискусии вж.: (Ангелова, Хюсеин, 2025, pp.18-23).

В контекста на асимилационните политики в България, в много помашки семейства се предава споменът за насилствените преименувания и ограниченията върху религиозната и културната им идентичност. Тази *комуникативна памет* е важен сегмент в оформянето на колективната идентичност и усещането за историческата несправедливост сред мюсюлманските общности в страната.

Предложеният анализ е част от по-голямо изследване, което се фокусира върху междугенерационния пренос на спомените за преживяното като семейна и общностна травма, свързани с мащабната асимилационна кампания от 1960-те и 1970-те години към помациите в България. В процеса на работа провеждам и обработвам автобиографични интервюта както с преживелите държавното насилие мъже и жени, така и с *пост-поколениято*. В сходна изследователска платформа се разполага и „програмният“ анализ на Франческо Трупия, озаглавен „Как щеше да бъде името ми? Постпаметта на "поколениято след" възродителния процес в България“ (Trupia, 2022). В сходен ключ е разработен и проектът „С имена на цветя: Твоето Име“ на Вера Хаджийска (Хаджийска, 2022; 2019), провокиран от собствения ѝ биографичен случай:

„През по-голямата част от живота си не знаех, че семейството ми е мюсюлманско. Не знаех, че са имали мюсюлмански имена преди българските имена, които използват днес. Откриването на тази част от наследството ми на по-късен етап от живота означава, че трябваше да преосмисля и да поставя под въпрос идентичността си. Въвеждането на тази нова информация създаде промяна или изместване на моята идентичност. От друга страна, братовчедка ми е израснала с тази памет, която е част от нейния разказ, и тя естествено се е включила в нейната идентичност. Тя вече се чувства като част от мюсюлманската общност и от това наследство. Това показва значението на семейния апарат, както и на това, което ни се преподава в училище и ни се разказва чрез други средства за комуникация във външната среда. Защото, ако училището и семейството ви казват едно и също, няма какво да противоречите на основната идеология и вярвания. Но ако семейството ви пази тази скрита история, имате опорна точка и можете да поставите под въпрос основните източници на информация и това, което ви се казва отвън...“ (Hadzhiyska, 2019, pp.9-10).

В своето изследване се опитвам да разглеждам начина, по който респондентите си спомнят за насилствените събития от миналото, които техните семейства и общността са преживели. Този ракурс на изследване е използван, за да се хвърли светлина върху различните начини, използвани от *поколението след*, за да се изрази семейният опит от насилието по време на дълбочинните интервюта. В тази „мрежа от постпамет“ (Hirsch, 2012; Trupia, 2025, p. 64) могат да се наблюдават начините, по които отношенията с по-старите поколения се подхранват и пазят, за да се съхрани културата на паметта, която позволява на следващото поколение да учи, открива и тълкува миналото като средство за референтно свързване с настоящите проблеми. Въпросът е доколко новото поколение не само наследява, но и интерпретира ли по нов начин споделените спомени (Baser & Toivanen, 2023, p. 298).

От особено значение в случая с постпаметта при помашката общност в България е спецификата в семейното предаване на спомените – „цикличността“, вълните на насилие (от „Кръстилката“ през 1912 г. до насилственото експулсиране през 1989 г.) Според мен, също толкова значима е своеобразната „педагогика“ на спомнянето в общността, особено когато учебниците по история например почти не дават отговор на значими за общността въпроси от близкото минало (Келбечева, 2023). Вярвам, че е важно младите хора да задават въпроси за своето минало и наследство. Ако не зададем тези въпроси сега, скоро единствените хора, които имат отговори, различни от репресивния глас на партийните документи от държавните архиви, ще изчезнат и заедно с тях ще бъде загубена важна част от историята ни.

През 60-те и 70-те години на XX век българските власти предприемат кампании за насилствено преименуване на помашките.² Тези действия са част от по-широка политика на културна и религиозна асимилация, включваща забрани и върху традиционното облекло и религиозните обреди. Особено засегнати са районите на Родопите, където живее значителна част от помашкото население в България. През 1970–1974 г. в Родопите се провеждат масови акции за преименуване, съпроводени с физическо насилие и съдебни репресии срещу съпротивляващите се в Пазарджишко, Якорудско, Гоцеделчевско (особено в Корница, Брезница и Лъжница) и на други места. През 1971 г. при стълкновения в

² Вж. и концепцията за „имецида“, предложена от Вилдане Озкан (Özkan, 2018).

Пазарджишко загиват двама партийни функционери. В отговор на това двама българи мюсюлмани са осъдени на смърт. На 9 май 1972 г. група от над 400 души тръгва през планината от Якоруда и околните села, за да протестират. При Самоков групата е спряна и насилствено върната от силите на реда. Пада един убит, като в партийните документи се твърди, че починал от язва. На 17 май последва нов сблъсък – в якорудското село Бунцево. Убит е секретарят на Градския комитет на Отечествения фронт в Якоруда. На 28 август 1972 г. Окръжният съд в Благоевград осъжда двама от участниците на смърт, а останалите – на различни години лишаване от свобода. Единият от осъдените – Абдия Чолаков е разстрелян, а присъдата на другия е заменена с 20 години затвор. Партийните началници отново не са наказани. През следващата година гоцеделчевските села Брезница, Корница и Лъжница се опълчват срещу преименуването, като протестът срещу преименуването на площада в Корница продължава почти три месеца. На 28 март 1973 г. се провежда „акция“ на МВР, командвана от генерал Петър Стоянов (издал през 1984 г. заповедта за преименуването в Кърджали), която завършва с петима убити, десетки ранени, осъдени и интернирани (Зафер, 2023). Показателно е, че в тези села не се провеждат „ритуали“ по смяната на имената. Вместо това органите на властта обикалят от къща на къща и под дулото на оръжията хората са принуждавани да си „избират“ ново име от предварително подготвен списък. Общо няколкостотин мюсюлмани от района са арестувани и съдени или изселени и въдворени (Зафер, 2023а). Тези травматични за общността събития имат дълготрайни последици за *поколението на постпаметта*. Макар и дълго време изтласквана от официалния разказ, тази колективна травма е дълбоко вкоренена в личните истории на семействата от засегнатите села. Предаването на тези спомени – чрез разкази, мълчание, семейни наративи и съпротивителни жестове – съставлява основата на постпаметта, която в съвременното започва да намира израз чрез устна история, културна продукция и научен интерес.³ Протестите

³ От гледна точка на прилагането на историко-антропологически инструментариум, интерес представляват няколко сборника с включени в тях автобиографични интервюта и житейски разкази: *Искам благородна професия. Традиции, мода, модерност в Западните Родопи* (Пашова и др., 2000) и *Искам човекът да е винаги приятен и да си правим моабет. Речево поведение и жизнени светове на българи мохамедани от Гоцеделчевско и Разложко* (Воденичаров и др., 1998), *Горчиви разкази. Тяхната истина за „възродителния*

от 70-те години не само свидетелстват за организирана съпротива, но и оформят едно морално ядро в паметта на мюсюлманските общности – ядро, което поставя въпроси за отговорност, историческа справедливост и право на памет. В едно интервю респондентка от с. Вълкосел разказва:

„Това, което разбрах от моя дълъг живот, и това, което знам от моята майка и нenea [баба]... никога няма да ни оставят на мира, докато не ни направят българи, колко пъти ни кръстиха, сменяха имената... Аз като съм се родила, са ме записали с българско име, хората от селото не са знаели, че им записват български имена на новородените и тогава са спрели за няколко години да ходят да си записват децата, после още веднъж ни смениха имената и облеклото ни...“⁴

В предговора към сборника *„Името, това ми е лицето“: 50 години от Корнишките протести* съставителката З. Зафер цитира откъс от есето *„Името“* на известната поетеса и писателка Блага Димитрова:

“Име собствено, бащино, фамилно. Тези три имена си длъжен да впишеш във всеки документ за самоличност. Без тях ти си никой. (...) То [Името] е твоето лице пред света, твоето достойнство, твоята неповторима личност. (...) Посегне ли някой на фамилното ти име, ти се превръщаш в изгнаник във времето, дърво без корен (...) А изтръгнат ли силом собственото ти име и го подменят с друго, това е непоносимо покушение върху личността ти. Все едно, че плисват в лицето ти сярна киселина, за да заличат и обезобразят индивидуалните ти черти. (...) Ти биваш лишен от биография. (...) Защо високопоставени нашенци, които минават за примерни патриоти, не смениха своите турски фамилни имена: Джагаров, Караславов, Абаджиев и пр.?” (Зафер, 2023, р. 8).

процес“ (Адииков, Конедарева, 2003), *В името на... името* (Бозов, 2011), *Когато ми отнеха името* (Зафер, Чернокожев, 2015), интервютата, включени в сборниците *„Името, това ми е лицето“: 50 години от Корнишките протести* (Зафер, 2023), *Насилие, политика и памет. Комунистическият режим в Пиринска Македония* (Груев и др., 2011) и др.

⁴ Интервю с Атие Мейзин, р. 1942, с. Вълкосел (2007) – Личен архив– Г. Гайгаджова.

Събитията на насилие се случват в определено време и на определено място, но тяхното наследство продължава да преследва жертвите дори след десетилетия. Травмиращите спомени за физическата болка и гавра с достойнството на хиляди мъже и жени прокарва дълбоки следи в колективната памет. Те се помнят и до днес, разказват се и на следващите поколения. В интервютата, които направих с Алиш Мустафов Оручов на 90 г. от с. Бел Камен, община Якоруда, Али Ахмедов Мустафов на 79 г. от с. Цветино, община Велинград, Махмуд Салиев Чолаков на 72 г. от с. Цветино, община Велинград, Муса Йълмазов Алиев на 70 г. от с. Медени Поляни, община Велинград и Юсуф Мустафов Ендъов, с. Бутрево, община Велинград, 90 г. разказват за процеса по смяната на имената им и организацията на съпротивата, като една част участват в организирания поход през връх Белмекен и гр. Самоков за достигане до столицата, където да протестират, за да разбере световната общественост за смяната на имената на помаците от Родопите. В разказите им травмата е смесица от преживян и усвоен опит и е преплетена с наследени травми и косвени спомени и за предишните цикли на насилие от първата половина на XX век, които те с разказите си предават в семейните истории.

Постпаметта не е просто пасивно унаследяване на спомени – тя включва активно конструиране на значения, чрез които миналото се осмисля в настоящето. В изследваните интервюта ясно се откроява, че травмата от смяната на имената не е забравена, макар често да е изговорена фрагментарно или съдържано. Нейното предаване се случва не само чрез думите, но и чрез емоционалните реакции, усещането за срам или несправедливост и осезаемото присъствие на "неказаното". По този начин, постпаметта се превръща в морален и културен ресурс, чрез който новите поколения осмислят идентичността си и отношението към държавата, историята и общността.

В контекста на етнически, религиозни и идеологически конфликти, при които дадена общност е подложена на насилствени действия – от геноцид, през преследване и „имецид“, травмата остава за поколенията и процесът на реконструкция на тази трагедия в съзнанието на преживелите я и наследилите я продължава. Паметта за насилието не е само заложена в телата и умовете на хората, но и пространствените практики, които са въведени под формата на паметни знаци, също представляват част от колективните усилия за мемориализация (Schramm, 2011, p. 5). Действително,

тъй като колективната памет възниква и се развива, тя оказва значително влияние върху колективната идентичност на дадена общност. Постпаметта свързва миналото с настоящето, оформяйки разбирането и възприемането на споделената история и опит на общността. Тя осигурява усещане за приемственост, позволявайки на хората в общността да създадат съгласуван разказ за своята колективна идентичност (Baser & Toivanen, 2024, p. 299).

Горепосочените перспективи са от съществено значение за задълбочаване на научното изследване на процеса по смяната на имената на помаците през 70-те години в съвременна България и извън нея. Вместо той да бъде използван инструментално за политически цели, бъдещи изследвания, фокусирани върху поколението на постпаметта, могат да разкрият разнообразни прагматични нагласи и ценностна система, които да допринесат за развитието на интердисциплинарния подход в изследването на историческите травми. Паралелно с консултацията на архивни материали и устни истории, именно поколенията на постпаметта в България притежават потенциала да инициират сериозен обществен дебат относно комунистическите асимилационни политики и техните отражения през десетилетията на прехода към демокрация.

Постпаметта функционира и като форма на съпротива срещу забравата, която държавата и обществото често насърчават чрез липса на признание или институционално мълчание. Потомците на репресираните активно се ангажират с опазване на паметта – чрез устна история, фотоархиви, лични разкази, семеен фолклор. Така идентичността се формира не само от принадлежност, а и от етичен ангажимент към истината. Травматичната памет за асимилационните политики е не само оголен (социален) нерв за помашката общност в съвременна България. *Постпаметта* за асимилационните политики от 60-те и 70-те г. на XX в. е динамичен процес, в който се преплитат исторически травми, политически манипулации и опити за помиряване. Тя продължава да поставя въпроси за колективната отговорност, толерантността, истината и справедливостта, а и продължава да оформя не само етно-религиозните взаимоотношения в страната, но и публичния дискурс за демокрацията и правовата държава. Заедно с това постпаметта може да бъде разглеждана като форма на релативизация на събитията от миналото, която прониква в поколенческата памет и става показател за разбирането и оценката на съвременния свят от хората, родени дълго след тези събития, но приемащи ги за

важна част от семейното и общностното наследство – спомени от настоящето.

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Muslims in the 'Lens' of Photo Propaganda, 1950s - 1980s in the 20th Century

Abstract: *The article seeks to answer the question of what photographic representations of Muslims were left behind by the photo propaganda institution in Bulgaria during the communist regime from the 1950s to the 1980s. What do the original negatives show and what do the specially selected positive prints for thematic albums hide? For the first time, photographs from the emigration of Muslims in the 1950s, preserved in the Central State Archive, are published.*

Keywords: *photo propaganda; Muslims; state photo archive; violent assimilation.*

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Мюсюлманите в „обектива“ на фотопропагандата 50-те – 80-те г. на XX век¹

Какви фотографски изображения за мюсюлманите е оставила след себе си институцията за фотопропаганда в България от времето на тоталитарния комунистически режим? Или още какво показват и какво скриват фотодокументите, които са следвали предписанията на държавната пропаганда и на комунистическата партия?

Отговори на тези въпроси се търсят във фотодокументите от архивния фонд на Стопанския комбинат „Българска фотография“ в Централния държавен архив.² Към тях се отнасят оригиналните

¹ Проект: *Политически репресии над жени-мюсюлманки по време на комунистическия режим, женски мрежи на съпротива и гражданска реабилитация*, Български фонд за жените, Програма „Ценности“ 2024, Договор №24-PROP-000610/30.08.2024.

² Най-ранните фотодокументи в този архивен фонд водят началото си от средата на 40-те години на XX век и се свързват с институцията за фотопропаганда

документи (негативите), чиито автори са фоторепортери, назначени на щатни длъжности в институцията за национална фотопропаганда. Друг източник на информация са тематичните фотоалбуми, които същата институция е съставяла с цел да улесни потребителите, но по-скоро, за да ги насочи към най-подходящите фотодокументи с оглед на преследваните пропагандни цели.

И негативите и позитивните копия от 50-те до края на 80-те г. са създавани в изпълнение на специални предписания, които тогавашната власт и комунистическата партия са задавали предварително и затова и едните, и другите са отражение на (или са пречупени през) идеологическите директиви. Но все пак съществува разлика между тях. Сред негативите има вероятност да попадат не само недобри фотографски изображения, несполучливи кадри, но също и нецензурирани кадри или кадри, които показват премълчавани и скривани събития, явления, факти.

Какви документи за мюсюлманите в България и в какъв обем могат да се открият във фонда на „Българска фотография“?

Какво е привличало погледа на пропагандата или по какви теми / за какви събития са изпращани при мюсюлманите фоторепортери? Ако с едно изречение трябва да обобщим – фотодокументите на националната пропаганда е следвало да покажат грижата на комунистическата власт към мюсюлманите в България и да я противопоставят на политиката на съседна Турция.³

Фондация „Българско дело“, която възниква през 1941 г. по образеца на германската пропаганда, а след 9 септември 1944 г. е в орбитата на съветската пропаганда в услуга на отечественофронтовската власт и комунистическото управление на държавата. В годините до 1989 г. институцията има различни наименования, но по същество осъществява фотопропагандата и фотоагитацията в условията на тоталитарната държава. След приватизирането на ЕАД „Българска фотография“ през 2000 г. Държавният фотоархив е закрит и се постига договореност масивът от фотодокументи да се предаде за постоянно съхранение в системата на държавните архиви. В Централния държавен архив са приети над 2 млн. кадри (с повече от 100 000 черно-бели негативни филми и над 80 000 цветни негативни филми) и всички те са част от архивния фонд №720 – СК „Българска фотография“, а в държавните архиви в страната постъпват повече от 6 млн. кадри. Вж. (Пискова, 2000); (Пискова, Парушева, 2003).

³ За политиката към мюсюлманите в България (1944–1989) вж. (Назърска, Шапкалова, 2009, р.94-96).

Всички фотодокументи, които разглеждаме, са резултат от аналоговата фотография. Това означава, че в момента на снимането и непосредствено след него няма възможност да се види какво е заснето, как е заснето, сполучливо ли е изобщо изображението. Необходимо е първо негативната фотолента да се прояви в лаборатория и едва тогава негативният образ става видим. Следва копиране на позитивен отпечатък или създаването на снимка. Затова фоторепортерите са правели по няколко кадри като застраховка, но същевременно не са си позволявали големи разхищения поради ограничения брой негативни фотоленти, с които са разполагали.

По правило всички заснети кадри от фоторепортера са подлежали на предаване във фотоархива на пропагандната институция. Архивната обработка предвижда регистрирането на всеки фотофилм във входящ (инвентарен) дневник⁴ за съответната година, в който се вписват: пореден номер, формат на негатива, име на автора, кратко заглавие. Следва техническото оформяне на фотофилмите, като регистрираните и проявени филми се нарязват и поставят в класьори. Върху класьора се вписват – в горния ляв ъгъл сигнатурният номер, вдясно – името на фотографа-автор, а по средата – кратко заглавие. Така се пазят всички негативи със заснетото събитие от фоторепортера.

Тематичните албуми с фотодокументи

От предадените в архива негативи са подбирани „правилните“ кадри, чиито фотокопия (позитивни отпечатъци) е трябвало да попаднат в съответен тематичен албум. Самият подбор е подчинен на конкретно идеологическо предписание и по предварително зададената тема. Но е важно да се подчертае, че за албумите са подбирани не толкова сполучливите фотографски изображения, а тези, които подхождат най-добре за целите на идеологическото внушение. Външните потребители не са имали достъп до негативите, те са разполагали само с тези фотоизображения от специално създаваните тематични албуми и само въз основа на тях са могли да поръчат съответните кадри. Така в годините са били видими единствено позитивните копия, създадени в резултат на строго контролиране и на двойно пречупване през призмата на пропагандата, както по тема, така и като конкретни изображения. Те са из-

⁴ За черно-белите и за цветните фотофилми се водят отделни дневници.

ползвани за целите на агитацията и пропагандата, за да илюстрират „моцта, размаха, възможностите и перспективите на комунистическия идеал, като едно от „най-сигурните оръдия на партията в борбата за политическо възпитание и организиране на трудещите се маси“ (Гаджева, 2012). „Социалистическият реализъм“ налага официалната тематика и така в центъра на вниманието трябва да бъде „човекът на труда“ – работникът, селянинът от кооператива, както и „научната и художествено-творческата интелигенция“. Разбира се, начело на всички процеси са членовете и вождовете на комунистическата партия. Извън обектива на пропагандата „социалистическият реализъм“ е оставил пенсионерите, хората с увреждания, болните и малцинствата (Божинов, 2017; Пискова, 2023).

По тези правила и предписания в институцията за фотопропаганда са съставени общо 587 тома тематични албуми с черно-бели снимки по 105 теми и също така 126 папки с цветни фотоси. Сред албумите с черно-бели снимки доминират свързаните с леката и тежка промишленост, строителството, архитектурата, транспорта, селското стопанство, вътрешната и външна търговия, финанси, външната политика, военно дело. На вътрешната политика са посветени общо 46 албума, от които един е озаглавен: „Албум за вътрешна политика – народностни групи (евреи, турци, арменци, цигани)“. В този единствен албум за малцинствата са включени позитивни копия на снимки от 1945 до 1982 г. върху общо 102 страници.⁵ За „турското малцинство“ снимките са 207 и сред тях доминират тези, които са предназначени да илюстрират грижите за „ограмотяването и за обучението на турското население“. Тук се отнасят и снимките за курсовете за медицински сестри, двугодишната политшкола за турското малцинство, турското девическо педагогическо училище, курс за ограмотяване на туркини, общообразователна школа, национално съвещание на учителите по турски език. Впечатляваща е снимката на учителката Нериман Дервишева от училището „Адил Дервишев“ в Плевен, или по-скоро пояснителният текст под нея, от който „научаваме“, че тя изнася доклад за Великата октомврийска социалистическа революция.

⁵ ЦДА, ф. 720, оп.5, а.е. 58 – Албуми със снимки за вътрешна политика – народностни групи (евреи, турци, арменци, цигани) 1945 – 1982, 102 стр. Включени са и репродукции на снимки от първата половина на XX век.



Училище „Адил Дервишев“ Плевен. Учителката Нериман Дервишева изнася доклад за Великата октомврийска социалистическа революция. (ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5 инв. №57/3789)

Друга голяма част от снимките илюстрират художествената самодейност, театралните постановки на турските естрадни театри, хоровите изпълнения на ансамблите за турски песни и танци, вкл. и окръжни прегледи на турската художествена самодейност.



Музикална комедия „Турна“ от С. Рустемов в естрадният театър за турското население, Кърджали. (ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5, а.е. 58 инв.№65/507)

Снимките от окръжните прегледи на турските самодейни колективи съдържат следи от нагледната агитация и лозунгите, които през 50-те години възхваляват социализма все още и на турски език, а през 60-те години са само на български език и определят „самодейността на турските колективи“ като „извор за патриотично възпитание“.



Окръжен преглед на турските самодейни читалищни колективи в Тервел. (ЦДА, ф.720, оп.5, инв.№58/1677)



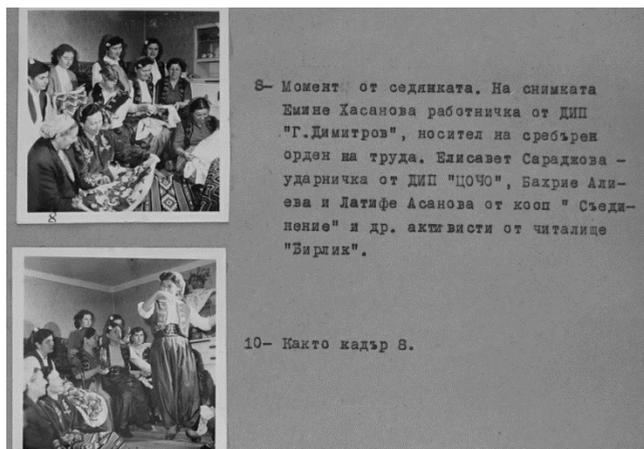
Окръжен преглед на турската художествена самодейност в Търговище. (ЩДА, ф. 720, оп.5, а.е. 58, инв.№ 61/1384)

Няколко по-различни снимки от фотоалбума заслужават да бъдат споменати:



**Бездетни жени туркини изкачват по стръмните стъпала на голямата скала, върху която са поставени основите на текето край с. Завет - Исперихско, 1953, Никола Миронски. (ЩДА, ф. 720, оп.5, инв. № 53/657)
Обичаи, свързани с празника Гергьовден в с. Север, Кубратско, 1953, Никола Миронски.⁶ (ЩДА, ф.720, оп.5, инв. № 663)**

⁶ Тук по всяка вероятност снимките са от празника Хъдърлез, който мюсюлманите отбелязват на Гергьовден, но фоторепортерът е обозначил като Гергьовден, или е възможно чрез подмяната да се заличава спецификата на мюсюлманския празник.



8- Момент от седянката. На снимката Емине Хасанова работничка от ДИП "Г.Димитров", носител на сребърен орден на труда. Елисавет Сарджова – ударничка от ДИП "ЦОЧО", Бахрие Алиева и Латифе Асанова от кооп "Съединение" и др. активисти от читалище "Бирма".

10- Както кадър 8.

Турска седянка по случай 50 години 8 март в град Сливен, 1960, Л. Чаръкчиев. (ЩДА, ф.720, оп.5, инв. № 53/ 657)

- Репортажен портрет на главния мюфтия, 1966. (Сибирски)
- Туркия с шалвари на ж.п. гарата в Разград, 1969. (М. Върбанов)
- Емине Ахмедова Алиева – 28 годишна предачка от младежкия завод „Орфей“ – Кърджали – най-младата народна представителка в 104 избирателен район Кърджали, 1981 г. (М. Георгиева)

В тематичния албум „Вероизповедание“⁷ снимките за българските мюсюлмани са по-скоро изключение. В тях са намерили място снимки за посрещането на църковни делегации, за погребението на патриарх Кирил, за избора на патриарх Максим (1957–1980) и др. Единствените три снимки, свързани с мюсюлманите, са от 1970 г. с шаха на Йордания и други гости сред служителите в мюфтийството.

Дали този образ на мюсюлманите и техния живот, който е показан в албумите, съвпада с картината, която представят негативите (оригиналните) фотодокументи?

Оригиналните негативни фотофилми

Какво скриват и показват негативните филми, които също са правени с пропагандна цел, но не са влезли в агитационно-пропагандните албуми?

⁷ <https://www.archives.government.bg/bgphoto/059.01..pdf>

От близо 2 млн. кадри в негативните фотофилми, които са създадени в периода 1945 – 1993 г. и са приети в Централния държавен архив, на мюсюлманите са посветени приблизително 2 000 кадъра, разположени в 199 класъора. Тяхното откриване стана възможно благодарение на инвентарните дневници, в които са записвани заглавията на всички 143 740 черно-бели фотофилми (негативи), които са създадени и предадени във фотоархива.

Как се разпределят по години фотофилмите, свързани с мюсюлманите?

1949 г.	1 класъор
50-те години	140 класъора
60-те години	26 класъора
70-те години	8 класъора
80-те години	22 класъора
1990-1991 г.	2 класъора

Друга особеност, която следва да подчертаем, е, че авторите на негативите са известни. Според Катерина Гаджева след 1946–1947 г. фоторепортерите в България стават анонимни. Техните имена не се срещат във вестниците и списанията и дори не се споменават при изброяването на съставителите на съответното издание (Гаджева, 2014, р.3). За разлика от тях, имената на фоторепортерите на пропагандната институция фигурират и в инвентарните дневници и върху всеки класъор с негативите и дори в самите тематични албуми. Само в София са работили 30 фоторепортери, а 25 души са описвали, систематизирали и съхранявали фотодокументите. След 1990 г. остават един фоторепортер и един специалист, обработващ фотофилмите. Благодарение на инвентарните дневници и на надписите върху класъорите разполагаме с имената на фоторепортерите, които са заснели живота на мюсюлманите в България от 50-те до края на 80-те години на ХХ век. По азбучен ред на фамилните имена те са: Василка Балеvsка (1946 –), М. Върбанов, Лиляна Георгиева, Т. Зиновиев, С. Йотовски, Карекин Карекинян (1926 – 2015), Е. Киров, Ст. Кожухаров, Рафи Марукян (1949 –), Здр. Милчева, Никола Миронски (1902 – 1974), Симеон Ненов (1914 –), Гаро Паносян (1926 – 2001 г.), Радослав Парушев (1921 – 2003), Хр. Попов, Кирил Свраков, Стефан Страхинов, Горос Хорисян (1921 – 2011), Любомир Чаръкчиев (1920 – 1967), Петър Щерев и Д. Янев.

Сред тях са едни от първите назначени фоторепортери в Държавния фотоархив – Карекин Карекинян, Никола Миронски, Радослав Парушев, Торос Хорисян, Любомир Чаръкчиев. Други са сред основателите на фотоотдела в Българската телеграфна агенция – Симеон Ненов и Рачо Стоянов. Най-пълна представа за дейността на фоторепортерите създават предадените лични фондове на Радослав Парушев в Държавен архив – Варна⁸ и на Любомир Чаръкчиев в Държавен архив – Плевен⁹.

Като цяло и сред негативите преобладават кадрите, които подчертават политиката по „ограмотяване“ и образование на мюсюлманското население. Заглавията на фотофилмите от инвентарните книги са достатъчно показателни и красноречиви: „Народно образование сред българо-мохамеданите в Родопския край“, „Учениците от народното турско основно училище в Силистра проявяват интерес към книгите“, „Строеж на турското педагогически училище в Кърджали“, „Тържествено откриване на турското педагогическо училище „Вълко Червенков“ – Коньовица“, „Българо-мохамеданско училище в Пловдив“, „Учебници, печатани в България за турското малцинство“, „Снимки на ученици българо-мохамедани в училището в Мадан“, „Из живота на пионерите от турското училище „Христо Смирненски“ в село Гложене“, „Пионери турчета в Разград“, „Турско основно училище „Назъм Хикмет“, „Новооткрита турска книжарница“, „Турско педагогическо училище за ръководители“, „Институт за усъвършенстване на учители – курс за начални турски учители“, „Турско училище „Ружие“ в Пловдив“.

На откриването на специалността *Турска филология* в Софийския университет е отделено подобаващо внимание: „Първи изпит на студенти турци по турска литература“, „Студенти от турски произход по време на занимания – природо-математици и филолози“, „Полагане на семестриален изпит на студенти турци в Софийския университет“. Фоторепортерът Кирил Свраков е оставил и две групови снимки на първите студенти по турска филология пред Народната библиотека.¹⁰

⁸ ДА – Варна, ф. 1609.

⁹ ДА – Плевен, ф. 725.

¹⁰ ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5, инв.№53/766.



*Първи изпит на студенти турци по турска литература
(ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5, инв. №53/766)*



През 50-те години връзките с Азербайджан като част от СССР укрепват и това намира място в голямото количество фотодокументи. С Азербайджан са свързани цели 29 фотофилма. В тях

много подробно се отразява „посрещането на съветската азербайджанска делегация в Русе“, посещението ѝ при министър-председателя и генерален секретар на ЦК на БКП Вълко Червенков, делегацията пред мавзолея на Георги Димитров, обиколката на страната – Стара Загора, Кърджали, Димитровград, Велико Търново, Балчик, Провадия, Коларовград (днес Шумен), Омуртаг, Търговище. Следват снимки в Министерството на земеделието, събеседване с агрономи и стажант-агрономи, както и посрещането на делегацията в Националния съвет на ОФ. Няколко класъора са описани като „Лични снимки“. Снимки са направени и на посрещането на аерогара София на българската делегация от турското малцинство, която е била на посещение в Съветски Азербайджан, както и „Посрещане на азербайджанеца Махмадим Шарифи к.и.н. и доцент по история в университета при турските студенти“. По същото време турски студенти от България се изпращат в Баку, вместо в Анкара. Фоторепортерът е заснел завръщането им в България за лятната ваканция. „Турски младежи-студенти в Азербайджан – София“.¹¹



*Ограмотяване на жени от турското малцинство в Толбухин.
(ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5, инв.№ 54/2553)*

¹¹ Вж. Муратова (2021).

Според пропагандата израз на грижите на властта и комунистическата партия за мюсюлманите е организираният „рентгенов преглед на турското малцинство в Толбухин“ (1952).¹²



Рентгенов преглед на турското малцинство.
(ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5, инв. №388)

Израз на „обгрижване“ и „внимание“ са също така и посещенията на малцинствени групи и учащи се на Международния мострен панаир в Пловдив (1952), или „Курс за инструктори по борба от турското малцинство, организиран от ВКФС“ (1952), както и „Първи литературен кръжок за турски младежи при в. „Народна младеж“ (1953), а също „Турски младежи купуват стоки по нови намалени цени“ (1954), „Младежи турци в активни физкултурни занимания“ (1954), „Гимнастически упражнения и тренировки на борци турци войници в трудови войски“ (1955), „Петминутка за бърборино – любимец на най-малките – тон запис на турски език – „Легенда за любовта“ (1955), „Предаване за турското малцинство“ (1955), „Българо-мохамедани от Родопите на екскурзия в София“ (1958) и др.

¹² ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5, инв. №52/388 – Заснети са общо 46 кадъра от фоторепортера Владимир Кръстевич.

На художествената самодейност и на националния преглед на държавните турски естрадни театри са посветени 21 фотофилма. Най-ранните от тях са за „Турския естраден театър в Хасково“ и „Художествения самодеен колектив при турското народно читалище „Мустафа Субхи“¹³ – Хасково“ (1954). Следват 5 фотофилма за „Зюлейха – ориенталска музикална драма от Мустафа Алиев“ (1955). За „националния преглед на държавните турски естрадни театри“ са заснети десет фотофилма от 1956 г. На 30 май 1957 г. е фотодокументирана постановката на турската малцинствена група при ВИТИЗ – София. „Легенда за любовта“. През 1959 г. фоторепортерът Карекин Карекинян е заснел върху два фотофилма „Едноактна азербайджанска комедия „Свекърва“ от Меджид Шайхалов – представена от Турския естраден театър“.

На жени са посветени 12 фотофилма, какъвто е например фотообразът на „ДОСО-вката“¹⁴ Недиме Алиева“ от 1956 г. Пропагандният поглед към мюсюлманките е уловил неслучайно и „Курсът за медицински сестри туркини“ през 1956 г., заснет от Кирил Свраков в четири фотофилма от 1956 г.

През 1975 г. няколко фоторепортери са изпратени в Смолян, Велинград, Гоце Делчев, Кърджали, Разград и Шумен, за да документират „срещата на НС на ОФ с девойки – активистки от ОФ школите“ в тези градове.

¹³ Мустафа Субхи или Супхи (1882–1921) – основател и първи председател на комунистическата партия в Турция.

¹⁴ Доброволната организация за съдействие на отбраната (ДОСО) е създадена през 1951 г. и е разпусната през 1968 г. Мрежата на ДОСО е изградена в съответствие с административно-териториалното деление на страната. А нейни клубове се изграждат в предприятия, ТКЗС, учебни заведения и др. Ръководи се от Централен комитет и Изпълнителен комитет. В управленския апарат на организацията влизат бивши военни, бивши партизани. ДОСО организира обучение по различни дейности, свързани с военната подготовка – клубове по авто-мотодело, авио-, морски и стрелкови клубове. Развива спортна дейност по ветроходство, безмоторно летене, парашутизъм, спортна стрелба, подводен спорт, моторно летене, мотоциклетизъм, морски моделизъм, радиоспортове и др.



*Курс на ОФ гр. Гоце Делчев за девойки българо-мохамеданки 26.10.1970 г.
Л. Георгиева. (ЩДА, ф. 720, оп.5 инв. № 70/4831)*

+



*Среща на НС на ОФ с девойки активистки от ОФ школите от Смолян,
Велинград, Гоце Делчев, Кърджали, Разград, Шумен.
(ЩДА, ф.720, оп.5, инв. № 75/1226 и инв.№75/1241)*

Друг пропаганден подход към мюсюлманите, прилаган системно, откриваме в обзорните фоторепортажи, които са правени през 50-те години в различни населени места в България. Озаглавени са: „Из живота на турското малцинство...“ Началото е поставено през 1951 г. с обзор за мюсюлманите в село Севар, Кубратско. През 1954 г. не е отбелязано точното населено място на снимките и прегледът е „Из живота на турското малцинство у нас“. През 1955 г. е представен животът на турското малцинство в гр. Сталин (дн. Варна). През 1956 г. три фотофилма са посветени на „живота

на българо-мохамеданското население в село Плетена, Гоце Делчевско (помашко село в полите на Пирин)¹⁵“.



*Из живота на българо-мохамеданското население в с. Плетена,
Гоце Делчевско, помашко село в полите на Пирин.
(ЦДА, ф.720, оп.5, инв. № 56/3051)*

Специално внимание е отделено на посещението на писателя Кръстю Белев (1908-1978) сред учениците от турското педагогическо училище в Кърджали.¹⁶ Други фотофилми са посветени на посрещането на „прогресивния писател Назъм Хикмет“¹⁷, който пристига в България за годишнината от отбелязването на 9 септември 1944 г. Снимано е събранието, на което говори писателят в защита на мира, както и срещата му с турски младежи. По случай 73-

¹⁵ Тук при описанието е допусната грешка. Село Плетена се намира в Западните Родопи.

¹⁶ Писателят не е случайно избран. По определението на Вили Лилков, той е „плащан другар“, бил е на издръжка на БКП и на съветското разузнаване още преди 1944 г. Като секретен сътрудник на съветските военни аташета и резиденти е създавал нелегални канали с Австрия, Турция и Румъния. По време на комунистическия режим е главен инспектор в Министерството на информацията и изкуствата (всъщност на пропагандата) и военен кореспондент (Лилков, 2023, р. 71).

¹⁷ Назъм Хикмет (1902–1963) е турски поет, писател, драматург и обществен деятел. В началото на 50-те години на миналия век той получава задача от българското правителство да спре изселването на големи групи турци от България в Турция. Заедно с Блага Димитрова и отговорни лица от комунистическата партия посещава турски села и организира митинги. Тази дейност е описана в книгата на Блага Димитрова „Назъм Хикмет в България“ (1955).

годишнината от рождението на Сталин е организирано тържествено събрание в турското педагогическо училище в София и то е отразено в обектива на пропагандата. Заснета е среща на турци журналисти с турски емигрант журналист на 12 февруари 1954 г.

Фотоочерци представят двама герои на социалистическия труд: „Саид Хасанов Лотфиев, майстор пекар на Рингова пещ в Керамична фабрика – Харманли“ и „Портрет на героя на социалистическия труд Али Мурадов Ходжов“ (1955).

Но сред негативите има и такива, които показват невидимата страна или още скриваната от погледите на обществото съдба на мюсюлманите в България. Тях бихме определили като нецензурирани кадри и истински находки за илюстриране на политиката по насилствена асимилация на мюсюлманите (Назърска, Шапкалова, 2009, р. 95).

Изненадващо много са снимките, направени през 1950 г. и 1951 г., които отразяват поредното изселване на мюсюлманите от България.¹⁸ Те напълно обяснимо не са намерили място в тематичния албум, представящ турското малцинство. В общо пет фотофилма са представени: „Чакащите пред турската легация в гр. Сталин (дн. Варна) от 5 октомври 1950 г.“; „Върнатите турски изселници от граничните турски власти на граничния пункт в Свиленград“ – на 4 октомври 1950 г.“; „Изселници турци чакат за влак повече от 18 дни, поради затваряне на границата от турското правителство 23 – 25 октомври 1950 г.“; „Чакащи на гара Свиленград“ и

¹⁸ В резултат на новия етап в държавната политика към мюсюлманите от началото на 50-те до края на 60-те – насилственото коопериране и кампанията за еманципация на жените е провокирана нова изселническа вълна (само през 1950–1951 – 155 000 души). Вж. (Назърска, Шапатов, 2009, р. 95)

„Българските власти подпомагат турските изселници с медицинска помощ“. Всички тези снимки са направени от Рачо Стоянов.



*Турски изселници гр. Сталин пред легацията, 5 октомври 1950.
(ЦДА, ф.720, оп.13, а.е.916)*



*Върнатите турски изселници от граничните турски власти на
граничния пункт в Свиленград – 4 октомври 1950.
(ЩДА, ф. 720, оп.13, а.е.1012)*



Изселници турци чакат за влак повече от 18 дни поради затваряне на границата от турското правителство 23-25 октомври 1950 г. на гара Свиленград. (ИДА, ф. 720, оп.13, а.е. 1082)

В края на следващата – 1951 година, Симеон Ненов е заснел върху един фотофилм завърналите се в България турски изселници

(на 19 декември 1951 г., общо 29 кадри). Впечатляващо е, че това са всъщност снимки на роми, ромски семейства, въпреки определянето им като турци в описанията на фотографи и редактори в „Българска фотография“.



*Турски изселници, завърнали се в България, 19.12.1951.
(ЦДА, ф.720, оп.5, инв. № 51/1415)*

Ако следваме само снимките от тематичните албуми, ще видим коренно различна картина на изселническата политика на комунистическата власт. Според тематичен албум, който е посветен на „Външната политика – български делегации в чужди страни“¹⁹, цели 13 фотофилма с 34 фотоса на Рафи Марукян²⁰ свидетелстват за грандиозна „среща на завърнали се в България български граждани.“ Срещата е проведена на 13 януари 1987 г., по всяка вероятност в зала в Народния дворец на културата. Имената на участниците, на цели семейства, на членовете на инициативния комитет, както и на организационния комитет с нищо не подсказват, че това са мюсюлмани. На някои места в албума тези поръчкови снимки са обозначени като отразяващи „Другарската среща на български граждани, завърнали се от Република Турция в своята родина“. Тържествена обстановка, трибуна, изпълнена зала и официално облечени и изказващи се участници от Кърджалийско, от Разград, от Търговищко, от Никопол, от Севлиево. Не е странно, въпреки че е абсурдно, и това, че промяната на имената на мюсюлманите е довела до класирането на тези снимки в албум, който няма нищо общо с турско/мюсюлманско малцинство, а са отнесени към външната политика и дори към български делегации в чужди страни.

Кулминацията в описанията на снимките в тематичните албуми е достигната две години по-късно и се свързва с т.нар. „възродителен процес“ и поредното изселване. Този път 22 цветни фотоса са обединени от общото заглавие „Граничен пункт „Капитан Андреево. Ислямизирани българи на път за Турция“.²¹ Всички те са дело на Ив. Добромиров.²² Албумът е събрал в себе си снимки за социалните грижи. И сред тях са попаднали и снимките от граничния пункт, включени в раздел „Малцинства“. Под всички снимки надписът е еднакъв и той определя мястото на събитието – границата с Турция и действащите лица – този път ислямизирани българи.

¹⁹ ЦДА, ф. 720, оп. 5, а.е. 47;

<https://www.archives.government.bg/bgphoto/047.03..pdf>

²⁰ Професионален фотограф от 1967 г. Преподава и фотография от 1975 г.

²¹ ЦДА, ф. 720, оп.6, а.е.5

²² От 1974 г. работи в „Българска фотография“ като щатен фоторепортер.



Граничен пункт „Капитан Андреево“. Ислямизирани българи на път за Турция. (ЩДА, ф.720, оп.6, 89/9031)





*Ислямизирани българи на път за Турция.
(ЩДА, ф. 720, оп.6 инв.№ 89/9029)*



*Граничният пункт „Капитан Андреево“.
(ЩДА, ф.720, оп.6, инв.№ 89/9039)*

Вместо заключение

Съществуват различни хипотези, предположения, изследвания, в които силата на въздействие на фотоизображението се измерва и съпоставя с думи, броят на които е винаги повече от 1 000. Без да търсим най-точния еквивалент, имаме всички основания да твърдим въз основа дори само на снимките за мюсюлманите, запазени във фонда на фотографската пропагандна институция, че тяхната сила е огромна и внушителна. За изследователите са изключително ценни и позитивите, които крещат с гласа на пропагандата. Много ценни и неизследвани са все още обаче негативите, които показват скриваните и невидими и премълчавани страни на политиките към мюсюлманите в България.

Запазените фотодокументи за българските мюсюлмани потвърждават не само политиката за тяхното маргинализиране, но

също и различната степен на обективност при негативите и позитивните копия. Тъй като негативите се пазят цялостно, без да се отделят несполучливите кадри, вкл. и без да се унищожават неподходящите за целите на пропагандата кадри, те са без съмнение поинформативен и дори по-обективен източник на информация в сравнение с фотосите от тематичните албуми. Също така те са многократно повече от снимките в тематичните албуми. Ако сред негативите бяха установени над 2 000 кадъра, свързани с мюсюлманите, то в тематичния албум снимките са сведени само до 207 черно-бели фотоснимки (близо десет пъти по-малко) и 22 цветни снимки.

Какъв по-убедителен завършек на тези редове може да има от думите, с които пропагандата е обозначавала в годините мюсюлманите?

В началото са: „българо-мохамедани“, „турско малцинство“ и „турски изселници“, които Турция връща (1950, 1951 г.) и на които българската държава помага, ограмотява, осигурява условия за художествена самодейност, лекува... През 80-те години „виждаме“ от надписите, че „българи са се завърнали от чужбина в родината си България“ и „българи, които са се завърнали от Турция“. През лятото на 1989 г. в надписите на цветните снимки от граничния пункт „Капитан Андреево“ вече няма и следа от турци и мюсюлмани, а се оказва, че са останали само „ислямизирани българи“, които са тръгнали на път за Турция...

Така, периодично прогонваните мюсюлмани от България в края на 80-те години вече изчезват и с гласа на пропагандата се обявяват за българи, които са ислямизирани.

Запазването на тези безценни извори в държавните архиви, а така също и започналото вече тяхно обработване и дигитализиране ще осигури автентични свидетелства за изследователите и за всички потребители, които проявяват интерес.

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Conformity and Consensus in Southwestern Georgia after the Establishment of Russian Imperial Authority: the Role of the Russian Empire in the Resettlement of the Local Population (Muhajirism)

Abstract: *The political history of the Caucasus is marked by enduring complexity and multifaceted contestation, driven by the region's pivotal position at the crossroads of empires. Over centuries, control oscillated between indigenous polities and successive imperial powers, engendering shifting allegiances and recurrent conflict. During the Russian Empire's 19th-century expansion into southwestern Georgia, these dynamics intensified, compelling local communities to choose between acquiescence to imperial rule or the precarious maintenance of autonomy. This article offers a comprehensive analysis of Muhajirism – the mass displacement and migration of predominantly Muslim communities from the Akhaltsikhe region – situating this phenomenon within broader imperial strategies. Employing a rich body of archival documents, including official correspondence, census records, land surveys, and contemporaneous local reports, the study reconstructs the administrative and military mechanisms by which the Russian authorities orchestrated population transfers and repopulated vacated territories with ethnically reliable settlers. The findings reveal a stark disjunction between the empire's official rhetoric of civilizing missions and its underlying objectives of demographic engineering, social control, and resource consolidation. Internal divisions among Georgian notables and local elites further facilitated imperial designs, while displaced communities experienced profound loss of property, identity disintegration, and cultural transformation. By critically reassessing the legacy of Tsarist colonial governance, this research illuminates how Muhajirism functioned as both a tool of power redistribution and a catalyst for long-term demographic and cultural change. The article contributes to scholarship on South Caucasian regional history, migration studies, and imperial policy, offering new insights into the processes by which empires sought to produce conformity and secure consensus among subjugated populations.*

Keywords: *Conformity and Consensus, Expansionist Empire Policy; Muhajirism; Ethnic and Religious Diversity; Demographic Policy.*

The political history of the Caucasus is complex and difficult due to its geopolitical location and ethnic diversity. For centuries, this re-

gion was the focus of various empires, which repeatedly led to the division of power between the local ruling elite and the conquerors. Compromises and conformities became especially relevant in the context of the expansion of Russian imperial power. Local ethnic and religious groups were often forced to accept the rules and norms of the Dominion or try to reach a common agreement to protect their interests.

The article deals with the dynamics of conflicts caused by the policy of the Russian Empire in the southern region of Georgia – Samtskhe-Javakheti; it analyzes and assesses the expansionist policy of the empire towards Georgian Muslims. The forced expulsion of Georgian Muslims from their homeland after the establishment of Russian authority is known in Georgian historiography as *Muhajirism*¹.

Southern Georgia is the place of the Georgian state formation, the hotbed of the spread of Christianity and the flourishing of national culture. It was the area where the centralized feudal kingdom emerged, considered the ideal of Georgian statehood. Therefore, we believe, it is relevant to conduct a deep analysis and consistent scientific study of the processes that developed in this region. It is important to draw appropriate conclusions on the path to building an independent, modern European state, so as not to repeat the fatal mistakes that, due to objective or subjective reasons, led to the fragmentation of the single national organism of Georgians, the alienation of one part and their displacement as muhajirs to the Ottoman Empire, which in turn led to irreparable demographic problems and the weakening of state power.

Therefore, we consider it relevant to conduct a deep analysis and consistent scientific study of the processes that are associated with the region, rich in historical events. It is important to draw appropriate conclusions on the path to building an independent, modern European state, so as not to repeat the fatal mistakes that, due to objective or subjective reasons, led to the fragmentation of the single national organism of Georgians, the alienation of one part and their movement as muhajirs to the Ottoman Empire, what in turn led to irreparable demographic problems and the weakening of state power.

¹ *Muhajir* is an Arabic word with mainly two meanings: originally, the word was used to denote the followers of Muhammad, the founder of Islam (al-muhajirun), although in the same language the same word, but without the suffix *-al*, meant any emigration (economic, social, political, religious, etc. See: Dudarev (2017); Vinogradov (2000); Bobrovnikov & Babich (2007); Baramidze (1996).

We would like to briefly examine the first attempts of the Russian Empire to annex the Akhaltsikhe Principality (the Akhaltsikhe Principality was an administrative unit created by the Ottomans in 1579, which also included the historical territory of Samtskhe-Javakheti). Since the 15th century (except for a short period), Constantinople has been the main object of the foreign policy of the Russian Empire. Due to its geopolitical position, the Caucasus (along with the Balkans) played an exceptionally important role in this regard. It is also clear that for various reasons Georgia was and remains the key to the South Caucasus. In turn, Georgia, especially its southwestern region, was of vital importance to the Ottoman Empire, and with the help of several naval and land military bases, the Ottomans protected the northern part of the southern coast of the Black Sea, bordering the Strait of Constantinople. It is obvious that the dominance of another political force (Russia, Iran) in the region not only posed a threat to the interests of the Ottoman Empire in the Caucasus, but also called into question the political existence of the empire. The cornerstone of the policy of the Russian Empire in the 19th century was the liberation of Constantinople, thereby allegedly fulfilling its missionary role in relation to the Orthodox world.

On April 12, 1801, Emperor Alexander I signed a manifesto on the annexation of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti to the Russian Empire. This fact was recorded in the Akhaltsikhe Principality in 1802. On April 16, it became known that the Governor of Georgia, General Kroning, informed Sherif Pasha that from now on, instead of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, his neighbor was the Russian Empire (Berge, 1866, v. 1, p. 69-70). It became clear to the Ottomans that from now on, the annexation of the historical lands of Georgia became part of the Caucasian policy of the Russian Empire. The first attempt to join the Principality was made diplomatically. Governor – General Tsitsianov tried diplomatic tactics even in 1803. On February 26, 1803, Tsitsianov wrote to the Italian ambassador in Istanbul, asking him to somehow convince the Divan of the Ottoman Empire to transfer Samegrelo, Imereti, and the coastal areas of the Black Sea together with Poti to the protection of the Russian Empire. He also persistently asked if the Sublime Porte could make a similar concession to the principality of Akhaltsikhe. Tsitsianov emphasized that the territory of the Akhaltsikhe Principality historically belonged to Georgia (Berge, 1866, v. 3, p. 342). The Porte rejected the proposal of Governor-General Tsitsianov. Thus, the first attempt ended in failure.

The next effort to annex the Akhaltsikhe Principality was made during the Russian-Ottoman War of 1806–1812. There were opened two fronts – in Europe and in the Caucasus. General Gudovich was appointed commander-in-chief of the Russian army. Military actions in the direction of the Akhaltsikhe Principality began in March 1807. On May 3, Gudovich sent an appeal to the elders, begs and clergy of the principality. He wrote: "I am entering the Akhaltsikhe Principality as if for battle on enemy territory." Although Gudovich promised the population that if they did not resist, he would spare their lives and property – this was not a message from a liberator. His actions resembled the violence of an invader (Berge, 1866, v. 3, p. 580). On May 6 of the same year, the Russian corps approached Akhalkalaki – the administrative center of Javakheti. On May 8, the Russian corps went on the offensive. However, the attack was unprepared and soon failed. At the same time, the Russian corps also retreated (Berge, 1866, v. 3, p. 586).

The policy of the Russian Empire towards the Akhaltsikhe Principality changed significantly after Tormasov was appointed commander-in-chief of the Caucasian Army, because he believed that the annexation of the Akhaltsikhe Principality was necessary for the peaceful life of Georgia. This is what Tormasov wrote to Count Rumyantsev on September 20, 1809: "Until the Akhaltsikhe Principality is included in the empire, our right flank will not be protected from enemy encroachments" (Potto, 1902, p. 245). Tormasov saw two ways to annex the Akhaltsikhe Principality: the first was diplomatic; the second was through military action. Almost immediately after his appointment, Tormasov began working through diplomatic channels to annex the Akhaltsikhe Principality. Moreover, for this time the struggle for the throne of the principality began between Sherif Pasha Jakeli and Selim Pasha Khimshiashvili. It was precisely this political situation that Tormasov tried to use to achieve his goal.

In 1809, Tormasov established diplomatic relations with Mamia Gurieli, with the help of which he hoped to obtain Selim Pasha's consent to recognize Russia's patronage (Berge, 1866, v. 4, p. 781). Things got to the point that on July 26, 1809, Prince Petre Orbeliani went to Akhaltsikhe as an ambassador plenipotentiary. He had to familiarize himself with the terms of the treaty drawn up by Tormasov for Selim. The treaty consisted of 11 articles. The main content was as follows: 1. The Akhaltsikhe Principality was under the protection of the Russian Empire; 2. A Russian garrison was created in Akhaltsikhe (Berge, 1866, v. 4, p. 784). Finally, as a sign of loyalty, Selim gave his son Abdi as a

hostage to Russia. Reliable historical data of that time indicate that Selim Pasha welcomed Tormasov's proposal. However, subsequent events, in particular the abolition of the Imereti Kingdom by the Russian Empire in 1810, completely changed Selim Pasha's political views on this issue. Ultimately, Selim Khimshiashvili rejected the articles proposed in the treaty (Potto, 1902, p. 248). Thus, the annexation of the Akhaltsikhe Principality in 1809 also failed. Tormasov's diplomacy suffered a complete failure. The issue of annexing the region of the Akhaltsikhe Principality again became the prerogative of military action.

In 1810, the Russian army stood at the borders of Akhaltsikhe and was ready to begin military action. Tormasov urgently requested permission from the imperial court to march on the Principality (Berge, 1866, v. 4, p. 767). The acceleration of the process was due to several factors: firstly, the military alliance between Iran and the Ottoman Empire against Russian rule in the Caucasus, was sealed by a treaty signed in the spring of 1810 (Lomsadze, 1975, p. 129), and secondly, virtually all the forces fighting against Russian rule in Georgia were concentrated in Akhaltsikhe. The king of Imereti Solomon II and his son Alexander were also here (Berge, 1866, v. 4, p. 127-128; Potto, 1902, p. 249).

Tormasov developed a plan to attack the Principality. An offensive was planned in three directions. All three detachments were to meet in the city of Akhaltsikhe on November 12 (Berge, 1866, v. 4, p. 801-803). According to the same plan, a large number of Georgian militias were to be involved in the hostilities. The Georgian militia was led by Major General Tamaz Orbeliani (Berge, 1866, v. 4, p. 803). According to the plan drawn up in 1810, by autumn the united army of Russians and Georgians moved towards Akhaltsikhe (Berge, 1866, v. 4, 805). On November 14, the united Russian-Georgian troops approached Akhaltsikhe. The assault began on November 18. Despite the great success, when the city was almost ready to surrender, on November 26, 1810, Tormasov lifted the siege (Lomsadze, 1975, p. 136). Despite the failure of the 1810 campaign, the empire did not cease military actions in the direction of Akhaltsikhe. However, the military expeditions did not yield significant results. According to the peace treaty signed in Bucharest on May 16, 1812, the Akhaltsikhe Principality remained part of the Ottoman Empire (Lomsadze, 1975, p. 144).

A new war between the empires began in April 1828. The state interests of the two empires once again clashed in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The main goal of the Caucasian Army was to alleviate the

situation of the Russian troops operating on the Danube and to capture the Akhaltsikhe region.² On July 24, 1828, the Russian army led by Paskevich captured Akhalkalaki, the center of Javakheti. 700 local residents died on the battlefield (Potto, 1902, p. 108). The next target of the military plan was the capital of the principality – Akhaltsikhe. On the way, Paskevich captured the fortresses of Khertvisi³ and Aspindza (Berge, 1866, v. 7, p. 760). In early August, the main parts of the Russian army set up camp in the Akhaltsikhe region. On August 9, the Russians began the first attack on the city and achieved significant success. On August 12, the attack was resumed, and the battle for the city continued until August 16. At 8 o'clock in the morning of the next day, the Georgian Grenadier Regiment entered the inner citadel and raised the St. George flag over Akhaltsikhe (Potto, 1902, p. 97).

On September 2 (14), 1829, Russia and the Ottoman Empire signed a peace treaty in Adrianople. Under the terms of the armistice, the Turks in the Caucasus lost fortresses located on the eastern coast of the Black Sea and ten sanjaks of the Akhaltsikhe Principality: Kvabliani, Abastumani, Akhaltsikhe, Atskuri, Aspindza, Khertvisi, Akhalkalaki, Chacharaki, Potskhovi and Childiri. According to the Treaty of Adrianople, ten sanjaks of the Akhaltsikhe Principality, in fact the whole of Samtskhe-Javakheti, went to Russia. According to the above-mentioned peace treaty, the warring parties took the demographic factor into account from the very beginning. According to Article 13, the population of the border territories was granted the right to free movement and resettlement for a period of 18 months. The above-mentioned Article of the peace treaty was equally beneficial to both parties. Russia would get rid of an ethnic group that was undesirable for it, and the Ottoman Empire would correct its unstable demographic situation. The Russian Empire played a major role in the expulsion from the native places and the resettlement of the population of Samtskhe-Javakheti, as well as the entire Caucasus. It should also be noted that the muhajirs, as a historical phenomenon emerged after the establishment of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus.

The forced eviction of indigenous peoples from their lands had already taken place in the policy of the Russian Empire. After the annexation of Crimea in 1783, by order of Potemkin, most of the inhabitants were sent to camps beyond the Volga (Esadze, 1914, p. 3). By the decree of the Empress of June 30, 1792, the Zaporozhian Cossacks were

² CHAG (Central Historical Archive of Georgia), Fund 1018, Inventory 3, File 34.

³ CHAG, Fund 1018, Inventory 3, File 73.

allowed to settle on the right bank of the Kuban (Esadze, 1914, p. 5). Thus, before entering the territory of Georgia captured by the Ottomans, the Russian Empire had accumulated considerable experience in resolving the national question in its favor. It acted on the conquered territory according to a clearly defined and pre-thought-out plan. It tried to create such an ethnic picture in the new territories that would ensure its centuries-long dominance.

The main contours of the colonial policy of the Russian Empire in Samtskhe-Javakheti were already outlined during the war. On March 9, 1829, General Muravyov decided to burn several villages in the Potskhovi Sanjak. Such punitive operations were carried out quite often. The goal of such actions was clearly to intimidate the locals and get rid of them before a truce was reached (Berge, 1866, v. 8, p. 779). A similar event is mentioned in one of the documents we found in the archive, which says: After the capture of the city, many of us, intimidated by the Russians, fled to the Ottoman Empire.⁴

A study of scientific literature and archival materials has shown that before the war with the Ottomans, the Russian Empire had a clear understanding of how to act with respect to the peoples living in the annexed territories. For example, on July 26, 1828, the correspondence between I. Paskevich and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs revealed that planning began long before the territory of Southern Georgia became suitable for new Russian construction. The governor spoke enthusiastically about the fertility of the land and the similarity of the climate with the interior regions of Russia (Berge, 1866, v. 8, p. 291; Potto, 1902, p. 199).

After the capture of Akhaltsikhe, descendants of Georgian nobles, who fled after the establishment of Ottoman rule, approached Paskevich. They presented documents issued by the Georgian kings on the ownership of property in Meskheta and demanded the restoration of their former rights, since they were already subjects of the Russian Empire. The commander-in-chief refused to let them go and, moreover, insulted them, calling them enemies and traitors of Russia (Berge, 1866, v. 8, p. 291; Potto, 1902, p. 775).

In early 1829, the Field Marshal wrote to the imperial official Nesselrode: In the areas we occupy, resettling Armenians is very difficult, since there are few uninhabited places suitable for living, but I will do everything possible to make it happen. Paskevich also noted that the main difficulty in this matter was the local population, since, despite

⁴ CHAG, Fund 77, Inv. 1, File 13.

military actions and the establishment of a new government, they did not intend to leave their homeland. Z. Chichinadze and I. Nebieridze also pointed to this fact in their journalistic notes (Chichinadze, 1912, p. 69-70; Nebieridze, 1948, p. 10). From the documents provided (similar material is abundant in the historical archives of Georgia and in scientific literature), it is clear that the plan for the eviction of local residents had been developed before the war, so neither the conformist nor the conciliatory attitude of local residents towards the new administration had any significance. Tsarism was not concerned with the fate of the population of the annexed territories, but with the appropriation of as much fertile land as possible, abandoned by the population.

The Empire, having created a provisional government in the region (August, 16, 1828), meticulously and with zealous energy began to implement its sophisticated plan. V. Bebutov, a representative of an old and very noble Armenian family, was appointed the first governor of Principality. On August 25, 1825, I. Paskevich gave the government general rules of governance, according to which the government was obliged to return the fleeing population; maintain order; control the activities of local Muslims and, if necessary, suppress them; describe the treasury territories; the local population can use the customs existing in this area.⁵ The above-mentioned document and the rule of V. Bebutov caused great joy among the local population; as V. Potto wrote, the population returned because all its crimes were forgiven, joy reigned in the ranks of the local residents, they were greeted everywhere with open arms as true subjects of Russia, people returned to their homes and work. The Emperor thanked the soldiers of the army operating in Asia for such activities (Potto, 1902, p. 101).

We do not know what materials the aforementioned chronicle is based on. In fact, the more confidential materials reveal how “Great Russian” chauvinism skillfully disguised itself as selfless concern for other nations and messianic phraseology. The reality was completely different, what was evidenced by numerous documents and ethnological records. In this regard, it is interesting to examine a story by a resident of Akhaltsikhe, recorded by Z. Chichinadze: “When the Christians of Akhaltsikhe came to Bebutov to ask for help, he answered: Go away from here, Tatars, so that not a single person remains here... You cannot stay here. You are Tatars, Russia will not accept you, you are enemies of Russia (Chichinadze, 1912, p. 69). As we can see, Russia welcomed

⁵ CHAG, Fund 2, Inv. 1, Geo. 3988, File 20.

the local residents with excessive “openness and open arms.” Here it is also necessary to emphasize the fact that such an action was not a whim of individual officials, but represented the main line of the empire’s policy.

The tsarist officials had tried to reduce the number of Georgian Muslims by any means possible before the terms of the truce were clarified. L. Dzhaniashvili writes: General Bebutov intimidated the population with his army, the frightened people hid in the forest, and he settled foreign tribes on their lands (Janiashvili, 1995, p. 12). At the same time, V. Bebutov, of course, with the consent of the highest authorities, allowed local Muslim nobles to sell their property and flee to the Ottoman Empire. The new administration was well informed that loyal begs would refuse to be exiled after peace was established. One of the documents states: Immediately after the capture of Akhaltsikhe, representatives of our rank, with the permission of the highest authorities, had the right to sell their estates and emigrate abroad.⁶ In addition, the new administration widely introduced the practice of illegal and accelerated transfer of lands to the treasury. In 1828, the Russian governor of the Khertvisi Sanjak reported to the Provisional Government: Although the local begs died in the war, they left heirs, so the fulfillment of your request to transfer the remaining lands to the treasury does not seem possible at this time.⁷ The document clearly shows that the empire did not even try to understand the attitude of Georgian Muslims to the new government. They did not care what intentions the nobles had towards the Russian authorities, whether they were compromise-loyal or conformist-minded, the main thing was to get rid of them.

On September 2 (14), 1829, the warring parties signed a peace treaty in Adrianople. According to it, Russia's colonial policy was officially formalized. The government accused the local Georgians of being Turks because of their religious beliefs. This is evidenced by numerous documents, for example, A. Fronel writes: Samtskhe-Saatabago was captured by Count Paskevich... The government calls the local residents Tatars, not Meskhetians⁸ (Proneli, 1991, p. 131). E. Weinbaum also speaks of the same fact: We must not repeat the mistakes we made in 1829 in Akhaltsikhe. We called the Muslimized Georgians Turks (Veindemvaum, 1901, p. 122). Calling the Georgian ethnic group Turks

⁶ CHAG, Fund 2, Inv. 1, Geo. 3083, File 7.

⁷ CHAG, Fund 77, Inv.3, Geo. 1, File 2.

⁸ An analysis of the historiographical debates about Meskhetian (Ahıska) Turks see: Ангелова (2021, p. 164-166)

was part of a carefully thought-out plan to expel Georgian Muslims from their homeland. In this regard, the most notable is one of the Russian documents, which states that migration will cleanse the Caucasus Mountains of unwanted populations, so they need help in this endeavor.⁹

Having consolidated its position in the newly annexed territories, the empire used its powerful apparatus to further intensify the process of evicting Georgians from the region. Instead of helping the war-ravaged, impoverished population, they were forced to pay off old debts left over from the Ottoman rule. The government did not consider the plight of the taxable population worthy of attention, which, like the settlers from Arzrum, demanded a number of benefits (Lomsadze, 1975, p. 416). The fact is that the population that emigrated from the Ottoman Empire to the Russian Empire was exempted from any duties for a period of six years.¹⁰ The Russian government was not going to compromise. It was not interested in the economic situation of the population; it was focused on the large number of exiles. Documents show that the local population was exempted from taxes only in 1828, but in the following years they had to fulfill all duties in full.¹¹ The list of people in debt was compiled with particular care. The document, created in 1827, lists the names of those Georgian Muslims who failed to pay the state debt in 1831–1832. The above document obliges the heads of the sanjaks to collect the debt by any means.¹² It should also be noted, that documents describing such activities of the empire can be found in numerous historical archives.¹³

Based on the above, it can be concluded that an openly discriminatory policy was carried out against the indigenous peoples. Tsarism provided all possible assistance to the foreign peoples who settled on the original Georgian lands, creating practically ideal living conditions for them (Berge, 1866, v. 7, p. 832). However, all this was done at the expense of denying the basic interests of local Georgian Muslims. The Russian administration made their living conditions extremely unbearable, a clear proof of which, among many other things, is the extremely premature collection of taxes.

⁹ CHAG, Fund 11, Inv.48, Geo. 1, File 40.

¹⁰ CHAG, Fund 77, Inv.1, Geo. 48, File 40.

¹¹ CHAG, Fund 2, Inv.1, Geo. 3083, File 45.

¹² CHAG, Fund 2, Inv.1, Geo. 4579, File 129.

¹³ CHAG, fund 2, Inv.1, Geo. 2930, File 30; Fund 77, Inv.1, Geo. 48, File 41.

One of the reasons for the expulsion of the inhabitants of Samtskhe-Javakheti should be considered the extremely negative attitude of the Russian administration towards the begs and nobles. It is well known that representatives of this rank adapt to the new government much easier than other social groups. Those who owned large estates, property and privileges and at the same time participated in the governance of the state always tried to compromise with the invader. Compromise and submission would allow them to preserve their property and various privileges (Vakradze, n.d., p. 150-157). During the establishment of Ottoman rule in this region, the Georgian nobility, in exchange for significant concessions, retained their old Georgian rights and simultaneously received new privileges from the Ottoman nobility. Therefore, it can be assumed that during the establishment of the Russian administration, most of the nobles (aghas and beys) preferred to remain in their homeland rather than emigrate abroad, while retaining privileges and property from the new government. But the reality was different. Tsarism did not need Muslim nobles, who had become too burdensome. The aim of the empire was to seize their property. The government understood perfectly well that, in addition to numerous territories, the Georgian nobles enjoyed great authority among the general population (authority was determined by a number of objective reasons). Therefore, by having got rid of them, the empire would have caught "two birds with one stone". Firstly, they would transfer large areas of fertile land to the treasury, and secondly, together with the begs, thanks to their authority among the population, the local peasantry would move abroad in large numbers. That is why the empire did not grant the local nobility – the *begs* – the rights of the Russian nobility (Umarov-Gozalashvili, 1994, p. 42). Sh. Lomsadze wrote about the fact of the refusal to identify the local feudal class with the Georgian nobility in his work (Lomsadze, 1975, p. 421). Deprived of the title and privileges, begs became an easy target. The empire treated the local nobility and, of course, their property at its own discretion and in its own interests. The administration transferred the property of the begs to the treasury without any disputes, be it individual plots of land or entire villages.¹⁴ At the same time, the empire did not take into account the documents confirming the rights of ownership, regardless of whether they were issued by the sultan or the Georgian kings. Moreover, the Russian

¹⁴ CHAG, Fund 2, Inv.1, Geo. 4218, File 4.

administration simply confiscated the existing documents and handed them over to the archive.¹⁵

In order to increase the treasury assets, the administration even denied the authenticity of the documents it issued. For example, the villages purchased by the Aspindza bey were confiscated because the purchase and sale document, executed in 1831-32, was drawn up incorrectly. The confiscated village was transferred to the treasury.¹⁶

The nobles, finding themselves in a hopeless situation, addressed the government with a letter: After the capture of Akhaltsikhe, the government announced to us that our property would never be taken away, and our rights and customs would be preserved. Now, Your Excellency, you demand from us documents confirming the right of ownership. We cannot dispute your decision, but despite this, we will not be able to give you the original documents, but we will provide you with copies, because if you keep the original, we will lose our property, and then we will be forced to move to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷

As we see, the empire ignored the loyal and compromising moods of the nobles in every possible way. The main line of its policy was different: as many local residents as possible should be resettled from Russian territories as far away as possible.

As can be seen from the above materials, the lion's share of the expulsion and resettlement of the indigenous population of Samtskhe-Javakheti from their homeland belongs to the Russian Empire. However, it is fair to note that the other side – the Ottoman Empire – also played a important role in this matter. As mentioned above, according to Article 13 of the peace treaty, the population of the border territories was granted the right to freedom of movement and settlement for 18 months.¹⁸

The Ottoman Empire categorically demanded the fulfillment of this point of the peace treaty. On the issue of the fulfillment of this point, Paskevich wrote to Nesselrode: I had the good fortune to hand the Emperor a card. His Majesty recognized the legitimacy of the Turkish side's demand regarding the provisions of Article 13 of the peace treaty.

¹⁵ CHAG, Fund 2, Inv.1, Geo. 2930, Files 14-15.

¹⁶ CHAG, Fund 77, Inv.3, Geo. 7, File 2.

¹⁷ CHAG, Fund 2, Inv. 1, Geo. 4218, File 42.

¹⁸ This deadline was extended several times, which was completely acceptable to both sides.

Therefore, we must support them in this endeavor in every way until the expiration of the period established in the treaty.¹⁹

Such support from the Russian Empire contributed to the intensification of Ottoman activities in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The activities of Ottoman emissaries and fanatical mullahs assumed large proportions. Al. Proneli describes this story as follows: “Mullah, what are you saying, didn’t you die of hunger abroad, in that huge city where you have no relatives or acquaintances? And Mullah argued, how can it be abroad? Aren’t all our people there? The country is big, strong [...] How can a Muslim die of hunger there?” (Proneli, 1991, p. 58). The author also points to the fact that the mullahs took their flock with them. Samson Pirtskhalava writes about the same fact: “The clergy took advantage of the situation and began to preach that they should go to Turkey. People sold everything and fled to Turkey” (Pirtsckhalava, 1915, p. 40). There are many documents of similar content preserved in the historical archive. One of them states: A significant part of the resettled population belongs to the Muslim clergy. This also brings us great benefit, since together with them, the broad masses of the population move to live in the Ottoman Empire.²⁰

As can be seen from the above material, the Ottoman Empire also contributed to the expulsion of Georgian Muslims from their homeland. However, it should be noted that they did not have to make great efforts for this, unlike the Russian government, which spent so much energy and effort on this matter that the residents of Samtskhe-Javakheti left their native places without agitation and propaganda.

In conclusion, it should be noted that according to the Treaty of Adrianople, the ancient region of Georgia Samtskhe-Javakheti was liberated from Ottoman rule and, together with the rest of Georgia, found itself in a single development environment - the Russian Empire, what in itself was a progressive event.

However, due to the differences in the geographical, religious and economic conditions of most of the local inhabitants, the Russian Empire classified them as Turks, considered them as hostile, unreliable elements and declared an uncompromising war on them. Of course, the indigenous inhabitants of this region, the Georgian ethnic group, had no

¹⁹ CHAG, Fund 11, Inv.1, Geo. 55, File 3.

²⁰ CHAG, Fund 11, Inv. 1, Geo.55, File 12.

chance of winning this battle. As a result of Russia's colonization policy, the joy of returning to their homeland in this region was somewhat overshadowed by the tragic events that unfolded there.

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Muslim Women of Ajara: Certain Aspects of Their Sociocultural and Sociolinguistic Portrait

Abstract: *The present paper deals with the distinctive aspects of the assimilation process experienced by Muslim women in Ajara while adjusting to new forms of life, which were expressed in sociocultural and sociolinguistic dimensions. The subject of the research is the period between 1920s–1930s distinguished by the establishment of Soviet power in the region of Ajara, which initiated a series of assimilation-driven yet contradictory processes. While the small number of Muslim women in Ajara adapted to new conditions, the majority of Ajarian women hesitated to adapt to change due to fear or timidity. In the countryside, women were still influenced by conservative traditions, particularly within the frameworks of social relations, such as marriage, dowries, work, education and etc. The adherence to traditional lifestyle among these women was largely driven by either the fear of family influence or external aggression. Nonetheless, progressively, over time, social norms in the region evolved as modern influences began to take hold. For instance, the traditional chador was replaced by plainer headscarf (known as “lechaki”), mostly worn by older women. The relationship between women and their families, especially with male members of society gradually became less restrictive. Whereas, women were previously restricted from engaging in conversations or being seen with men, these prohibitions were progressively relaxed. Ajarian women gained access to education, which was unthinkable in the pre-Soviet period. The sociocultural identity of Ajarian women and their process of assimilation into new ways of life have been prominently preserved in folklore, literature and other forms of collective and cultural heritage. The previously mentioned study will be developed based on the text, focusing on the aforementioned aspects. We will examine the unique characteristics of assimilation process experienced by Muslim women in Ajara adapting to new living conditions; moreover, we will engage in sociolinguistic analysis of this process and evaluate the historical, cultural and social factors that led to assimilation of Turkisms into local dialects.*

Keywords: *Muslim women; Ajara; Georgia; assimilation; cultural transformation.*

Introduction

The present paper deals with the distinctive aspects of the assimilation process experienced by Muslim women in Ajara while adjusting to new forms of life, which were expressed in sociocultural and sociolinguistic dimensions. The subject of the research is the period between 1920s - 1930s distinguished by the establishment of Soviet power in the region of Ajara, which initiated a series of contradictory processes aimed at assimilation. Considering the issue of Ajarian Muslim women of the 1920–1930s, it is necessary to note that the spread of the Muslim religion in Ajara radically changed the sociocultural portrait of the Ajarian woman. The religious factor primarily changed the lives of women.

In the past, Ajarian women led a rather closed lifestyle from a social point of view. The fusion of local Ajarian culture and traditions with Islamic customs played an important role in shaping the lifestyle of Muslim women living in the region. Prior to this period, the severely restricted human rights to contribute and participate as free and equal members of society suppressed Muslim women in Ajara from self-expression and fulfillment. Discrimination against them appeared both in formal and informal settings, particularly within familial and urban societal structures.

Nevertheless, the lives of Muslim women in Ajara began to transform in the 1920s, with the introduction of new societal norms in the region. In the beginning, Muslim women of Ajara managed to successfully establish themselves in the society, by refusing to wear religious attire associated with Islam (such as chador and other head pieces, participating in public and communal activities). It's vital to note that such behavior from women was met with criticism from social conservatives.

While the small number of Muslim women in Ajara adapted to new conditions, the majority of Ajarian women hesitated to adapt to change due to fear or timidity. In the countryside, women were still influenced by conservative traditions, particularly within the frameworks of social relations, such as marriage, dowries, work, education and etc. The adherence to traditional lifestyle among these women was largely driven by either the fear of family influence or external aggression. Nonetheless, progressively, over time, social norms in the region evolved as modern influences began to take hold. For instance, the traditional chador was replaced by plainer headscarf (known as "lechaki"), mostly worn by older women. The relationship between women and

their families, especially with male members of society gradually became more loyal. Whereas, women were previously restricted from engaging in conversations or being seen with men, these prohibitions were progressively relaxed. Ajarian women gained access to education, which was unthinkable in the pre-Soviet period.

Methods

The sociocultural portrait of Ajarian women and the process of their adaptation to new living conditions have been preserved in a very interesting way both in folklore and literary texts, in various layers of collective and cultural memory. The above aspect of the study is developed on the basis of the texts recorded in the mentioned layers, in which we examine the features of the process of adaptation of Ajarian women to new living conditions, as well as its contradictory nature; more detailed attention is paid to the sociolinguistic side of this process, the analysis of historical, cultural and social factors that influenced the penetration of Turkisms into local dialects. Based on the goals and objectives of the work, we have used the descriptive research method, the method of literary text analysis and the comparison-contrast method.

Main part

Soviet propaganda always emphasized the radical changes that began in society immediately after the establishment of the communist regime (Blauvelt, Khatiashvili, 2016; Hoch, Kopeček, 2011; Martin, 2001; Pelkmans, 2006; Suny, 1994). One of the most difficult tasks in the process of transforming society was changing the lifestyle of Muslim women. Much has been written on this topic, mostly in a pathetic tone. „The Soviet government put an end to the slave, disenfranchised position of women, which was further aggravated by the Muslim faith in Ajara. Before the establishment of Soviet power, no government guaranteed women the opportunity to escape their disenfranchised position. Before the establishment of Soviet power, Ajarian women lived in extremely humiliating conditions, were deprived of the right to appear in society and had to spend most of their lives within four walls. Only the October Socialist Revolution granted women equal rights with men, abolishing medieval customs of marriage“ (Davitadze, 1958, p. 115).

This is what Soviet propaganda wrote, and accordingly, how Soviet literature fulfilled the ideological order: there was often created an image of such an oppressed woman, that was supposed to free her for a

new life and raise her to new heights. However, at the same time, in the works of some representatives of Georgian literature, there appears a female image somewhat different from the official one. For example, the writer from Batumi, Parmen Loria, who knew the life of mountainous Ajara very well, depicts a romanticized image of an Ajarian woman in his novel "Dawn in the Gorge".

Parmen Loria's novel "Dawn in the Gorge" is a realistic text inspired by socialist ideology, dedicated to the process of transformation of the Ajara region under the rule of the communist regime. The writer reflects on the establishment of Soviet power in Ajara and the sociopolitical changes associated with it. Using the female images in a particularly expressive way, the author tries to show the contradictory image of the era, the struggle between the traditional and the new.

In general, the novel is a rather impressive gallery of images of Ajarian women. Each of them has her own function in the work; their totality creates a generalized image of an Ajarian Muslim woman. There should be especially highlighted the following characters: Naile Odiladze, Nazime, Nurife. The writer shows them in the traditional framework of life, where women are almost silent figures, they are forbidden even to talk to men, and they are focused only on household chores.

The image of Naile Odiladze is strikingly different from the image of a disenfranchised, oppressed and enslaved woman created by communist propaganda. Naile is a strong, courageous girl. She is brave enough to give a worthy answer to the Khoja who demands a large payment to bring her brother, Deli (Mad) Murad, to his senses, that is, to cast a nuskha (curse) on him. "My sister is more mad than I am. Watch yourself, tear your nuskha (written curse), I don't need it," Murad answered the Khoja (Loria, 1970, p. 17).

Naile, like her brother Murad, is quite independent in both her thoughts and actions. Unlike the women in her village, she thinks relatively broadly. She approaches life issues more philosophically and measures the problems of the world with a universal yardstick. „All evil and wicked people are godless... All people are the same. Men and women are equal, love is based on the will and desire of a person...“ (Loria, 1970, p. 41). In general, such a statement of Naile, against the background of the almost slave position of an Ajarian woman of the 1920s living in the mountains, is a rather bold challenge and atypical for women of the Ajarian region, since, as already mentioned, the role of women in the Muslim community was very belittled, and a young

Ajarian woman of that period would hardly have dared to give such a blasphemous answer to Khoja. Therefore, it can be assumed that the image of Naile acts as a kind of resonant hero, through whom the author expresses his own point of view on the issue under consideration.

The female character created by the writer was at the same time a reflection of the doctrine established by the communist government, which believed that "religion is the opium of the people" and that people must be freed from its influence. Moreover, the character of Naile was created by the author to represent a certain future type of a strong Soviet woman who would overcome the remnants of the past and be able to establish herself in society as a full-fledged member. Thus, the formation of Naile's image was determined by social conditions.

Nazime is a different, more realistic character compared to strong and independent Naile, and is presented as a victim of the outdated customs of her family and society. Nazime was engaged from the cradle to a man she didn't love. This is another fact from the bitter reality - Ajarian women had no choice and no rights. A woman's happiness was determined by her family, her fate was predetermined from childhood, and she could not decide it herself. „We are the unfortunate daughters of the place we live in. We must always follow the will of others, like cattle...” (Loria, 1970, p. 40). The emphasis is again on women's control in matters of religion and society.

By depicting these two female characters, the writer consistently presents the disenfranchised position of women in Ajara. Nazime does not want to get married without love, but she cannot overcome the opposition of her family. Naile, who is relatively brave and progressive in her thinking, and is also free from family pressure (she is an orphan), tries to solve her friend's problem herself and goes to talk to Nazime's fiancé, Jemal. But again, there is a confrontation caused by established customs: a woman could neither talk to a man, nor even approach him. It is precisely because of this inhuman limitation that the author made his resonant character Naile utter a phrase that is an interpretation of one of the most famous statements ("Religion is the opium of the people") of the communist regime: "Faith is something intoxicating, dizzying" (Loria, 1970, p. 45).

Parmen Loria describes the discriminatory position of Ajarian women, who were forbidden to talk or even appear among men. When meeting a foreigner, a woman had to cover her face and even to turn away. This is the picture that the writer depicts in his novel. When the housewife leaves the house in the morning to get water, when she meets

a villager, she covers her face with a dolband (kerchief) and turns her back to him. The writer explains the reason for such a humiliating position of women by the religious factor. Men "do not allow their women to show themselves to strangers, and they, in turn, were deceived by the Khoja..." (Loria, 1970, p. 31). Moreover, they call a non-Muslim who comes to the village "giauri" (godless, unbeliever), thereby emphasizing the religious nature of the confrontation.

Another female character in the novel, Nurife, represents one of the most important aspects of the sociocultural portrait of an Ajarian Muslim woman.

After the adoption of Islam, the chador became part of the culture and everyday life of Ajarian women. The chador was probably brought to Ajara from Turkey and is connected with the violent spread of Islam. Z. Chichinadze considers the clothing of Ajarian women to be a non-Georgian, Ottoman phenomenon. According to Chichinadze, Ajarian women wore the same clothing as women from other parts of Georgia, but after the adoption of Islam, they universally adopted the chador, „they stopped wearing Georgian dresses and put on red and yellow cotton dresses, like Ottoman women“ (Chichinadze, 1913, p. 86). Chichinadze's opinion was met with skepticism among Georgian researchers: „Unfortunately, Z. Chichinadze does not notice the presence of Georgian elements in the Ajarian clothing complex, and mistakenly, without any basis, considers it to be non-Georgian one“ (Samsonia, 2005, p. 11).

In 1921, after the establishment of the communist regime in Georgia, the Soviet government declared war on all religious rites in the country. The fight against women wearing the chador was one of the main areas of struggle in Ajara in the first years of Soviet power.

During the campaign to stop wearing the chador, every woman's decision to remove it was significant and courageous. It was difficult to make such a decision within the strictly established rules, although, in general, these actions were of a formal nature. According to Muslim customs, women were forbidden to attend meetings held in rural areas together with men. Despite the fact that the campaign to remove the chador was actively carried out, in the 1920s and 1930s, women's and men's meetings continued to be held separately in different areas of Ajara.

The scene of removing the chador is also shown in P. Loria's novel. The character of the novel, Nurife, an obedient woman to her husband, is one of the first to remove the chador. The husband is also a

representative of the new government - he is the chairman of the collective farm. However, the author does not explain this bold step solely by the factor of the Party nomenklatura. Before the scene of the wife removing the chador, the author shows the experiences of the husband, who is faced with a dilemma – whether to let his wife remove the chador or to follow the centuries-old custom? Memories of his own youth, very far from orthodox religious fanaticism, convince him that the new life follows new rules, that a woman is a full member of society, equal to a man, and that wearing a chador only diminishes the rights of a woman. Thus, the process of removing the chador, shown in the work, is not a personal decision of the woman in this particular case.

„The only thing that worried Andro most of all was the remnants of old harmful customs that remained in Adjara..., among which the most harmful and degrading to human dignity was the chador, to which some people still clung tightly. The chador prevented the Adjarian woman from entering the public arena“ (Loria, 1970, p. 305). The above thoughts of Andro, one of the main characters of the novel, reflect the reality of Ajara. The Soviet government wanted Ajarian Muslim women to take off the chador and adapt to the demands of the new society. Representatives of the communist regime launched a powerful campaign among women in the villages of Ajara, seeking to involve women in active work on an equal basis with men.

As can be seen from the materials of the Party archive, the women's department of the Ajara Regional Party Committee organized 164 women's meetings in 1922. The meetings were devoted to such issues as: “New Economic Policy”, “Soviet Power and Women”, “Second Congress of Women of Ajara”, “History and Significance of the Press”, “The Status of Women Before the Establishment of Soviet Power”, etc.

During the same period, the women's department held the 19th City Congress of women delegates, where various issues of political and local significance were discussed. Women's conferences were introduced into practice. They contributed to women's self-awareness and their involvement in public activities. Schools of cutting and sewing were created in the regions, where Ajarian women were trained. (Davitadze, 1958, p. 116).

The issue of women's emancipation was being resolved in very difficult conditions. It was necessary to fight ignorance, educate the people. Schools, libraries, clubs and other educational institutions were created, but turning an Ajarian woman, isolated from society, into an

active participant in life required great effort and skill. First of all, it was necessary to free women from the oppression of the chador.

The most reliable means of removing the chador was the proven method – agitation-propaganda, persuasion and raising the awareness of women through it. It was decided to create a women's club in Batumi in order to teach Ajarian women sewing and thus to involve them in social activities. On May 12, 1925, there were already 30 Ajarian women in the club which was located on Liebknecht Street. In this club, along with teaching handicrafts, they also worked on the mental development of Ajarian women. As a result of active propaganda, the number of students was increasing every day. Gradually, women got freed from the captivity of darkness and achieved the fact that women, who had been oppressed until recently, were ready to participate in public life (Talakovadze, 1958, p. 151-152).

For a complete picture of the sociocultural and sociolinguistic portrait of a woman in the period under study, it is also necessary to take into account the sociolinguistic image of a woman: in the 1920–1930s, significant changes took place in Georgia and Ajara. This period was marked by intensive cultural and political changes, such as the processes of national self-determination, language and educational reforms.

Ajara is a multinational region, what largely determined the borrowing of words from other languages, especially Turkic ones (due to the sociopolitical circumstances mentioned above). During the period under study, the use of Turkisms was mainly limited to informal relationships: family, friends, neighbors, etc. We have found interesting facts in oral and written texts. As evidence, we can cite the so-called „დედაბრული ხელნაწერები“ ("Women's Manuscripts"), which are one of the varieties of the Georgian Mkhedruli script, common in Guria and Ajara. The name "Women's Manuscripts" is due to the fact that it was distributed mainly among women. Various types of letters were written by women, including many personal letters, in which the attitude of the woman to the addressees, mainly close relatives, is clearly visible - modesty, respect, reverence,

There is given an extract from one of the correspondences below:
 „ბაშუმ სალოლსუნ (basun sagolsun – Condolences), შენი თავი მიმყოფოს ღმერთმა (May God bless you); ხეირდუას მოგახსენებ: ხეირდუა – (Kheirdua - blessing from the heart);

ბელქი (სპ. Belki – perhaps), you will not like it;

ენიშტე ალა... (eniste – son-in-law); სელამს და სელამეთობით ადრე ადრე მოკითხვას მოგახსენებ. Selamet (Arabic: good, good day), comp. – ამას ბევრი დღე მისცეს ღმერთმა... რომე მოხუელ და გვნახე, მოგვიკითხე, ღმერთმა სალამეთობა მოქცეს (May God grant you many good days of life... May God give you many years of life once you came and visited us) (Putkaradze, 1993, p. 610);

სელამეთით (goodness, safety) მიგიყუანოს ღმერთმა სახლში, სელამეთით გამცხოვროს იქში (May the Lord send peace into your home and may you live there in peace) (Putkaradze, 1993, p. 225).

As BSU professor M. Khakhutaishvili notes in her monograph, the "Women Manuscripts" could have been a sample of "ancient Georgian writing". It can be considered reliable in the sense that the two versions of the "Women's manuscripts" that we have are apocrypha texts containing fragments of the Gospels written by women, which give us reason to assume that the tradition of copying continued even during the Ottoman rule. The necessary attribute of identity linked the scribes (in this case, women) with the past." (Khakhutaishvili, 2017, p. 14).

Historical reality, the circumstances in which copyists had to "disseminate" such books, forced them to encrypt apocryphal texts containing the corresponding Gospels. The significance of these texts is also evidenced by the content of the manuscripts themselves: "...წინაშე თვალთა მისთა ეს ებისტოლე ანგაროზი იახლოს ზეცისა და ქვეყნისა და მისა ხატოვანებითა ევლიასითა..." „გადაარჩინე ამ ავგაროზის ბატონი ყოველისა მარცხისაგან..." (Save the owner of this apocryphal text from any failure, any evil...) (Khakhutaishvili, 2017, p. 14).

Traditional Ajarian culture has been influenced by Islam, although it has retained pre-Islamic Georgian elements. This is reflected in the language, customs, folklore and even some social practices. In one of the folk poems it is written:

„დუნია რომ მოიარო, ვერსად ნახო მისებრ ქალი,
დიდი ნენე მერიემი, თელი ერგეს ზისა თვალი,
დედაბრულის წერა იცის, არ გასწირა მისი ძველი,
ოგი ჯამეს სტუმარია და ქილისეს მასპინძელი” (“If you travel around the world, you will never find a woman like her, Great

Nene Meriam, she knows how to write „women's manuscripts“, she has not sacrificed her old knowledge, She is a guest of the mosque and the hostess of the church") (Davitadze, 1990, p. 99).

The role of the Muslim woman, seemingly invisible, but at the same time an important figure in the preservation of the language and writing, her tolerant nature are clearly visible, she is a guest of the jame (mosque) (an honorary invited guest) and the hostess of the kilise (in Turkish - the church).

Women's speech can be more formal and polite, especially in the context of communication with strangers. This can be expressed in forms of addressing someone. An interesting aspect is the study of the speech of Muslim women and men. Etiquette and forms of address are important, as they show how Ajarian Muslim women addressed men, family members and peers at home. The apparent secondary role and invisibility of women in society affects the social and cultural context, in which women's rights and freedom are often unequal. Such a secondary status is especially evident in women's self-esteem and their role in the family, society and social relations.

The secondary status of women is clearly visible in speech relations with men; they use Turkish etiquette language markers, such as: "Aga", "Effendi", "Bey", "Aga-Effendi" - this is how they addressed even family members, since as men were considered the privileged gender, their socioeconomic dominance was recognized. Mazli (husband's brother), even if he was younger, stood at a higher level in relation to his sister-in-law. Men were considered heads of the family (high social role), so women treated them with shyness and respect.

Later, after the establishment of Soviet power, when the state began to care about the education and socialization of women, they also joined these processes, although gradually and with a lot of difficulties and obstacles.

Conclusion

Thus, the images of Muslim women created by Parmen Loria, despite their artistic conventionality, are completely realistic characters, since they are taken from real life. The images of the women we analyzed were an integral part of the reality of Ajara, what is documented in numerous archival records and historiographic studies. Characterizing the first years of the communist regime, researchers paid great attention to the woman's issue, the problem of the full integration of Ajarian women into the new society. In order to strengthen work among

women, a women's department was created in the 1920s, which carried out extensive mass political work among women, and promoted the involvement of women in public activities.

In Parmen Loria's novel, a woman is not only a thematic figure, but also an ideological symbol – her transformation represents a profound upheaval in society. Woman, hidden in the shadow of the past, begins to act more and more „loudly“ in P. Loria's novel, and her liberation is not only a physical one, but also a metaphysical liberation of voice, personality and vision of the future.

The title of the novel "Dawn in the Gorge" is metaphorical; it does not simply refer to a natural phenomenon. It is a mythologized symbol of a new beginning, a mythologized symbol of the darkness of the gorge, personifying the process of cultural transformation. A woman, as one of the most oppressed figures in the closed and full of frames "gorge", is the main indicator of the dawn.

It should be noted that the analysis of folklore texts and etiquette forms of addressing Muslim women in the 1920s and 1930s reveals not only the specifics of the sociolinguistic representation of the woman's image, but also hidden forms of violence that manifest themselves at the level of language. Mechanisms of patriarchal control, oppression and marginalization are captured through expressions, addresses and folklore clichés; this allows us to consider language as an important tool for maintaining social hierarchy and a normative model of female behavior.

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Reflections on the Archetype of Home in the Feature Film “Homeward”

Abstract: *The grief and the pain of the Crimean Tatar people is reflected in art (cinema). It is necessary to find out how the tragic fate of the Crimean Tatars was conveyed by poetic means and creative techniques. The recipient (viewer) should perceive the message of the movie’s artists (director Nariman Aliyev) “Homeward” (2019) as a tragedy of a discriminated people. It is useful to determine the fact of discrimination of the Crimean Tatars in the course of history. The creative “codes” of the movie “Homeward” reflect post-colonial problems: historical injustice, to end the “silence” of the disadvantaged — to give them a “voice”. In the landscape of the beach, the sea, the morning, the horizon as a symbolic “beginning” of life, the movie’s authors reveal the test of fate for a person: Alim drags the body of his dead brother on the ground, it is difficult for him. The “heaviness” of life is revealed in this scene. Alim understands that after the death of Nazim’s brother and Mustafa’s father, he was completely alone and lost his relatives. He is “the only one” who now continues the aspirations and traditions of his ancestors, carries the historical memory of the Crimean Tatars, and is the owner of individual experience in the discourse of ethnic trials. It is appropriate to interpret the ethnic identity of the movie’s heroes “Homeward” through the imagological concepts of “own” / “someone else’s”. Crimean Tatar mentality and archetypes Home, Land, Road are revealed in the communication of father and son with carriers of the Ukrainian cultural subconscious: separate situational characters (ordinary people and representatives of state systems). In this communication, the movie’s authors depict the spirituality, civilizational dominants, worldview, social determinism of both Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. The “own” father and son in the movie come into conflict with the “someone else’s” of the surrounding characters. “Own” for father and son manifests itself not only at the levels of national identity, but also at the levels of “common” views on a certain object, so it is relative. The problem of “own” for the Crimean Tatars also appears in the fact that politically they are officially “included” in the state of Ukraine, which is a European state. Europe is identified as Western Christian versus “Eastern” Muslim. And this opposition east / west: Crimean Tatar / Ukrainian on a subconscious level as an ambiguity is interpreted by the movie’s authors in common everyday situations. Ukrainians have always (since 1991) supported the aspirations of the Crimean Tatars for ethnic identity, preservation of national culture, traditions, and languages.*

Keywords: “Homeward” (2019); Crimean Tatar; imagology; “own”; “someone else’s”; archetypes; Home; conflict; historical memory; traditions.

Introduction. Art as a Site of Reflection

I propose to interpret the movie “*Homeward*” directed by Nariman Aliyev, 2019, in the discourse of patriotism. A feeling of “own” is the dominant feature of this movie. The very title – “*Homeward*” – is an allusion to the perception of the space of Home as an Archetype. The screenwriters of the movie “*Homeward*” are Nariman Aliyev and Marysya Nikityuk. This movie was screened at the 72-nd Cannes International Movie Festival on May 22, 2019 in the “Special View Competition Program”. This date is considered the world premiere of the movie.

The movie “*Homeward*” is a reaction to the historical events of the 21st century – Russia's war with Ukraine in 2014, which began with the annexation of the Crimea Autonomous Republic on February 20 – the beginning of April 2014. The heroes of the movie are representatives of the Crimean Tatar ethnic group. Not the first time the Crimean Tatar suffered as a result of an invasion from the Russians. This movie illuminates the gaps in the historical memory of the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, unknown to the general public. In the 21st century, Crimea is officially part of the state of Ukraine. Therefore, the problems of oppression of the Crimean Tatars also become part of the modern Ukraine history.

Discrimination against the Crimean Tatars began in the Russian Empire. Suvorov had been introducing the deportation. He was one of the first. This is discussing in the movie “*Homeward*”. The movie’s authors create an oppressive atmosphere of silencing problems in the country by allusions to the chronological events of the 2014-2019 war, which in the history of Ukraine are systematized as stages:

The **Initial Period** is the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (February 20 – early April 2014);

The **First Period** of the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine – overcoming the “hybrid aggression” of the Russian Federation in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro, liberation from Russian terrorist cells (beginning of April – September 19, 2014).

The **Second Period** of the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine – the localization of the armed conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the annexation of Crimea (September 19, 2014 – December 2021 – February 23, 2022).

From February 23, 2022 until now (2025), the **Third Period** of the Russian-Ukrainian war continues.

Consequently, the movie's authors are creating a picture of the world: a few days from the life of the Crimean Tatars in the 21st century, which mentally-subconsciously mirror the historical events of the 21st century: the war in Ukraine 2014–2019 (The Initial Period / – The First Period of the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine / – The Second Period of the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine); historical events of the 20th century: genocide of the Crimean Tatar people, deportation on May 18-20, 1944, during the Second World War; historical events of the 19th century: after the Crimean War 1853–1856, the Russian Imperial Government carried out a program of deportation the Crimean Tatars; 18th century : after the annexation of Crimea in 1783, from 1783 to 1804, Russian Imperial Government forced the Crimean Tatars to leave for Turkish territory.

The movie's authors have been revealing the tragedy of the entire Crimean Tatar people, who were oppressed by the Russians from the 15th century (1441 – the beginning of the wars against the Crimean Khanate) to the 21st century.

The scientific problem is to draw attention for the understanding of the pain and grief of the Crimean Tatar people through art (cinema). It is necessary to find out how the tragic fate of the Crimean Tatars was conveyed by poetic means and creative techniques.

Formulating the purpose of the article. The aim is to perceive the message from the artists of the movie "*Homeward*" as a tragedy of a discriminated people. It is useful to determine the fact of discrimination of the Crimean Tatars in the course of history. In the creative "codes" of the movie "*Homeward*", I will reveal post-colonial problems: historical injustice. It will help to to end the "silence" of the disadvantaged – will give them a "voice".

In view of the goal set, with the help of conflicts and artistic images of the movie, I will reveal the mentality of the Crimean Tatars through the archetype of the Home. I will open a perspective for the impact of the movie on the opinion of the viewers. I will focus on the painful thinking of the heroes movie – ethnic Tatars. This will help in the future to return the Home to the Crimean Tatars in reality. The film is approached as an artistic field for reflection on the problems of the Crimean Tatars. I will reveal conflicts in poetic signs, codes, artistic images; I recognize the fact that the Crimean Tatars do not have a home (land, Motherland); I will single out the "desire" of the Crimean Tatars to have the existential archetype Home on the conscious and subconscious levels.

Analysis of recent research

Many small reviews of an advertising nature have been written about the movie “*Homeward*” in popular magazines and on the Internet. Among these reviews, one should single out Volodymyr Serdyuk “Review of the Ukrainian dramatic movie ‘*Homeward*’” (Serdyuk, 2020)¹. Volodymyr Serdyuk explains the name of the movie “Evgе” as the way to oneself, returning to the origins, to the place where we were born.

Kemp Philip, in his review of ‘Homeward sends a father and son on a Crimean pilgrimage,’ emphasizes that ‘Western audiences is that it assumes background knowledge they’re unlikely to possess. Few will be aware, it’s fair to bet, that the Crimean Tatars were deported en masse from their native land by Stalin in 1944 and only partially and grudgingly allowed back decades later; nor will the mentioned names of Nestor Makhno (leader of an independent anarchist army in post-Revolutionary Ukraine) or Alexander Suvarov (an 18th-century Tsarist general) convey much. (Nor will most of us detect when the dialogue switches from Ukrainian or Russian to the non-Slavic Crimean.)’ (Kemp, 2021). Simon Alissa recounts the plot of the film and notes in the ‘Film Review: *Homeward*’: ‘Particularly unforgettable are the visuals during the climactic scene that depicts Alim literally burdened by the weight of Tatar tradition’ (Simon, 2019). Ide Wendy notes plot elements in ‘*Homeward* review – a moving modern-day Crimean war story’: ‘Elegant framing makes striking use of a generous widescreen aspect ratio, but the film’s main asset is a deft screenplay that subtly reverses the roles of father and son as the journey progresses.’ (Ide, 2021). In the review ‘*Homeward* review – Crimean Tatars on a heart-breaking Odyssey’, Le Phuong interprets the film in the discourse of the eternal return Home : ‘This is not a distant threat. It is happening now. And it strikes at the heart of truth, accountability and democracy (Le, 2021).

In the scientific field, it should be noted the analytical article by Larisa Ivanyshina “Freedom and family duty in the movie “*Homeward*’” (Ivanyshyna, 2020, pp. 6-7), the researcher draws attention to the everyday and symbolic. The interpretation of the movie is presented in Svitlana Kryvoruchko's scientific article “Genocide of the Crimean Tatars: historical and individual memory in the movie ‘*Homeward*’”.

¹ <https://dramaturg.org.ua/1883-2/>

(Kryvoruchko, 2024). I interpreted the movie “*Homeward*” as an attempt to highlight historical gaps and revive the national memory of the Crimean Tatar people (Kryvoruchko, 2024).

The actions and resistance of the Crimean Tatars fit into the discourse of literary heroes, who suffered from clashes with the authorities. Among them, modern Ukrainian poetry. Its relevance has been manifested since 2022, it is presented as a separate layer. Understanding the verses of Borys Gryniov (Gryniov, B., & Kryvoruchko, S., 2024), Karolina Poplavska (Poplavska, K., & Tymchenko, A., 2024) is a reflection of the military reality, by which the peaceful residents of Kharkiv were absorbed during 2022–2024 years. French researcher Claire Kaiser in the personal story of the heroine movie “*Germany Pale Mother*” reminds of the historical guilt of the Germans during the Second World War. In this discourse, the professor urges the Russians to take responsibility for the crimes committed today: “Russians are today as Germans were yesterday,” says Claire Kaiser (Kaiser, 2024, pp. 33–34).

Methodology

In the course of the analysis, I will involve the principles of postcolonial criticism (Spivak, 1987; Bhabha, 1993; Said, 1993), historical (Holoviy, 2015) and cultural-historical (Ferens, 2021) methods. I will engage psychoanalytic criticism (Freud, 1949; Jung, 2012; Lacan, 1982), which will reveal the Home as a “lack” at the level of the archetype. The concept of postcolonial criticism contributes to an adequate understanding of the processes of geopolitics 2014–2025, these roots are reflected in the movie “*Homeward*”. It is necessary to reconsider the place of the Crimean Tatars, and their culture, language, taking into account national and social differences, and remove them from the layer of “secondary status” / “inferiority”.

Results

Cultural Memory and Identity

Crimean Tatars do not have the Home. The very name “*Homeward*” contains a deep implication and irony, since these people do not have a Home, and they go there — where it “doesn't have”, but they would very much like “have been having”: to have a home. Therefore, the movie “*Homeward*” is the embodiment of the dream of all Crimean Tatars: to have “own” Home. They want to have Archetype Home. Home is as a space. Home is as Earth. “Own”.

The silence of the heroes of the movie is a position of resistance of the Crimean Tatars, when they come into contact with representatives of other nationalities. The silencing is an attempt to survive and preserve their ethnicity, language, culture, and traditions. Conflicts between individual / state, man / woman, parents / children are revealed in the world picture of the movie. The idea of tradition runs through the movie. Children oppose their parents because they do not want to sacrifice their lives to the memory of their ancestors. But in the process of communication, reconciliation takes place, and the children return to the ethnic plane, since no one can do it except them.

The movie's authors reveal the multiculturalism of the Crimean Tatars, who are included in various linguistic discourses: father Mustafa speaks two languages: his native Crimean Tatar and Russian; Alim – three: native, Ukrainian, Russian; uncle Refat – two: native and Ukrainian. At the level of language, the director introduces the opposition and reconciliation of father and son.

The intrigue is done masterfully. The intrigue develops in the plot through the aggravation of “plot knots”, which tense the situation and are separate bursts of the culmination. Therefore, the action reaches the culmination through separate sharp conflicts almost at the end of the movie (Alim throws himself into the sea and swims to his father). Sharp conflicts are mini-culminations of each plot node.

Topographies and Symbols of Home

The movie begins with a landscape prologue (*Homeward*: 0.01.33-0.02.09). This is a “picture” of the geographical area – the Crimean desert, the specific color of the air, the land, the specific shape of the tree. This landscape is the archetype of Home for the Crimean Tatars, who dream to live here – on their native land, but the Russians “do not allow” them to do so since 1783. So, in the prologue, the movie's authors reveal the idea: a person's dream about a native Home, to which the people “goes” throughout the life of each individual ethnic representative. The Crimean Tatar language is the Home for the Crimean Tatars, because it is in everyone's heart, no one can take it away. And individual representatives of the ethnic group treat it delicately and carefully, keeping it for many centuries in different parts of the world. This Home landscape is unchanging natural, not modern, not burdened by the “sounds” of modern civilization (the noise of cars, music, people's conversations). After the prologue, the director introduces the title

of the movie “*Homeward*”, thereby cementing the idea: the desire of the Crimean Tatars to have a Home.

This landscape is a topos in the movie, because it is an artistic image of Crimea (semiotic construct: landscape, architectonics, topography), that presents the plane of “connection” common background – eternal universal of the Earth. The heroes feel the patriotic emotions of “own” to this Earth, archetype Home.

After the prologue-landscape, the director introduces the name of the movie: “*Homeward*” (*Homeward*: 0.07.18). And this is the beginning of the revelation. The road topos is the leading one, which is equal to the topos of the house – archetype Earth (Crimea). The movie’s authors give the name in two languages: Crimean Tatar (voice replica) and Ukrainian (letters in the frame).

The road topos is revealed by different loci: variants of the road. Landscape: the streets of Kyiv, which are presented from the point of view a person driving in a car (*Homeward*: 0.07.31-0.07.55), peaceful life. There is a subtext in this landscape: it is an illusion of a peaceful life, because at that time there is a war going on in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which is being silenced by the Ukrainian government and all Ukrainian citizens, since it is convenient. The government did not take responsibility in 2014 under the unofficial slogan of the “cabinets” – “to avoid bloodshed.” In this way, bloodshed took place in the eastern territories, which everyone (most) was ashamed to talk about. However, the deeds and actions of the heroes movie are just the proof — bloodshed in Ukraine exists, and it is official, and the proof “is going” in a car, which the representatives of the official structures are “ashamed of”.

The director captures the archetype of the Home in the family hearth, which is realized in the modern dimension with signs: a candle (near the photo), a lighter, a stove in the kitchen. Alim looks at his brother's Zippo lighter. This is the memory about Nazim that remained with Olesya in the House. The younger brother touches the lighter, holding it in his hands, looks at it carefully. The director introduces close-ups showing details: a lighter. (The traditions are traced here – close-ups of details – directed by Andrei Tarkovsky). It is a sign-symbol, according to folklore terminology, a magical thing around which the plot will unfold. The lighter is a reminder about his brother: Alim turns it on, carefully and slowly looks at the fire. Father enters: “ – Where is the Koran? : Crimean Tatar. - I do not know. : Ukrainian.” (*Homeward*: 0.13.01-0.13.07). The authors of the movies convey the

multiculturalism of Ukraine in different languages (Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian) in father and son. There is a son / father conflict in the family, which is transmitted through language. Father came to Olesya to take away the holy of his people – the Koran.

Three languages are spoken on the territory of Olesya: Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar, and Russian. The father moves to another interior – the kitchen. The kitchen is connected to the family hearth. The modern stove is a symbol of ontological fire. A woman should take care of this “fire”, which energetically and mentally nourishes the people of this House. The director show a close-up of the fire on the stove, on which Olesya prepares coffee for the father. In Olesya's apartment, fire as a symbol is presented three times: a candle next to a photo of the deceased, a lighter, a fire on the stove. (Hypothetically, Olesya could prepare coffee in a modern electric coffee maker, but this method of cooking deprives her of the “fire” energy provided by the modern use of gas). Coffee in Turkish. Olesya's stove – dirty, unkempt, is a symbol of fire in the Home archetype, which is not properly cared for. The coffee runs out of the Turk onto the stove and extinguishes the fire. The girl removes the coffee and turns off the gas – “fire”. (*Homeward*: 0.13.29-0.13.45).

When Alim and his father leave the apartment after the scandal, the girl remains alone in the House archetype. She is locked in the apartment, she is hysterical, Olesya is knocking on the door. The noise of the door slamming can be heard under her screams and cries. The director visually draws attention to the vacuum, emptiness, void. The movie shows a close-up of an empty room, and a girl's voice can be heard behind the frame: “Open the door! Open the door! Do you hear?! Open the door! Doors!: Ukrainian” (*Homeward*: 0.15.50-0.15.55), her tears. She is not visible. So the movie's authors reveal the archetype of the House as empty, although she is here. This emptiness is mental. And it came not when Nazim died, but when Olesya was “forbidden” to have an individual memory about him. The father made this house empty. (*Homeward*: 0.15.14-0.15.55).

The father dreams about an archetype Home in Crimea, but in reality, he does not have one. He has a building – walls, but life has not been “breathed” into these walls. There is no woman out there, who could create it. The mother died, and the other woman – of Alim's wife / of Nazim's wife (dead) – is not there. Therefore, this “empty” House is not an archetype that could energetically attract a man who would like to spend his life there. The father “did not allow” Olesya to go with

them, although she could influence on this space. Therefore, the father lives in the past – memories about the history of his ancestors, his life with his wife and children. The Russians exacerbated the problem even more, when they occupied Crimea in 2014 and made this place “closed” from the civilized world. But for Alim, this father`s position is by a brake of his individual life.

This Home / Crimea becomes a prison for Alim. He is not interested there. Nothing happens there. Alim wants activity, movement, life: in Kyiv, which is a prospect of success. The walls of the father's house (absence of the Home Archetype) become a burden for the son, which binds him, weighs him down. He does not need this “gift”. The father reproaches the son for his ingratitude, for his unwillingness to “take” / own these walls of the Home, without nourishing energy. The father`s life is aimed at the well-being of the children, which the sons did not ask for and do not want to accept. This deprives them of the possibility of their own choice. Home fetters the son's freedom. The son refuses. He protests against his father's pressure. His protest is subconsciously revealed through Alim's attachment to the Ukrainian language. (*Homeward*: 0.21.41-0.21.59).

For the father, Crimea is the native land. The father's dream is to revive this land, to make it viable and prosperous. That's why he wants to return home, and forces Alim to do the same: “Do you know what we went through to return to Crimea?! Do you even understand what it's like to grow up in a foreign country?! We were not considered people there! To return to the Crimea... : Crimean Tatar – But everyone does not care about this Crimea! There is no life there and never will be!: Ukrainian. – And what now, like Nazim – run away?!: Crimean Tatar – Do you seriously, yes, seriously think that he ran away?!: Ukrainian - Enough! Come on!: Crimean Tatar” (*Homeward*: 0.21.59-0.22.08). The movie`s authors embody the idea that Crimea is Home for the Crimean Tatars. The father reproaches that the son does not appreciate the efforts of the ancestors, who devoted their lives to returning home, and now the children are leaving this land themselves. The father talks about humiliation in a foreign land.

Thus, the problem about important things is raised during a serious conversation between father and son in the aura of the topos “eternal” Road in this plot node. The son refuses the Home / Crimea.

At this moment, Alim betrays the traditions of his ancestors, because now (after 2014) it is difficult. He does not want to suffer all his life. He wants to live. The father denies that life in a foreign country is

death. Metaphorically in the movie, this is conveyed by the death of his brother — Nazim ran away, and now he is dead. And the life is existing in Crimea / Home. There is a future for the Crimean Tatars, because this is the Motherland, the “own”, the land. The authors of the movie, in the sparing remarks of the father, develop the idea of denying emigration as a phenomenon, dissidence as an institution that cripples a person and his descendants in the future. The heat of passion between strong adult men turns into a quarrel, the director depicts an open irreconcilable conflict between parents / children.

Father/Son Conflict as an Archetypal Model in the Search for Home

The director develops the father/son conflict around the archetype of Home – Crimea. These are the conversations of grown men, who are under stress. An aura of male emotional stinginess is created: the heavy of silence through separate replicas. Father and son have different positions. Sometimes the son responds to the Crimean Tatar replicas of the father in Ukrainian. This is a sign that Alim entered the stratum of dual nationality, which he presents in the discourse of Ukrainian culture through language. For Alim, Ukrainian nationality becomes culturally acquired, he made it “own” through language.

The father's aggression leads to the resolution of the conflict. This is the first attempt to reconcile father and son after the scandal in Olesya's apartment. The son switches from Crimean Tatar to Ukrainian. Here, the conflict of son / father is reading through the language. The son renewed himself, got used to the modern situation, joined the Ukrainian, because he mentally entered the stratum of “dual citizenship” – for Alim, Ukraine became “own”, which is salvation for him from his father and from the aggressor (Russia). The authors of the movie, through the inclusion of two languages, create allusions to the “separation” the son from the father, the Crimea from Ukraine, which form multiple versions of subtexts that arise in the imagination of the viewer, who becomes a co-author of meanings.

The father does not want to let his son go: “- And for whom did I build this house? For whom did I trade at night at the bazaar? Do I need it? I did everything for you!: Crimean Tatar. - I don't need it! : Ukrainian.” (*Homeward*: 0.20.29-0.21.25). Mustafa wants to leave Alim with him in Crimea, which is occupied by the Russians. Since 2014, Crimea has been a dead, hopeless zone for the development of young people. Universities operate there illegally, which issue illiquid diplomas. All

residents of Crimea have illegal passports of the Russian Federation, which are not – recognized in the world, therefore, if one of the Crimeans goes abroad, he does so using a Ukrainian (legal) passport. The father does not want to give Alim the opportunity to continue his studies at the university, taking away the chance for a full-fledged successful future. Because it is necessary to “preserve” Home: to be “at home” there – in Crimea. He decides all this against the will of his son. (*Home-ward*: 0.20.29-0.21.25).

The son / father conflict is clearly revealed through language. The father speaks Crimean Tatar, the son speaks Ukrainian. The son chose Ukraine as a state that can provide the future – freedom, development. The father wants to live on the native land of his ancestors, which should be protected and continue the existence of this Earth (the archetype of Home, Earth) by “own” being on it. The father forces his son to choose Crimea, which is “theirs”, but which everyone “betrayed” / abandoned, due to political hopelessness, futility. The father is trying to protect, preserve his family, save his son from war, including the war in Ukraine, which is ongoing in Donetsk and Luhansk.

The movie’s authors reveal the conflict son / father in Alim's objection, the son resists this “protection” of the father. Olesya becomes by the catalyst in the son/father conflict. In the car, during a serious conversation, the phone rings. It is Olesya who is calling. She interferes unconsciously. The father, when he sees her call, behaves aggressively.

The father almost killed himself and his own son with his defense/aggression against a “someone else’s”. Alim is revealed as a decent reliable person, you can count on him in any situation. The characters of father and son are in evolution. Throughout the movie, the father/son conflict turns into reconciliation. In the plot node in the locus of the road of the village, Alim drops a knife from his hand onto the road. He bends down to pick it up, and at that moment the father wraps himself up and sees the knife. There is a reassessment of the son in the father’s eyes. The son appears as a strong warrior who is ready to resist the enemy. A strong layer of the previous history and traditions of the Crimean Tatars is revealed here: the desire to survive, the effort to defend one's interests, the ability to resist. Mentally, the father and son “are the only ones”. Here there is a transition: from the hypostasis of the father to the hypostasis of the teacher.

Father makes comments. He tells : where to hit, praises. Here, in fragmented phrases, a man's conversation takes place. This psychologically unites father and son. They emotionally reconciled in the case,

when they faced a common problem. They became emotional partners who trust each other. The father perceives the son as an equal. In addition to the technique of attack, the father shows his son how to defend himself, when a person is attacked with a weapon. In this way, the movie's authors reveal the evolution of the father's character, who turns from an authoritarian aggressor into a teacher whom the disciple / son begins to respect. The father reveals himself as an experienced successful fighter and teacher: he praises his son and gives the following technical advice. In fact, the text is presented as a father's monologue, which is built with verbs of the inductive (active) mood and nouns – parts of the human body.

Thus, father and son become “one” through trials (conflicts with other people). In the locus of the village road, father and son are walking together. This is the path before the test. The movie's authors reveal Crimean Tatar traditions – deep religiosity. The father prays before the test, and Alim repeats the prayer after him. They are mentally deeply religious Muslims, father came home to Nazim's girlfriend only to take away the Koran, which is sacred to them, because exactly faith saved the whole nation (some representatives, who survived the 500-year aggression of the Russians). Prayer is a sign that the Crimean Tatars are “not alone” in the existential sense: Allah guides them through life and protects them. (*Homeward*: 0.45.03-0.45.43).

Tension is created in the locuses: bazaar / yard through active actions without words: “recognition” / escape / fight / escape. In the bazaar locus, Alim sees that boy and points him out to his father. The tension is achieved through the male instinct of “hunting” – tracking and chasing. In the locus near the wheels of the truck, on the ground, the weakened father lies and moans. Thoughts of losing his father frighten Alim, he screams and calls for help, takes out medicine from his backpack and gives it to his father. Father is sick, he is breathing hard, Alim tries to take care of him, supports him by the neck. The father tries to get up, and then Alim picks him up. The weak father cannot stand on his own, he holds on to a tree, and nature itself seems to help. Thus, due to trials (theft, fight, illness), the father / son conflict is resolved by mental reconciliation. Father and son become “one”. Alim supports his father, who hugs his son's head. Alim presses his head against his father. They are native people. (*Homeward*: 0.48.17-0.49.21).

In the locus of a roadside cafe, the movie's authors continue to develop the evolution of reconciliation between father and son. So the

father lets his son go, lets him “go”... “live” his life. In this plot node, the father mentally frees Alim from the obligation to return home and be with him – from the burden of being responsible for the continuation of life on the land of his ancestors in the Crimea. They speak the Crimean Tatar language. Thus mental “unity” is introducing. The father leaves, there is food left on the table in the cafe, which he did not finish. The movie’s authors emphasize by creative approach a close-up – a passport and money on the table. Alim sits and thinks. It rains. The father drives away in the car. Alim stops him on the road and gets into the car. He made an independent decision: to go with his father, of his own free will, without coercion. The son independently took responsibility for his father, and for preserving the memory of his ancestors, and for preserving the historical memory of his people. The movie’s authors introduce this subtext through religiosity: “And that prayer... what is it about?: Crimean Tatar. - About the fact that Allah is one. That he begat no one, and no one begat him. That is, he is, was, and always will be.: Crimean Tatar. – And how did it start? I can't remember.: Crimean Tatar.” (*Homeward*: 0.51.06-0.52.52). It is this prayer that is the code – “salvation” in the trials that befell the Crimean Tatar ethnic group.

At the end of the movie, there is a mental reconciliation between father and son. The son fully accepts the guidelines and traditions of his ancestors through the father by his own choice. In the locus of the sea coast, Nazim's body is placed in a boat. Ukrainian and Russian representatives of the systems did everything that it was impossible to get to the cemetery by land. Therefore, the place of burial should be reached by boat. The father understands how difficult this path “Home” is, so he takes responsibility on himself.

In the landscape of the darkness of the night sea, the father gets into a boat and sails into the night. Uncle and Alim remain on the shore: “Let's go, Alim. We cannot stay here.: Crimean Tatar. – Alim! Alim! - Dad!: Crimean Tatar. – Sit!: Crimean Tatar” (*Homeward*: 1.22.24-1.23.16). In this plot node, the movie’s authors reveal the strong power of family ties: “unity” and the desire to overcome life's challenges together. When Uncle Refat gets into the car, Alim looks at the sea. The son feels the “burden” that his father put on himself, choosing to “carry” in himself the ethnic historical memory of the Crimean Tatars, which is for him “own” in the discourse of patriotism. Feeling an emotional kinship, Alim rushes into the sea and swims to catch up with his father. Uncle Refat calls him, but the son swims to his father. (*Homeward*:

1.23.16-1.24.10). In an emotionally tense scene of the topos of the eternal sea, the movie's authors reveal the complex fate of a person against whom the whole world is set: the night; noise of water; father rowing; it is difficult for him. And at this moment salvation comes. Mustafa sees that Alim has swum to the boat, and then the father helps his son to get in, after which the father begins to have a heart attack. Alim replaces him and starts rowing. (*Homeward*: 1.24.10-1.25.19).

The movie's authors depict the abuse of Crimean Tatars and their resistance and desire to "live" and act freely on their land in Crimea. An exhausted father lies on the bottom of the boat next to his dead son. He breathes heavily, the idea of "burying" Crimean Tatars in Crimea becomes the meaning of a person's life (*Homeward*: 1.25.29-1.25.26). In forbidden territorial waters, father and son commit a second crime – illegally cross the border for the second time. The movie's authors depict a boat and a man in the night landscape of the darkness sea – Alim is rowing. The father lies next to Alim's dead brother at the bottom of the boat. (*Homeward*: 1.25.26-1.26.12). Suddenly, the searchlight of border patrol officers illuminates the boat. At this time, Alim lies down on the bottom boat, next to his brother, so as not to be noticed by the border guards. This landscape is intensely emotional, it conveys the anxiety of the characters, feelings of fear and insecurity. The movie's authors depict: NIGHT; DARKNESS; A BOAT splashes in the sea. Sound accents reveal the unity of person and nature. Nature itself protects the Crimean Tatars, "hides" them from "people" (representatives of the systems - customs officials). The splash of water creates the SOUND of water – the VOICE of water. Emphasis on the sounds of the sea allows to present the element in art – the water – the sea. (*Homeward*: 1.26.12.-1.27.04)

The last plot node of the movie demonstrates the highest emotional intensity, which was reached during the previous trials and conflicts. In the morning on the beach, the body of the dead brother is lying on the ground. Alim unties the ropes, the father sits and looks at the water. Contemplating the sea brings about an emotional union of a person with the element of water, which gives strength and inspires. Alim helps his father to his feet: "– Could you go?: Crimean Tatar. – Dad, there is still a little left.: Crimean Tatar. - I will rest a little and catch up with you. : Crimean Tatar. - No, let's go together. Need help?: Crimean Tatar. – I am myself. : Crimean Tatar." (*Homeward*: 1.27.04-1.27.39).

In the landscape of the beach, the sea, the morning, the horizon as a symbolic "beginning" of life, the movie's authors reveal the test of

fate for a person: Alim drags his brother's body on the ground, it is difficult for him (*Homeward*: 1.27.39-1.27.48), his father follows them at a distance 30-40 meters, while limping. Mustafa has absolutely no strength. (Home: 1.27.48-1.28.26). It is difficult for Alim to pull the body, he makes an effort, his father carries a shovel. (*Homeward*: 1.28.26-1.28.44). The “heaviness” of life is revealed in this scene.

The father falls to his knees. Alim notices this and approaches his father, touches him, lifts him up. (*Homeward*: 1.28.44-1.29.44). Alim continues to drag his brother's body. Funerals according to tradition are a great burden and test for him. He “pulls” – he takes responsibility. Alim calls his father, he prays, and the father repeats the prayer for his son. The father stops repeating: “Allah Akbar” (*Homeward*: 1.29.44-1.31.23), and Alim realizes that the father is not repeating because he is dead. The father's silence offscreen indicates his death. Alim prays and cries. He understands that he is all alone and has lost his relatives. (*Homeward*: 1.31.23-1.31.51). Alim is enveloped in darkness: in death, in the noise of the sea, in the noise of the air. He is now the “only” successor to the aspirations and traditions of his ancestors, the bearer of the historical memory of the Crimean Tatars and the owner of individual experience in the discourse of ethnic trials.

Discussion

In the movie *Homeward*, it is appropriate to interpret the ethnic identity of the heroes through the imagological concepts of “own” / “someone else's”. The Crimean Tatar mentality and archetypes Home, Land, Road are revealed in the communication of father and son with carriers of the Ukrainian cultural subconscious: individual situational characters (ordinary people and representatives of state systems). In this communication, the movie's authors depict the spirituality, civilizational dominants, worldview, social determinism of both Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. In the movie, the “own” of the father and son comes into conflict with the “someone else's” of the surrounding characters. “Own” for father and son appears not only at the level of national identity, but also at the level of “common” views on a certain object, therefore it is relative. The problem of “own” for the Crimean Tatars also appears in the fact that politically they are officially “included” in the state of Ukraine, which is a European state. Europe is identified as Western Christian as opposed to “Eastern” Muslim. And this opposition east / west: Crimean Tatar / Ukrainian on a subconscious level as an

ambiguity is understood by the authors in the movie in everyday household situations. I propose to introduce the concept “genocide of the Crimean Tatars” and arrange discussions: how it is reflected in art.

Conclusions

In the characters, the authors of the 2019 movie *Homeward* reveal the idea of patriotism of the Crimean Tatars, who perceive Crimea as “own”. They feel love for Crimea, which is their native land. They “received” this love as a historical memory from their parents, which they managed to convey in the subconscious at a distance. The decision to “revive” ethnic Crimean Tatar life is a free choice of individual representatives, who formed a large community. The problem of the Crimean Tatars is that they cannot protect their right to live on their native land for 582 years. The ethnic freedom of the Crimean Tatars was embodied in the preservation of the Crimean Tatar language, literature, and their religion at a distance from their native land and in forced separation from each other – from the bearers of the Crimean Tatar ethnic consciousness. Individualism is characteristic of the Crimean Tatars, it became the salvation for the preservation of the ethnic group. Belonging to the Crimean Tatar layer of culture is felt by its carriers at a distance from their native land – Crimea and in their remote living from each other.

In the cultural subconscious and historical memory, Crimea is the archetype of the Earth and the archetype of the Home for the Crimean Tatars. The impossibility of living in Crimea and the “difficulty” of existence are signs of the loss Home at the mentality level. So, the Crimean Tatars are people without a Home, because houses in other geographical territories are “someone else's” to them, they are just walls that protect against cold and rain. The dream of having a home in Crimea is an ethnic idea and a task, related to the memory of ancestors. Crimean Tatars of the 21st century fulfill the mission of their families in the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. For the Crimean Tatars, Crimea has the energy of intuitive “keeping”, the desire to “return”, “to be” on this Earth. Although the heroes of the movie, Nazim and Alim, tried to “cut off” themselves from Crimea's energy supply, they “returned” after the “trials”: Nazim dead (although this “return” was incredibly difficult), Alim alive. The movie’s authors symbolically depict the “burden” of Crimean Tatar life, the lack of joy and satisfaction to which they are doomed. There are female images in the movie. Only Refata's wife “cre-

ated” the Home archetype for herself and her husband, for their children, but near Crimea. Alim's loneliness reveals emptiness. Only a woman can create the archetype Home in Crimea, give birth to children and open the perspective of life for him in this place. This woman is not there. There is also no sense of safety. There is the freedom of Alim in his free choice, faith, religion and native language, which “fill” the Home / Crimea with the ethnic energy and culture of the Crimean Tatars.

The movie's authors emphasized the idea genocide of the Crimean Tatars in Crimea, which is carried out by the Russians, and revealed the procedural nature of this phenomenon as permanent and never-ending. The movie *Homeward* outlines a long-term perspective for the revival of the historical memory of the Crimean Tatars in the perception of this people by other ethnic groups and states.

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From Minority to Immigrant: The Education and Cross-Country Teaching Experiences of Turks of Bulgaria

Abstract: *Through the testimonies of those who have experienced teaching in two countries with different political and economic systems, the study aims to provide a portrayal of issues such as minority education, the transfer of origin capital, and the similarities and differences in the educational practices of the countries. This study delves into the experiences of four teachers who worked in two distinct countries, the communist People's Republic of Bulgaria, and the post-1980s Republic of Turkey where neo-liberal policies were implemented. The research was conducted through oral history interviews with four Turkish teachers who had studied and worked in Bulgaria and worked in Turkey after migration. Using the oral history method, teachers' experiences were collected, and each country's educational history and practices were followed through individual narratives. The study reveals that while traditional education models had similarities, there were differences in the prevalence of vocational and preschool education, the connection between education and daily life, and applied education in both countries. As in this study the comparison between Bulgaria and Turkey with their shared history and overlapping educational goals under the nation-state model, through firsthand accounts of individuals, can create a more accurate representation of the past.*

Keywords: *Education; teaching experience; migration from Bulgaria to Turkey.*

Introduction

The education systems are strategically developed to cater to society's political and economic interests. The objectives, approaches, and activities involved in education, along with the training of both teachers and students, are tailored to align with these interests. Education, in turn, imparts values to society through symbols and rituals that individuals assimilate and practice in their daily routines. The primary focus

of this study is centered on the unique experiences of four teachers who have worked in two distinct countries, each with differing forms of governance and modes of production. These countries were the communist People's Republic of Bulgaria, and the post-1980s Republic of Turkey where neo-liberal policies began taking hold.

To provide a comprehensive context for this study, literature on the history of education systems in both countries are included briefly. It was deemed necessary to dedicate a separate sub-heading to the education of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria due to the historically problematic relationship between minority groups and education. Feroze A. K. Yasamee (1997, p. 74) notes that "Assimilation of a community is not easy [...] once it has literacy, education and its own social and cultural leaders", highlighting the government's desire to control minority groups through education.

The research was conducted through oral history interviews with four Turkish teachers who had studied and worked in Bulgaria and worked in Turkey after migration. The study aims to present a narrative of both countries' educational history and practices through individual accounts and testimonies obtained from the interviews. Utilizing a narrative design alongside the oral history method, the study establishes connections between personal stories and the political and economic structures behind the education.

Methodology

The study seeks to gain insight through firsthand accounts of individuals who have experienced historical events, focusing on creating a more accurate and equitable representation of the past (Thompson, 1997/2003). To this end, the study consulted with four teachers who had been educated and taught in Bulgaria before migrating to Turkey. These participants were selected through a purposive sampling method, and their reflections were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The study utilized in-depth interviews to gather data and examine the topic in great detail through the perspectives of a select few participants (Leavy, 2011, p. 10; Creswell, 2013, p. 283). All participants were members of the Turkish minority in the Bulgarian education system during the communist era and could continue their teaching profession after immigrating to Turkey.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, there were periods of mass migration from Bulgaria to Turkey. According to Turhan Çetin (2011), using data from the State Planning Organization, Bursa was the second most

popular destination for migrants to Turkey in 1989, following Istanbul. We selected four teachers who migrated to Bursa in 1989 during the process of "vızroditelen protses" (revival), which can also be defined as "forced Bulgarization." These teachers, two women, and two men, could have transferred initially to different provinces but are/were teaching and residing in Bursa. Their birth years range from 1953 to 1961. Interviews began in 2021 and continued in 2022. Ethical rules were followed in the study; participants were adequately informed, their voluntary consent was obtained, and their identities were anonymized without distorting the scholarly meaning. The final version of the study was shared with them, and written informed consent for publication of their details was obtained.

Background about the education history of Bulgaria

During the 1920s, Bulgaria's education system consisted of a three-tiered structure that included a four-year primary school, a three-year *progymnasium*, and a *gymnasium* for high school. Though compulsory education was extended from four to seven years for all children, this was only sometimes enforced in practice (Daskalova, 2017, p. 23). In fact, until 1944, many villages lacked schools, and secondary education opportunities were limited primarily to the middle class (Grant, 1970). Private schools, unsupported by the Bulgarian state, were established during the Farmers' Party era, with a significant number of minority (Turkish, Greek, Jewish, Armenian, etc.) and missionary schools (Daskalova, 2017, p. 22).

After 1908, although there were technical schools for industry and agriculture, the focus was still mainly on general education. The Farmers' Party administration (1919-23) tried to shift the Bulgarian education system from general to vocational education. However, there were debates on this issue (Daskalova, 2017, pp. 20-1). The history of preschool education in Bulgaria can also be traced back a long way. The importance of preschool education continued during the communist government, which came into power in 1944 (Grant, 1970). Under socialist rule, children were drawn into the public sphere rather than the family and private sphere through collective activities, camps, kindergartens, and nurseries. The ultimate goal was achieving the "communist future" through "tireless work" (Lyubenova, 2017, pp. 129-30).

During Bulgaria's communist government, the education system underwent a significant transformation to adopt a secular and Marxist-Leninist structure (Daskalova, 2017). Private schools were banned in

1946, and primary education became mandatory for seven years in 1950, which was extended to eight years in 1959. Only four percent of students did not pursue further education. One-third of students enrolled in general high schools, known as *gymnasiums*, while the remaining two-thirds attended vocational-technical colleges (*tehnikumi*) or vocational schools (*profesionalno-tehnički učilišta*). These institutions provided education in agriculture, commerce, medicine, and veterinary medicine (Grant, 1970, pp. 180-4).

Students were obligated to join *Komsomol* organizations. These groups emphasized Communist ideology through activities like reciting poems and organizing trips to significant locations for the regime. The educational system prioritized practical learning, including laboratory experiments and field trips, from kindergarten to university (Georgeoff, 1968). Education was reinforced through various media like radio programs, television, films, slides, and recordings. Students were required to work in industrial enterprises or on collective farms for two weeks each semester between 5th and 8th grade, as well as in 10th and 11th grade, to provide labor for industries or the agricultural sector (Georgeoff, 1968).

In the era of Bulgarian higher education, through the 1959 education law, the objective was to cultivate a group of highly skilled elites in scientific fields, particularly mathematics, with a sound grasp of communist political theory (Georgeoff, 1968, pp. 34-5). Although tertiary education was open to all high school graduates, political beliefs were also considered for admission (Georgeoff, 1968, p. 35). To apply for university, one had to either join a short-term labor battalion of students or possess three years of work experience in a factory (Lyubenova, 2017). University students also joined *brigades* and worked on road construction, construction projects, or collective farms at certain times of the year. Moreover ministries, public organizations, and people's councils were responsible for providing positions to students who completed their studies.

Education of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria in the communist era

During Bulgarian Principality era Law on Public and Private Schools of 1884 acknowledged Turkish schools as unique and entrusted their management and supervision to the Turkish community (Ersoy-Hacısalihoglu, 2019). From 1933 to 1944, multiple efforts were made to impede Turkish education (Şimsir, 1986; Iliycheva, 2010; Gülmen,

2011). With the establishment of the People's Republic in 1946, a resolution was passed to nationalize Turkish minority schools (İnce-Erdoğan, 2017). Despite being nationalized in the early years of the communist regime, the number of Turkish minority schools increased to 1200, and Turkish books were published. Other courses were taught in Turkish except for Bulgarian language and civics classes. In 1958, a decision was made to merge Turkish schools with Bulgarian schools. As a result, in 1958, high schools began teaching in Bulgarian, and in 1959, all primary and secondary schools followed suit, as outlined by Şimşir (1986).

In 1964, the Bulgarian government implemented measures to prevent migration and tap into the Turkish population's labor potential. The focus was on economically developing the Turkish regions, with initiatives such as establishing schools, kindergartens, and workshops (Işık, 2016). Technical and vocational schools at the high school level were also expanded to train Turks for intermediate positions (Gülmen, 2011). Toğrol (1989, pp. 27-76) noted that Bulgaria tackled the issue of technical personnel by creating technical colleges and two-year vocational schools, particularly for Turks, and he conveyed that everyone was required to work in Bulgaria except for those who were in school, ill, or elderly.

In the 1960s, primary education institutions in areas with a significant Turkish minority population could provide two to four hours of Turkish classes each week. However, this practice was terminated entirely in the 1970s (Şimşir, 1986). The Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Sofia University also stopped accepting students in 1970 (Gülmen, 2011). By 1975, it became increasingly challenging to speak Turkish due to mounting pressure (Toğrol, 1989). Between 1984 and 1989, assimilation policies peaked during the "Rebirth" process. The Migration of 1989 saw over four thousand Turkish teachers from Bulgaria coming to Turkey, all recruited as teachers (Süleymanoğlu-Yenisoy, 2007; 2017).

Background about the education history of Turkey

Turkey's education system faced challenges after its establishment, including limited public education and a divide between schools and madrasas. The aim was to create a modern, national, secular, and mixed system (Kenan, 2013).

During the 1930s, vocational and technical education saw progress, opening new schools and art institutes for both genders (Başgöz,

2016). Looking at the next landscape of vocational education The Perspective Plan spanning 1973 to 1995 intended for 65% of high school students to enroll in vocational and technical education, with the remaining 35% opting for general education in the 1995-1996 academic year. This objective must still be met (State Planning Organization, 2001). However, the 2013-2014 academic year rates still favored general education, with 53.62% of students studying in general and 46.38% in vocational high schools (Kılıç et al., 2015, p. 96).

Compulsory education was extended to 8 years in 1997 and 12 years as of the 2012-2013 academic year. In the 2000s, some innovations were introduced under the constructivist approach. These innovations, however were mainly limited to the curriculum level, with critical and creative thinking, research, and entrepreneurship cited as skills to develop (Çelik, 2006).

Witnessing education as a teacher in two countries with different political and economic systems

Teacher Ayşe was born in 1953 in *Dedeler (Dyadovtzi)* village of Kardzhali. Her parents were born in 1928 and were illiterate. In those years, her parents and most village people had no education. Ayşe attended primary school in the town of *Karamusallar (Chernigovo)*. The inhabitants of these villages were all Turks, except for a few civil servants. All her school-age students went to primary school during her student days, except in exceptional cases. The language of instruction was Bulgarian from primary school onwards. However, she had never spoken Bulgarian until she went to school. From 4th to 8th grade, she studied in a larger village. In 1964, when she started secondary school, all the students were Turkish again, but this time, there were Bulgarian teachers because "the number of Turk teachers were not enough." Turkish Language and Literature classes were continued. According to Ayşe, in the mid-1960s, high school graduates taught secondary school classes in this region and were "not teachers." Nevertheless, the secondary schools had a sport hall, laboratories, and equipment such as maps. The school in the village was no different from the school in the town in terms of equipment.

According to Ayşe, students should be able to go to and from school themselves, like they did. Moreover in Bulgaria, students were also assigned tasks such as picking rose hips and oregano. Teachers were active outside the classroom, too. She was angry with her younger siblings when they left their beds unmade because teachers could go to

their homes to observe their working environment. Ayşe was made a member of the *Komsomol*, a youth organization of the Communist Party, like all young people who finished 7th grade (see Image 1). This organization organized competitions and trips between schools.



Image 1. Ayşe's *Komsomol* membership card

In 1968, Ayşe graduated from secondary school and became the first girl from her village to attend high school. At that time, Turkish villages were opening kindergartens, but there weren't enough teachers. So, the Pedagogical Institute began accepting high school students to be trained as kindergarten teachers. Ayşe took painting, music, and physical education exams because these skills were expected of a kindergarten teacher. Her priority was to have a profession after high school. Most of her middle school friends also went to vocational high schools. She studied with Bulgarian students in high school, but her Bulgarian was insufficient. In high school, Turkish language and literature classes were also offered, while Bulgarian students attended French courses. Excursions were an essential part of their education, and they also had "military courses" (see Image 2), which lasted for 15 days, as she remembers. During these courses, they received training in first aid, shooting, and gas masks. According to Ayşe, the training contributed to discipline.

In 1971, Ayşe graduated from high school and was appointed kindergarten director in her village of *Chernigovo*. The kindergarten employed five staff: the director, a teacher, a cook, a janitor, and a buyer and seller. Bulgarian language education starts in kindergarten. Ayşe

said, "They made kindergarten compulsory to teach the language." A year later, she enrolled in university but completed her education by taking exams from outside while working. She received a mathematics-science teaching diploma with a minor in physical education from the three-year Pedagogical Institute of Kardzhali. In 1975, while working as a kindergarten teacher, Ayşe married her classroom teacher husband. In 1978, they were dismissed from their jobs due to her brother-in-law's emigration to Turkey. Ayşe was later transferred to a remote village while her husband was assigned to a preschool. After 1984, the teachers were tasked with supervising and reporting those who spoke Turkish, but Ayşe and most of her colleagues never embraced this task. Later, Ayşe was appointed as a physical education teacher at a secondary school in *Mleçino*.



Image 2. Ayşe "at the military service course" which was Given in high school during the communist period

She immigrated to Turkey in 1990, and in 1991, her husband was transferred to Bursa as a physical education teacher, which was also his sub-branch, and started to work. However, it took until 1994 for her to begin working despite applying for several years. Ayşe was assigned

as a classroom teacher in *Mirahmet* Village in *Kovancılar, Elazığ*, where she worked for ten months. After having taught in Bulgaria for several years, it was not easy for her to adapt to teaching in Turkey. However, she learned the rules of the Turkish language, Turkish history, and Atatürk. Ayşe's well-rounded education allowed her to teach various subjects, from music to physical education to science. Bulgaria's national education policy is to "raise well-rounded people," and according to her, she realized it.

When she arrived in Turkey in 1990, she found that the schools lacked the equipment available in Bulgaria where even in the 1970s, equipment was considered essential for education and was provided.

However, the village school in *Mirahmet* needed better physical facilities, with no janitor or toilet. Teachers had to light the stove. Ayşe describes her first teaching experience in Turkey as a success despite their challenges. She credits the "internship seminars" she attended after migrating for this success, also.

After ten months, Ayşe moved to Bursa. She went to her children's high school, which had old desks and poor physical facilities. However, Ayşe believed that "everything a student sees should be in good condition." She spent 20 years teaching in Turkey before retiring in 2014. Thinking of Bulgaria, she describes education in Turkey as having "a multiplicity of goals that cannot be put into practice." She believes that too many goals are written down but not implemented in practice. In Bulgaria, on the other hand, education was delivered in practical ways.

Teacher Ahmet was born in 1959 in the town center of *Eğridere* (Ardino) in Kardzhali province. He comes from a family of educators; his grandfather taught at a madrasah. Ahmet began his primary education in 1966, attending a village school and staying with his grandmother in *Çandır* (Svetulka) for the first two years. The instruction was in Bulgarian, but his teacher, Salih, taught folk songs in Turkish on his accordion. Turkish lessons were introduced from the second grade onwards, with two hours per week. Despite not knowing Bulgarian initially, Ahmet completed his primary and secondary education in the district center, where he was placed in branch A due to his academic performance. There were four branches of each grade in the district school. Bulgarian students were placed in A, while Turkish students were placed in B, C, and D: "The urban kids were in branch A, B, the slum or village kids were in C, D," he says. The classes were taught by teachers who graduated from the Turkish Pedagogical School, including Teacher Meliha and Teacher Şevket Abdi. In the 1970s, audio and visual materials were emphasized in lessons, and the natural science lesson was taught in nature in the spring. The teacher used real-life examples to teach landforms, soil and plant species, and erosion.

During the communist era, teachers controlled students' lives during school hours and outside of them. For example, a student in the town center would come to school at two o'clock and study until four, and could only go to the cinema once a week at two. During middle and high school, teachers on duty would check on the situation by going around the town, while other teachers would work with struggling students. Anyone who broke the rules would face disciplinary punishment

or be transferred to another school, as stated by Ahmet. This was not practiced in villages because students there had to help with fieldwork and herd animals. Students from the surrounding settlements would stay in rented houses in the center of *Eğridere* during high school. The teachers on duty would visit and check these houses between eight and ten in the evening. Class teachers would see the students' homes once a semester, and report on information, such as whether they had a room and a desk.

Compulsory education in Bulgaria was eight years. However, few students opted out of further studies after the 8th grade. Students could attend high, technical, or vocational schools. Technical schools took four years to complete, whereas vocational schools took two or three years. Turkish students in the region often chose technical high schools in construction, cartography, agriculture, mining, and nursing. Vocational schools were also popular among Turkish students with driving, turning, furniture making, and construction craftsmanship departments. These schools were chosen according to the region's needs and the Turkish population. Only the most successful Turkish students went to high schools (*gymnasium*) with the idea of attending university. Ahmet mentions that vocational schools were also more preferred among Turkish students than high schools for another reason:

This was particularly beneficial for those students who were required to complete military service, which was 24 months long, for Turkish citizens it was extended to 27 months. These Turkish soldiers were not given a gun; instead, they were tasked with working in construction, building infrastructure, and railways without pay. It was important for parents to ensure that their child had a vocational certificate, which would allow them to continue working in their chosen field during their military service.

He didn't receive Turkish lessons in high school because they were banned and Bulgarian teachers were in the majority. He graduated high school in 1977 and served in the military for 27 months. After high school, half of his friends pursued three or four year programs, the other half opted for two year vocational education. Between 1980 and 1983, after completing military service, he studied at the Pedagogical Institute for three more years and graduated with a bachelor's degree in history-geography teaching. Being a teacher was a respected career in Bulgaria, with a salary and status equal to that of a doctor in those years.

Trips and camps played a crucial role in his education, as they helped students "prepare to make decisions on their own." In high

school, all students were required to go out for a month to pick grapes or tobacco, and in the evenings, they enjoyed music and guitars. He experienced these "brigade" periods as a student and a teacher. The same practice existed at the university, where students worked in canning factories when there were not enough workers. They earned a little money, but the primary purpose was to "contribute to the state." From primary school onwards, students had to clean the environment on Saturdays. In high school, they played sports for half a day at the stadium once a week. From primary school to high school, 15-20 minutes of warm-up and gymnastic exercises were done in the morning before classes, accompanied by music, to promote "discipline."

Teacher Ahmet came to Turkey during the 1989 Migration, and his wife is also a classroom teacher. In 1991, there were no kindergartens around *Gaziantep* and *Urfa* where they worked. However, kindergarten education became widespread in Bulgaria in the 1960s and was soon made compulsory (in practice). In 1993, migrant teachers were allowed to return to their places of residence, but they remained in Southeastern Anatolia for five years. Despite being a history-geography teacher, Ahmet was assigned to teach primary school during this period.

In the 2000s, he started working as a high school teacher in Bursa. As a geography teacher, he wants to instill environmental awareness in his students, but one day the school principal informed him that there were complaints from parents and he should not take the students outside. According to the principal, the school janitor is available if there is a need to hoe the bottom of the trees, pick up garbage, or plant something. Also, he doesn't believe that high school education in Turkey adequately prepares students to make decisions and act independently.

Teacher Mehmet was born in 1960 in the village of *Kademler* (Balgaranovo) in *Osmanpazarı* (Omurtag). He attended eight years of compulsory education in the village, where the language of instruction was Bulgarian. His mother had no education other than Koranic education, while his father did not finish primary school. Turkish lessons continued in his village until 1974. There were no Turkish lessons in primary school, only in the 5th and 6th grades. These classes, which lasted two hours a week, were later banned. Mehmet thinks that he mastered Bulgarian only after high school, but after university he became "inseparable from Bulgarians."

Even in the villages, schools had staff to light the stoves. The physical facilities were good, and there were projectors and other equipment, as he says. Before classes started, students lined up in the

schoolyard for 15 minutes and did warm-up exercises. The school also had a field where agriculture classes were taught. Outside school hours, students were supervised by teachers. There were also many activities in schools. In the early 1970s, a teacher staged plays in Turkish but was later persecuted.

In the 1960s, there was a kindergarten in the middle of two Turkish villages, and he attended this kindergarten. There were both Turkish and Bulgarian teachers in the town. There were no problems between them and the Bulgarian people. Still, the Bulgarian teachers discriminated against them because they spoke Turkish in primary school, and even kindergarten. "You are a perfect child, but you are a Turk" in Bulgarian heard from his teachers. During middle school, there was a shortage of teachers as Bulgarian teachers wanted to avoid going to Turkish villages. When he graduated from high school, he worked as a teacher for two years before entering university.

In 1975, he completed eight years of schooling and was encouraged by his teachers to continue his education in high school. He chose the *gymnasium* because of his high score while many of his friends went to vocational schools. In the last branch of the *gymnasium*, there were 32 Turks, two Gypsies, and one Pomak. The Mehmet teacher was also in this branch, while the others were for Bulgarians. Despite being told by his math teacher, Petkov, that he was a "very good boy, but Turkish," he received a good education, he thinks.

He aspired to study at the Faculty of Medicine at Sofia University, but the quotas reserved for Turkish students were too few, and he was not admitted. He believes that the idea among Bulgarians that "they should not enter important places because they will leave anyway" played a role in his failure. Additionally, he thinks that not being found "predisposed to the communist system" in the philosophy exam also contributed to his inability to get in. In 1980, "many students were admitted to the institute to train Turkish teachers for Turkish villages." During his period, 40-50 Turkish students were in the institute. After graduating from the Pedagogical Institute, he continued at Sofia University in 1985 "after the names were changed."

He met his wife at the institute, and they later moved to Turkey during the 1989 Migration. They were asked at Kapıkule why they were coming, although they owned everything, and they replied that they were coming because they were Turkish. They were first assigned to the *Keles* district of *Bursa*, where he worked as a biology teacher in various schools.

Teacher Neşe was born in 1961 in the village of *Sırtköy (Gırbışte)* in *Eğridere (Ardino)*. Born in 1923, her father was a miner and only went to school for a few years. Her mother learned Arabic prayers from a hodja. Neşe's older sister, born in 1951, studied kindergarten teaching in Kardzhali and became a kindergarten teacher in 1966. Neşe began primary school in her village, in 1967. The first four grades were taught together, and the teacher was Turkish, but the language of instruction was Bulgarian. Neşe did not attend kindergarten in her village, and until she started school, she spoke no Bulgarian either. In "those good years," teachers could still explain what the students did not understand in Turkish. In the fifth grade, because her father was a miner and sick, she was admitted as boarding to a school for children with respiratory diseases (Klimatichna Gymnasium) in *Eğridere*, and made Bulgarian friends. During the summers, the *Komsomol* planned vacations that included education, and Neşe participated in them. These trips "opened her horizons" she says.

After finishing high school, she failed her exam and got married. She worked as a temporary teacher in her village for six months (see Image 3) and was involved with the *Komsomol*. Seven years later, in 1986, she enrolled in the Pedagogical Institute. She graduated in 1989 with six friends from her department, which started with 78 students. Her majors were history, geography, and physical education. She said this provided them with a well-rounded education and helped them avoid finding a job.



Image 1. In the village Teacher Neşe, and her students with red scarves (*vrızka*) – a communism symbol- around their necks

Neşe and her family migrated to Turkey in 1989. She wanted to become a history teacher. However, an officer in charge suggested that the country needed more female physical education teachers, so she accepted her minor field instead. Neşe found that her Bulgarian was better than her Turkish. She thinks that her teachers were the most influential people in her education. She said, "Education in Turkey depends on parents, but in Bulgaria on the state and teachers." In her words, in Bulgaria, "every citizen should study and work. Everyone should be useful to society [...] even if you are rich, the state forces you to work."

Conclusion and discussion

The research analyzes the experiences of four teachers who worked in two countries with different forms of governance and modes of production: the communist People's Republic of Bulgaria and the post-1980s Republic of Turkey, where neo-liberal policies were being implemented.

In the 1920s, vocational education became a priority in both countries. Nonetheless, in 1946, the Communist Party came to power in Bulgaria, and the high school education rates shifted in favor of vocational education. In the 1950s, two-thirds of those attending high school in Bulgaria received vocational education which helped provide the labor force and train Turks as intermediate staff. Witnesses drew attention to the relationship between vocational education and the Turkish minority, emphasizing that this was a state strategy beyond some disadvantages, including the language barrier and poverty. In Turkey, similar rates were targeted for 1995, but even in the 2010s, these rates could not be achieved. Preschool education was widely practiced in Bulgaria, including in Turkish villages, as early as the 1970s, while it became widespread in Turkey only in the 2000s. In communist Bulgaria, the expansion of preschool education was related to the ability to draw children into the public sphere and introduce them to the state's ideology at a very early age. However, this practice also had another purpose, such as teaching the country's language in Turkish settlements. Although the language of education has been Bulgarian since 1959, Turks, who mostly live with their ethnic group, could only learn Bulgarian partly in high school education.

After the closure of private schools and the acceptance of Bulgarian as the sole language of education, the Communist regime increased schooling rates. It is understood from oral history interviews that the eight-year education that became compulsory in Bulgaria in 1959 was

implemented successfully in Turkish villages as well, albeit with a delay of a few years. Turks born in Bulgaria in the 1950s and 1960s experienced significant vertical mobility compared to their parents in terms of education. There was no strong resistance from the Turkish minority to providing education in Bulgarian. It is seen that only until the 1980s did Turkish teachers use micro-resistance tactics such as explaining the subject in Turkish to students who needed help understanding, singing Turkish songs, and performing theater in Turkish.

Bulgaria and Turkey have implemented traditional education models that prioritize society over the individual and center the teacher and discipline. However, there are some differences in some matters. Bulgarian schools, including those in Turkish villages, had advanced physical and technological facilities during the 1970s. The regime also instilled the ideal of "tireless work," discipline, productivity, partly Marxist ideology, and the idea that the student belongs to the state rather than the family. Moreover, Bulgaria is seen achieved more goals on student responsibility, decision-making, and applied education in the communist period. At the same time, these themes were common characteristics recalled about the Bulgarian education system in oral history interviews.

When teachers migrated to Turkey in 1989, their appointment was made easier due to their versatile training in major and minor branches, which reflected Bulgaria's goal of "raising versatile people." Similarly Turkey's "Pre-Service Teacher Training Project," initiated in 1997, aimed to train teachers who would provide applied education in multiple fields. However, the success in these areas remained limited (Şişman, 2000, p. 28; Abazaoğlu, Yıldırım and Yıldızhan, 2016, pp. 150-151). Migrant teachers expressed in oral history interviews that it is challenging to implement Bulgaria's applied and daily life-oriented educational model in Turkey due to the differences in the two countries' approaches.

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The Relationship between Orthodoxy and Politics in Dictatorship and Democracy

The Exemplary Case of Saint Nicholas Monastery (Romania)

Abstract: *The aim of this article is to investigate the relationship between orthodoxy and politics in dictatorship and democracy analyzing in the case study of Saint-Nicolas Monastery (Romania), the place we have carried our field etnological research. Mostly coming from rural areas, but choosing an ascetic life by their own free will, the nuns of the monastery does not hesitate to assert a double identity: peasant and orthodox. Family and Orthodoxy shall be lodged in their universe of collective meanings in which daily experience relates to divinity, to the transcendent order. However, what makes this community a case study represents the memory of the experience undergone during Communism.*

The memory of the monastery is as revelatory for the double movement between, on one side, the state policy's seizure over Orthodoxy and, on the other side, its resist in its privat frames. To escape from the increasingly strict control to which the monastery's territory was committed by the authorities, the nuns find refuge in the domestic space.

Keywords: *Romenia; Orthodoxy; communism; trasnsition; Saint-Nicolas Monastery.*

Introduction

Orthodoxy is often reproached with passivity and the lack of the apostolic actions. As it has been assumed and experienced by the Romanians, the tradition of Eastern Christianity, many authors considers, does not cause participation but obedience in relation to political power, does not involve belief in something or someone, but submission to an authority.

Orthodox eschatological dimension with its contemplative attitude is more profound than that found in the west spirituality. As Ioan I. Ică very well observed, the traditions of the two branches of Christianity would manifest themselves "as two distinct socio-cultural figures: conservative and defensive, of Platonic, mystical, and Eastern inspira-

tion, oriented towards the transcendent and the atemporal in the Orthodox East; progressive and offensive, of Aristotelian, juridical inspiration, oriented towards the immanent and history in the Catholic West” (Ică, 2002, p. 28).

For Romanians, consider Daniel Barbu, Orthodoxy is not so much a matter of personal faith, but an organic law recalling organization and administration of a social body. Romanian Christianity was understood not so much as a form of faith (*fides*), an individual experience, but rather as a communal law (*lex*) and a moral code of conduct, enforced by the “old and good men” of the villages. In these rural communities, customs and traditions prevailed, while Christian spiritual life was largely reserved for monks (Barbu, 2000, p. 96-98). This type of Orthodoxy, “understood less as a dogmatic heritage and more as an instrument for producing and reproducing communal unity, seems to constitute in modernity a form of social capital for Romanians, characterized by an ethic of political conformity and dependence on authority ...” (Ibidem, p. 39).

All these facts led us to question the role that Orthodox monasteries have played in relation to the state and society, as well as to what extent reflections on Orthodoxy as passive and excessively contemplative align with recent historical data. We sought to decipher this issue through research conducted at Saint Nicholas Monastery, a community of nuns in Romania. This research culminated in a doctoral dissertation defended at Laval University in Canada and later in a book published by the same university's press (Mateoniu, 2015).

The memory of the monastery becomes an important source of information regarding the relationship between the nuns, as faithful Orthodox believers, the state and church's authority, and also the other people and God. From this memory, we want to understand how the nuns shall be related to the ecclesial authority, state and society in Communism and Post-communism. Has their vision of the world been in favors of a passive or an active attitude? Does Orthodoxy suppose, as Daniel Barbu claims, to bow in front of authority and rather co-participation, „not to believe in something or in somebody, but simply conform to the opinion of the majority”? (Barbu, 1999, p. 247) To what extent does the monastery exist in a significant memory environment for the relationship of Orthodox religion with politics?

We are aware of the fact that answers to such questions which come from a single survey may imply the risk of applying a particular

reality to the society as a whole. At the same time, just a particular analysis can help us to understand life in its smallest details, lived and narrated by simple persons with no implication in high politic. Our study is even more important as it refers to an Orthodox religion community, being situated, in other words, in the heart of Orthodoxy, which allows us to observe everything from the social and religions frames of the communism experience's memory, the influence of Orthodox knowledge and tradition upon the attitudes and the behaviors of nuns, their relations with laity, with authority, to their relation with the idea of death and sacrifice.

Saint Nicholas Monastery: Location and Importance

The monastery Saint Nicholas is situated in Bucegi Mountains and was founded in the middle of the XVIII century. At first, the monastery adopts a cenobitic way of life, and changes later on, in the XIX century, its organization method, remaining until today part of the Orthodox monasteries with a idiorhythmic organization or an "own life".¹ This means a different relationship with ecclesiastical authority, allowing for a relatively autonomous life, with individual expressions of faith being at least as important as collective ones.

Just like a village, having the church in the middle of it, with the houses spread around, the Saint Nicholas monastery was lived, during our field research, by 60 nuns. Each house guested a spiritual family composed by two, three or four nuns, having a certain autonomy in the ecclesiastical authority. Benefiting from the right of minimum property, the nuns administer their goods individually, the role of the tutelary authority, especially the prioress's, being to take care of the overall cult welfare and to manage the shared property of the monastery, pretty reduced as a result of the collectivization of agriculture during communism.

The institution of the abbey has the main role of overseeing Christian practices, managing the monastery, and maintaining connections with the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church, with parishioners, and with tourists, the monastery being not only a place of worship but also a tourist destination.

The monastery maintains, in this direction, a paradoxical relation with the society, of complementarity and distinction, at the same time.

¹ It is known that in the orient Christianity there are three types of monasteries: monasterie with shared life (everybody lives together), monasteries having an idiorhythmic organization and hermitages (see P. Tomáš Špidlík, 1997, p. 7).

Monachos comes from *monos*, which means both “unique” and “alone.” In other words, withdrawn into the wilderness, in solitude, and united with oneself and with God. Monastic life means more than just belonging to a community, even if it is a particular one with a collective role; it is a personal choice within the framework of Christian faith. Not everyone reaches, and especially not everyone remains in the monastery, the nuns were keen to tell us, but only those called to follow the path of holiness. “To have a calling” or “to feel the calling” is one of the conditions of monastic life, and striving for holiness means living the paradox of seeking God in solitude while also maintaining a constant relationship with others. In short, the search for God in the case of Romanian monasteries did not mean closing the doors to the world, but rather living paradoxically, with the world and outside the world. In constant expectation, Orthodox monasteries remain open to pilgrims and parishioners. Through its specific ideorhythmic organization, Saint Nicholas Monastery is all the more oriented toward maintaining these connections, implicitly with the peasant environment from which the nuns come.

The monastery has created its own tradition, but according to the Orthodox tradition of the laity, the monastic community emerging from the society and continuing to maintain live interactions with it. Orthodoxy and family are the fundamental frames of monastic memory (for the traditional memory frames, see Halbwachs, 1952), the nuns transposing in the familial and religious Orthodox frames their collective universe of significations in which daily experiences regard divinity and the celestial world which transcends them.

Even so, what makes from the monastic community an exemplary case is the experience lived in communism, whose theory makes family and Orthodoxy more than simple “traditional memory frames”. For the monastery, but also for the whole of Romanian society, family and religion transform into refuge places where traditional values withdraw from ideology in order to rediscover by the society (Mateoni, 2015; 2016). This was my hypothesis of research. The nuns shared their experiences of living under communism from a spontaneous inner need, but also from a desire to transmit this experience to the world, to serve and be useful in defining collective identity.

The purpose of the undergone research in the monastery was to observe the manner in which the nuns have reacted to the state and the Orthodox Church’s policy, as derived from the community memory, the monastery being a micro-unit compared to the society. To reach this

purpose we have used an established methodology, both in anthropology and history, supposing the balance of the research's attention between the local and global structures, with the purpose of simultaneously observing in the analytical and interpretation process (See Geertz, 1986, p. 88). In other words, we were not interested in producing a detailed monograph of the monastery, but rather in understanding the complex relationship between religion and politics, as it emerges on the smaller scale of a religious community and through "grassroots" research, close to the people.

In order to be successful, we have gone a long way, with the field research having been done for more than for years in a row, between 1999 and 2004. During the field research I have used the method of free discussion in order to avoid the communication gridlocks. At the end of the field I had 20 recorder discussions, as well as copies after most of the documents in the monastery's archives. Both interviews and archives documents have been analyzed and interpreted with no difference, based on the same procedures. The two types of sources were perceived as testimonies, rich in data and interpretations, referring with no doubt to a reality, as a transfigured reality.

Starting from oral memory and archival sources, we were able to reconstruct the recent history of the monastery, which revolves around Decree No. 410 of 1959, based on which some of the nuns were forced by the communist regime to renounce monastic life. The persecutions from the end of the 50s have profoundly marked the religions life from Romania. The nuns' memories from Saint Nicholas concentrate on this moment of crunch which has become a starting point of their collective identity (Mateoniu, 2009). But in order to understand local history and memory, it is first important to highlight the general context of the relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the state in the modern and contemporary periods, as this relationship has, in one form or another, impacted the internal dynamics of the monastery.

The relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the state

The role assigned to orthodox monasteries

The revolutionaries of 1848 set the Romanian Principalities on the path to modernity by applying the principles of secularism following the French model – through the secularization of monastic estates and other institutional measures – which led to the subordination of the Church to the state. But while in the West, the Catholic Church, having

gone through the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, preserved its program as a universal church, in the East, churches became “statized,” and Orthodoxy was “nationalized” (Manolescu, 2011, p. 361). Church revenues were gradually taken over by the state, which also intervened in ecclesiastical organization. The attainment of autocephaly by the Romanian Orthodox Church after the unification of the Romanian Principalities did not put an end to state interference in church affairs. On the contrary, the state established rules for the recruitment of priests, the election of hierarchs, and dictated church operations based on bureaucratic principles (Conovici, 2011, p. 384).

However, despite these secularization measures, individuals’ accession to citizenship did not occur through distancing from religion but rather through its inclusion in the national program (Manolescu, *op. cit.*, p. 363). The modern state did not treat the Romanian Orthodox Church “as an intermediary and autonomous body of society, as happened in some Catholic countries, but rather as a (semi-)state organism with its own rules of operation” (Conovici, *op. cit.*, p. 385). The Church not only adapted to this statist regime but also sought to use it to its advantage, strengthening its position as a moral authority. This status persisted even during the communist period, despite the atheist doctrine, restrictions, and persecutions.

In the terms of an organic nationalism theorized since the 19th century, the Orthodox Church hierarchy justified its compromise with the communist state by advancing the Byzantine principle of “symphony” between Church and State, understood as a form of cooperation. In reality, this symphony, which was meant to be based on the Byzantine principle of dyarchy, had the state as the sole conductor (Conovici, 2011, p. 392). The Church justified its acceptance of subordination as the only way to preserve ritual, liturgy, and places of worship.

It is undeniable that religious services were monitored and controlled, some priests were arrested along with inconvenient believers, Christian icons and symbols were removed from schools, certain religious institutions were shut down, and Christian faith, in general, was forced to retreat into the private sphere. Churches and monasteries thus became secluded environments – much like the catacombs during the pagan persecutions – where Orthodox tradition was preserved and perpetuated.

From the very beginning, the regime adopted a dual strategy: on the one hand, attracting new supporters to the Marxist ideology from among the population, including clergy and parishioners; on the other

hand, persecuting elements deemed resistant or hostile to the new direction. Recognizing the importance of the Romanian Orthodox Church among the masses – not as a political power, but as a moral authority – the goal pursued by the communist leaders was not so much the destruction of the Church, but rather its subordination to their own interests. It is no coincidence that the first communist government after 1944, led by Petru Groza, included a Ministry of Religious Affairs headed by a priest – Constantin Burducea – precisely in order to attract the masses and persuade them to abandon their old political sympathies and support the new “democratic” (pro-communist) parties that already held control of the state (Enache, Petcu, *op. cit.*, p. 25).

Alongside efforts to attract priests and the general population, abuses were carried out from the very beginning against all those who, in one way or another, opposed the process of communization. Starting as early as October 1944, Law no. 486 was implemented, referring to the “cleansing of the public administration” of officials who had held a “shameful position, had served foreign interests, or had been active in one of the paramilitary political organizations, such as the Legionary, Fascist, or Hitlerist movements, or who had served the purposes of certain dictatorial organizations” (Vasile, 2005, pp. 44–45). Under this law, a large number of priests, as well as Christian intellectuals, were removed from universities and major academic and cultural institutions. Several priests deemed “fascists” were imprisoned in camps at Slobozia, Caracal, Lugoj, and Târgu-Jiu (Ibidem, p. 64). The abuses against the clergy and believers were so severe that Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu himself requested the Ministry of Religious Affairs to intervene for the release of those arrested. The only response received was a promise to release the detainees, along with the creation of a special commission by the Ministry to handle the “just” and “lawful” purging of the clergy.

By Decree No. 177 of August 4, 1948, regarding the general regime of religious denominations, the distinction between “historical denominations” and “associations” was eliminated. The only condition imposed on any religious denomination in order to operate was obtaining official recognition from the Great National Assembly. This recognition could be withdrawn at any time “for well-founded reasons.” According to Article 6 of the decree, “religious denominations are free to organize themselves and may operate freely if their practices and rituals do not contravene the Constitution, public security, public order, or

good morals” (Enache, Petcu, op. cit., p. 26). Although the law appeared to be democratic, it left ample room for abuses of power by secular institutions (Ibidem, p. 30). The state exercised direct control over religious denominations, with the Ministry of Religious Affairs becoming the main institution of oversight and control. In practice, the law served as a façade for attacks against religion.

The autonomy desired by the high-ranking hierarchs was systematically counteracted through the intervention of repressive and intelligence organs (later the Securitate) in the debates of the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, with the aim of transforming it into an institution subservient to the regime. All methods were employed, from blackmail to provoking conflicts among the synodal hierarchs. An example of aggressive police intervention in Church affairs was the case of the Metropolitan of Moldavia, Irineu Mihălcescu, who was the rightful successor to the patriarchal throne. Metropolitan Irineu was effectively forced to resign (Vasile, op. cit., p. 136), and in the vacant position, Justinian Marina was appointed in 1948.

From a simple priest, Marina became the head of the Romanian Orthodox Church following the highly suspicious death of his predecessor. His rapid rise, thanks to his connections with the leaders of the communist movement, led his opponents to nickname him the “Red Patriarch”. The image of a patriarch subservient to the regime was reinforced by his numerous public statements and speeches, in which he advocated for the Church’s adaptation to the new framework of “people’s democracy”. Despite this, archival data highlight his undeniable qualities as a leader and strategist. The documents show that the patriarch was constantly monitored by the Securitate and often came into conflict with political authorities, especially when defending opponents of the regime.

In his work *Social Apostolate*, Justinian Marina advocates for the adaptation of believers to the conditions imposed by the new government, attempting to establish and explain the social principles of the Church. This written work by the patriarch aimed to show that the Romanian Orthodox Church was trying to establish a *modus vivendi* with the state, while also revealing the social mission of Romanian Orthodoxy beyond the framework of strictly political relations. The patriarch thus offered a discourse desired by the political authorities – a theoretical justification of the Church’s subordination to the state and, at the same time, a theoretical framework reaffirming the “eternal values of

the Christian faith, so that they remain constantly present in the consciousness of priests and believers” (Enache, Petcu, *op. cit.*, p. 68). The patriarch’s entire discourse alternates between giving the communist leaders what they expected to hear and a concern to preserve intact the tradition of the Orthodox Church, its rituals, sacraments, and the faith in that tradition.

Among the measures taken by the state against religion with some of the most significant consequences for society were the prohibition of religious education in public schools and the transfer of the Church’s last agricultural properties into state possession. The 1948 Constitution stipulated in Article 27 that “no denomination, congregation, or religious community could open or maintain elementary schools or colleges, but only special schools for training clergy personnel, while primary and general schools were to be controlled by the state” (Vasile, *op. cit.*, p. 217).

Decree No. 175 of 1948, regarding education reform, laid the foundations for “realistic-scientific” education. All confessional and private schools were nationalized, and these new rules aimed at removing religion from education were accompanied by ostentatious measures such as the destruction of crosses and wayside shrines in front of schools, the ceremonial removal of icons from classrooms, and the prohibition for teachers and students to recite the opening prayer at the beginning of classes. In several localities, parents protested against these measures by refusing to send their children to school (Ibidem, pp. 217–219).

These unexpected reactions alerted the authorities, who became much more cautious, refining their methods of action against religion. Even the communist leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej noted that the teachers and priests in the villages were, for the most part, hostile to the regime and to the secularization measures in education: “The vast majority of peasants, 79% of the country’s population, 12 million people, are believers, and we cannot, overnight, turn them into materialists. By the measures taken, we have given ammunition to the Church, which will strengthen its position among the rural population” (Ibidem, p. 2019). The regime was thus forced to take into account the influence the Orthodox Church held at the popular level, preferring to instrumentalize the Church in the process of building a new society and the “new man.”

Patriarch Justinian Marina was also fully aware of the impact of Orthodoxy on society and relied on this undeniable truth in his negotiations with the communist leaders. In an effort to mitigate the secularization and nationalization measures in education, the patriarch laid the foundations for a reform of theological education, which was directly coordinated by the Synod of the Church rather than by the state. The Synod determined the curricula for theological schools and appointed priest-professors, who were entrusted with a dual mission: to teach and to conduct religious services. There were three types of theological schools: ecclesiastical schools for cantors, theological seminaries, and university-level theological institutes (Păcurariu, 1997, pp. 505–506).

This reform initiated by Patriarch Justinian was important for both the Church and the faithful. The theological education of that time, as well as the publications issued by the Romanian Orthodox Church, were noted and praised even by prominent figures from abroad (Enache, Petcu, p. 110). The reform was based on the patriarch's conviction that the Church's only chance of survival – and of maintaining contact with the people – was through the education of the clergy, both priests and monks. In parallel with the secularization of education, the state also took harsh measures against private property. The collectivization of agriculture affected the Romanian Orthodox Church as well, especially the monastic communities that still owned agricultural land. As a result, the Church was left without property and became increasingly economically dependent on the state.

The issue of livelihood sources became increasingly urgent, especially for Orthodox monasteries, which, deprived of land, were at risk of closure. For the monasteries, Justinian Marina developed a new Regulation for Organization and Functioning, whereby monks and nuns were required to combine their life of prayer with the practice of various crafts, such as icon painting, carpet and textile weaving, embroidery, metalwork, and others. Patriarch Justinian Marina's ability to negotiate with the state granted the Church a certain degree of autonomy, at least until the mid-1950s. After 1955, however, the patriarch's influence diminished drastically, particularly as the activity of the Securitate increasingly focused on religious matters, including the surveillance of priests and even the patriarch himself. Repressive measures also targeted monasteries, which came to be perceived as major threats to the regime. A wave of coercive actions struck Orthodoxy, especially Orthodox monasticism, in the context of Khrushchev's proposed de-Stalinization.

The persecution of Orthodox monasteries culminated in the purging of some monks and nuns at the end of the 1950s. Monasteries were perceived by the communist state's surveillance and control organs not as isolated from the world, but as actively engaged with it. Remote monasteries, particularly those hidden in the mountains, were closely watched by the Securitate, as they were suspected of providing support to anti-communist partisan groups (Enache, Petcu, op. cit., p. 22-37).

The response of the communist authorities was proportional to the importance that Orthodox monasteries held among the faithful, especially those who were marginalized or even persecuted. While the patriarch fell into disgrace – being increasingly accused of having a “mystical spirit” – the monasteries were subjected to a wave of persecution that reached its peak at the end of 1959. On October 28, 1959, Decree 410 was issued, which stipulated the abolition of certain monasteries, along with a drastic reduction in the number of monks and nuns allowed to remain in the others.

According to the Decree, a total of 1492 monks and nuns were to be removed from the monasteries. Following intervention by the church hierarchy, the number of those excluded was reduced to 1200. The number of those forced to leave was smaller, due to the interpretation of the law in favor of the monastic personnel (Enache, Petcu, op. cit., p. 60–61). The Decree was interpreted in such a way that sick individuals and those who had completed studies in monastic schools were allowed to remain in the monasteries, with religious studies being equated to the seven years of mandatory primary education.

The Implementation of Decree No. 410 at the Saint Nicholas Monastery

The decree appears in the context of the soviet army's retreat from the country, the repressive measures taken against the Christians having the meaning not only to put aside any form of resistance to the regime, but also to prove Moscow that the communist leaders won't give up the revolutionary vigilance (Ibidem, p. 189).

However, in the Saint Nicholas monastery the crisis has begun many years before, the Decree representing the summit of a pretty long and difficult period. The political and economic constraints increase, having the role to push the community towards the margin, to determine the nuns to accept that they are unable to adapt by themselves to the exigencies of the new system. In 1958, the monastery's workshops (a carpet workshop and a paper-bag confection workshop) are closed by

force, with no right to appeal. The only means of living is land work. Only that, having suddenly become indispensable, the monastery's harvest property proves insufficient to assure the products needed for the community, and in addition the monastery is obliged to deliver to the state a tribute from its harvest products.² The community lives, for a long period of time, with fear of losing its harvest properties. Moreover, this actually happens immediately after the promulgation of Decree, the departure of a part of the nuns being one of the pretexts to rob the monastery of its grounds, at the same time with the collectivization of agriculture. As a result, the monastery is left, after 1962, for a long period of time, without any source of living, excepting the state pensions of old nuns.

Going back to the events which preceded the decree, in March 1959, as an outcome of the new Regulation for the organization and function of the monasteries, 14 sisters and 5 nuns, from the 120 persons who composed the community, are forced to leave the monastery.³

The nuns would leave based on the decision made on December 15, 1958, by the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, under pressure from the Department of Cults, to remove minors and staff who had not completed elementary school, as well as immoral individuals and those hostile to the regime, from the monasteries (Enache, Petcu, op. cit., p. 56).

With the exclusion of young candidate girls to the monastic life, the "gates" of the monastery are closed: the community no longer has the right to accomplish the ritual of entering the monastic life. Without the institution of apprentices, the nuns begin to live in fear of the abolition of the monastery.

In January 1960, the monastery's council requires the nuns to fill in the "personal files", which comprised, among age, provenience, schooling level and health condition, also information about the nuns's implication in politics and experiences of foreign travelling.⁴

² Cf Monastery's Archive, File nr. 14, *Surorile de mănăstire. Registrele matricole, 1954-1958*, inv. No. 338/1960.

³ Cf Monastery's Archive, File nr. 14, *Surorile de mănăstire. Registrele matricole, 1954-1958*, inv. No. 338/1960.

⁴ Monastery's Archive, The files of the personel from the Saint Nicholas monastery, inv. No. 345/1960, f. 113.

Starting from the personal files, the nuns from the Saint Nicholas monastery were divided into four categories regarding age, health condition, studies and income (Mateoniu, 2010, p. 16-18). The selection endangered the sick nuns under 50 who hadn't followed the courses of the monastic school for exclusion, and they were considered able to work outside the monastery.

The last nuns, who refused to leave voluntarily, would be forcibly placed into security vehicles and transported under escort to their native villages. They would later be integrated into the socialist economy and forced to renounce their monastic vows. After the wave of persecution passed, some of them would return to the monastery after years of living outside it. These are the nuns who mainly recount the moment of leaving the monastery; the life lived at a distance, but also the moment of their return. The return to the monastery happens at the call of Patriarch Justinian Marina, who, although marginalized by the regime, tries to act in the direction of saving the Orthodox Church. Simply ignored by the governmental and control bodies during the enforcement of the Decree, the action being carried out by the Department of Cults within the government, the Patriarch later manages to alleviate the effects of the repressive measures.

The intervention of the state in the life of the monastery shocks the community. Retrospectively, looking back from the present upon the life stories, the Decree represents a rupture in time, which created the conditions as the base from which the local universe has to reorganize. It disturbs at first the life of the community, causing a loss of the sense of existence from within the monastery, becoming late, through memory, a place of production of sense (instead of resignification). The event represents, in front of anything else, a temporal threshold, becoming in time a place where all the values of the monastic community concentrate.

The reconfiguration of the monastery after the Decree

After crisis, the monastery's perimeter starts to be even more drastically controlled by the state agents. Wishing to escape this control, the nuns try to face the political pressures finding refuge more and more in the domestic space of their houses. This process manifests along a few decades, while the nuns try to preserve their right to property and work within the monastery. They send numerous petitions to the government and to the Patriarchy. Due to these repeated petitions, the patriarch Justinian Marina interferes personally in 1962 to help the nuns

keep their last properties, after the end of the collectivization of harvest, when the monastery loses most of its harvest properties. The community eventually manages to keep a few “eyes” of field (as the nuns call them), situated in the near, and for them the nuns have to carry a true war with the Forestry which for a period effectively occupies not only the lands around the monastery but also the premises.

After 1964, major changes appear both at level of state policy and the level of Romanian Orthodox Church’s policy. In 1965, the patriarch Justinian initiates a site for the restauration of the monastery, this date being considered by a part of the nuns (especially by those who remained in the monastery after the Decree) as a moment of refoundation, of return to normality after the crisis.

Ceaușescu would continue the policy of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej from the latter’s final years, replacing the faithful alignment with the Soviet Union with an exaltation of national values and the gradual development of the dictator’s personality cult. While in the 1950s Orthodox monasteries had been seen as places of refuge for opponents of communism, starting in the 1960s the regime began to perceive them as sites with economic and identity-related potential, as well as for heritage preservation. Not only would the regime abandon its previous goal of restricting and closing them, but it would also contribute to their restoration in order to use them in the process of legitimization through a constant return to ancient, ancestral origins.

The site changes the appearance of the monastery. The enclosure is remade; the houses’ frontages are restored in such a manner to emphasize their rustic, authentic character. The site brought electricity and running water into the monastery, and each house incorporated a bathroom. In other words, the site brings modernity to the monastery, conserving at the same time the elements considered to be archaic and authentic.

In 1979, upon the completion of the construction works, the monastery grounds were consolidated and modernized, comprising 25 renovated houses connected to running water and electricity, a guesthouse (*arhondaric*), another building intended for the retreat and rest of high-ranking patriarchal hierarchs, and a museum containing religious and folk objects.

The rebuilding of the monastery’s territory after 1965 explains very well the process of the political power’s usage of Orthodoxy in such a way that it would contribute to the remodeling of national iden-

tity within the nationalism promoted by Nicolae Ceaușescu. The hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church accept the policy of the state which has as a purpose the transformation of Orthodox churches in patrimonial places. However, while for the state the religious heritage was meant to legitimize the nationalist utopia and contribute to the development of the tourism industry, for the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the process of turning places of worship into heritage sites represented the only viable solution for overcoming the economic crisis faced by religious communities. If we take into account the fact that the monastery's workshops were abusively closed and that of the harvest property was seized by the state, the valorization of the heritage and the openness to the religious mass tourism becomes the only source of subsistence for the nuns at Saint Nicholas.

Once restored, the monastery would come increasingly under state control, just as Orthodoxy itself would be increasingly instrumentalized by the regime. The Romanian Orthodox Church became more and more subordinated to the Party-State, with any potential opposition from the clergy being forcefully neutralized or suppressed through networks of complicity. Monasteries came to be perceived more and more as places preserving an Orthodox tradition placed in the service of nationalist ideology. In 1974, the Romanian Orthodox Church was included in the Front of Democracy and Socialist Unity (FDUS), which was strictly controlled by the Communist Party (Ică Jr., 2002, p. 538). The clergy were co-opted into campaigns aimed at convincing peasants to give up their properties and join agricultural cooperatives. Priests were active in "struggle for peace" organizations, which served purely propagandistic roles against an imagined external enemy. Iustin Moiescu, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church between 1977 and 1986, presided over international peace struggle conferences held in Bucharest in 1981, 1984, and 1985 (Ibidem).

The "Byzantine symphony" between politics and religion, always invoked by the clergy and defenders of the majority Church in Romania, transformed into total control of the Church by the state. In the name of nationalism, the high hierarchs of the Church accepted to fulfill the role of propaganda for the regime. Thus, in the second half of the 1980s, many places of worship were destroyed as a result of the state's rural and urban systematization policies, without encountering even minimal resistance from the high hierarchs or society. Any possible opposition was completely annihilated, highlighting both the "ambiguity

at the level of theological thought and moral philosophy” and the “absence of an articulated civil society in modern Romania [...]” (Ibidem).

Faced with this relentless crushing force, the nuns of Saint Nicholas Monastery were forced to adapt to the new conditions, but without abandoning their convictions or giving up their free will.

The meaning of the memory of Saint Nicholas Monastery

The context of the changes after 1989

The reality of monastery is as revelatory as it can be for this double movement between, in side, the state policy’s seizure over Orthodoxy and, on the other side, its refuge in its traditions frames. The monastic territory builds according to the official policy of the Church and of the state, to value the ecclesiastical heritage, a process of patromonialization to which the nuns have adapted in time. At the same time, to escape from the increasingly strict control to which the monastery’s territory was committed by the authorities, the nuns find refuge in the domestic space. The living memory is practically the antidote of the collective body to the oblivion tendency and to a „museification” proposed by the state as a sole solution for survival.

The nuns refuse to be viewed as victims of history and they share the most difficult moment of their lives. The brutal intervention of the state turns, through memory, into a failed attempt to disturb the divine order. The reaction to the crisis provoked by the regime became an example of survival, a life lesson, as well as positively particularizing the nuns’ experiences.

Aware that the terrestrial sphere doesn’t exist outside divine economy, the nuns are waiting for the miracles that God doesn’t hold up to make. The probe of this divine economy’s manifestation is actually solving the crisis and continuing the religious life inside the monastery. At the same time, the contemplative and eschatological vision of the nuns (the understanding of divine presence in everything that surrounds) doesn’t oppose the active life they have always showed. The way in which the monastery reacted to oppose the abuses coming from outside, from the secular power, show the nuns’ capacity to stand on their grounds and fight against the abuses. The temporal dimension of their life can be eventually found between the awaiting for the ultimate judgment of God and the concrete action in present, to be inside and outside the world at the same time, to live as strangers to this world while expecting the divine providence and at the same time to respond to the challenges of the present times.

The nuns shared with us their oral memorial during a period still highly conflicted across society, marked by the political power's tendency to conceal the traumas of communism. Against the backdrop of the Balkan war and the conflictual situations in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, authors such as Samuel Huntington considered Orthodoxy to be the deep cause of these conflicts, which were not so much political as religious in origin. In the author's opinion, Orthodoxy represents the foundation of a distinct civilization that separates the boundary of democratic Europe from the non-democratic one, along the line drawn by the Great Schism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Although contested, this theory was embraced by various authors who would continue to explain the relationship between religions and democracy through the demarcation of civilizational boundaries. In line with Huntington, Olivier Gillet, for example, analyzing the relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the communist state, considering exclusively the public discourse of church hierarchs and the actions reflected in the press of the time, states that Orthodoxy is a hindrance to democratization (Gillet, 1997).

Certainly, by claiming itself as the "true faith," Orthodoxy seems to have opted for prioritizing the preservation of tradition, an effort perceived as immobility and a refusal to engage in dialogue with modernity. However, as Anca Manolescu pointed out, Orthodoxy has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to adapt to political and social changes (Manolescu, *op. cit.*, p. 365). It is true that this adaptation occurs slowly and through cautious steps, with "the style" of Orthodoxy, as the author calls it, being different from that of Catholicism or Protestantism. Participation in modernity and, more recently, in democracy, is manifested through a unifying and conservative discourse, avoiding opposition to politics or public debates on diversity. It is more a matter of the pace of adaptation than a planned action to slow down the democratic process.

One issue remains that the Romanian Orthodox Church has not critically examined its collaboration with the communist regime, which maintains a state of tension in society, deceiving the expectations of a significant portion of the population, especially the intellectuals. However, a formal indictment regarding what happened during the communist regime has not taken place in Romanian society. The transition from communism to democracy has been more than tumultuous, marked by numerous political and social conflicts, the repeated arrival of miners in Bucharest at the call of the post-communist power, and the violent repression of the opposition. The alternative to power from the

second tier of the communist nomenclature will materialize belatedly, following violent clashes. As for the average person, the concern for the next day, in the context of major economic instability, will prove to be much stronger than removing the ghosts of the past and cleansing institutions of the old regime's flaws.

In this context, the "return to faith" after the rupture will occur, expressed both through unconditional belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Church and through various individual manifestations of public expression of faith, such as the construction of churches and monasteries, entry into monastic life, and pilgrimages to the relics of saints. In this effervescence of the 1990s, in the search for the sacred, the Orthodox Church will strengthen its position as a moral authority and as a guarantor of social unity and stability. The Church's fragile involvement in debates regarding the recent past, acknowledging its own collaboration with the regime, as well as its involvement in catechizing the masses in the spirit of the Gospel, will lead a part of civil society to transform criticism into direct attack. Once Romania enters the European Union, the Orthodox Church will make efforts to accept interfaith dialogue, develop its own educational and social assistance programs, but without giving up its role as a moral authority for all, for the entire nation.

The construction of the Cathedral of the Salvation of the Nation, a project advanced by Patriarch Miron Cristea during the interwar period, resumed in post-communism and recently materialized, will lead to an intense campaign of opposition to the Church. Under the extremely simplistic slogan "We want hospitals, not cathedrals," the necessity of ending state funding for religious cults is proclaimed, perceived as a source of public money waste and also as encouragement for religious dogmatism. Thus, the Church hierarchy will be confronted not only with the ghosts of the past but also with a secular wave, undermining its traditional position in relation to the state and society.

This happens in a delay compared to Western Europe, where Christianity is no longer perceived as opposed to democracy. While specialists in religious studies have spoken about the process of "desecularization" (Peter Berger) and the "deprivatization of religion" (José Casanova) since the 1970s, Orthodoxy is expected not only to be fully autonomous from the state, to retreat into the private sphere, and to "liberate" the public space from what secular civil society considers retrograde and an obstacle to progress.

Dissatisfied with a life reduced to the origin of the immanent order, young people in Western Europe seek closeness to the sacred, but not through the mediation of traditional churches, rather directly, following their own spiritual instincts (Taylor, 2011, p. 146). This phenomenon of “believing without belonging” (Grace Davie) is part of a broader culture driven by an ethics of authenticity, the discovery of one’s own fullness and spiritual depth. Following this path of self-discovery, the focus is placed on spirituality and less, or not at all, on institutionalized religion, on the individual and less on the collective (Ibidem, p. 147).

In democratic societies based on differences and pluralism, the retreat of religion into the private sphere seems to be a solution to avoid vexing non-believers. At the same time, paradoxically, it is absurd and profoundly undemocratic to demand that religion no longer manifest itself publicly. The presence of religion in the public sphere is actually based on the acceptance of the plurality of actions and worldviews, which should tend toward consensus regarding the common good.

Observing the religious revival in the West, José Casanova supports the democratic legitimacy of Christian Churches entering the public arena, within civil society, to uphold values that are not opposed to democracy, based on ideas of freedom, human dignity, cohesion, and social solidarity (Casanova, 1994, p. 65). The Romanian Orthodox Church will enter the public arena quite late, remaining to this day more an object of contestation than one of defending its own values. The appearance of its own radio and television stations rather indicates a “segregation” of Christian values in the public space, rather than an intentional and discerning inclusion of Christian values.

Conclusion

“The paradox of Orthodoxy,” as Ioan I. Ică tells us, “is that the generous community-based dialogic personalism at the heart of its dogmatic, liturgical, and mystical tradition has failed to become an active ferment in Orthodox societies.” Indeed, “this community-based and dialogic personalism should be reactivated...” (Ică, op. cit., p. 44-45).

Human rights, instead of complementing, have rather brutally replaced the Christian idea of human dignity and freedom. These fundamental rights, which are spoken about rather little these days, were interpreted for many years in such a way as to exacerbate differences and lead to conflictual relations between various social groups, rather than fostering cohesion and harmony. In Romanian society, the nostalgia for

the life lived under communism, expressed for years by a significant portion of the population as a response to the current political and especially economic situation is increasingly accompanied by a manifest tendency to return to the personality cult. This trend is undoubtedly fueled by the exaltation of popular pietistic forms, messianic in nature, and the weak distinction between Christian love and idolatry.

In the face of these millenarian manifestations, the case of the Saint Nicholas Monastery offers a completely different example, of resistance to political abuse, discernment, and serenity.

The life experience of the nuns at the Saint Nicholas Monastery, the memory of this place, highlights a case of exemplary Christian attitude in relation to politics. Perhaps it is a case that confirms the rule, or maybe it is, as I stated in my doctoral thesis, an example of the manifestation of Romanian Orthodoxy under political pressure, within its traditional framework of life, less influenced by the current media turmoil. In this case, Orthodoxy is not as an exclusive contemplative religion, in the way of an exaggerated focus upon the last things and the afterlife. The expectation of God's Kingdom does not mean neglecting the immediate aspects of life, but rather a constant response to the challenges of the present, with faith in divine providence. The memory of the monastery indicates a strong capacity of the nuns to adapt to political changes, but also their struggle and resilience over time. The values shared by the nuns, such as love, faith, hope, freedom, and dignity, represent an undeniable heritage that can be useful to society. However, the transmission of local memory occurs predominantly in traditional frameworks, in the home environment, and exclusively through orality, which unfortunately points to a weak ability of society to absorb and identify with these forms of resilience.

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Künstlerroman in Turkish Literature and an Original Work of The Genre: Nahid Sırrı's Novel “Yıldız Olmak Kolay Mı?”

Abstract: *The künstlerroman, which can be defined as a narrative form that deals with the problematic existence of the artistic subject and the journey of the artist's pursuit to direct the process of artistic development, is a genre shaped within the circle of German literature, but over time it has begun to find representation in the literary traditions of different nations. The transition of the Künstlerroman genre into contemporary Turkish literature coincides with its first representative in the West, about a century later. Nahid Sırrı Örik's novel Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı? (Is it Easy to be a Star?), published in 1944, represents an unique precedent that breaks the monotony of the works written in the genre of künstlerroman in the history of Turkish literature. The novel, which deals with the story of a young woman who take a step into to life as a vocal artist, with its unique thematic structure and figurative characters, eliminates the dominance of masculine discourse over the texts of the künstlerroman. In this study, the structural transformations of the künstlerroman during the adaptation into the Turkish literature will be reviewed around the novel Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?; the similarities and differences between the local works of the genre and its representation in the Western literature will be examined within the framework of the aforementioned work.*

Keywords: *Künstlerroman; Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?; Turkish novel; Culture industry; Gender.*

Introduction

The künstlerroman (artist novel), a genre that emerged in the historical development process of German literature, constitutes a sub-branch of the bildungsroman, which can be translated into English as “novel of formation”. The künstlerroman genre, of which characteristics in the archaic examples can be found in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) and Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), differs from the bildungsroman category with its thematic structure in which the artist's personality is problematized. The prominent characteristics of the künstlerroman genre are the artist's practice of aesthetic production, the dilemmas s/he faces in the process of developing his/her

art, and the narration of his struggle with the cultural status quo caused by the time s/he lives in. It is possible to argue that James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, published in 1916, becomes a milestone in the development of this genre. It can be seen that Joyce's work published for the first time in Turkey in early 1966, was printed in only five thousand copies and was only available to a very limited audience (Belge, 1983, p. 101). On the other hand, it should be noted that the pioneering works of the *künstlerroman* genre in the history of Turkish literature began to be seen in the late 19th century, and narratives based on fiction, in which various debates on aesthetic preoccupation are focused through the priority given to artist figurations, can be analyzed in almost every period. It can be put forward that the body of texts that can exemplify the *künstlerroman* genre, constitutes a voluminous literature in the context of the history of Turkish literature. A significant number of these texts share a schematic discourse in terms of both the typological positions of their protagonists and their thematic and fictional structures.

Among the *künstlerroman* novels Nahid Sırrı Örik's *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* (Is it Easy to be a Star?), which was published in 1944, is a unique work of the category with its image of a female aesthete rebelling against normative morality, as well as the art circle it depicts and the popular culture criticism it contains. The main element that distinguishes *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* from the other works of the *künstlerroman* is that the protagonist deviates from the typology of the masculine author. The fictional structure of the novel, which tells the story of a young woman training to become a singer, is centered not on any literary circle, but on musicians and stage life. This unique character of the work as an precedent of a *künstlerroman* necessitates an analysis of the literary and technical parameters that distinguish it from its peers. Therefore, this study will focus on the the place of Nahid Sırrı's *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* among the artist novels written throughout the history of Turkish literature based on the analysis of its relationship with the genre of *künstlerroman*; the dialogue between the sociological information pointing to the cultural, moral and ideological problematics caused by the modernization experience specific to Turkish society and the intellectual structure of the text will be analyzed. In this way, the historical, aesthetic and sociological value of the work will be discussed by determining how views regarding Turkish nightlife of the 1940s is reflected in an original text within the boundaries of the *künstlerroman*.

Künstlerroman with its Theoretical Background and Reflections on the History of Turkish Literature

The bildungsroman, focusing on the multifarious stages of the protagonist's experience of maturing his/her personality by discusses the individual and social factors that give acceleration the material and spiritual development of the protagonist in the process of subjectivation, and which ultimately tells the story of the protagonist's becoming a harmonious component of the public order, appears as a genre that bourgeois ideology paved the way for its development. As the bildungsroman is a genre rooted in bourgeois ideology, it also refers to a narrative category that is predominantly subjected to the demand of bourgeois society. According to Georg Lukacs, it is no coincidence that both bourgeois and socialist literature have an affinity for the autobiographical bildungsroman as “both types of society, unlike previous societies, are in a state of constant and dynamic change. A person growing up in these societies has to learn the facts on his own and find a place for himself within that order” (Lukacs, 2000, p. 127). The final stage of the relationship of individual with the bourgeois society, in which s/he has a partial autonomy in the process of constructing his/her personality and determining his/her class affiliation, is the obligation to submit to the yoke of public authority. For the bildungsroman, the reconciliation of hero with the social reality surrounding him is a kind of ontological necessity. Therefore, the stereotypical hero of the bildungsroman is an individual tamed and harmonized by his/her time and society. Additionally, “the sub-genre called artist novels (künstlerroman) emerges as by the end of the 19th century, artist protagonists replace the young heroes taking a step into life with great hopes but then face with reality and become disillusioned” (Parla, 2024, p. 42).

Along with its widely accepted definition in the literature, künstlerroman refers to the genre of “the novel in which the personality of the artist and the artist's existence are treated as the focal problem” (Aytaç, 2003, p. 366). In attempts to conceptualize the künstlerroman genre in depth, the problematic nature of the interaction of the artist individual with his/her environment is emphasized. Thus, according to Hugh Holman, the künstlerroman corresponds to the form of “a novel of apprenticeship in which the struggles of the artist or writer protagonist in the course of his development from childhood to maturity, both in the face of a arduous environment and in accordance with the goal of understanding his/her creative mission” (Holman, 1985, p. 241). It is noteworthy that Holman prefers the term “protagonist” to describe the artist

hero whose struggle is narrated in works belonging to the *künstlerroman* genre. When considered within the framework of its theoretical background, it is seen that the use of this term is not accidental. According to Hakan Sazyek, the protagonist is “the equivalent of the main character in the modernist novel system. Individualized alienation, which is the dominant problematic of the modernist novel, and its important indicator individual anomie, is the sense of disconnection between the individual and the social structure or institutions that force him to conform to his own norms and values” (Sazyek, 2023, p. 358). This sense of disconnection appears as an inevitable parameter in the creation of the novel genre. The depiction of the tensions and conflicts generated by the dichotomic relationship between the individual and society represents the existential purpose of the novel. In fact, “the novel is considered as an epic genre, but it focuses an irresistible conflict between the hero and the world, which distinguishes it from myth or fairy tale” (Goldmann, 2005, p. 19). Aforementioned conflict, shaping the dominant characteristic of the novel genre, is replicated in the *künstlerroman* by distilling it to an intellectual opposition between the artist and the social structure. The conflicting relationship between the idealized set of values distinct to the middle class thought by bourgeois society and the portraits of artists who endeavour to reach a certain level of transcendence is the basic trajectory of *künstlerroman*. Unlike *bildungsroman*, the artist in the *künstlerroman* prefers to become isolated by not adopting the harmonious personality that social values compel him/her to have. This voluntary isolation indicates to the tendency of absolute alienation that the artist develops in the face of social impositions and his choice to attribute a value to aesthetics above the crude and limited reality of life. While listing the technical and thematic parameters of the *künstlerroman*, Jale Parla notes the following about the experience of isolation of the artist stereotype created by this genre:

“... In the *künstlerroman*, the values of bourgeois society are negated, art is placed above life, aesthetic values and debates about these values are brought to the main axis of fiction, and a writer or poet is referred as the protagonist. This writer is almost always an unsuccessful writer; as the main plot of the *künstlerroman*, that is, the claim to place art at the center of life, includes the debates on good art and bad art, the artist's sense of being trapped between his conscious efforts and the call of the unconscious, an increasingly personal journey through which the artist will fully define themselves, unique and solely their own, and the artist's maturation process, and therefore the novel is about the personifications of writers who have not reached perfection” (Parla, 2024, p. 42).

The bildungsroman is a genre in which the dominant discourse of liberal culture, which sanctifies the individual, paves the way for its development; on the other hand, künstlerroman heralds the collapse of liberal ideology and bourgeois relationships. The image of the crushed in spirit and alienated artist of the künstlerroman is a representative figure destined to be disappointed in order to symbolize this decadence.

The first and prominent work regarding the künstlerroman genre in the history of Turkish literature is the *Mai and Siyah (Blue and Black)*, published in 1896 by Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil (1866–1945), the most important novelist of the Servet-i Fünun generation. In fact, it is not coincidental that the first representation of the künstlerroman in Turkish literature is encountered in this period. Influenced by the decadent sensibility emerged in France, the novelists of Servet-i Fünun developed a morbid, centimantal and pessimistic feeling under the influence of the censorship policy instrumentalized by the regime of oppression imposed by Abdülhamid II. For these literary artists, who were prevented by the political conjuncture from engaging in politics, art represents the highest ideal. The conflict between imagination and reality, which is frequently encountered in the works of Servet-i Fünun novelists, generally results in disappointment. “Their inability to deal with social issues made them stay indoors, interested in nature and the poor, and led them to elaborate on all emotions, especially the feeling of pity. Pessimism, melancholy, shun, desire for solitude, distraction, depression are common themes in their prose and poetry” (Enginün, 2017, p. 328). These themes are also the basic themes of the künstlerroman. Ahmet Cemil, the idealist artist of *Mai and Siyah*, who is doomed to experience an absolute tragedy by failing to realize his dream of becoming a successful and famous poet, is the spokesperson of his generation on the intellectual plane and exemplifies the romantic artist image of the künstlerroman. This image is markedly different from the archetype of the sage Eastern writer, idealized in many respects, encountered in the works of Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844–1912), one of the founders of the Turkish literature of the modernization period and a member of the preceding generation. The representation of the Künstlerroman in Turkish literature should be discussed on the basis of the distinction between the authors' attitudes towards modernization and westernization movements. The ideological agenda of modern Turkish literature, which Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar states began with a kind of “crisis of civilization” (Tanpınar, 1977, p. 101), was constituted by the search for the attitude

to be adopted in the face of the experience of westernization. The representations of artists in the works of conservative novelists, who favored a cautious transformation in the process of integration with Western civilization, appear as idealized author figures who have a credible identity in the eyes of the large masses of people they lead and who have achieved perfection in every respect. The fictionalization of these heroes as idealized figures is the direct result of the need to preach the conservative suggestion that one should be cautious in the face of modernization/westernization movements to the public. As these figures monopolized the authority to determine the limits, direction and nature of the westernization adventure experienced by Turkish society. Therefore, unlike the typical heroes of the *künstlerroman*, they considered art as a kind of pulpit of indoctrination rather than a sublime refuge. It is possible to evaluate the prominent artist figurations in this context in the works of writers such as Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Mizancı Murat (1854–1917) and Peyami Safa (1899–1961). The presupposition of the Orientalists that Western civilization is soulless; useful like a calculator but far from humanistic behaviors, that great economic accomplishments and high technology can be achieved with this way of thinking, but that it is “incapable of grasping the most important things in life because it is devoid of spirituality and far from understanding the human suffering” (Buruma and Margalit, 2022, p. 63) is also embraced by these authors. The following words spilled by the ideal writer hero of Peyami Safa's novel *Bir Tereddüdün Romanı* (*A Novel of Hesitation*) to Vildan, an *alafranga* bohemian artist type portrayed as a morally deprivileged, pejorative figure, are quite remarkable:

“The whole of Europe feels the same hesitation: Germany, France and England are going between right and left wing. National and international movements, religious and secular movements, Catholic marriage and free love movements, moral and immoral movements are dividing the human will and making it hesitate. That's why marriages are declining and young people are hesitating; marriage is to believe in at least one thing. In this mad, rabid age of hesitation and doubt, marriage is the institution feeling tremors the most” (Safa, 2020, p. 169-170).

Aforementioned citations contain discourses that prove that the perspective of conservative Turkish intellectual on the experience of westernization is based upon Occidentalist principals, and that are capable of representation due to the common characteristics of their derivatives. Although their heroes rely on artistic figurations, it is not pos-

sible to evaluate these texts within the normative stereotypes of the *künstlerroman*. In the works of authors adopting the idea that the modernization experience should be constructed in a way that constitutes a radical break from the epistemological accumulation of the traditional Turkish-Islamic civilization, the conventional hero figuration of the *künstlerroman* is encountered. Rather, these figures, appearing as representatives of modernist and postmodernist literary orientations, develop a more fundamentalist perspective of westernization by excluding ideological engagement from artistic activity. In other words, “unlike the first category of perfect and active author figurations who see the inevitability of change and develop ideas to control and manage cultural transformation, these second category of writers are incapable and passive, far from controlling and managing suggestions and tendencies, and in the face of the inevitability of change, they envision not a controlled change but a total metamorphosis” (Parla, 2024, p. 13). The common characteristic of the artistic heroes of the leading writers of twentieth-century Turkish fiction, including Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901–1962), Oğuz Atay (1934–1977), Vüsat O. Bener (1922–2005), Bilge Karasu (1930–1995) and Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952), is to transform through metamorphosis and the inability to hold on to the conventional values created by their contemporaries. The notion put forward by these novelists, who saw the novel as an aesthetic preoccupation aimed solely at itself, away from being an apparatus of indoctrination charged with being the mouthpiece of political ideals and ideological considerations, was deemed too *avant-garde* by the socialist intellectuals of the young Republic. In Oğuz Atay's *Tutunamayanlar*, the figure of the intellectual alienated from his time and society, defined by a metaphorical expression that effectively instrumentalizes irony, is portrayed in the following terms:

“*Tutunamayan* (disconnectus erectus): A clumsy and cowardly animal. There are even human-sized ones. At first glance, they resemble humans in appearance. They do not have family organization. After birth, mother, father and offspring go to separate places. They do not know how to live collectively and have not been seen to unite against external dangers. Their instincts are not fully developed. They do not know how to protect themselves. However – due to their gene mimicry - they do get into fights, imitating the fighting of other animals. No disconnectus erectus has ever been seen to defeat another animal in a fight. Since they live close to cities, it is high time to thought about preventing their numbers from decreasing by keeping them inside the city, in a fenced park for the disconnectus erectus” (Atay, 2008, p. 194-151).

The representation of the Künstlerroman in the history of Turkish literature establishes focus on narratives in which the “disconnected” writer or poet individuals live a life of absolute isolation, considering artistic production as an existential necessity by disconnecting from social reality. The narrator of Vüsat O. Bener's *Bay Muannit Sahtegi's Notları* shares the fate that the “disconnectus erectus” described above is destined to experience. In the work, which tells the story of a retired lawyer's writing experience while he is alcohol addict, there is a narration of selected excerpts from a life devoted to bodily pleasure and intellectual preoccupation. The narrator, who is disconnected from his time and society in many respects, believes that “writing, not speaking, will save [him]” (Bener, 2022, p. 11). This belief is a dominant motif in other precedents of Künstlerroman. Also in the narratives of Sait Faik, who brought to Turkish literature the depiction of ordinary situations and details of the daily reality of ordinary people, we encounter that the dominant tendency of the idealized artist profile is to purify through writing. In his fictions with autobiographical elements, the narrator glorifies art and the act of writing, just like his counterparts, in the face of the social reality he has difficulty adjusting to. The persistent attitude of the author's narrator, “No one can remove the decision to make a living with his writing alone from his mind” (Abasıyanık, 2021, p. 13), is the product of the absolute dedication of the defeated and helpless artist figuration to aesthetic production. This state of devotion expresses an absolute commonality that appears in different precedents of the genre of the Künstlerroman from various periods in the history of Turkish literature.

However, at this juncture one matter should be emphasized. The local works of Künstlerroman, which take their subject matter from the communal order of art circles or the conflict between the aesthetic ideals of artists and the social structure to which they belong, witness the absolute hegemony of male heroes. Among the aforementioned works, it is not possible to come across any work that appoints a female artist as the protagonist. It is also observed that almost all of the heroes constituting the figurative characters of these texts are literary men. Despite the modern achievements of the secular revolution, Turkish society's failure to completely eliminate the remnants of the legacy of Islamic culture, which prohibited engagement with the plastic arts, may also have contributed to this situation. From this point of view, it can be said that the prioritization of Künstlerroman of masculine domination and its

contentment with treating literary activity as the sole artistic preoccupation constitute a remarkable thematic uniformity in Turkish literature. Nahid Sırrı Örik's work *Yıldız Olmak Kolay Mı?* breaks this monotony by presenting stage life from the perspective of a young female soloist and represents the most original and marginal example of the artist novel in the history of Turkish literature.

The Story of a Young Woman Who Brought the Künstlerroman to the Stage: *Yıldız Olmak Kolay Mı?*

Nahid Sırrı Örik's second novel, *Yıldız Olmak Kolay Mı?*, which is one of the works that affected its essence in terms of the development of the genre of *künstlerroman* in Turkish literature, was published in Tanin newspaper in 1944. Living in cities such as Paris, Vienna, Rome, Berlin and Copenhagen between 1915 and 1928 (Kurdakul, 1985: 482), Nahid Sırrı's first story *Zeynep, la Courtisane* (Necatigil, 1989: 249), published in *Les Oeuvres Libres*, deals with the journey of a female hero, just like the novel *Yıldız Olmak Kolay Mı?* It is possible to understand from Nahid Sırrı's works that special importance is attributed to female protagonists. In his work *Kadınlar Arasında (Among Women)* (1941), the author describes the women in his family, and in his narratives we encounter plots in which weak male heroes are consumed by strong women. According to İnci Enginün, "the reason why the author includes strong, even destructive women in his works may be due to the existence of strong women in his own family who can easily cope with thousands of problems" (Enginün, 2018, p. 332). The female protagonists we encounter in Örik's works are often portrayed as powerful figures. Women who do not have this privilege are portrayed as powerful individuals participated in the struggle for power as active figures and who are characterized by their actionist personalities. This value that the author attributes to the female image has led him to embody an unique work that creates a different perspective to the *künstlerroman*.

Unlike the conventional precedents of the *künstlerroman* in Turkish literature, the work centers on a female voice artist candidate as the protagonist figure. Another feature that distinguishes the novel from its counterparts is that it contains the story of a voice artist emerging as a product of the popular culture environment instead of any poet or writer. Hayriye Hanım, who is known as *giglet*, lives a very modest life with her daughter Selma in their house in the Beşiktaş which is a district of Istanbul. In the first part of the novel, there is a scene in which Selma tells her mother that she has quit her job at the company owned by Ali

İlhami Bey. Selma has left the company, where she worked as a typist for only ten days, because her boss, Ali İlhami Bey, has proposed her for marriage. The decision to raise Selma as a singer capable of becoming a star is made possible thanks to the conversation her mother Hayriye Hanım has with Kemani Celal, whom she meets on her way down the Abbasaga slope to Beşiktaş. Kemani Celal, depicted as the dearest violinist of one of the most famous saz places¹ in 1940s Istanbul, decides to present Selma, whom he learns from her mother that she has an impressive voice and a stunning beauty, to his boss Hasan Arif as a young starlet. What Kemani Celal tells his boss, Hasan Arif Bey, about Selma's artistic merits reveals the conditions under which one can become a star in Istanbul's stage life:

“The girl doesn't want to be anything. But after talking to her mother and going through my memories of her childhood, I thought we can train her to be a star.’

‘A star... Is she going to be a star tomorrow night?’

‘No, not tomorrow night, but maybe if we train her seriously until the beginning of the winter season.’” (Örik, 2008, p. 35).

Although Selma has been enamored of singing from an early age, she does not dream of becoming a star with her own will. In this respect, Selma is portrayed as a figure who was initially forced to adopt the career that those around her admired for her. It is decided that Selma will start taking lessons from Kemani Celal in order to ensure that she is qualified to be ready to go on stage as a conceived project. This is because she is a rival “to be put up against Seniha Hikmet, who has been spoiled for two years and has become truly intolerable” (Örik, 2008, p. 28). The dialogue between Kemani Celal and Hayriye Hanım, who exchange ideas about whether this passive subject possesses the characteristics of the star cult as a whole, draws attention to the fact that visual appeal is as important as artistic competence in becoming a famous singer. At the heart of the tragedy Selma is threatened with as an aspiring artist is the ontological incompatibility between the destructive competitive conditions of the world she is forced into and her own ideals. This tension constitutes the dominant conflict element of the *künstlerroman*. Selma is on the verge of stepping into a world full of intrigue, a world in which many female singers who dream of fame have

¹ The term “saz place” is an expression used in Turkey, especially in the first half of the 20th century, for musical entertainment venues. This term refers to entertainment venues where bands of musicians playing instruments such as oud, cümbüş, bağlama and violin take the stage.

to settle for the secondary status of being a singer. In this environment where the price of being a star includes parameters such as the ability to adapt to intrigues, moral compromise and aesthetic appeal, Selma tries to maintain her idealistic attitude. Refusing to resort to the help of any instrument other than her voice, which she tries to train through the singing lessons she attends, Selma finds the suggestions that she can compensate for her technical deficiencies with her visual appeal unacceptable (Örik, 2008, p. 39). Selma's renouncing to be content with the privilege of her physical superiority and focusing solely on developing her artistic virtues proves that she is a figure reconcilable with the *künstlerroman's* image of the heroine, who takes it upon herself to attribute an existential value to aesthetic preoccupation. As seen in various precedents of *künstlerroman*, she is portrayed as an individual endeavouring to overcome the psychological pressure of the obstacles she encounters during the process of developing her art. The first obstacle Selma will face while climbing the ladder of fame as a star-to-be will be Madame Kirkor of Armenian origin, the life partner of her future boss Hasan Arif Bey. It is also noteworthy that the ethnic belonging of this opposing force, which is presented as an obstacle to the protagonist figure of the novel, is frequently referred to. Furthermore, It is also possible to read this preference in relation to the author's ideological agenda. Madame Kirkor, drawing portrait that is negated as a whole with both her mental and physical characteristics, appears in almost every passage of the novel as an insulted individual. She is even involved in the thoughts of different characters about each other with the same impression. Hayriye Hanım, while dreaming of Hasan Arif Bey, rants about the anger she has felt for years for “that porky Armenian wife, gross with her beard and mustache” (Örik, 2008, p. 75). It is certain that the caricaturized visual image we encounter in these depictions is attempted to be associated with an ethnic representation. Madame Kirkor's function in the narrative system is to keep Selma away from the attention of her life-partner Hasan Arif Bey. Selma, imagined as a young and beautiful starlet, is an crucial threat for Madame Kirkor, to whom it is possible for Hasan Arif Bey, whose philandering she has no problem tolerating, to lose his heart to her. Madame Kirkor's main concern was that Selma would take advantage of Hasan Arif's financial influence and exploit him. It can be emphasized that Madame Kirkor was partially right in her prediction. Hasan Arif did indeed talked with Hayriye Hanım to let him marry with Selma, whom he was passionately in love with. However, this incident, which constitutes an important breaking point for

the plot of the novel, is also a first step in the construction of the most important dramatic tension element of the narrative. As Selma, who has existed as a passive and isolated future artist until this part of the text, reinforces her personality and artistic ideals with her rejectionist attitude in the face of the offer she is exposed to. With this refusal, Selma also challenged the patronage oppression that was being put on her. The idealistic attitude she adopts during the process of developing her art leads her to reject a patron who is ready to take on her patronage, and transforms her into a revolutionary/marginal figure for her era and society. Selma's words to her teacher Celal are noteworthy in terms of showing how much she is inclined to persevere in her art:

“But to become a star...!”

‘To become a star... We talked about it before. Big advertisements, the stubbornness of a boss to create a star, or...!’

Selma's chest was rising and falling with excitement. ‘Or else... Why don't you continue, teacher? Or else there is a voice, a marvelous voice that will overthrow and dominate everything. However, you don't have that either!’ Tears gathered in her eyes...” (Örik, 2008, p. 82).

Selma's words spilled from her mouth show that she, as a *künstlerroman* subject, is willing to share the common stories of the protagonists of educational and developmental novels. The obstacle that the protagonist faces in the process of keeping her artistic ideals alive is not the pressure created by the sociocultural and moral rules specific to bourgeois society, as seen in Western European novels, but the tax patronage system of Eastern societies. Selma rebels against an institution that has existed for centuries by refusing to obey the absolute authority of a patron who can provide her with the economic influence and social prestige she needs to sustain her artistic activity. The priority of this institution is to fix the normative role assumed by the artist subject within the family to which he or she belongs and to present him or her to the masses with an identity subjected to the control of the protector. Weber emphasizes this aspect when he evaluates patrimonialism as the adaptation of the patriarchal household relationship in Eastern societies to the masses (Weber, 2008, p. 61). The equivalent of the sultan or the ruling elite, who appears as the protector of the poet in the tradition of classical literature, in 20th century Turkish society is the civilian capitalist. Selma, as a woman and a stage actress, is a subject who tends to break this cycle. However, this subject who did not initially dream of becoming a star, decides to watch Seniha Hikmet, whom she is preparing to replace herself, at the saz place where she performs in order to provide the motivation she needs to overcome the despair caused by the

marriage proposal she receives when she is on the verge of stepping into the world she is forced to be a part of.

The night she watches Seniha Hikmet at the saz place run by Hasan Arif Bey constitutes the turning point creating the real stimulating effect on Selma. The social environment in which she participated also helped to reveal a very important component of Selma's personality that had remained hidden until then. Her observations of stage life encouraged Selma, who was being groomed as a starlet, to continue developing her art. This turning point recalls the importance that W. J. Harvey attributes to the network of human relationships in which the novel's character is placed. According to Harvey, "much of our personality can be illuminated in our relations with other people" (Harvey, 2010, p. 177). This is also true for the heroes of the novel. Indeed, according to Hermann Broch, the primary function of the novel genre is to clarify the anonymous, obscured existential integrity of the hero (Broch, 1975, 204). The distinctive qualities of Selma's personality, her uncompromising loyalty to the perspective of artistic development, her willpower and perseverance, become visible only when she starts to become part of stage life. Paradoxically, however, the more she socialized, the more isolated she becomes. The reason is that Selma is forced to make compromises that make it possible for her to conform to the moral and cultural standards of the social environment with which she comes into contact. The resistance she shows against the standards imposed by the established order leads her to isolation. For the thematic structure of the *künstlerroman*, which Lukacs calls "the novel of disappointment", the process of isolation is a kind of absolute fate:

"Loneliness is neither accidental nor the fault of the individual in the novel of disappointment; it is an indication that the longing for the essence will always take one out of the world of social structures and intimacies; it is an expression that intimacy is only possible on the surface of life and only through compromise" (Lukacs, 2007, p. 138).

The understanding that Selma has a multi-layered personality and a temperament prone to taking refuge in her inner self can be grasped by emphasizing the problematic nature of her relationship with her environment. With her longing for her own self and essence, she steps out of the world of social structures and becomes lonely. The contact she established with the social reality surrounding her also led Selma to realize how inclined she was to devote her life entirely to her artistic development. Further development foreseen by this realization is the process of isolation that emerges as an inevitable necessity for the idealist

artist prototype. The aforementioned process of isolation is also a factor making it possible to depict the artist personality in depth. However, the elements deepening Selma's artistic personality in the novel are not detailed psychological analyses or the revelation of a deeply penetrated state of consciousness through the technique of interior monologue. The narrator is content with revealing Selma's personality, which signifies her dedication to her art, through a few inconspicuous actions, words and gestures. The protagonist of the novel is, in James Wood's words, a portrait that "the narrator lifts and moves with a few brush strokes" (Wood, 2000, p. 70). Therefore, despite her flat character appearance, Selma is a figure whose psychological content, ideals, aspirations and desires the reader can grasp as a whole. However, what makes Selma an interesting and original hero of the *künstlerroman* is that she dares to struggle not only with the artistic environment she tries to become a part of, but also with the feudal social values of her time as a revolutionary individual. At the center of this struggle is "sexual morality", which is a kind of taboo for the traditional Turkish family structure.

Despite her artistic and physical virtues, Selma is aware that the prerequisite for her to achieve star status is to respond positively to Hasan Arif's marriage proposal. However, as a young and beautiful woman, she refuses to let the first man she will have a relationship with be "a rough, fat, fifty-year-old man" (Örik, 2008, p. 127) who will offer her the opportunity to become a star. Having her first sexual experience with Cevat Servet, a literature student she has been seeing for a while, goal of Selma is to become Hasan Arif Bey's mistress. With this act reflecting her rebellion against the imposed gender role, Selma underlines the fact that she realizes that her art is the only means that makes her strong. Selma says the following to Hasan Arif Bey, whom she meets after her first sexual intercourse:

"Now, when I sing, I listen to myself as if I were a foreign person. The presence of this voice, which resembles a second being, prevents me from being a woman who sits at home and sewing while waiting for her husband. Yes, this voice has become a second being inside me. It has more necessities, domination, desires and wishes than me. I could have imprisoned myself within four walls, but this voice would not consent let me. I do not have the will to turn back from this new path that you have dragged me to, and to accept to live as a lady at home" (Örik, 2008, p. 139).

Selma's words, which can be interpreted as a kind of feminist manifesto, reflect the determination of a progressive female individual seeking to transcend the imposed gender role through her passion for

her art. The function of the female image, shaped by the traditional values of Turkish society, is limited to fulfilling the doing houseworks, being a faithful wife and obediently serving the continuity of the lineage. Selma, on the other hand, opposes the restraining her function as a woman to domestic obligations by obeying the call of her inner voice inviting to devote her existence to her art. Selma's realization of this goal depends on proving her artistic maturity. Therebeside, she informs Hasan Arif Bey, in whose casino she will perform, that she has agreed to be his mistress. However, her acceptance to be the mistress of her boss is basically a revolutionary behavior. As a matter of fact, with this behavior, Selma not only refused to be the wife of her boss, whose help she needed while becoming a star, but also gained the freedom to have a voluntary union with the young man she fell in love with. Selma's attitude is reminiscent of the views expressed by feminist theorists about the relationship between women and masculine authority. According to Simone de Beauvoir, "woman, although she roughly accepts the superiority and authority of men and worships their gods, from a more general point of view, resists male domination step by step; this is where the curiosity of running afoul, which is attributed to women, comes from" (Beauvoir, 1978, p. 26). Selma's decision enabling her to resist the patriarchal order is her willingness to leave both men in her life behind for the sake of her artistic ideals. As a woman destined to have status and power, Selma "knows all the weaknesses of the male order and never misses an opportunity to expose them" (Beauvoir, 1978, 26). For her passion for art and her aesthetic development, Selma sacrifices both her love and the conventional moral system of the society she belongs to. Selma, considering the traditional loyalty to men as a burden for her artistic development, carries the feminist struggle trajectory to the *künstlerroman*. Her struggle against the dominant artistic environment of her age, in which values, norms and institutions are shaped by patriarchal domination, not only leads Selma to absolute loneliness but also makes her a problematic individual. Selma's development as a star candidate contains both parameters. Selma not only turns into a problematic individual with her identity as an artist, but also develops to a level of artistic competence that will enable her to reach the level of artistic competence that will impress even Seniha Hikmet, whom she is put up against as a rival, with her voice (Örik, 2008, p. 206).

One of the most important characteristic of the *künstlerroman* is the tendency to define the artist individual, whose various stages of development are described, through the sense of inadequacy dominating his/her mood. Selma, similar to other *künstlerroman* heroes, dreams of achieving aesthetic perfection despite her talents. Her desire to always take her art one step further encourages Selma, who is “clearly informed that she can only become a star if she can sing in a very methodical way because she does not have a loud and big voice” (Örik, 2008, p. 48), to work for days without leaving her house. The constant sense of inadequacy and incompleteness she felt gave Selma the motivation to dedicate herself to her artistic development. This feeling will also be the main cause of the tragedy Selma will experience. On the first night she performs in the casino run by Hasan Arif Bey, Selma fails to show the sultry, light-hearted, and libertine demeanor that the customers demand from a starlet, and the protest to which she is subjected makes the emotional disconnection that will eventually lead her to death inevitable. This fate to which the protagonist of the novel is cannot escape overlaps with the eternal fate of the image of the artist, whose struggle in the *künstlerroman* usually ends in disappointment.

The salient point here is that Selma is the subject of an unfamiliar field of struggle with her identity as a *künstlerroman* hero. The stereotypical artist subject of the *künstlerroman*, which we encounter in Western European literary traditions, is problematic as it denies the dominant values of bourgeois society. However, Selma is not confronted by an institutionalized bourgeois class against which she has to engage in an existential struggle. The fundamental cause for this is that Turkish society in the 1940s had not yet created a fully-fledged bourgeois stratum. Feroz Ahmad states that the Turkish bourgeoisie was still trying to assert its existence as a “small and undeveloped” (Ahmad, 2014, p. 17) stratum in the 1920s during the War of Independence. This class, which was still in the process of formation, had not yet gained the identity of a powerful, effective and inclusive social actor that would alienate the artist subject from her own cultural values by the 1940s. The opposing force of Selma's struggle to keep her artist identity alive is not bourgeois society, but the culture industry. Due to this distinction, Selma, as the subject of the *künstlerroman*, is not portrayed as a figure who continues her struggle against institutions such as religion and family, which function to perpetuate the ideology of the middle class. The bourgeois class is not the institution that causes the difficulties she encounters in the

process of developing her art. Selma is a member of a society that, without internalizing the bourgeois ideology, has produced a unique artistic environment through the culture industry established with media tools imported from the West. As a member of this society, Selma's field of struggle is the media competition environment caused by the entertainment industry. Selma, prioritizing her efforts to improve her art over the social prestige promised to her, expresses her longing for a modest life (Örik, 2008, p. 81), but becomes isolated as time passes in the face of the destructive conditions of the media competition she is forced to participate in. Success in stage life depends on having strong network in the media world. Unlike Seniha Hikmet, whose position she aspires to, Selma lacks the entrepreneurial temperament that will enable her to acquire this network. The intrigues of the media world are fierce and dirty enough to break her will to struggle. The necessity to develop her art on a medium contrary to the founding values of her personality prepared Selma's catastrophic fate and deprived her of the opportunity to realize her dreams.

Another characteristic that distinguishes the novel from its Western counterparts is that it does not contain autobiographical elements. Harry Levin states that artist novels overlap more with the author's life than developmental novels; this feature makes the *künstlerroman* more realistic (Levin, 1959, p. 42). On the other hand, *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* is a work in which it is not possible to establish any biographical parallel between the protagonist and the author who brought him into existence. In fact, it cannot be claimed that Örik had a direct relationship with stage life. The author's interest in stage life should rather be explained by his passion for music. It is understood from some of his writings that Nahid Sırrı was familiar with *alafranga*² and *alaturka*³ music and made remarkable observations about the adventures of vocal singers as they stepped into stage life.⁴ It is possible to argue that the author, who wrote a work titled *Sanatkârlar* (Artists), consisting of three stories in which he included only stories of artists, was a typical aesthete. According to Kayahan Özgül, who prepared all of Nahid Sırrı's works for publication, the theme of his narrative *Sanatkârlar* is “the personal and artistic problematics of a poet, a sculptor and a

² It is a stereotypical expression meaning “belonging to Western civilization”.

³ It is a stereotypical expression meaning “belonging to Eastern civilization”.

⁴ For more detailed information: Nahid Sırrı Örik, “Alaturka Musiki-Alafranga Musiki Harbi-III, Tanin, Nu: 4454-1461, 21 Eylül 1947.

painter” (Özgül, 2008, p. 7). This shows that Nahid Sırrı attached particular importance to the contemporary art debates of his time and the life practices of artists from different disciplines. The following views expressed in an interview with him provide an insight into the source of his interest in artist novels:

“I would like to embrace the theory that art is for society. However, when I see some people hiding behind the motto “art is for society” and trying to impose as literature some empty things that have no artistic value encouraging no artistic excitement, I have no heart for advocating this theory” (Örik, 1934).

These statements show that the author attaches the same importance to artistic preoccupation in the theoretical context as he does on the fictional plane. While choosing the subjects of his works, Nahid Sırrı prefers to take the local reality of art circles as an axis and suspends the obligation to perform aesthetic production for the public good. In his imagination, artistic production is not characterized as a practice that would guide sociocultural development movements. For him, the artist is an individual destined to experience ontological conflicts with conventional categories shaped by social norms. As a distinctive element of his society, the artist finds his/her deepest tragedy in this conflict s/he is destined to experience. Nahid Sırrı himself experienced this conflict in its most severe dimensions and was largely neglected by the literary canon of his time. The main reason for this neglect is the author's homosexual identity. Nahid Sırrı's sexual orientation not only clashed with the superordinate identity based on the heterosexual, Sunni, White Turkish image idealized by the official ideology of the Republican regime, but also paved the way for his marginalization by the leading literary circles of his time. It is also known that this practice of marginalization sometimes became harassment as well. The most dramatic behaviour of this harassment is when Ertuğrul Şevket tears the pants of the writer, who does not portray a typical male image with his manners, portrait and style (Kemal, 1967, p. 51). The aforementioned behaviour seems to have been realized in order to convey the message that a garment symbolizing masculine power does not suit him. Nahid Sırrı is a figure prone to sympathizing with the female identity. The author wrote his 1928 essay *Kadın Hayatını Canlandırma* (*Revitalizing Women's Life*) under a woman's name, Ayşe Nesrin. It is inevitable to read Örik's preference as a rather marginal move for the Turkish society of the 1920s. This situation also gives us an idea about the possible reason for the author's preference for the stories of female protagonists in his

works. All these information show on which biographical grounds the literary parameters that make *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* the most original work of a *künstlerroman* in the history of Turkish literature developed.

Conclusion

Nahid Sırrı Örik's novel *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* which was published in *Tanin* newspaper in 1944, is the most remarkable work of *künstlerroman* in the history of Turkish literature with its unique figurative characters, unfamiliar artist portraits, marginal themes and conflict elements. Until the publication of *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?*, the *künstlerroman* in Turkish literature was a genre dominated by male artist figurations. In the traditional narratives constructed around these artist profiles, almost all of whom were poets or writers, the literary circles were predominantly at the forefront. An iconoclastic move in the context of the *Künstlerroman* tradition, *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* first of all shakes the foundations of the gender representations that have been repeated in the fictionalization of artist novels in Turkey. The narrative replaces the male literary figure of an aspiring male literary artist with a young woman preparing for stage life, and includes observations on the developmental processes and competitive environments of vocal artists. On the other hand, the narrative constructs the young female artist whose story is the axis of the narrative as a portrait of a woman who cannot reconcile with the idealized value judgments of her society; devoted to her artistic development; and whose aesthetic development journey ends in disappointment. In this respect, the work is faithful to the thematic template of the *künstlerroman*, which is particularly represented in German, English and French literary traditions.

The *künstlerroman* genre has undergone a number of technical and thematic transformations while being adapted to local idiosyncrasies due to the fact that the social reality that gave birth to it has not been personally experienced by Turkish society. The heroes of *künstlerroman* in Turkish literature, just like their western counterparts, become problematic figures by retreating into their inner worlds during their journey of artistic pursuit. However, the opposing force against which these aforementioned heroes struggle during their artistic journey is not bourgeois society, but feudal culture and the climate of religious fundamentalism. Nahid Sırrı's novel *Yıldız Olmak Kolay mı?* adds a new link to this chain of distinction. For it is not the bourgeois society or feudal/religious bigotry that hinders Selma's artistic development as a hero of a *künstlerroman*. Since she could not reconcile with the norms and

values of the entertainment industry, developed under the guidance of the culture industry in Turkey in the 1940s, she retreated to her ivory tower and became isolated; she continued her journey of artistic pursuit as a problematic subject. Her journey of search is accompanied by many themes and motifs ranging from gender inequality to media criticism, from the problematic of popular culture to class conflict. Therefore, the novel is a work with lines that go beyond the schematic representation of the *künstlerroman* within the circle of Turkish literature. Despite all these differences, the main message of the novel conforms to the dominant discourse of the *künstlerroman*. This discourse is based on the belief that the impossibility of the idealist artist's reconciliation with social reality is an archetypal condition.

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Outsiders and Runaways around 1965: Approaches to the Problem in the Context of Bulgarian Literature and Culture

Abstract: *The article analyses the figure of the outsider within the cultural and literary context of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in the year 1965, tracing the mechanisms through which the socialist system shaped, regulated, and selectively admitted representations of social marginality within the boundaries sanctioned by ideology. The study encompasses both comparative readings of foreign literary and cinematic examples and close analyses of Bulgarian texts, seeking to understand how difference was represented, managed, and ultimately absorbed into the normative cultural order. The article also considers how Bulgarian ideological discourse reconfigures the outsider as socially acceptable only when presented as young, redeemable, and ideologically correctable. Specific literary and cinematic examples such as Chico in Gencho Stoev's novel *A Bad Day*, Ana in Rangel Valchanov's film *The She-Wolf* (script by Chaim Oliver), and Rayna in Blaga Dimitrova's novel *Journey to Oneself* are examined in detail, with attention to the stylistic, biographical, and behavioral mechanisms by which these characters either conform to or resist normative expectations. The article concludes by arguing that the figure of the outsider in Bulgaria in 1965 is both constrained by ideological containment and charged with critical potential, functioning as a prism through which literature registers the unassimilated zones of social reality and ethical consciousness.*

Keywords: *communist Bulgaria; 1960s, socialist realism; outsiders; juvenile re-education institutions; ideological infantilization; moral guilt; ethical narration.*

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Аутсайдери и бегълци около 1965 година: подстъпни към проблема с оглед на българската литература и култура

„Понякога се чудя какъв бих бил без моя проблем? И разбира се, не мога да отговоря“. Това е крилата фраза от романа „Тюн-

сет“ от 1965 г. на Волфганг Хилдесхаймер, немски писател с еврейски произход, чиято книга разглежда отчуждението и социалната изолация на един хроничен аутсайдер. Тук проблемът не е просто психологическо затруднение, а усещане за идентичността като остатък. През същата 1965 г. зад Желязната завеса в социалистическа Полша, Тадеуш Конвицки разглежда сходен проблем чрез авторския си филм „Салто“ (1965). Героят му *изпада от влака* в затънтен малък град. Разказва на жителите налудничави истории, като твърди, че се е крил в града по време на войната. Той не търси справедливо място в света, а потвърждение, че го е имало, и то като *проблем* на колективната съвест и памет. Година по-рано Макс Фриш моделира субективност, която не иска завръщане в паметта, а възможността да я облича и съблича като костюм („Ще се нарека Гантенбайн“), трансформирайки субективността на по-ранния си герой от романа „Щилер“ (1954), настояващ на правото да бъде забравен.

Отново през 1965 г., романът „Роден като остатък“ („Crumb Bone“) на австралийския писател Клайв Бари, сам преминал през нацистки лагер за военнопленници през ВСВ, представя друг тип аутсайдер. Главният герой Фругал, уродливо непривлекателен, самотен и презиран, отказва да се впише в общността на военнопленниците. Той активира тактиката на незабележимото действие (Мишел дьо Серто) – бягство през фантазията, като субект в сянка, без територия и без глас, своеобразна етика на отрицанието. Фругал е фигура на крайно изместване, не може да бъде интегриран дори като жертва. Въпросът вече не е просто „моят проблем“, а кой има властта да дефинира проблема ми и да ме превърне в проблем. Самото заглавие е диагноза: „Роден като остатък“. Crumb може да означава и трошица, и натрошеност – но тук остатъкът е онова, което грозно стърчи, след като нормата е решила какво е интегрируемо и ценно. Личното име Фругал (frugal – пестелив) обозначава някой, който минимализира всички излишества, за героя остатъчността е форма на съществуване – отломка от свят, който никога не го е поискал.

Тези привидно разнопосочни импулси се срещат в желанието да контролират „своя проблем“. Ако погледнем към тези и подобни герои не като към фигури на екзистенциалния дефицит, а през технологията на социалното изключване, ще открием форми на опозиционност, които не се коалират, но генерират отложен ерозивен ефект върху социалните норми.

Радикализации на различния

Междувременно в САЩ аутсайдерството се радикализира като колективен гняв. *Моят проблем* вече не е изолиран вътрешен конфликт, а белег на принадлежност към цяла контракултура. През 1965 г. Сол Юрик, вдъхновен от „Анабазис“ на Ксенофонт, публикува „Воините“ (The Warriors) – урбанистичния епос за младежка банда, принудена да премине през града като през вражеска територия. Под повърхността на уличното насилие се крие *моят проблем* – липсата на място, на глас, на легитимност. А малко по-рано „Портокал с часовников механизъм“ (1962) на Антъни Бърджес представя тийнейджър с изострен вкус към бруталността като перверзно огледало на *нормалните* процедури за превъзпитание чрез ужасяващ поведенчески контрол в името на реда.

Тази логика не се ражда през 60-те – тя зрее в десетилетието, чиято отправна точка може да локализираме между 1951, когато излиза емблематичният за темата „Спасителят в ръжта“ и 1953, когато излиза романът, изнесъл проблема в заглавието си, преди той да се превърне в културна теория – „Аутсайдерът“ на Ричард Райт (Wright, 1953). Авторът му е един от първите афроамерикански писатели, които рязко захвърлят расовата мелодрама и си позволяват да шокират с насилие, жестокост, глад, изнасилвания и зрелищни убийства. Главният герой не е подрастващ, а зряла и осъзната личност, отчуждена от ролите, в които е редно да се впише – чернокож, работник и по презумпция – комунист. След злополука, в която го обявяват за мъртъв, той решава да *започне отначало* – със съчинена идентичност, извън натиска да бъде „черен“, „борец за социална правда“, „работник“, „съпруг“ или „човек на морала“. Опитът му да скъса с тези категории се оказва провал на хуманността.

Всички тези и още много нарастващи гласове кулминират в протестите и нежните революции през 1968 г. Хипита, които атакуват доволния капитализъм чрез „лудост от висш порядък“. Млади номади, които правят „моя проблем“ видим чрез бунт срещу нормалността, чрез отказ да бъдат вменени в порядъчното и търсене на транс език като практика на свобода. Във Франция през 1968 г. феминистките и младежите превръщат личния гняв в политически акт. Женските движения атакуват *мъжката* структура на знанието и на властта. В Западна Германия студентите разкъсват мълчанието на родителското поколение за нацизма. Техният „проблем“ е наследен, срамът – системен. А Пражката пролет

е опит за автономия на цяла, превърната в *сателитна*, национална култура.

Така сеизмографът на литературната 1965 отчита нарастващо напрежение – от субективните кризи, през градските одисеи и колективните гласове на улицата – „моят проблем“ вече не е само личен. Той става симптом на цяла епоха, в която изключените търсят не утеха, а израз, признание, легитимност и промяна.

Класово форматиране на изключените

Именно през 1965 г. излиза и първият труд, изследващ социалната динамика между център и периферия – „Установените и аутсайдерите“ на Норберт Елиас и Джон Скотсън. В тяхната теория установените са тези, които притежават власт, ресурси и престиж, не само за да установяват норми и правила, но и да оформят и налагат образа на другите чрез социални стигми, приписвайки им „най-лошите характеристики“. Тези различия произвеждат символна и морална асиметрия, възпроизвеждана през етикети, слухове, език, ритуали, институции, официализирана култура. И обратно, самоидентификацията на установената група се моделира по примера на най-добрите. Централна теза е, че обществата изграждат вътрешни йерархии на статус и принадлежност дори в рамките на една и съща социална класа или общност (Elias and Scotson, 1994).

Погледнат през тази теория, героят на „Салто“ ще се опитва да влезе в групата чрез паметта, но „установените“ няма да го признаят, защото това би нарушило собственото им самоусещане като „чисти“ от вина за геноцида по времето на Втората световна война. В „Ще се нарека Гантенбайн“ опитът да се „разиграва“ идентичност ще изглежда опит за социална мобилност на самоизключил се, който се движи между ролите, за да избегне стигма. Във „Воините“ бандата ще създава алтернативна система на установеност, базирана на насилие, копирайки механизмите на „установените“, но отдолу нагоре и т.н. Разнообразието е голямо, но това, което предизвиква разточителния наглед от примери, не е стремеж към всеобхватност, а демонстрация на многообразието от варианти, което не отговаря на класовата матрица, наложена при усвояването му от соцреалистическата литература на Източна Европа през 60-те г. на XX век.

Напротив, Норберт Елиас и Джон Скотсън твърдят, че въз основа на символен контрол и морална регулация йерархиите могат да възникват в една и съща социална класа, и „дори ако различията в материалното положение са минимални, социалната дистанция между групи, които съжителстват, може да бъде драматично подчертавана чрез символно маркиране и стигматизация“ (Elias & Scotson, 1994: xix). Вместо солидарност между „равни“, често се налагат вътрешни механизми на изключване, базирани на дългогодишно местожителство (уседнали и нахлули/новоприсигнали), междуличностни обвързвания (лоялни и двулични/предатели) или локален авторитет (знатни и дискредитирани/опозорени). Така работническата класа, макар да се мисли за праведна, защото *не ограбва труда на човека*, не е хомогенна, а разслоена по оста „установени“ и „аутсайдери“, където последните биват натоварени с „най-лошите характеристики“, които трудно могат да се изброят.

В теорията от 1965 г. няма привилегирован критерий, по който привидно еднаквите се подреждат в йерархия. В Източна Европа обаче темата за аутсайдерството нахлува като критика към западния свят, но в класова опаковка и с щемпел *препоръчително за 16–23*.

1965 и процедурите по идеологическото подмладяване на аутайдера

От горните примери, както и от много други, се разбира, че аутсайдерът не е по презумпция юноша, нито задължително радикален бунтар или синоним на борец за нов социален ред. Докато комунистическата идеология го представя като инфантилен антипод на стария капитализъм, истинската му функция е далеч по-гъвкава. Той е онзи, когото установените не припознават за свой. Понякога радикализиран, друг път фантом, доказващ, че общността съществува, защото някой винаги трябва да бъде залостен на границата, но никога напълно *извън* или свободен¹. Именно за-

¹ Според друга съвременна философска теория на Карън Барад *онова, което е изключено, никога не е напълно „друго“, поне не в абсолютен смисъл [...] „способните“ зависят от „неспособните“ за самото си съществуване* (Barad, 2007, p.158).

щото не харесва положението си, аутсайдерът е идеалният неофициален хроникьор на социума, който помни какво е било преди нормата да облече костюм.

Знаково е, че точно през 1965 г. българските читатели получават достъп до две влиятелни произведения на западния аутсайдерски канон, но възрастово сегрегирани: Холдън Колфийлд от „Спасителят в ръжта“ на Дж. Д. Селинджър и Колин Смит – „Самотният бегач на дълго разстояние“ от едноименната новела на Алън Силитоу, един от водещите гласове на т.нар. „сърдити млади хора“ в следвоенната британска литература. И в двата случая героите са млади, социално отчуждени, в конфликт с институциите, нормите, фалшивите езикови кодове на възрастните. Колежанинът Колфийлд отказва да „порасне“, защото разчита зрелостта като корумпирана форма на лъжа и конформизъм. Произхождащият от работническата класа Колин Смит, изпратен в изправителен дом след кражба, отказва да победи в маратона и да се превърне в символ на „съгласния“.

В контекста на Студената война, тези персонажи на западното аутсайдерство са удобно употребени от комунистическата идеология като илюстрации на „гниенето“ на модерния капитализъм. Присъствието им в преводната литература е педагогически пренасочено и внимателно филтрирано, за да се превърнат в доказателства за моралния разпад на капитализма. Така, лишена от многообразния си контекст, фигурата на аутайдера на Изток се „подмладява“, за да бъде преработена през оптиката на *превъзпитанието*. Той става поносим за соцреалистическия канон само ако е в синхрон с реформирания след смъртта на Сталин социалистически морал, според който виталността на младите се изправя срещу умората на старите, в синхрон с подмладената комунистическа идейност, ставайки източник на нова романтика.

Млади и... млади

Младежкият „проблем“ през 60-те г. съучаства и за оправдането на реални социални напрежения, чрез опаковането им като рецидив на култовския период. Проблемите на властта се маскират чрез конфликта *млади срещу стари*, в който *старите* са носители на преходни качества – догматизъм, сектантство, принизяване на идеалите. А младостта отдавна не е възраст, а всеобхватен идеал

за общество и символ на комунистическата идея². Подобен курс би рухнал, когато истинските млади хора започнат да мислят. Ето защо, парадоксално, но тъкмо юношите, с присъщите конфликти на порастването, не съответстват на младежката тема в литературата.

Аутсайдерът става литературно допустим само ако може да бъде рехабилитиран чрез ТВУ, работнически бригади, комсомолски организации, тимуровски команди и подобни храмове на комунистическия морал, които да отстранят пороците на съзряването и вторично да вдетинят героя чрез отстраняване на вътрешните му напрежения и противоречия. Както отбелязва Евгений Добренко, тоталитарната култура е „във висша степен инфантилна“, а детинството – родова черта на соцреалистическата литература (Добренко, 1992, р.165). Целта на възпитанието не е преодоляване на детската асоциалност, което е истинската цел на класическата педагогика, а задържането на индивида в структурно подчинена незрялост – състояние на наивност и вечна възприемчивост към властовите желания. В този хоризонт соцреализмът не е инструмент на осъзнаване, за какъвто се представя, а за инфантилизиране, моделиращо субект, който „лесно се направлява и е подвластно на суеверия, митове и идолопоклонничество“ (Добренко, 1992, р.165). А задържането на подобни герои на прага на зрелостта не е сюжетен каприз, а идеологическа операция, чийто залог е контрол над структурата на фантазията – младият герой не трябва да мисли, а да бъде мястото, където властта мисли себе си като добра.

Ето защо художествени образи, носещи заряда на западния аутсайдер и представени като проблем на съвременността в соцреалистическа литература, са невъзможни. Твърде наподобяват прясно престъпление, след като набеденият сериен убиец вече е ликвидиран. Затова могат да бъдат представяни единствено като

² „Това застава литературата отново да потърси конфликта синове/бащи, но не в социален, а в идеологически план. Новото поколение се отличава от старото по редица антропологически качества. Младото поколение го боли за целия свят, то трепти на космическите честоти на цялата вселена. Качествата на старите са преходни, те съответстват на един преодолян етап от развитието на социализма. В съответствие с конкретната художествена задача тези качества са включени в мотива на обвинението или в мотива на оправданието. Конфликтът между млади и стари е по-скоро мним, декларативен и почти винаги приключва по един и същ начин“. Цит. по (Ангелова, 2014, р. 324).

(1) ехо от култовския период, (2) призраци от буржоазното минало или (3) подмамани от евтиния блясък на Западния свят чуждопоклонници. Те са идеологически невъзможни като продукт на социалистическото време.

Педагогика на палача

На този фон проблемите с младежката престъпност започват да придобиват зловеща статистика. Точно през 1965 г. детската престъпност бележи пик в Съветския съюз. Самоубийствата сред непълнолетните също растат лавинообразно – *от 360 случая през 1960 г. до над 850 през 1965 г., което означава две-три на ден*³. Наред с тях, нараства броят на ранните бременности, венерическите заболявания и абортите. В допълнение към стария бич на детския алкохолизъм, се появява ново зло – наркоманията, което води до включването на „склоняване на непълнолетен към наркомания“ в регистъра на престъпленията през същата година. *В училищата се установява практиката „трудните“ ученици да бъдат елиминирани от системата* (Краснов, 2018, р. 74–78). Лентяите и момичетата с леко поведение са прехвърляни към ПТУ, вечерни училища или изтласквани към нископлатен труд, а образователната и социалната система отглежда само „удобните“.

Удобните затова са удобни – защото потвърждават алибито, че от четири десетилетия неравенство и бедност не съществуват. А всяка поява на младеж с неправилна походка – *момиче, което крие под дрехите си кърпа с кръв; момче, което крачи само по релсите в тъмното; бездомно тяло, увито в старо одеяло под мост*⁴ – се превръща в нова улика по отдавна затворено дело, което от самото начало е водено срещу грешния обвиняем и е приключило с показна, назидателна смъртна присъда. Тези образи на страданието са били необходими само доколкото могат да послужат като *тяло на престъплението* (corpus delicti) – онова необходимо

³ Статистиката е извлечена от изследването на Дмитрий Краснов „Детство в клетка“ (2018).

⁴ Изброени са разпознаваеми персонажи от *театъра на мизерията*, формиран в традицията на социалния роман от XIX век: Нанси („Оливър Туист“, 1838, Чарлз Дикенс) – младо момиче, въввлечено в престъпния свят, символ на ранна сексуална експлоатация, насилие и уязвимост; Етиен („Жерминал“, 1885, Емил Зола) – младеж без работа и дом, образ на отчаяна трудова младост и зараждащо се социално съзнание; Джо („Студеният дом“, 1853, Чарлз Дикенс) – уличен метач, дете на социалното дъно, емблема на институционална слепота към бедността и невидимите животи.

материално доказателство, че нещо дълбоко неморално е било извършено, преди да се повдигне обвинение. Но появата им, след като обвинението вече е напълнило Сибир с *виновни по подразбиране*, се възприема не като доказателство, а като говореща улика, която в съдопроизводството има тежест на самодостатъчно обвинение (*res ipsa loquitur*) към хванат на място извършител (човек с гаечен ключ пред разбита бижутерска витрина примерно). Защото режимът не може да е добродетелен и справедлив, когато произвежда невръстни престъпници или жертви на социално неравенство.

Самите жертви са отпаднали от училище и не биха могли да се защитят, но днес Карън Барад в своята книга „Meeting the Universe Halfway“ (2007) утвърждава, че действията на индивидите са ефект на вплитане. Понятието вплетеност (*entanglement*), обогатено с теорията за въвличения субект (*implicated subject*) на Майкъл Ротберг (Rothberg, 2019), биха разместили самодоволната картина на приключилия с престъпността *изцяло нов* свят. И двете теории разглеждат субективността не като автономна даденост, а като резултат от участие в мрежи от взаимодействия, зависимости и норми. Според Барад, субектът възниква вътре в системата, не преди нея – няма предварително съществуващо (в случая престъпно) „аз“. „Индивидите не предшестват своите действия, напротив, те се пораждаат *чрез* и като част от своето вплетено вътрешно действие“ (Barad, 2007, p. 5). Това означава, че всяко отклонение от моралната норма е не историческо ехо, а ефект и резултат от моделите, в които индивидът е включен. В квантовата механика, откъдето Барад извежда логиката си, частиците не съществуват със стабилни свойства преди да взаимодействат – техните състояния се определят от самия процес на измерване (Barad, 2007, p. 91). По аналогия, социалният субект не може да бъде мислен като носител на чужд заряд. Затова Барад настоява да се отхвърли терминът *inter-action* и да се приеме *intra-action* – модел, при който субектът и ситуацията възникват едновременно (Barad, 2007, pp. 33-34). По тази логика властта не може да се освободи от отговорност – ако нещо се е появило, то е произведено в нея. Произведено не от провала на миналото, а от нови неравенства и нови йерархии, от осъвременени *по социалистически* системи за включване и изключване. Нарасналият брой на *изпортени младежи* е доказателство, че редът не произвежда справедливост.

Гореприведените статистически данни, разбира се, остават потулени. Но година по-рано този сериозен социален контекст намира шумен публичен образ и изкупителна жертва в лицето на Аркадий Нейланд. „Моят проблем“ на Аркадий става обществено достояние благодарение на ленинградската преса, показвайки целия спектър от социални провали, характерни за съветската младежка политика от началото на 60-те години.

Нейланд е 15-годишен бездомник, израснал по интернати, професионални училища и трудови колективи. През януари 1964 г., воден от желание да „живее хубаво и да пътува“, извършва грабеж и жестоко двойно убийство. Купува си зимна шапка, бутилка коняк и шампанско – малки символи на мечтания „красив живот“. Заловен е на 30 януари на гарата в Сухуми. *При разпита за първи път някой му обръща внимание и го слуша, затова той с ентузиазъм съдейства на разследването* (Краснов, 2018, pp. 89-93). На процеса с детска наивност, приета за необичайна за възрастта му арогантност, Аркадий заявява, че след освобождаването си ще се върне „към старото“. Тази реплика на непълнолетния престъпник надхвърля предела на идеологическото въображение и става причина, по-основателна от самото престъпление, за отприщване на репресивна реакция.

Въпреки че съветското законодателство забранява прилагането на смъртно наказание върху малолетни, на 11 август 1964 г. Аркадий е екзекутиран. Гневната обществена реакция е използвана като основание за специална резолюция, приета на 17 февруари 1964 г. от Президиума на Върховния съвет на СССР, която позволява смъртно наказание за непълнолетни и разрешава да се приложи със задна дата. *Според някои сведения лично Хрущов настоява случаят да бъде показан* (Краснов, 2018, p. 91).

Аркадий е пълен аутсайдер – няма добродетелно семейство, няма правилна социална история, институциите, които го произвеждат, не го разпознават като част от нормата на превъзпитанието. Но липсата на нормативиращ код го прави приемлив, докато е невидим. Когато проговаря пред ленинградската преса и заявява това, че го има, предизвиква екстравагантна форма на педагогика – екзекуция. Както знаем, в класово изравнено общество, в което властта принципът „всекиму според потребностите“, престъпленията са невъзможни. Съществуването на Аркадий като медиен феномен подкопава целия символен капитал на комунистическата власт.

Възпитание чрез сприятеляване

Но 1965 г. е не само година на репресивни мерки и ужасяваща статистика – тя е година на вече оформен културен отговор. В съветското кино при огромен зрителски интерес излиза леката криминална комедия „Пази се от автомобил“ („Берегись автомобиля“, реж. Эльдар Рязанов). В контекста на антиеснафския бунт в новообуржавеното при Хрущов общество автомобилът е символ на стари като света човешки слабости – престиж и алчност. Героят Юрий Деточкин (самото име е вдетинено) е крадец идеалист. Той отнема автомобили само от подкупни хора, продава ги, за да дари парите на институции за безпризорни. Но по-същественото – Деточкин също е израснал без родители, формирал е своето чувство за справедливост извън семейството. Принуден е да изобрети собствен морален компас в свят, който (уж) не му е оставил инструкции. Това го превръща в трикстер, който атакува света на установените чрез „възвишена престъпност“. И това не тревожи цензурата, защото не разрушава реда, а го прави по-поносим и адекватен на човешката субективност. Неговата социална легитимност е приета *условно*, защото не нарушава табута, а ги *отиграва*. Филмът опакова още един приемлив за властта наратив – репликата на следователя в края – „А вообще он хороший человек... но не по нашему делу“ – обобщава *заверата* между грешно-човешкото и праведно-институционалното. Все едно, ако органите на реда не бяха пазители на Хрущовите закони, следваше дружно да отчуждят автомобилите на спекулантите – като през 1917 г. – или поне да ги боядисат в червено и да им залепят петолъчки.

Така през 1965 г. се срещат два отговора на една и съща криза: единият – суров, вплътен в педагогика на екзекуцията, другият – мек, културен, с човешко лице и дълбоко съчувствие. Но случаят Нейланд и филмът на Рязанов показват общество, загубило способността да се грижи за собствените си деца, освен ако децата не върнат ключовете и не измият колата.

Юрий Деточкин напомня друг обичан съветски трикстер – Остап Бендер, но в морализаторската естетика на 60-те. Ако Бендер се промъква с чар, ирония и картата на Рио де Жанейро в джоба, Деточкин крачи с кротка упоритост към една уж непоискана добродетел – инфантилност, съчетана с благороден инат (погоре споменатата насърчавана детска асоциалност).

А Аркадий? Той е трагичният вариант, за когото по сценарий няма реплики, а когато все пак проговаря, езикът го гилотинира. В един паралелен съветски скеч – някъде между „Берегись автомобиля“ и „12-те стола“ – те тримата можеха да вървят по улицата заедно – единият със слънчеви очила и речник от 400 израза за „измама“, другият с тъжна усмивка и детска наивност, третият – хлапе без посока, със зимна шапка, бутилка коняк и шампанско, което системата е забравила да обучи как да бъде *правилно* престъпник. И когато изкуството разказва истории като тази на Деточкин, който в края на филма се превъзпитават, то не противоречи на властта – то ѝ сътрудничи по-фино, но и по-ефикасно.

В един свят, доминиран от *системи за производство на смисъл* – трикстери като Деточкин и Бендер практикуват дребни, но изобретателни бягства. Те не се бунтуват срещу режима, а го *ползват накриво*. Вършат зло, за да правят добро, в стил дълбоко познат на социалистическия поданик. Аркадий, за разлика от тях, не успява. Него системата го съкращава с хладната ефективност на административна поправка. А смъртната присъда е и форма на дисциплиниращ монтаж – изрязване на сцената, преди героят да стане неудобно типичен.

Чико, Ана и Райна: блокаден език, стилово транспониране и морфологичен демонтаж

През 1965 г. българската литература, в ритъм със съветската, също се обръща към тези, които досега са били невидими – младежи без родители или без правилен произход. Това е човешки материал с ниска идеологическа възвръщаемост в романите на 50-те, но през 60-те той повишава цената си и се капитализира, обслужвайки наратива за разобличението на култа. На сцената излизат Чико, Флори и Мичона от „*Лош ден*“ на Генчо Стоев, заедно с Райна от „*Пътуване към себе си*“ на Блага Димитрова и Ани от филма „*Вълчицата*“ на Рангел Вълчанов, по сценарий на Хаим Оливер. Това са първите опити за социални драми на съвременна тема, засягащи неловкия проблем с непожеланите деца на социализма. В полето на културната легитимност Чико, Ана и Райна могат да бъдат мислени като три синтактични реакции спрямо езика на *идеологическия повик* (Althusser, 1971). Чико е нечетлив – присъствието му носи стигмата на *цигански език* и се моделира през телесни сигнали – кожа, поглед, озъбеност срещу авторитета. По този начин блокира езика на властта. Той говори жестомимичен

език, който звучи като сквернословие. Ана е с пълен репертоар на момиче с *леко поведение*, което с лекота приема и педагогическата норма, сменяйки стил, походка и речеви регистър. Реабилитацията ѝ минава през стилистично транспониране. Райна, от своя страна, не е насилствено преформатирана, тя добросъвестно демонтира неправилния си класов произход, преосмисляйки интелектуалната си мотивация, наследствената си вина и бягството от колектива и се връща на строежа с пренаредена морфология на личността.

Възпитателят като образ на добрия човек

Филмът „Вълчицата“ на Рангел Вълчанов е първият, който показва живота в трудово възпитателно училище. Лайтмотив е премахването на оградата. Главната героиня е дъщеря на разведени родители. Бащата е маркиран чрез отсъствието си, но с атрибути на капиталистически лукс – западен автомобил, европейски маршрути и върволица от млади любовници. Това са атрибути, в които литературата по това време описва типаж, който е маркиран като *остатък от времето на култа*. Героинята в синхрон е *золи* – пее джаз и италиански шлагери, слуша рок и „Бийтълс“, бяга от училище, танцува суинг, пие, пуши, сменя партньори, съблазнява надзиратели. Всичко това провокативно прелива от образа на Ана като репертоар на поведение – истинска бунтарка (с ключ от временния арест).

Промяна в Ана постига директорът на поредното ТВУ, в което тя попада. В неговия образ политическата логика и човешкото лице си подават ръка със съгласувана грация. Директорът става символичен гарант и единствено възможен баща в политическото въображение на режима. Тук словенският културолог Славой Жижек буквално би ликувал, защото директорът не е обикновен администратор – той не принуждава насила, а кани в лоното на морала и възпитава в идейност чрез индивидуална грижа и институционална закрила – образ, през който *идеологията се наслаждава на себе си* (Zizek, 2008).

Едно от престъпленията на Ана е фалшифицираната ѝ биография, за да избегне стигма и да стане ударничка. Но под влияние на директора Ана постепенно се ориентира към стилово преоформяне на своята личност, в синхрон с фалшивата биография. Преходът ѝ започва в полето на принудата, като насилствена асимилация, но завършва в полето на избора, като сюжетът предлага цяло тесте от добри практики. Накрая оградата е свалена, заедно с „моя

проблем“ на Ана, но не защото реалността се е променила – а защото оградата вече е интровертизирана. Чрез илюзията на избора Ана се превръща в свой собствен надзирател – най-ефективният механизъм на контрол. В този случай идеологията функционира чрез *интерпелация*, казано с термина на Пол Алтюсер. Тя *повиква* индивидите и те се разпознават като избрани, чрез нейния повик. Сюжет за пример, в който Ана съблича порока и облича инфантилността, като сюжетът също преминава в инфантилен регистър и накрая всичко изглежда правилно, защото всички играят по правилата.

В статията на Анелия Касабова „Урок по смелост за отстояване на позиции. Филмът *Вълчицата*“ (2017) подробно е проследен процесът на редакционна трансформация на сценария, като авторката внимателно документира развоя на идеите, срещите и репликите в споровете, разгръщайки внимателно архивите на киноцентъра. Богатата си и архивно подплатена теза Касабова разгръща чрез последователна реконструкция на институционалните спорове около изграждането на образа на директора Кондов. В публикувания от нея протокол от 6 май 1963 г. от заседание на творческия колектив, в който Хаим Оливер и Рангел Вълчанов представят литературния сценарий, виждаме първообраза на Кондов според нередактирания сценарий. Любен Станев отбелязва: „интересна е биографията с постепенно разкриваща се същност на човек, минал през огъня“. Във второто заседание на художествения съвет (16 юли 1964 г.) анонимно изказване призовава към повече бдителност: „Да не забравяме, че това е партийно назначен човек, който има минало – можем да загатнем, че е бил партизанин или активен борец – но нека това бъде деликатно, не в смисъл на хвалба, а като вътрешна морална основа“. Емил Петров (кинокритик и главен редактор на сп. *Киноизкуство*) възразява: „Това са външни налепени белези, които идват да попълнят онова, което липсва“. Интересна е идеята на член на съвета с име Иван Иванов, който заявява: „Не ми се вижда на място това, че правим Кондов партизанин. Нека бъде един криминален, хулиганстващ тип, който отивайки в затвора, в допира си с комунистите, става човек“. Така се оформят три линии, характерни за ревизирания след времето на култа соцреалистически дискурс – деликатна партийна легитимация (минал през огъня), демодирала догматична версия, характерна за партизанската линия на 50-те г. (партийно назначен човек) и *вапцаровски* образ на нравствено преобразен

криминален престъпник. В същото заседание се включва и редакторът на филма Валери Петров, предлагайки директорът да носи характерната за поета логика на „добрия човек“: „Ако аз бях режисьор, този сценарий би ме запалил... има няколко неща, които си заслужава човек да се понапъне малко, за да направи нещо добро.“ Надделява авторитетът на Валери Петров. Така, вместо култовски персонаж, директорът ще изобрази социално приемлива фигура, чрез която насърчаваната критика ще бъде обезопасена в образа на *прост стар селски учител, без външен блясък, без особени претенции, без подчертани теоретически познания в областта на педагогиката*, по думите на Хаим Оливер⁵.

А това, което оцелява от сблъсъка на институционалните сили, е принципът на народността. Триадата на социалистическия реализъм включва партийност, народност и типичност. В първото следвоенно десетилетие доминира партийността, разбираана като непоклатима идеологическа правота, с централна сюжетна роля на комунистите. Тогава директорът задължително щеше да бъде партизанин, както предлага един от участниците в обсъждането от 16 юли. След падането на режима на Червенков, изкуството, в синхрон с лозунга „близо до народа“, се ориентира към народността. Така човешкото лице на директора не е бунт срещу системата, а легитимация на нейната реформа. Третият принцип на соцреализма – типичността – също не е изоставен, а пренастроен. Така, вместо строг ръководител, Кондов е представен като фигура, която възпитава чрез разбиране, близка до *добрия човек* на Валери Петров, чиято типичност през 1965 г. обаче е въпрос на други архиви. Филмът, разбира се, впечатлява с фокуса върху въдворените зад ограда деца, с репертоара от неморално поведение на градските нетрудови елементи, но това, дали действително провокира дръзко властта, се подсказва и от положителните рецензии.

Година по-късно е готов „Понеделник сутрин“ (1966) – филм, в който отново централна фигура е момиче с „леко поведение“, но без педагогически обрат и без институционална корекция. Той е спрял от цензурата и остава заключен до 1988 г. поради своя пряк, неутешителен и реалистичен тон. Именно това показва границата между допустимата и недопустимата смелост и е реалният тест за реформаторска провокативност.

⁵ Всички цитати от обсъжданията на „Вълчицата“ са по (Касабова, 2017).

Превъзпитание чрез бягство от нарцисистичните травми

Но това е доста лесен успех, а идеологията побеждава най-зрелищно, когато субектът я избира с дълбока морална съпротива. Именно с трудния избор на младата интелектуалка Райна Блага, Димитрова вдига залога в романа „Пътуване към себе си“. Героинята има сходна травма – неправилен произход, но като дъщеря на „бивш човек“, интелектуалка, която свири на пиано и обладава августиновска чувствителност към съдържанията на паметта и времената. Това я прави аутсайдер в трудовата бригада, с произход, който не може да бъде пренаписан, но с вътрешна нужда личността ѝ да намери ново *себе си*.

В един единствен ден, разположен на 446 страници, бегълката от строежа преживява трансформация и се връща в бригадата преобразена. Катализатор на промяната, с елемент на инициационно изпитание, наред с богат набор от преосмислени исторически травми, е съблазняването от страна на красивите вещи, провокиращи бунт в съзнанието на Райна, прогонвайки я обратно: „Най-жестоката тирания – на красивите вещи [...] Тръпнех цялата като в треска огненица пред витрините с обувки, чорапи, чанти, блузи, трико, манта, лъскави дреболии. [...] Започнах да ги мразя с глухо озлобление. [...] Бясна ревност ме обзе към тая бяла и розова пяна, към тия черни мъгли, лилави снежинки, тюлени виелици. Колко тъжно е да бъдеш младо момиче с хасен комбинезон. Предстоеше ми подмолна борба с терора на вещите, със суетата, която блуждаеше в мене, борба със самата себе си. Отвред лъхаше заплаха. Сякаш ми надявах вериги и ме отвеждаха в робство на вещите“.

Изброените красиви вещи са част от рекламната продукция на пловдивския панаир. Тук умножената интимност, театрализирането на голотата в тюлове, мъгли и пяна, сексуалната провокация, макар и щедро пресъздадени, са видени като почти фаустовско изпитание. Отговорът на героинята е вътрешна борба и мобилизация срещу еснафството и воля за промяна. А конфликтът се разгръща като вътрешен дебат между съзнанието и стихията на желанията (диалектиката стихийно/съзнателно е в основата на комунистическото превъзпитание). Така витрината на пловдивския панаир спокойно може да се запише като принос към идеологическите инструменти за превъзпитаване – редом до ТВУ, училище, младежки организации и прочее храмове на социалистическата добродетел, въвеждайки практики като ония, при които децата са

възпиращи от пушенето, като ги карат да изпуснат цяла кутия наведнъж.

Пловдивският панаир, разбира се, не е единственият враг на социалистическия морал, а негова акордирана към проблемите на 60-те години версия. Това е крайната точка в една по-дълбока линия на осъзнаване на *робства* и *тежки вини*, чрез които биографията на Райна е представена като исторически верен регистър на репресиите срещу „бившите хора“ по времето на култа към личността. Персонажите, които изпълняват властови роли в романа, са *стоманените хора* в романите на 50-те години, развенчани след 1956 г. Така романът съди миналото с инструментите на актуалния морал, а травматичността е създадена в *преходното* време на култа.

Строителната бригада в Родопите е ръководена от стар комунист, баща на загинал партизанин, който организира колектив от девет момчета, наречени хулигани, заедно с Райна. Ръководителят бай Крум е идеологически мотивиран педагог, последовател на Макаренко и организатор на практически експеримент за моралната корекция чрез труд. Райна се оказва в тази бригада не по административна случайност – нейният баща е водил жандармерийската част, виновна за смъртта на сина на бай Крум. Самият сблъсък между дъщерята на *палача* и бащата на *жертвата* е поставен като възпитателна сцена, предварително натоварена с идеологически заряд, напомнящ класически трагедиен сюжет, но пречупен през призмата на социалистическия морализъм. Наподобява инверсия на схемата *наследена вина – морална отговорност – пречистване*, каквато срещаме и в „*Антигона*“ на Софокъл. Същевременно в рамките на модерната литература тази сцена съвпада с романите за покаяние и поемане на отговорност, а катарзисът е преход към социална легитимност.

В групата Райна пристига с двойно оформена травма. Първият пласт на тази травма е причинен от доброволния отказ от по-тежко, изразен в официално отричане от бащата. Вторият е представянето на фалшива биография, според която тя е дете на обикновени чиновници, като допълнително поддържа тази версия с устни твърдения, че произходът ѝ е работнически. Вместо *мека прегръдка* обаче, тук педагогиката на Макаренко ѝ предлага приобщаване по *сталински модел* – изкушението да стане доносител и включването в колектива чрез съучастие в показно корумпирана

мрежа. Вместо да се подчини на тази логика, Райна избира да избяга. Бягството ѝ изпълнява функцията на сюжетен обрат. Чрез него романът се фокусира върху съзнанието на героинята. Това е ключово композиционно решение, при което паметта се въвежда като активен коректив на идентичността. Отказът да сътрудничи на системата отваря възможност за втора, по-дълбока линия на развитие. В нея изплуват потиснати преживявания, травматични спомени и морални парадокси. Във вътрешния разказ се открояват два епизода, чрез които Райна се стреми да калибрира границите на своята вина. Първият е свързан със смъртта на Елена – нелегална комунистка, загинала в навечерието на 9 септември 1944 г. Райна не я предава, но и не предприема действия за нейното спасяване. Ситуацията е осмислена от героинята като морален провал. В ретроспективен план тя разбира това като *убийство чрез политическа неграмотност*, като неспособност да се разпознае историческата необходимост. Вторият случай е противоположен, но води до идентична последица. След намесата на Народния съд и в ролята си на политически коректен субект, Райна се отрича от баща си. Второто убийство е резултат от прекомерна идеологическа ревност и вече придобит политически усет, *убийство чрез политическа грамотност*. Между тези две крайности – липсата на усет и излишъкът на усърдие – се оформя не просто чувство за вина, а цялостен етически модел на греховно съществуване. В този модел всяко решение се явява натоварено с последици и подлежи на ретроспективна присъда.

Тази вътрешна реконструкция на събитията може да бъде разглеждана като форма на морална самоорганизация, която се осъществява в рамките на вече налична етическа матрица в съответствие с произнесени исторически присъди. Райна осъзнава, че самото участие в репресивната логика, включително в системата на доносничеството, е от същия порядък като нейната собствена вина – сектантско прилагане на комунистическата идеология в духа на отречените рецидиви през първото десетилетие на новата власт. Така възниква процес на символично разпределение на отговорността между субекта и властта, който няма еманципиращ, а интегративен ефект. Той не се постига чрез насилие, а чрез илюзията, че необходимостта от промяна е свободна, морална и индивидуална. В действителност тази промяна е резултат от структура, в която моралът функционира като повик на съвестта, а вината – като механизъм на взаимно разпознаване и споделена отговорност.

Субектът не се произвежда чрез натиска на другите, нито се институционализира чрез доклад за техните грехове, а чрез самонаблюдение и донос от собствената съвест. Това става възможно чрез ритуалите на вина и покаяние – форма на дискурсивно очистване, която има за цел да убеди читателя, че страдащата и измъчвана от вина Райна трябва да бъде спасена, че съществува изход от стигмата и че този изход е морално приемлив.

Година след като гилотината официално влиза в арсенала на възпитателните средства за непълнолетни в СССР, Блага Димитрова и Хаим Оливер ни показват другата крайност – педагогика на меката прегръдка и на осъзнатата вина. И в това е разковничето, защото субектът сам избира да се откаже от себе си.

Неуспехите на педагогиката и успехите на етичния човек

Но дяволът се крие в езика. Грамотността на интелектуалката Райна е символична територия, която трябва да бъде превзета чрез внедряване на вътрешен враг, снабден с езика на желанията, който *да я отделя от хората*, докато я принуди да го забрави, за да бъде приета. А западнопоклонничката Ана наподобява трофей, изтръгнат от легиона на вражеските езици, чрез толкова интимизиран език на *бащата*, че един от антагонистите, сервилен и догматичен учител, пише донос за прелъстяване.

Ето защо романът на Генчо Стоев „Лош ден“ е фокусиран около по-неграмотни младежи. Рядък случай, в който неграмотността помага. Те са на прага на зрелостта, в процес на проверка и вписване в класата. Момчетата не си разменят прегръдки, а юмруци. Потенциални Аркадиевци, но с шанс за художествено спасение. Накратко сюжета: На сираците са раздадени ролите на прелъстител и шампион на работническия колектив, който се докарва пред началството – *Флори*; на момичето *Мичона*, чийто единствен капитал, пазен за семейна реализация, е девствеността; и *Чико*, който се зъби по цигански на всички. В края нагаждачът Флори пребива Чико и *вероятно* изнасилва Мичона, но трескавото безпокойство на мургавия рицар да предпази момичето го превръща от аутсайдер в неуспял спасител, но и в истински защитник на човешкия морал.

Израснал в приемно семейство с неясни спомени за истинските си родители, Чико е образ на градски номад – „в паспорта му пишеше, че е българин, но за него това означаваше, че не знае точно какъв е“ (Стоев 1965: 11). В тази липса на ясно дефинирано

самоназоваване прозира точно онова, което Джудит Бътлър нарича „представителната празнина“ (Butler, 2004, p. 151) – момчето няма дори име (Чико). Така героят се разполага в *зоната на nuda vita* (Agamben, 1998, p. 66) – живот, лишен от политическо значение, тяло, изхвърлено от стабилизиращи категории, знак за живот, който е извън назоваването.

Чико е нарицателно за *момче*, широко разпространено в испаноезичните страни като Мексико, Аржентина, Куба, Колумбия, Венецуела и Чили. В културната си конотация се свързва с фигурата на градския скитник или улично дете – едновременно продължение и трансформация на латиноамериканските образи на *момчетата от равнината* (Planeros, gauchos, niños del campo). Често думата е неформално прозвище, което подчертава заличената лична история на носителя. Оттук произтича и латентното напрежение в образа на Чико. Останалите момчета от бригадата са работници, с ясен произход – селата, и с общ език – правилника за вътрешния ред. „Не бяха чували, че живеят в един нявгашен хан, че преди тях през него са минавали хиляди други – за да продължат с параходите нагоре, към богатите държави, към големия късмет [...] Не знаеха момчетата, че ханът, пристанището и общежитията са места, където хората и корабите се срещат случайно и бързо се разделят, като внимават да не блъснат носовете си един в друг. И за да няма сблъсквания, доскоро Чико им показваше зъбите или „циганския“ си отдалеч. [...] Сега не вървеше да я кара така. Дори обещание в тоя смисъл подписа“ (Стоев, 1965, p.12).

Подчертаната екзотика чрез латиноамериканското нарицателно в образа на Чико е ехо от традицията на българската емигрантска литература от първата половина на XX век и служи за ясно разграничаване от останалите момчета в бригадата, които идват от преекспонираната през социализма, идеализирана селска беднота. Те са снабдени с език (правилника), с адрес (бригадата), с произход (селото) и са идеални герои от производствения роман на 50-те години. Същевременно континенталният юг, оформил името, се разграничава и от американския „Див запад“, нахлул в културното въображение на епохата чрез каубойските филми и масовата култура. Според наблюдението на Михаела Илиева, изследовател на градската *инфантилна проза* през 60-те г. на XX век, *героят с дънки* е различен от прерийния типаж, тъй като „каубойското присъства като образ на свободното движение, на извънградския простор и митологията на прерията, докато дънковото бележи градски

тип свобода, свързана със субкултурната визуалност на 60-те“ (Илиева, 2023). Чико обаче не носи нито митологията на прерията, нито субкултурата на градския гамен. Той не е герой на инфантилната проза, макар да е връстник и съгражданин на *дънковите момчета* – не иска абстрактна свобода, а *свободното движение*, хитрува, знае как да се измъкне и да обещае „наужким“, но не бяга от работа. Стереотипите на етническото потекло му приписват друг, културно маркиран код – не на наивността, а на зрелостта. Погледът му е другаде – към големите и богати държави. Това не е митология на порастването, а логика на замисленото бягство. И в това има повече истина за живота на младия човек през 60-те години, отколкото в повечето митнически декларации на литературата, призвана да го задържа преди прага на порастването.

Сам тъмноок и черен, Чико смътно носи в душата си спомен за екзотичен праотец – „баща ли му беше той, чичо ли, съсед ли някой или случаен спътник в живота на майката, когото бе запомнил с големите валчести черни рамене, лъснати от пот, с острата му миризма, с гърбавия нос и насочената опака десница“ (Стоев, 1965, р. 11). Образ, който по-скоро функционира като стигматизирана следа, отколкото като фамилен знак. Фигура, която не основава, а трасира една незавършена принадлежност и, вместо да гарантира идентичност, я разбърква. Праотецът натрапливо връща към телесността (пот, мускул, мирис), към живота в неговия чист вид. Самата памет на Чико не произвежда линейна идентичност, а фрагментен архив на афекти, миризми, форми и заплахи.

Героят на Г. Стоев е враждебен към всякакви форми на наставление и обучение. Образованието му се изчерпва с деформиран цитат от Ботевата балада „Хаджи Димитър“, която в неговата интерпретация звучи като неразгадаемото „Жуфетуй Жуфе“. Именно тук перформативното се разгръща с особена сила. Не само защото се проваля да установи нормативно значение, но и защото допуска субективна алтернатива. Най-високият национален символ за Чико е памет за унижение и дресура, за дисциплина без етика. „*Жуфетуй Жуфе* бе едно многоглаво люспесто същество. Никой не се досети да му каже, че е нещо друго“ (Стоев, 1965, р. 11-12). Ето защо Чико отказва да комуникира с езика на насилието, което го конституира, и избира да остане в зоната на възпиране – да се зъби по цигански.

Чико не е от типа *колебаещ се* или *израстващ* герой, характерен за производствения дискурс. Макар и все още младеж, той е

калѐн от живота, но не в героични трудови дела, а в суровия модел на оцеляването. Останалите момчета от бригадата са работници, чиято субективност е „опитомена“ и интерполирана. Те се придвижват като част от институционален механизъм, докато Чико се движи по неговия ръб – „[...] За да няма сблъсквания, доскоро Чико им показваше зъбите или „циганския“ си отдалеч. [...] Сега не вървеше да я кара така. Дори обещание в тоя смисъл подписа“ (Стоев, 1965, р. 15). Подписаното обещание е символичен акт на капитулация, неутрализирана от циганския – нещо неразбираемо за другите, което крие опасност.

Ако погледнем фигурата на Чико като продукт на нормативна матрица, която произвежда „четливи“ и „нечетливи“ тела, то *циганският* е огледална форма на съпротива чрез нечетливост отдолу, отговор на нечетливата власт отгоре. Плетеница от заповеди, унижения и паузи между две върбови пръчици, която фиксира мястото на Чико в социалния ред. Но отдолу прозира – не Ботев, а върбовата пръчка, не родината, а обидата, която я произвежда като образ и наказание. Езикът на Чико е и онзи излишък, който идеологията не може да интегрира, защото не може да прочете. Тук няма епическа възвишеност, няма Ботев, няма митопоезис на нацията. Има върбова пръчица и лингвистичен погром. Така „Жуфетуй Жуфе“ е и лапсус, и ерес – пародия на най-високото в патриотичния ред, кух маркер и химн, изсвирен на развален акордеон от човек, когото никога не е учил на солфеж. В този смисъл „Жуфетуй Жуфе“ не е просто пародия, а автентичен отпор на властта, когато тя говори с удари, с грешки и с унижение.

И още – Чико така и не проговаря „на цигански“, не артикулира, а жестикулира – езикът е липсващ, но присъствието е ярко. Етническото е неизречено, но осезаемо. Той е „вътре“ в националното тяло, но никога свой. Приет е, за да бъде различен.

Финалът, в който Чико е победен от Флори, представя герой, който не печели играта, но въпреки всичко успява в грижата. Той се показва като автентично *добър* човек – не в идеологически, а в етическия смисъл – зрял, завършен, без нарцистични травми, интегрирал сянка и персона чрез тревогата за Другия. Не чрез постижения и трудови рекорди и не чрез приспособяване. Нито като циганин, нито като българин. Неговата субективност се оформя чрез поетата отговорност за съдбата на по-слабия. Така Чико се превръща в поданик единствено на етиката. Това е финалният коз на

Генчо Стоев в *дългогодишния* му белот с идеологията, която раздава само белязани карти⁶. Чико побеждава, като става положителен герой на литературата ѝ – без да играе по нейните правила.

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⁶ За перипетиите пред Генчо Стоев след дебюта му „Истински хора“ (1953) и за паузата в издаването на негови книги до 1965 г. вж. (Дойнов, 2024).

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Languages, Language Choice, and Multilingualism in Pajtim Statovci's Novel *Bolla*

Abstract: *Works by the Finnish author of Kosovar origin, Pajtim Statovci, have become increasingly well-known over the last decade. The present study concerns his third novel, Bolla, originally published in Finland in 2019 and translated into English in 2021. It deals with the illicit love affair between Arsim, an ethnic Albanian, and Miloš, an ethnic Serb, in mid-1990s Pristina. Like Statovci's previous works, the novel deals with weighty topics including war, violence, and ethnic strife, as well as questions of identity, love, and loss, all taking place against a tumultuous backdrop of conflict and migration. With the events of the novel occurring both in Kosovo and in a nameless locale somewhere in northern Europe, the two settings offer interesting material for interdisciplinary analysis from the interrelated perspectives of language and society. Based on a close reading of the work, this article aims to examine how languages, language choice, and multilingualism are depicted in the novel and the consequent role that they play in the narrative. This includes analysing the unique multilingual context of the Balkans, noting how language can commonly act as an important marker of ethnic and cultural identity, as well as some of the specifics of the northern European context, where linguistic aspects can also be key with regard to issues relating to immigration and integration. In focusing on these features, the article contributes to work on the portrayal of languages and multilingualism in twenty-first century literature.*

Keywords: Albanian; Kosovo; identity; migration; Finnish literature.

Introduction

In the historical and modern-day multilingual milieu of the Balkans, the use, status, and even nomenclature of the region's different languages serves manifold purposes beyond mere acts of communication. Indeed, the usage of a specific language or script can be interpreted in many ways – for example, as a marker of identity demonstrating ethnocultural belonging or religious adherence (Safran, 2008). Additionally, in social, political, or cultural terms, the use of a given language (or not) may be considered grounds for advantaging or disadvantaging certain individuals or groups in professional, personal, or institutional settings (e.g., see Angermeyer, 2023; Back & Piekkari, 2024, etc.).

During the period of its existence (from 1946 until the early 1990s), it can be said that socialist Yugoslavia was emblematic of the linguistic diversity which has characterised southeastern Europe at different points in its history. Comprised as a federation of six republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Serbia, with Kosovo and Vojvodina as autonomous provinces within the latter), several additional languages were spoken and had official status in various parts of the country alongside the national language of Serbo-Croatian, thus emphasising the tapestry of ethnicities and religions contained within Yugoslav territory. Yet, as the world knows, following the end of Communism and with the concurrent rise of nationalist ideologies in the 1990s, this political union of different ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups was eventually to disintegrate in a series of devastating wars (Allcock & Lampe, 2025; Calic, 2023, pp. 116-121).

The lasting impact of these interethnic conflicts is still apparent even today, and not only in political, social, and cultural terms. The large number of refugees who fled the wars has also resulted in significant diaspora populations with origins in the former Yugoslavia, often residing in western Europe (Bennich-Björkman, Kostić, & Likić-Brborić, 2016, p. 11). Several members of this group – who were perhaps still children at the time of the conflicts – have become recognised for their literary accomplishments. Among their number is Pajtim Statovci, the author of *Bolla*, the work analysed in this study. As will be outlined subsequently, the novel opens in Pristina in 1995. This was a time when relations between the ethnic Albanians and the ethnic Serbs in Kosovo were deteriorating rapidly, a situation which would eventually culminate in armed conflict (Calic, 2022, p. 121). With the novel's main narrative concerning the impact and consequences of a love affair between Arsim, an ethnic Albanian, and Miloš, an ethnic Serb, the usage and depiction of different languages is therefore worthy of analysis and represents the central aim of this article. Prior to presenting and discussing how languages, language choice, and multilingualism are portrayed in *Bolla* and the role that they play in the narrative, this study will first give a short summary about the multilingual situation with regard to Yugoslavia and afterwards, before introducing some relevant details about Statovci and his oeuvre, as well as about the novel itself.

Remarks on languages and multilingualism in the western Balkans

As mentioned above, the western Balkans has been marked by strong linguistic diversity in historical and modern times, and as a result a variety of languages are spoken there (Joseph, 1992). Nowadays, in addition to the official languages of the various nation-states (Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian, and Slovenian), these also include a range of minority languages. Though several countries in the region had gained their independence during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was not until after World War One that Ottoman and Habsburg imperial rule ended and the first unified Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) was proclaimed (Calic, 2022, p. 90). Though there were initial attempts to make a common South Slavic language by combining Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian (Kamusella, 2009, pp. 228-229), it was not until after World War Two and the foundation of socialist Yugoslavia that a unified standard Serbo-Croatian language was mooted and adopted (Hoyte-West, 2022, p. 9).

With the general interrelation between language and politics well-attested, following the Novi Sad Agreement of 1954, Serbo-Croatian was considered to be a single language with two variants and two scripts (Cyrillic and Latin) (Požgaj-Hadžić & Balažić Bulc, 2022, pp. 47-50). It was based on Serbian and Croatian, two languages which had been standardised independently during the nineteenth century, albeit with notable collaboration between the pioneering linguistic experts (Požgaj-Hadžić & Balažić Bulc, 2022, pp. 25-38).

Yet the fall of Yugoslavia also meant the end of the Serbo-Croatian language, leading to the development and recognition of the four standards of Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian, joined most recently by Montenegrin (Hoyte-West, 2022, p. 9). Each exhibits divergences in lexis and script, with implications for national language policies (see Djordjević, 2022) as well as at the supranational level. With reference to the latter, Croatian has been an official language of the European Union (EU) since Croatia acceded to that organisation in 2013, and translation and interpreting provision will have to be made for the incorporation of the other languages should the relevant countries (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia) accede to the EU in the future (Hoyte-West, 2021; Vušović, 2024, pp. 253-257).

Though additional languages such as Macedonian and Slovenian were spoken within socialist Yugoslavia, the most relevant for the present study is Albanian, spoken in Kosovo. Similarly to multilingual Vojvodina, Kosovo did not have the full status of a Yugoslav republic; rather, it was autonomous within Serbia from the mid-1970s onwards, with implications for the status of Albanian (Kamusella, 2022, p. 131). Unlike the Slavic languages of Macedonian, Slovenian, and Serbo-Croatian, Albanian is a member of an independent branch of Indo-European, with a long literary history and is spoken in two distinctive variants, of which Gheg predominates in Kosovo (see Rugova, 2015; Kamusella, 2009, pp. 240-246).

The high degree of multilingualism in Yugoslavia and its successor states also extended to foreign languages, including the enduring role of English in Kosovo (Bekteshi, 2022; Dauti, 2023) where, in common with elsewhere in Europe (Modiano, 2024), English as a *lingua franca* is seemingly becoming increasingly dominant for commercial and cultural reasons. As Baftiu (2023, p. 137) demonstrates, a range of other major European languages – such as German and French – are also spoken in Kosovo. To these can also be added the role of diaspora languages – for example, the languages of the host countries in western and northern Europe adopted by those leaving the western Balkans and subsequent generations raised abroad.

Pajtim Statovci and *Bolla*

One of Finland's leading contemporary writers, Pajtim Statovci was born in Kosovo in 1990 and came to the Nordic country with his family as a two-year old toddler (Statovci, 2025). A literary scholar as well as a novelist, to date Statovci has written four prize-winning novels which have received considerable acclaim not only in Finland, but also abroad via their many translations (e.g., see Greenwell, 2019; HKW, 2024, Statovci, 2025, etc.). Among the many nominations and awards that his work has received, his first novel, *Kissani Jugoslavia* (2014) [*My Cat Yugoslavia*], was awarded the Helsingin Sanomat Literature Prize and the second, *Tiranan sydän* (2016) [*Crossing*], was awarded the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize in 2020 for its English translation (OCCT, 2025; also Hoyte-West, 2023, p. 86); he also is a three-time nominee for the renowned Dublin Literary Award (2025).

Bolla (2019), Statovci's third novel and the subject of this article, was garlanded with Finland's most prestigious literary award, the Finlandia Prize; his most recent novel, *Lehmä synnyttää yöllä* (2024) [*A*

Cow Gives Birth At Night], has also received this distinction, thus making Statovci a two-time laureate (Suomen Kirjasäätiö, 2025). Statovci's work often revolves around themes relating to LGBT topics and gender identity, including notions of migration and diaspora among ethnic Albanians, and featuring settings involving the Nordic and Balkan regions. In this regard, *Bolla* does not represent an exception.

Both in translation and in the original, Statovci's oeuvre has attracted the attention of scholars, particularly his novels *My Cat Yugoslavia* and *Crossing* (e.g., Bator, 2021; Lama, 2023; van Amelsvoort & Dal Bosco, 2024, etc.). Perhaps because of its recency, *Bolla* has not yet received the same degree of international critical interest, save for a comparative German-language study examining Statovci's first three works from the perspective of "Albanischsein" ("Albanianness") (Qose & Voss, 2021), an analysis of religion and transnationality in contemporary Balkan literature (Voss, 2023), and a study on the propaedeutic value of literary works for Finnish social work students (Heino & Tarkiainen, 2024). Therefore, in exploring the role and significance of languages, language choice, and multilingualism in *Bolla*, the current study can be said to represent a different approach to prior research on the topic. As the author of this article does not possess sufficient reading knowledge of Finnish, the analysis is performed via a close reading of the novel in the 2023 paperback edition of its 2021 prize-winning English translation (Statovci, 2023 [2021]) by David Hackston, a noted literary translator who has also translated Statovci's other works (Brown, 2022).

On language, language choice, and multilingualism in the novel

From the first few pages of the novel, the issue of language plays a defining role. It is April 1995, and amid the growing chaos and deterioration in Albanian-Serb relations in Kosovo, Arsim is mesmerised by a man who sits near him on the terrace of a Pristina café. Though unsure and wary, Arsim feels "compelled" (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 12) to approach the young Serb, greeting him in his own language: "'Zdravo,'" I say in Serbian" (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 12).

After ordering coffee, Arsim notes that the two men "lower our voices, and when I see that his books are in English we switch languages. Though improbable, random even, it feels natural, because by

speaking English we can be different people, we are no longer ourselves, we are free of this place, pages torn from a novel” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 13).

From the outset, therefore, English assumes a role as a *lingua franca*, as a seemingly neutral language in the tense, politically-charged atmosphere. It allows the two men – both in their mid-twenties – to relax, to talk on an equal footing, without the historical, emotional, and ideological baggage of speaking Serbian or Albanian in that context (see Lohaj, 2017). It also serves, amid the upheaval, as a kind of private language between them.

Arsim learns that Miloš is a medical student at the city’s university (which during that tumultuous period had been closed off to ethnic Albanians), and that his interlocutor has good language skills: “In addition to his native language and English he speaks fluent German and even a smattering of Albanian” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 13). Later, Arsim wonders as to why Miloš ended up moving to Pristina for his studies, especially given that he was a “talented linguist” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 31) and would have been able to “study anywhere he liked – abroad, Scandinavia, or central Europe – and get a degree that would open more doors than one from here” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 32).

Arsim, a student at the underground Albanian university, tells Miloš his own tale, noting that his “father taught English and got me interested in languages and that one day I hope to work as a teacher of literature or a proofreader for a newspaper” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 13). Accordingly, English is crucial for both men – it not only provides an instant connection which helps to jumpstart their nascent mutual attraction, it also offers a shared resource, a way of them to transmit their stories, desires, and hopes in an ideologically and linguistically neutral manner.

On returning home after that fateful first meeting with Miloš, Arsim’s wife Ajshe breaks the news that she is pregnant with their firstborn. Arsim reacts with an outburst of violence, hitting his spouse, an act which serves as a foretaste of his behaviour later on in the novel. Yet, despite these changes in Arsim’s personal life and the worsening political and social instability, Arsim and Miloš meet again and grow closer and closer. Despite the danger, the Albanian spends more and more time at his lover’s apartment, and their affair deepens, with the two even going on a short holiday together to Montenegro. Eventually, following the news of the massacre in Srebrenica, the situation becomes

untenable, and Arsim and his family (a son has been born, and Ajshe is pregnant again) leave Kosovo, planning to seek asylum somewhere in western Europe. Thus, he bids farewell not only to his native land, but also to his beloved Miloš.

The second section of the novel moves forward to 2003, where Arsim and Ajshe now “live in a district of high-rise apartment towers about ten kilometers from downtown in a city of millions” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 82). They are now a family of five with two sons, Driton and Endrit, and a daughter, Drita. The country appears not to be named in the novel, though in an interview (Brown, 2022), Statovci notes that it is in fact Finland. Though Ajshe appears to be settled there with a job in a supermarket, Arsim still mourns his lost relationship with Miloš and finds it hard to adjust to their new abode, later recalling that the “language they spoke there was as foreign to me as to our baby” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 206). The two sons are having problems at school, and Arsim highlights the stereotyping that his children face from their teachers simply because they are from Kosovo:

“It’s a difficult situation for a young child, [the teachers] explain. Living between two languages, two cultures and religions can cause an identity crisis, and the children no longer know who they are, because their entire world is formed from such conflicting customs and practices, they tell us flatly, as though informing us of an upcoming renovation” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 87).

He adds about how he and Ajshe feel about such crude and facile oversimplifications, noting how offended it makes them:

“It irritates and riles us, because their words imply that our children’s lives are somehow incomplete or lacking in some respect, that because of us their lives aren’t healthy and full, because we moved here to escape the war. To their minds, the fact that our children speak several languages fluently, that they are acquainted with different customs and beliefs apparently doesn’t enrich our sons’ lives; on the contrary, they see it as a strain. Their teachers think that our children don’t need Albanian as much as the languages spoken and taught at school” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 87).

This notion of an unwritten linguistic and cultural hierarchy in educational environments is mentioned not only in the academic literature (e.g., see Skutnabb-Kangas, 1989; Sierens & van Avermaet, 2013, etc.) but also by Statovci himself in an interview, where he states that in the particular context of Finland, “when you come from outside the Western world you are not seen as an equal immigrant as if you moved from the US, France, or Germany, for those countries don’t have the same reputation of violence, or the same history of war or conflict or

restlessness, that Kosovo has” (Brown, 2022). In citing his own experiences at school, Statovci highlights that his ethnic origins were viewed “as a restraint of sorts, but my Swedish or German peers didn’t suffer from the same problem” (Brown, 2022). In an earlier interview, he remarks that during his schooldays his “life wasn’t a pressure cooker of cultures, languages, and religions, but full and whole and beautiful as such, with all its cultures and languages” (Yliopisto, 2018).

Yet the notion of a restrictive background is alluded to in the novel via Ajshe’s struggles to explain to the school that the fact her sons “are constantly being reminded [by the teachers] of the war, of the fact that they are Kosovans, though nowadays they speak another language far better than they will ever speak Albanian” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 87) is also a major contributing factor to the children’s perceived behavioural issues.

Unfortunately, her efforts appear to bring little reward. Ultimately, the school labours under the discredited and retrograde belief that the “children’s lack of success is down to being bilingual” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 88). This conclusion motivates Ajshe, “using a professional interpreter”, to attempt “to explain to [the teachers] that we considered the school to be racist” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 88). In once again noting the perceived hierarchisation of languages by her sons’ educators and echoing Statovci’s own experiences, Ajshe wonders if “the teachers [would] say the boys aren’t getting on at school just because they’re bilingual if their mother tongue was something else?” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 88) – in other words, that Albanian is not to be considered as a prestigious or literary language compared to certain western European languages.

Notably, Arsim does not seem to contribute to these important discussions about his children’s education and their unjust treatment at school. This is despite that, even if his skills in the language of the country may not have been adequate, it is to be presumed that the teachers at the school would be able to speak English, a language which he – of course – speaks fluently. In forcing his wife to avail of the services of a professional interpreter, this episode further demonstrates Arsim’s isolation and alienation. He does reflect, though, on looking through his sons’ school textbooks, that “there isn’t any mention of Kosovo, not a single word about Yugoslavia, of the grand, glittering life of affluence that people once enjoyed there” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 87), thus highlighting the quality and high standard of living that characterised the region before the outbreak of the devastating wars.

As the novel progresses, Arsim continues to become even more unhappy, difficult, and violent, and starts behaving increasingly irrationally and recklessly, a downward spiral that leads him to prison. Once imprisoned, he tries to maintain a low profile, even feigning “to speak their language worse” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 133) than he actually can. Though incarcerated, he still holds onto the long-held dream of becoming a writer. Yet he is faced with a lack of reading material – he notes that he cannot “understand this language well enough to get anything out of reading their books” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 133) – and therefore lacks any inspiration to write. After he “complain[s] that the only books in English in the prison library are thrillers and romances” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 133), the warden, a literature student *manqué*, brings Arsim the canonical works of English, American, and world literature that he requests, including specific novels like Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*, James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room*, and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Once again, this serves to underline the importance of the English language to the narrative. In this instance, Arsim’s skills in the language allow him to access classic works of literature on topics relevant to him and his identity; the very presence of these English books also harks back to the circumstances of his very first meeting with Miloš in a Pristina café. Therefore, by extension, it offers Arsim the opportunity to somehow reconnect with his past and with his lost lover.

After completing his prison sentence, Arsim is deported back to Kosovo in 2004. Disgraced and unwanted by Ajshe and his children, he struggles to adapt to the new post-war reality as he attempts to rebuild a life for himself, writing to his estranged wife of the differences in “the Albanian they now speak here” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 156). In trying to find his feet, Arsim searches for – and eventually finds – the emaciated Miloš in a gruesome psychiatric hospital. Yet, though Arsim rescues him from the dilapidated institution, there is to be no happy reunion between the two men – Miloš’s mind, body, and soul have been irrevocably broken by the traumas of war.

Finally, after much instability in his circumstances, Arsim finds accommodation in a self-contained unit in a house situated way out of the city. Eager to avoid more problems, Arsim pretends to his future landlord – a member of the diaspora now resident in Sweden – that he spent time abroad in France, rather than telling his real story. The property is in fact part of the landlord’s holiday house in Kosovo, and in

excusing the lack of furnishings, the man says that they live in Stockholm, “in a district where the children go to good schools, learn Swedish and other foreign languages, English, French, German, whatever they choose” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 203). In fact, to Arsim’s alarm, the landlord asks his daughter to speak to the newcomer in French, a request the child shyly declines.

Over time, Arsim slowly manages to rebuild his life, re-enrolling at the University of Pristina and subsequently getting a job publishing content for the postal service. He is also able to realise his dream of being an author when, at long last, one of his stories appears in print. He remains living at the property, observing that the landlord and his family return to Kosovo less and less frequently, “with the children speaking Swedish to one another” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 214) and observing that the level of their “Albanian deteriorates” (Statovci, 2023 [2021], p. 214), thus offering a clear example of language shift among the second generation (Gogonas, 2009).

In this regard, this hierarchical approach to language knowledge can be said to exhibit some similarities to the attitudes displayed in the novel by the schoolteachers in northern Europe – i.e. the perceived ‘high’ status of European languages such as German, French, and Swedish as compared to Albanian. Yet in this instance, these perspectives come from Kosovars themselves, with the children’s linguistic attrition representing not only a loss of language skills, but also an attenuation of their ancestral identity (see Cho & Krashen, 1998). In observing this, this episode in the novel illustrates that this fate may be shared by other members of Kosovo’s diaspora as the Albanian language – a key part of their linguistic and ethnocultural heritage – is slowly replaced by those ostensibly ‘prestigious’ languages used in the western European countries which have now become their homes.

Conclusion

In aiming to explore how languages, language choice, and multilingualism are depicted in *Bolla*, a number of salient features have been identified in this study. Given the complex interrelation of language and identity in the Balkan context, and particularly in Kosovo at the time the novel is set, it is unsurprising that these aspects feature prominently. In the first instance, Arsim and Miloš’s use of English serves not only as their own private language of communication, but as a neutral means of avoiding usage of a local language at a time of political instability and conflict. Knowledge of English, too, is fundamental later in the

novel, when Arsim is imprisoned and is able to utilise his skills in the language to access important literary works which help him to understand his own identity and thus himself as an individual and human being.

Additionally, language also plays an important role when Arsim, Ajshe, and the children emigrate to northern Europe, where the fact that they speak Albanian and are from Kosovo causes difficulties with the children's teachers, owing to their erroneous negative stereotypes about multilingualism and, by extension, the perceived 'low' status of Albanian compared to western European languages. This ostensible prestige of these western European languages is highlighted by Arsim's landlord in postwar Pristina, proudly boasting of his children's linguistic capabilities in these tongues whilst simultaneously losing their skills in their ancestral language. In sum, these aspects demonstrate the complex role that language, language choice, and multilingualism play in the tumultuous and tragic events of the novel as a whole, thus opening the door for broader research on these topics in Statovci's wider literary oeuvre.

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Freedom and Identity in Guy Gavriel Kay's Novel Tigana

Abstract: *The article examines the ideas of freedom and identity in the novel "Tigana," which is dedicated to the problem of human choice and free will. Freedom and the pursuit of one's identity are seen in the story as an indispensable part of man's quest for memory. The book is an epic fantasy that touches on postcolonial issues as it tries to present the voices of forcibly exiled people, the struggle for the return to the roots, to heritage, and language used as a means of oppression. One of its main points is sacrifice as a path to freedom. However, this novel shows that deciding what is evil and good is not easy, and things are not always what they seem at first glance; rather, it depends on the point of view. The novel is examined against the backdrop of the work of a genre classic like Tolkien, highlighting the intertwining of mythology, legends, and history in an amalgam alloy in which we find allusions to the present and messages for the future.*

Keywords: *freedom; identity; Tigana; history; fantasy.*

Can you imagine a world without your country and roots? A world with no memory of your homeland, a world in which you have no identity, no home, no roots, and you are the only one who remembers your culture, traditions, country, and language. This is the world of Tigana, the novel by Guy Gavriel Kay. The book we will discuss is part of the so-called epic fantasy genre. In the field of fantasy, eras are measured before or after Tolkien. In his essay "On Fairy-Stories", Tolkien defines fantasy as "*an act of imaginative creation which strives to have both the 'inner consistency of reality' and the strangeness Faërie¹, in order to explore reality in some deeper way*". (Tolkien, 1947, p. 138-139) This is certainly true in high fantasy, with its autonomous, secondary worlds. It has a specific application to Kay's novel, as it is influenced by his work with Christopher Tolkien on J. R. R. Tolkien's post-

¹ In this term Tolkien includes not only fairies, but anything magical and all fantastical elements of a story, this is explained in detail in the quoted essay "On Fairy-stories".

humously published novels and stories. But another thing Tolkien mentions in his letters is how some literary critics try to "protect" literature from various forms of nonsense (such as fantasy) by "hanging" it in a frame. (Carpenter, 1981)

In this sense, in his novel, as a follower of Tolkien, Kai advocates his ideas that fantasy should not only not be underestimated as literature, but that it explores reality more deeply and discovers its truths, no less significant than those of so-called "serious literature."

Tigana is an epic fantasy that, although set in a fantasy world, touches on issues related to real-life postcolonialism as it attempts to represent the voices of forcibly exiled people, the struggle for heritage, and language used as a tool of oppression. In this novel, Kai manages to raise critical real-world issues, significant for many postcolonial authors, in whose "stories of migrants, refugees, residents of former colonies" become "the terrain of the new world literature" (See Личева 2019, p. 23)

It is known that for centuries, the canon of world literature has included mainly Western European literature. In this regard, Gayatri Spivak expresses her concern that for centuries, the literature of the rest of the world has been marginalized in this way (Spivak 2023, 39). In "The Death of a Discipline", Spivak argues that comparative studies can only be revived by including depoliticized regional studies, and that it is necessary to turn our attention to the literatures and languages of regions such as Asia, to avoid Eurocentrism. Thus, by applying a decentralized approach, "hearing" the voices of migrants and residents of former colonies, we can see the fruitful overcoming of borders for contemporary literature, the new possibilities for reading beyond the stereotypical. Epic fantasy has the most striving for freedom and imagination, faith, madness, strange images, and strange cultures, sometimes so numerous that the reader needs maps and notes to remember all the actions, characters, countries, and customs. And there is no shortage of maps in these novels.

The common denominator of epic stories, which generally have a wide range of themes, is that they aim to keep the reader in suspense and tell interesting stories with freedom-loving heroes, all of which take place in vast worlds. This is probably one of the reasons why epic fantasy is quite significant in volume – it depicts entire universes. If the story is worth it, and the writer tells it masterfully, the reader finds himself in a vast world that swallows him up, and having memorized strange names, cultures, and events, he does not want to leave it.

The reader of *Tigana* finds himself in such a vast world, a world in which there are monsters and adventures, losses and slavery, but more importantly, this world does not speak of prison bars, but of the pursuit of freedom. And here we can recall the words of the writer Tolkien, whom Kay follows: fantasy is an escape from prison, a choice to talk about other topics, not prison bars. ("On Fairy-Stories," Tolkien 1947).

Perhaps the Canadian writer's philosophical education influenced the questions in the epic fantasy he creates, because a central question in Kay's fantasy world is free will.

The novel *Tigana* was published in 1990. *Publisher's Weekly* described it as "a brilliant and complex portrayal of good and evil" and by *USA Today* as "a boldly organized, intelligently articulated romance." (Kay, 1990) The book was nominated for the Mythopoetic Fantasy Award, World Fantasy Award, and the Aurora Prize in 1991.

Tigana is notable for its richness of character and scenes, and especially its realism of situation and action. In it, Kay deliberately sets himself complex philosophical problems to solve. Tolkien and Kay consider the issue of freedom and free will, but their conclusions differ. Tolkien's novels always point back to some sovereign will or plan for the universe, free will being how that plan is carried out, which is why many readers doubt whether free will is a possibility for Tolkien's characters at all.

For Kay, victory can only be won through sacrifice. Therefore, the highest form of human choice, free will, comes from sacrifice. Kay shows that predestination arises from repetition and that no further repetitions follow once a pattern has been broken. According to the writer, the structures of myth in its various guises, such as archetypes, names, connotations, and plot lines, can be seen as forms of predestination and fate, but they need not be, and they do not exclude freedom and free will. The choices one makes, made with free will and resulting from mastered freedom, determine the character and the story's destination.

Kay draws heavily on mythological, legendary, and historical sources in his fantasy novels. For this writer, myth is of paramount importance. His earlier, highly acclaimed Fionavar trilogy (*Fionavar Tapestry: The Summer Tree; The Wandering Fire; The Darkest Road*) worked with many myths, openly drawing on a wide range of easily recognizable sources to create a truly innovative reinterpretation of the archetypal battle between the forces of Light and Darkness.

Tigana represents a new direction in Kay's work. It reads like a richly embroidered historical novel, full of character and detail, but it is set in a world the reader does not know. It is a world where magic works, with a different cosmology, religions, songs, arts, crafts, and myths. The author has presented them all with an intensity of imagination and skill that rivals Tolkien's. Kay surprises his readers with his willingness to kill off the main characters, even the most attractive ones, and this also gives realism to what could otherwise be an airy fantasy.

Since the book has not been translated into Bulgarian, here we will outline its plot: The world of *Tigana* is a world with its own geography, religion, politics, and social systems. It is a highly developed pre-technological civilization whose inhabitants interact by sea and land: they trade in cloth, wine, spices, and more. All this is reflected in a complex social structure that is reminiscent of that of Renaissance Italy. Due to its geographical shape, the divided peninsula, known as the Palm, is under the power of two wizard rulers. One of them, Brandin, to avenge the death of his son, magically erases the name and memory of a beautiful province, Tigana, and its inhabitants move to other parts of the peninsula due to oppression and the lack of any freedoms. Their main objective becomes the movement for freedom and the desire to overthrow their oppressors.

The fantasy novel tells us of the struggle of a world caught up in conquests and wars, and how the entire peninsula survives, despite the dispute over land and power between the two wizard kings, Brandin of Igrat and Alberico d'Astibar. *Tigana* is a text that refuses to offer the traditionally clear division between good and evil. It speaks of the struggle for identity and freedom in the face of brutal violence.

Kay reproduces the sentence structure, atmosphere, and style of nineteenth-century romance. Yet he rejects today's fantasy stories' cozy confidences and obvious patterns to focus on strange ideas about political, social, and sexual power, especially in the arts. The novel is known to take much of its world and setting from Renaissance Italy, which, while not unique, is undoubtedly fresh and different here. *Tigana* is a work about the nature of power. There are power struggles between nations, the various religious orders dedicated to the three deities of the Triad, the women of Brandin's harem competing for court favors, and factions at all levels.

The first epigraph to *Tigana*, from Canto XVII of Dante's *Paradiso*, speaking of Dante's exile, reinforces the book's Florentine connec-

tion and emphasis on power. The text adopts Dante's philosophical position of belief in free will, adapting the idea that a rational person can make a conscious choice that has meaning for all eternity. In *Tigana*, this exile extends to the entire province. King Brandin's curse effectively places the province on the threshold of Dante's *Inferno*. The inhabitants of Tigana who have survived must live without identity, in a vicious circle in time. This results from the knowledge that no one else remembers their homeland.

The connection with Italy in the novel is not accidental because *Tigana* was born in Tuscany, Italy. Even the name of the novel, "Tigana," sounds reminiscent of Tuscany, one of the most important centers of the Italian Renaissance. In addition, wine appears everywhere in the story - green, blue, and black, and a key holiday is the Feast of the Vine. Tuscany is known for its winemaking. Brandin, on the other hand, is a cultural despot whose island court resembles the most brilliant of the twelfth-century European courts, that of the Sicilian King Roger II at the strategically located seaport of Palermo; home, at the time, to scholars, philosophers, and artists from the European and Arab worlds.

When referring to mythological references, Kay uses a variety of mythologies – Scandinavian, Greco-Roman, and Middle Eastern. For example, the mythological basis for the Triad of the *Tigana* recalls the story of the mother goddess Ishtar's love for the young Tammuz, whose annual death is lamented to the music of flutes and whose resurrection revives the natural world.

The fragment in the third chapter of the first part, where coins are placed on the eyes of the dead man to pay the Gatekeeper at the last Gate of Morian, strongly recalls the Greek rite in which coins are placed with the dead man to pay the ferryman Charon. Similar references are constant in the novel. The name of the Gatekeeper, which comes from "Moria", on the other hand, is a toponym that leads first to the Bible, where it is mentioned twice, and also to Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, where Moria is the abandoned home of the dwarves. All these overlays of the meaning of the names are essential for understanding the novel's essence. The dwarves are driven from Moria just as the Tiganians were from Tigana and cherish the hope of someday returning to their Promised Land.

The author's approach to mythology is poetic. One of the instances in which Kay works directly with myth to reconstruct an archetype occurs in his use of the figure of the Fool, who plays a secondary but crucial role in *Tigana*: it is the Tiganian Prince Valentine from the

introduction of the story, disguised as a jester, who kills the dictator Brandin. Along with Shakespeare's use of the royal Jester, Kay adds the figure of the magical hunchback and connects the two with the figure of the Fool from Tarot as an indicator of a risky gamble, an unexpected solution or a turning point, and the keeper of the key to a mystery.

Although *Tigana* is not specifically a feminist book, it is certainly pro-female: its heroines are active and determine the course of events; through female images, the idea of freedom and the pursuit of one's own identity are brought out as an invariable part of the quest for memory. At the same time, in this novel, the woman is not only the family's guardian but also preserves the image of the homeland and is ready to sacrifice herself unconditionally. The writer's bias towards female images is evident.

If the male images are depicted as more contradictory and dual, the female ones are more holistic and have a unified message. This is especially clearly brought out through the image of Dianora, the heroine who is forced to live in the home of her enslaver, in the house of the one who erases the memory of her homeland. Her initial desire to kill Brandin changes when she realizes he is a wounded father, not a villain; she falls in love with him. Her image is described with much love. Through her fate, the book, the author gradually raises questions about whether the good that seems good is always so, and whether evil is absolutely evil. The novel plays with several points of view and the idea of an overall perspective. In the novel's conclusion, the reader asks himself whether the good cause is truly good or whether the hero Alessan, who tries to free his homeland to prevail over the tyrant, can be called good if he acts equally cruelly. The narrative hints that he will hardly be a better king than Brandin. The final battle of forces leaves an open ending to the novel, which provides more questions than answers. Besides the hope of returning to one's identity, of winning the freedom of the oppressed side, questions such as what one's 'identity' is come to the fore, as well as, if one has not had one's own face for too long, can one easily get it back or will it already be an old mask that only brings discomfort. Thus, this novel questions the idea of identity, which is not perceived as something once and for all given but as something 'becoming' and constantly changing.

As the novel claims, the price of freedom is a sacrifice, though sometimes, the sacrifice might seem meaningless if freedom has obtained a different shape and value.

The end of the novel, in which the forgotten song from *Tigana* appears, is both an ominous prophecy about the lives of the three characters at the end (a future ruler, a present observer, and a former wizard lord) when they spot a mermaid (*riselka*) and a warning about remembering history and finding one's own home.

*One man sees a riselka², his life forks there.
Two men see a riselka; one of them shall die.
Three men see a riselka
One is blessed, one forks, one shall die.*
(Kay 1990, p. 259)

Even when it tells stories that sound like fairy tales, this epic fantasy references the modern world with a sense of lost orientation; a book that very clearly reflects our current understanding of loss: it considers the price of power and the price of blood. Perhaps that is why the interest in this novel has been evident in recent years. The meaning of this often perceived marginal genre can be seen as an opportunity to change minds and hearts. Fantasy does not tell you that there are dragons; it tells you that they can be defeated. Both the sense of identity and the understanding of evil in this novel are concepts that change in different parts: gradually the narrative reveals to us that what we see is not always the true nature of things and that perhaps we should not only trust our eyes, but also look within ourselves to find the answers.

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² Riselka is a mermaid in the mythology of *Tigana*.

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Documentary Films Produced by Kosovafilm (1975–2003)

Abstract: *The origins of cinematography in Kosovo are marked by the establishment of “Kosovafilm” in 1969. Operating independently and in co-production with various film studios from the former Yugoslavia, Kosovafilm produced a range of artistic, documentary, and cartoon films. This film production house was the only cinematic entity that, during a certain period, represented Albanian culture in Kosovo, both within its borders and beyond. Over the course of its activity, it produced and distributed numerous films across various genres, some of which garnered significant recognition in the former Yugoslavia and were awarded prizes at various international festivals. Among its productions, Kosovafilm also produced several documentary films that effectively captured aspects of the social, spiritual, cultural, and historical life of Albanians in Kosovo. Both in terms of content and direction, the filmmakers of these films sought to present to a broad audience a variety of themes, addressing and crafting them with great skill and passion, down to the finest details. This paper aims to highlight the significance of these documentary films, which served as a cornerstone of creativity during that period and contributed to the development of Kosovar cinematography. Even today, the work of the “Kosovafilm” production house continues to serve as a source of inspiration for many generations, scholars, and contemporary artists.*

Keywords: *Kosovafilm; documentary; culture; film; art.*

Introduction

Film art in Kosovo began later than in the rest of the Balkans. Here, cinematography developed at a slow pace. In February 1969, “Kosovafilm” was founded in Kosovo as the only institution in the country dedicated to the production and distribution of artistic, documentary, short, and cartoon films. From its founding to the present, according to our research, no scholarly study has been written about the history of artistic film in Kosovo, particularly documentary films. Overall, “Kosovafilm” has made a valuable contribution to the growth and

advancement of cinematography during this period. Cinematography in Kosovo is directly tied to this production house, which independently produced and filmed works. During certain periods of its activity, it also collaborated with other film houses from the former Yugoslavia.

Various papers and studies have contributed to shedding light on cinematographic activity in Kosovo, especially in recent years, providing an important foundation for further scholarly research. However, this paper aims to offer an additional perspective and contribution through a historical and analytical overview of Kosovafilm's activity, with particular focus on documentary films as part of a broader cultural and social context in Kosovar society at the time.

This study focuses on a specific period in the activity of this production house, namely the production of documentary films by "Kosovafilm" between 1975 and 2003. It also analyzes and discusses the themes of these films in relation to the circumstances of the time, with particular emphasis on two documentary films regarded as especially significant. Furthermore, the paper examines key social factors that contributed to the success of these films in reaching both domestic and international audiences. By examining this artistic output, the research aims to present a well-structured, unbiased, and accurate model of professional study, based primarily on primary and secondary sources. It seeks to portray the activities of that time in the most concise and impartial manner, fully grounded in rigorous scholarly methodology.

In light of the above, we believe this paper will serve not only scholars of the seventh art but also society as a whole. Furthermore, it will contribute to a broader recognition and inclusion of this activity within the history of world cinematography.

A brief historical overview – the founding of "Kosovafilm"

Kosovo, a state in Southeastern Europe in the Western Balkans region, was for many decades part of the former Yugoslavia, initially as an autonomous province within the Socialist Republic of Serbia. During this period, Kosovo experienced political and cultural restrictions, but also moments of institutional affirmation. Its population is predominantly Albanian, with a broad ethnic and cultural identity. One of the most successful cultural institutions of Albanians in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia was "Kosovafilm".

"Kosovafilm", a state-owned film production house, began its operations in 1969 in the Autonomous Socialist Province of Kosovo, in

what was known as Yugoslavia. In the same year, on February 24, during the eleventh session of the Educational and Cultural Chamber, the Education Council of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo approved the draft decision for the establishment of an enterprise for the production, sale, and dubbing of films. During the meeting, it was *inter alia* stated that “*this enterprise would be involved in filming, the sale of both domestic and foreign films, and the dubbing of films, as this decision was also made by the Provincial Chamber, justifying the need for a film enterprise in the Province*” (F.G, 1969, p. 10). After the establishment of the film enterprise “Kosova-film” in Prishtina, the acting director, Abdurrahman Shala, stated in an interview with the daily newspaper of the time, “*All formalities have been completed. I have registered the enterprise, and soon the first payment will be deposited into the account. The enterprise is called ‘Kosova-film’. The first step will be to announce a competition for the screenplay*” (Rilindja, 1969, p. 12).

After the enterprise was established, it was located in the premises of the Provincial Cultural and Propaganda Center in Prishtina. This decision of the Provincial Assembly marked the beginning of organized activity in the field of film art in Kosovo.

During its operation, this film production house produced and co-produced over 35 artistic, documentary, and cartoon films. With these films, “Kosovafilm” represented the country at various local and international festivals. This institution also collaborated closely with the Radio Television of Prishtina (RTP), with which it produced several visual co-productions. In the distribution sector, it imported more than 200 artistic films, primarily from the West, as well as some hit shows from the United States, which were shown in the former Yugoslavia (Mehmetaj, 2020, p. 7-76).

It is important to emphasize that the political developments before and during the 1990s had a direct impact on cultural life, cutting the ribbon of celluloid in Kosovo. Specifically, since 1988, no films were produced in 35mm format, although several television films were made.

It is known that before the 1990s, Kosovo had limited autonomy within the Republic of Serbia. Cultural policies were centralized and controlled by communist ideology, heavily influenced by the Soviet Union. In 1948, the split between the Soviet Union and Stalinist Yugoslavia marked the first major break within the then-communist bloc, more than a decade before the conflict between the Soviet Union and China (Schmitt, 2021, p. 337). Albanian culture was often marginalized

and censored, and relations between cultural institutions in Kosovo and those in Albania were limited.

In the 1970s, a form of cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation between Yugoslavia and Albania was being reestablished, mainly in the fields of literature, theater, music, and various scientific disciplines. However, such cooperation remained absent in the field of cinematography. In that historical context, “Kosovafilm” not only failed to find a path or opportunity to co-produce any films with Albania in the spirit of cultural and artistic reciprocity, but even the films it had already produced, bearing its own logo, were not given the chance to be screened before Albanian audiences until after the fall of communism in the early 1990s. Paradoxically, however, a considerable number of Albanian films produced by Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re” during the 1960s and 1970s were shown in cinemas in Prishtina and other cities across Kosovo. In March 1971, the “Week of Albanian Film” was organized in Prishtina, during which six feature films and six documentaries were screened. This was the first event of its kind, offering a broad overview of cinematography through works that, in a way, presented a glimpse into Albanian cinema, its productions and the main concerns of its key figures (Shita, 1971, p. 10). This lack of mutual cooperation, however, did not result from the artists themselves, but rather as a result of the dominance of an isolating political climate and the refusal of any form of collaboration with Albania and vice versa. Although on the part of Kosovo, within the framework of a platform for dialogue and cultural rapprochement with Albania, institutional cooperation between “Kosovafilm” and Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re” was envisioned and planned for the realization of documentary and feature film projects (ASAK, 1979), this never materialized in practice. The only symbolic event marking this period was the official visit of a delegation from Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re” to Kosovo and their meeting with counterparts at “Kosovafilm”. Despite mutual enthusiasm, the visit did not result in any new developments. No concrete cooperation in the field of film production was brought to life in the following years. Figuratively speaking, cultural cooperation with communist Albania was a challenge in itself.

The political and cultural situation was now entering a new phase. In the 1990s, the policies of Slobodan Milošević (Serbian president from 1989–1997; president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1997–2000) reduced Kosovo’s autonomy and led to the Kosovo War of 1998–1999 between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, led by Serbia,

which controlled Kosovo within Yugoslavia. After these developments, “*the Kosovo Liberation Army was formed whose existence was used as a pretext for the Serbian campaign to destroy Kosovo’s villages during the summer of 1998. Subsequently, Western governments’ efforts to mediate an agreement, focused on the restoration of Kosovo’s autonomy, proved unsuccessful*” (Malcolm, 2019, p. 21). The refusal of Belgrade to accept any political solution forced the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to intervene in the Kosovo War, compelling Serbia to withdraw all military forces from Kosovo. After several years of international negotiations, “*by early 2008, it became clear that due to the rigid stances of both sides, achieving results was unlikely. As a result, several Western states increased their support for Kosovo to unilaterally declare its independence, which happened on February 17, 2008*” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 291).

During these political and cultural developments, “Kosovafilm” did not produce or co-produce any feature films until 2003, when the first two documentary films, “*Doket dhe zakonet e shqiptarëve në Mal të Zi*” (Customs and Traditions of Albanians in Montenegro) and “*Na ishte dikur Kosovafilm-i*” (Once Upon a Time There Was Kosovafilm) were shot.

Documentary films

It is essential to understand that cinematography continues to be a tool for communication, information, and propaganda through its audiovisual language and grammar. From the early steps of cinematography, art theorists completely rejected the idea that it would exist alongside other arts, as it did not have its own expressive tools but borrowed them from other arts (Fon, 2014, p. 14). Over time, cinema managed to become one of the most widespread arts of our time. It continues to play an important role in artistic life and to have a significant impact on large masses of people (Uçi, 2008, p. 417). As in various countries of the former Yugoslavia, in Kosovo as well, the treatment of different themes related to the events of that time managed to create an impact on the development and orientation of public opinion. Rightfully, Béla Balázs defends the well-known and widely accepted thesis when he states that “*cinematic art exerts a greater influence on the spirit of the masses than any other form of art. He argues that we must recognize the laws and possibilities of cinematic art in order to control and discipline the spiritual influence it exerts, as this type of art is unprecedented in the history of human civilization*” (Balázs, 2008, p. 27). Thus, art

teaches people to see with feeling; it is itself a kind of language and holds great possibilities within. Artistic creativity represents, in a way, a structure built in harmony with the melody that lives within it (Adler, 2009, p. 191). In short, cinema is both a language and an idealistic phenomenon (Bazin, 2012, p. 18-19).

When it comes to documentary films, we can easily say that this genre, among other things, involves content that is largely or almost exclusively based on objective reality and the recording of real events and real people. Marko Babac, a well-known film scholar, writes that *“unlike artistic fiction, the documentarian does not deal with the invention of events and characters. He expresses himself through the specific selection and arrangement of his discoveries from life. Viewers are very interested in using the screen and motion pictures to establish a connection with other people”* (Babac, 2000, p. 330). They are consistently drawn to themes and events that address both the near and distant past. The past, grounded in historical facts, holds deep personal significance for them, and they seek to engage with these events from the inside, as well as see historical figures up close (Babac, 2000, p. 330).

A historical event for the seventh art itself was the establishment of the only film house, “Kosova-film”. With the establishment of this production house and later the distribution of films, opportunities and conditions were created for Kosovar cinematography to enter a phase of consolidating its own forces. Activities began to expand further with the independent filming of ambitious projects by Kosovar filmmakers, addressing autochthonous themes. In addition to the *“artistic genre of feature-length films, a solid number of documentary and short films were produced, which stood out in various festivals and events, both for their unique directorial approach and for addressing themes that had previously been unexplored”* (Mehmetaj, 1981, p. 13).

It should be noted that the filming and production of documentary films remained rather modest throughout Kosova-film’s activity. At the time, there was a clear need for the Provincial Community of Culture to be more generous in funding documentary film, and for the relevant institutions to take a more active role in fostering this genre, not as a matter of trend, but as a response to the needs of the time. “Usually, when the question is raised – why are there not more feature-length or short documentary films – the answer is immediate: there is no funding, and therefore, no films. Yet it is well known that one of the primary goals of documentary film is the authentic recording of various phe-

nomena, some of which are disappearing, while they should be preserved as evidence of a particular time” (Mehmetaj, 1984, p. 10). On the other hand, Kosovo, perhaps more than any other region, was teeming with themes that remained unrecorded and underrepresented on the cinema screen.

Despite all the challenges and circumstances that “Kosovafilm” faced during this time, its activity nonetheless continued. Within “Kosovafilm”, films of various documentary genres have been produced. The film **“Bukë e kryp e zemër”** (Bread, Salt, and a good Heart) in 35mm (color), directed by Besim Sahatçiu, was produced in 1975 by “Kosovafilm” in co-production with the film house “Filmske Novosti” from Belgrade. Two years later, in 1977, another documentary film, **“Brigadat kosovare”** (Kosovar Brigades), was produced by director Ekrem Kryeziu. In the same year, the film **“Shota”**, directed by Muharrem Qena (Mehmetaj, 2020, p. 72), was filmed, with Ismail Peshku as the organizer and Afrim Spahiu as the cinematographer. Another film, **“Pikë e gurë”**, produced in 1979, was filmed by Rudolf Sopi, with Ekrem Kryeziu as the director. The director of the documentary **“Kur pranvera vonohet”** (When Spring Comes Late) from 1979 was Isa Qosja. The film deals with the time and the realization of a long, ambitious artistic film, which carries the same title, **“Kur pranvera vonohet”**” (ASHAK, 2011, p. 587).

The film **“Loja e rufaive”** (The Game of the Rufa'i), produced in 1979 and directed by Azem Shkreli and Gani Bobi, was filmed by Shukri Kaçaniku, Afrim Spahiu, and Murat Zeka, with editing by Skënder Cakolli. This documentary explores the ritual of the Rufa'i Sufi order, focusing on their mystical and oriental dance performed during their sacred night (Mehmetaj, 2020, p. 73). The film **“Dita e mërgimtarëve”** (Migrants Day), directed by Ekrem Kryeziu, was produced in 1980 (Mehmetaj, 2010, p. 32).

Another film produced in 1980 by the film house “Kosovafilm” was **“Tepriçat”** (The Surplus), with Ekrem Kryeziu serving as both the screenwriter and director. This documentary received a Special Diploma for Direction at the Documentary and Short Film Festival in Belgrade in 1981 (Mehmetaj, 2010, p. 32). The film **“Ngjyrat e dheut”** (Colors of the Soil) was made in 1983, directed by Fahri Hysaj (ASAK, 2011, p. 587). It is an engaging and vibrant recording that explores the working environment of an artist (Mehmetaj, 2010, p. 32).

After twelve years, the film **“Doket dhe zakonet e shqiptarëve në Mal të Zi”** (Customs and Traditions of Albanians in Montenegro)

was produced, directed by Emin Halili, in 2003. “*The film offers a compelling depiction of a fading Albanian world, as traditional customs and ways of life slowly give way to modernity. Meanwhile, large-scale emigrations have contributed to the near extinction of the population in this Albanian region, leaving only the elderly behind*” (Mehmetaj, 2010, p. 33).

Among the films produced by the film production house “Kosovafilm” are the documentaries “117” and “Dikur ishte Kosovafilmi” (Once Upon a Time There Was Kosovafilm), both of which will be discussed in the following sections as separate chapters. We consider these two films to be of particular importance to art enthusiasts and the wider public due to both their content and directorial treatment. The first film, in addition to its artistic value, offers a broader portrayal of traditional culture in Kosovo, while the second presents a concise history of the cinematography developed by “Kosovafilm” itself.

The Documentary Film “117”

The documentary film “117” was made by director Besim Sahatçiu in 1978. The cinematographer was Afrim Spahiu, the producer was Adil Begolli, the editor was Mentor Kaçi, the voice was provided by Sahit Sahiti, and the organizer was Ismail Peshku. The film was shot in 35mm color, showcasing a vibrant palette of colors that primarily highlighted the traditional costumes of the village of Nivakaz in Gjakova. It depicts the traditional lifestyle of an Albanian family living in a single stone tower. All family members live together in unity, emphasizing the great harmony they share among themselves. The scholar Kopi Kyçyku writes that the exemplary: “*harmony and sincere respect for the head of the family – who represented, so to speak, a tribe, a community, a traditional society in miniature – found its embodiment and concreteness in the serious and meticulous implementation of all his orders and instructions*” (Kyçyku, 2024). This documentary film is one of the most attractive and interesting productions ever filmed in Kosovo. On the Public Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK), in the program “Voyage” titled The Cinematography of Besim Sahatçiu, aired on 29.10.2023, journalist and director Korab Lecaj, among other points, emphasized that; “*this is one of the best Albanian documentary films ever made, from his perspective, particularly highlighting its unique approach – being filmed solely with a camera, without a narrator*” (RTK, 2023). In this documentary, the family is portrayed as an institution where each member is engaged in their own tasks, knows exactly

what they are responsible for, what their obligations are, and what they must contribute to the small family community over a twenty-four-hour period. Film critic Gani Mehmetaj notes that the director follows this family over a period of time, capturing them in various tasks and activities (Mehmetaj, 2010, p. 31).

Through this film, director Sahatçiu managed to document many relics and “old ways” of living in the 1970s, a lifestyle that quickly disappeared with the industrialization and economic development of the time. In a way, this film represents the preservation of the spirit of a nation, serving as evidence of the cultural, family, and historical values of Albanian society in Kosovo. In an interview conducted by journalist S. Haliti for the daily newspaper “Rilindja”, when asked about the idea behind filming “117”, director Sahatçiu responded: “*I visited many families in different parts of Kosovo, but the most characteristic among them was the the Nivakazi family of 117 members from the village of the same name near Gjakova, where they had preserved the most authentic traits of both the people and the local environment*” (Haliti, 1978, p. 12). It is precisely this authenticity that the director highlights that makes the film an ethnographic one, presenting in detail the way of life of that time. The documentary was presented at the XXVth anniversary of the Yugoslav Documentary and Short Film Festival and won the “Grand Prix” award. The film was well received, with journalist S. Haliti writing: “*The festival audience warmly received this film, greeting it with frantic applause. According to general impressions, it was truly the most successful film of the evening’s program*” (Haliti, 1978, p. 22). The film’s screening was a success, earning the “Golden Plaque” at the Documentary and Short Film Festival in Belgrade in 1978 (Mehmetaj, 2010, p. 32).

The documentary adopts a unique approach, as it lacks a narrator and traditional interviews that provide direct, concrete information. Instead, the film’s content is created through the atmosphere of various shots that follow one another, driven by the actions and events that unfold. Each scene tells a story that reveals something new, beginning with cinematic shots such as wide views of a picturesque village, featuring stone towers, large walls, and stunning landscapes, all conveying the sense of a place preserved from the outside world.

Through the low-angle perspective, we are introduced to the central character of the narrative, both as the bearer of the story and the head of the household. The climbing of stairs from this perspective conveys the meaning of the difficulties and struggles he carries as he enters

the house. One of the few moments where text is used occurs when the head of the family addresses the camera, struggling to recall the last names of family members. Afrim Spahiu, the director of photography and a witness to the event, highlights in the program “Voyage” that: *“at the thirty-eight-minute mark, when the head of the family introduces the final members, he, standing behind the large camera, zoomed in as the head of the family struggled to remember their names. This shot, which captured Haziri’s best moment, inspired him deeply, making him realize that this family and their story are truly exceptional - possessing something that no one else in the world had”* (RTK, 2023). The following film shots mainly consist of various details, such as working in the yard, preparing firewood, preparing animal food, lighting the oven for cooking, fetching water, collecting milk, creating costumes, baking bread, and weaving materials. Additionally, we see details of people, such as children and primarily women performing household tasks, which together portray the dynamics and everyday routines of their lives. Each shot introduces something new, building upon the previous ones and including all age groups—from young children to adults and the elderly. Special focus is given to the daily household tasks, particularly the care of children, which is mainly carried out by women, while outdoor tasks, such as fieldwork and other physical labor, are assigned to men. Occasionally, there are also shots of domestic animals and birds, living in harmony with the family members. As night falls, a wide shot reveals the tower, followed by close-ups of the children eating. A panoramic shot then unveils three tables set only for the children, creating a beautiful scene of all of them gathered together. Director of photography Afrim Spahiu explains how, during the filming, they took time to familiarize the family with the process by doing some rehearsals before the shoot. Initially, the children were intimidated by the large camera, but they soon approached and turned it into a game. For one meal, there were three tables set for the children, three for the women, and three for the men and the elders. A great deal of organizational work was done to ensure that the family enjoyed the experience, which is clearly evident in the scenes. The detail of the cat eating alongside the children conveys a sense of humanity, continuing into the next room, where Haziri, the head of the family, divides the bread into equal portions (RTK, 2023). In the close-ups of the men’s faces, we observe the wrinkles that tell the story of the suffering and struggles they have endured. Later in the evening, an intimate close-up of the head of the fam-

ily's face, as he converses with the men of the house during a "meeting", shows them making plans for the upcoming days and dividing the tasks. All the men, focused and captured in close shots, receive instructions for their upcoming duties.

The next scene appears on the small TV in the house, and then, as the camera moves, a wide shot reveals several family members watching attentively as information about computers is discussed.

In the same angle as at the beginning of the film, the children, lined up, descend the stairs, coming towards the camera. This recursive shot takes on an entirely different meaning, portraying the children as "heroes" or the future of the household. The director uses this moment to convey the message that the children must be oriented towards education and a brighter future. The shots of the children walking to school in various locations, facing different risks, along with the accompanying music, create a dramatic effect filled with hope. In the final shot, the window of the tower is seen in the foreground, while in the background, the children walk towards school, leaving behind the tower – the place from which they came out – for their purposes.

The film was shown at the International Documentary and Short Film Festival "Dokufest" (Fondacioni Lumbardhi, 2024), in a special screening, followed by a seven-day workshop of the Experimental Ensemble of Lumëbardhi. Led by Ilir Bajri, the musicians composed and produced a live soundtrack for the documentary, filling the experience with emotions through audio. The 22 members of the Ensemble were positioned on stage beneath the screen, where the visual part was displayed, while the live music performance was carried out in real-time. *"This was a true treat for eyes and ears while immersing in a small piece of Kosovo's history"* (Dokufest, 2024).

The documentary film "Dikur ishte Kosovafilmi"

The last documentary film produced by this film house, **"Dikur ishte Kosovafilmi"** (Once Upon a Time There Was Kosovafilm), directed by Isa Qosja, was made in 2003. *"The film offers a retrospective of "Kosovafilm", a once-successful institution that experienced both highs and lows. It produced some of the most notable films in Albanian cinema in Kosovo, but also faced a period of inactivity due to a lack of financial resources and insufficient state support"* (Mehmetaj, 2020, p. 75).

The documentary begins with actor Faruk Begolli, who talks about the early development of cinematography in Kosovo (Qosja,

2003). It then continues with director Besim Sahatçiu, who explains how the first documentary film, “117”, was made about a large family in a village in Kosovo. Filmed with great enthusiasm, Sahatçiu directed the project as part of Kosova-film. *The film was shot over four days using a complete set of borrowed equipment, according to director Sahatçiu* (Qosja, 2003). The next interview features Ekrem Kryeziu, who talks about his film “Kur pranvera vonohet” and its artistic values. Producer Ismail Peshku, in the interview, shares insights into the premises of the film house, where Kosovafilm’s films were supported and produced. Film editor Agron Vula reflects on the opportunities the film house provided him when he was first entrusted with editing the feature film “Lepuri me pesë këmbë” (The Five-Legged Rabbit) while still a student. Ismail Imeri, the director of this film, describes how a project as significant as “Lepuri me pesë këmbë” was entrusted to a student who had yet to complete his film studies. The trust placed in those studying various aspects of cinematography enabled the film house to begin producing films by Kosovo-based authors. As director Imeri notes, this film was awarded the Golden Arena for music at the Pula Film Festival. In the early 1980s, a different constellation of film scholars returned from various academies in the former Yugoslavia, as director Agim Sopi recalls (Qosja, 2003). Azem Shkreli, the director of Kosova-film at the time, invited them to discuss and debate the idea of establishing cinematography in Kosovo. This initiative laid the foundation for the country’s cinematic development. The 1980s generation also included cinematographer (director of photography) Mendu Nushi, who was entrusted with working on several film projects of that time. His first major project as a cinematographer for a feature film was in “Njeriu prej dheu” (Man of Soil), directed by Agim Sopi. After its premiere, the film was shown for only two days before its screening was banned. It was later reinstated with one condition – it had to be re-edited and several scenes had to be reshot. These changes, as Nushi explains in the documentary, were ordered by the regime of the time (Qosja, 2003). Director Isa Qosja, in an interview, explains that: “*in the 1980s, “Kosovafilm”, under the direction of Azem Shkreli, established a principle whereby new filmmakers, trained in various European countries, were engaged by Kosova-film*” (Qosja, 2003).. In 1983, Qosja joined the film house for the project titled “Ura” (The Bridge), which marked a new starting point for the style and language of film in Kosovo. Meanwhile, “Kosovafilm” received the script for “Njeriu prej dheu”, which was considered a very serious project. As a result, the funds initially allocated for

the film “Ura” were redirected to this script, while the remaining part of the funds was used for the film “Proka”, also directed by Isa Qosja. Eqrem Basha, the screenwriter of the film “Proka”, recounts a conversation he had with Anton Pashku about the short story of the same title by Filip Papajani, which provided a sufficient foundation for creating the film. In 1985, the film “Proka” was shot, marking the beginning of Kosovo’s cinematic journey, represented by “Kosova-film”. Through this film and its artistic values, it was demonstrated not only to the public in Kosovo but also internationally that our filmmakers had the potential to develop true cinema – a potential that was forcefully suppressed by the regime in the 1990s (Qosja, 2003). Emin Halili, another young film professional, was entrusted with the next project, “Pikniku” (The Picnic) in 1985, which was later featured in the Pula Film Festival. With the release of “Proka”, collaboration with broader figures from the former Yugoslavia came to an end, paving the way for local filmmakers to independently produce films and projects without external support. This was exemplified by the subsequent film, “Rojet e Mjegullës” (The Keepers of the Fog), which was made in 1987, after which the curtain on Kosovar cinema fell due to violent repression. The production of Kosovar films was interrupted, and we were all left in the corners of this city, in a state of despair under the oppressive atmosphere of the time – a period that was foreshadowed in “Rojet e Mjegullës” (Qosja, 2003). This film was awarded for its music at the Yugoslav Film Festival, receiving the Golden Arena at Pula. Following the festival, the film faced criticism from several journalists and filmmakers of the time, who identified unacceptable political implications and connotations in its content. Although nominated for many awards, it won only one. It was invited to several festivals, but was ultimately denied participation, as stated by the cinematographer of the film, Mendu Nushi (Qosja, 2003). The film house also had a distribution department, where numerous films found success, with the local film “Rojet e Mjegullës” standing out as the most-watched. Bedri Hysa, a writer of the time, stated in this documentary that it was a great misfortune that “Kosovafilm” had ceased to operate due to a lack of financial resources, and emphasized the need to revive this institution and bastion of our art in Kosovo.

This documentary provides a general overview of the entire body of work of this film house, revealing, step by step, the processes and challenges it encountered throughout its existence. Not only does the film highlight a segment of the history of Kosovar cinema, but it also

documents the entire creative journey of those who were part of “Kosovafilm”. The film passionately conveys the ideals of various Kosovar filmmakers, who, despite numerous challenges, managed to contribute, albeit modestly, to the growth of cinema. The film concludes with a series of documentary photographs that capture and testify to the complete development of “Kosovafilm”.

Conclusion

Considering that the language of motion pictures in film, television, and video allows people to understand the past as a valuable record of times gone by, we can confidently say that the documentary films of “Kosovafilm” have successfully demonstrated this by documenting the social, spiritual, cultural, and historical life of Albanians in Kosovo and beyond. Furthermore, these films contributed to the emancipation of society by bringing a variety of themes to the screen, which the creators of these films explored with great passion and dedication, down to the finest details.

It is important to emphasize that this paper has dedicated a significant portion to the two documentary films, “117” by director Besim Sahatçiu and “Dikur ishte Kosovafilmi” by director Isa Qosja. These films were thoroughly analyzed and examined, considering the sensitivity of the themes and the significance they hold in the way they are treated. The film “117” showcases significant aspects of our Albanian traditions, customs, and culture, with particular focus on the concept of family as an institution that has influenced our social development. The second film, directed by Qosja, also presents a valuable historical contribution, encompassing personalities and other accompanying elements that were part of the contribution to and development of Kosovar cinematography.

Considering the time in which they were made, we can confidently say that all of these documentary films played a significant role in preserving and documenting cultural and social values, thus becoming an archive in itself, not only for scholars of cinematography but also for other fields of study.

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Byzantine-Pecheneg Conflicts in the Balkans

Abstract: *Pechenegs, a Turkic tribe, entered Byzantine territory in 944 as auxiliary troops of Prince Igor of Kiev. For a time, they maintained contact with Byzantium as mercenaries of the Rus. Later, relations between the Pechenegs and the Rus princes worsened. Pechenegs then began to raid Byzantine lands on their own. Since the 1030s, the Cumans had become active near the Don River. Their pressure forced the Pechenegs to move into Byzantine lands in the Balkans. As a nomadic people, Pechenegs lived by raiding and plundering. Their advance into the Balkans made Byzantine territories a direct target. They even carried out threatening actions near Constantinople. The Byzantine emperors had to develop new policies to defend the empire. This article aims to examine the Byzantine-Pecheneg conflicts in the Balkans from military and political perspectives based on primary sources from the period, with a particular focus on demonstrating the strategic importance of the Balkans for the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Alexius Comnenus.*

Keywords: *Balkans; Pechenegs; Byzantium; Cumans.*

Introduction

There is evidence that the Pechenegs, a Turkic people, lived near the Lower Seyhun and the Aral Sea in the eighth century. Their migration beyond the Yayık River happened during the reign of Abbasid caliph Mahdi-billah or later. It was caused by the attacks of the Oghuz, known as Uzes in Byzantine sources. The Pechenegs settled around the Yayık and Itil rivers and lived there for a long time. Over time, they became a threat to the Khazars. The Khazars allied with the Oghuz and attacked the Pechenegs in 889. They pushed them west of the Itil. After this migration, the Pechenegs came into contact with the Hungarians. They forced the Hungarians from Lebedia to Etelköz in the Don basin, and later to the banks of the Danube and Tisza rivers. In 895, the Pechenegs attacked the Hungarians again as allies of Bulgarian Tsar Simeon and drove them into Pannonia. In this way, they brought the region from the Don to the Danube under their control (Sümer, 2017, p. 213).

An Overview of Byzantine-Pecheneg Conflicts in the Balkans Until the Reign of Alexius Comnenus (1081–1118)

The Pechenegs also served as mercenaries for the Rus. After suffering a defeat against Byzantium in 941, Prince Igor of Kiev (914–945) included the Pechenegs among various peoples in his 944 campaign to take revenge. When the people of Kherson and the Bulgarians learned of Igor's overland expedition, they immediately informed Byzantium. In response, Emperor Romanus Lecapenus (920–944) sent envoys to Igor and proposed peace. He offered to pay more than the tribute previously given to Prince Oleg (879–913), successfully halting the campaign. The emperor also found it necessary to reach an agreement with the Pechenegs, allies of the Rus, and sent them fine fabrics and gold as gifts to invite them to peace. When Igor abandoned the war, he ordered the Pechenegs under his command to attack Bulgarian lands (Yücel, 2020a, p. 161; Kurat, 2016, p. 107).

The next phase of the Byzantine Pecheneg conflict unfolded in connection with Bulgarian activities on Byzantine lands. When the Bulgarians attacked Byzantine territory, Emperor Nicephorus Phocas (963–969) sought help from Svyatoslav (945–972), who had succeeded Igor. In response, Svyatoslav launched a campaign against the Bulgarians in the Danube region in 967. He defeated them and captured around eighty cities along the river (Yücel, 2020a, p. 162; Kurat, 2016, p. 111). According to Cedrenus, the Pechenegs were Svyatoslav's allies in this war. The Byzantine historian refers to them as Patzinaks (Πατζινακοί) and also mentions the Turks (Τούρκοι) living in Pannonia, meaning the Hungarians (Cedrenus, 1838, p. 384). Zonaras confirms these accounts and states that Bardas Skleros, the Byzantine commander with the title Magistros, gained the upper hand against the Pechenegs in this battle (Zonaras, 2008, p. 16). Apparently, Byzantine sources strangely portray this conflict as a Byzantine victory. However, according to Kurat, these records actually refer to later events following Svyatoslav's crossing of the Danube into Bulgaria in 969. The forces Skleros fought were Pecheneg units separated from the Rus (Kurat, 2016, p. 114–115). This suggests that Byzantine sources do not clearly distinguish between two different events. It is also likely that some Pecheneg groups remained loyal to earlier agreements with the Byzantine Empire.

According to the Russian chronicles, Svyatoslav launched a successful campaign against the Bulgarians in 970 and forced them to submit. In the following year, 971, he arrived at Pereyaslavl, and the Bulgarians were forced to abandon the city. A fierce battle followed, and

the Bulgarians suffered a heavy defeat (Yücel, 2020a, p. 163). However, that same year, Svyatoslav suffered a decisive defeat at Pereyaslavl against Byzantine Emperor John Tzimiskes (969–976), which forced him to abandon the city and make peace with the Byzantines. During the peace negotiations, Svyatoslav requested a guarantee from Tzimiskes that the Pechenegs would not attack him on his way back home. Tzimiskes then sent word to the Pechenegs, asking them not to attack Svyatoslav and to allow him to return safely by crossing the Danube without harming Bulgaria (Zonaras, 2008, p. 23). In response, the Pechenegs stated that as allies of the Byzantine emperor, they would not violate the Danube frontier. However, they also said they would not allow Svyatoslav to pass through their lands on his way home. Indeed, as Svyatoslav was returning to Kiev, he was ambushed by the Pechenegs on the Dnieper and killed by their leader Kure along with many of his men. It is believed that Byzantium encouraged the Pechenegs to carry out this attack on Svyatoslav (Kurat 2016: 115-116).

Pecheneg activity on the Danube resumed in 1026. This was closely linked to Emperor Basil the Bulgar Slayer (960–1025) bringing the Bulgarians under Byzantine control in 1018 or 1019. As a result, the Pechenegs became direct neighbors of the Byzantine Empire. From then on, their attacks would target Byzantine borders directly (Kurat 2016: 121). Byzantine sources mention these events. According to Zonaras, the Pechenegs crossed the Danube in 1026 and attacked Bulgaria. Constantine Diogenes, the strategos of Sirmion and dux of Bulgaria, responded and drove many of them back across the Danube (Zonaras, 2008, p. 47; Günaydın, 2020, p. 67; Paroń, 2021, p. 319). Six or seven years later, in 1032 or 1033, the Pechenegs launched new raids on Bulgaria. In this context, the Byzantine historian Cedrenus describes Arab attacks near Melitene in the east, and at the same time notes that the Pechenegs crossed the Ister (Ἰστρος), or Danube, from the west and inflicted damage on Moesia (Cedrenus, 1838, p. 499). Cedrenus's account matches that of Zonaras. Zonaras states, "At the same time the Arabs attacked Mesopotamia, the Pechenegs attacked Bulgaria, and the Sons of Hagar [North African and Sicilian Arabs] raided the coasts of the province of Illyricum" (Zonaras, 2008, p. 52). In 1035, during the early years of Emperor Michael Paphlagon's reign (1034-1041), the Pechenegs again plundered Moesia (Zonaras, 2008, p. 58). According to Cedrenus, their attacks extended beyond Moesia and reached Thessaloniki (Cedrenus, 1838, p. 512). They frequently crossed the Danube and killed the captives they had taken (Zonaras, 2008, p. 59).

By 1048 or 1049, the Pechenegs were launching raids across the region from the Dnieper River in the north of the Danube to Pannonia. They lived a nomadic lifestyle and dwelled in tents. Their leader was Tyrach. Another important figure was Kegenes. Soon, a dispute broke out between Tyrach and Kegenes. In response, Kegenes turned to Emperor Constantine Monomachus (1042–1055) with his loyal followers and reached an agreement. As part of the agreement, Monomachus granted Kegenes three fortresses along the Danube and large tracts of land. This gave Kegenes a base from which he could take revenge on Tyrach and his supporters. Indeed, he soon began to harass and kill Tyrach's followers (Zonaras, 2008, p. 92; Kurat, 2016, p. 157-159; Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 123-125; Günaydın, 2020, p. 93; Paroń, 2021, p. 321-322). In reaction, Tyrach threatened Emperor Monomachus to stop Kegenes's attacks. The emperor ignored these threats. Tyrach then crossed the frozen Danube and devastated Byzantine territory. Upon hearing this, Monomachus sent an army against Tyrach, using Kegenes and his forces as reinforcements. But Tyrach's men did not dare fight the Byzantine army. They surrendered. Many were captured, including Tyrach himself. Instead of executing the captured Pechenegs, the Byzantines considered settling them in the uninhabited parts of Bulgaria and arming them for use on their side (Zonaras, 2008, p. 93; Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 127). According to Cedrenus, the Byzantine position prevailed in discussions with Kegenes. The Pechenegs were settled in the deserted plains of Bulgaria. Some were relocated elsewhere and taxed. In case of war with the Seljuk Turks in Anatolia or with other foreign tribes, these Pechenegs were to be conscripted. Kegenes accepted this proposal. Except for the captives he had sold, he executed all the others. The high-ranking commander Basileios Monachos took many Pechenegs and settled them near Sardike, Naissos, and Eutzapolis in Bulgaria (Cedrenus, 1838, p. 587; Skylitzes, 2010, p. 429-430; Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 128; Günaydın, 2020, p. 94-95; Melnyk, 2022, p. 127). Thus, the Byzantines and their Pecheneg allies under Kegenes won the winter campaign of 1048. However, the 15,000-strong Pecheneg army that Byzantium had raised for war against the Seljuks soon turned against Monomachus. They chose to reunite with their kin in Bulgaria. They crossed the straits and joined their people in Triaditza. Many Pechenegs later settled along the Osmos River, which flows into the Danube (Skylitzes, 2010, p. 431-432; Kurat, 2016, p. 163-165). Afterward, the Pechenegs were pushed back to the area between the Balkans and the Danube. Eventually, they withdrew to Hundred Hills, a

rich pastureland on the left bank of the Danube near the Black Sea (Yücel, 2020b, p. 208; Günaydın, p. 2020: 98).

On 8 June 1050, the Pechenegs appeared at Adrianopolis. The local commander, Arianites, made a strategic decision not to move his troops outside the fortified zone. He intended to weaken the Pechenegs' resistance by letting them attack the fortifications, then counterattack once their strength had waned. However, this plan was disrupted by a subordinate commander who acted without Arianites' permission and initiated combat. The Pechenegs launched a fierce attack and inflicted heavy losses on the Byzantine troops. But when a stone hurled from the fortress struck the Pecheneg leader Soultzous, the Pecheneg formation broke down, and they lifted the siege (Cedrenus, 1838, p. 600-602; Skylitzes, 2010, p. 438-439; Attaleiates, 2012, p. 59, 60; Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 133-134; Kurat, 2016, p. 171-173). Emperor Constantine Monomachus knew the Pecheneg raids would not stop. Soon after the Adrianopolis battle, they began plundering Macedonia. The emperor appointed Nicephorus Bryennius to lead an army of twenty thousand to fight them (Skylitzes, 2010, p. 440). He also requested aid from Pecheneg chief Kegenes. Kegenes responded positively and was sent as a Byzantine envoy to Pechenegs who had promised to support Byzantium. However, the Pechenegs did not keep their word. They killed and dismembered Kegenes (Skylitzes, 2010, p. 440-441). As Pecheneg raids in Thrace and Macedonia continued, Byzantium and the Pechenegs signed a thirty-year peace treaty in 1053 (Zonaras, 2008, p. 94; Skylitzes, 2010, p. 443; Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 137). Yet the treaty soon collapsed during the reign of Isaac Comnenus (1057–1059), in 1059. Hungarian king Andrey (1057–1059) likely played a role in this breakdown (Yücel, 2020b, p. 232). In the chronicle of Attaleiates, a group identified as the Sauromatai – probably the Hungarians—joined forces with the Pechenegs to threaten Byzantine territory from the west. Emperor Isaac responded by sending his army to remove the threat. His troops secured the Hungarians through diplomacy. A similar offer was made to the Pechenegs. But Pecheneg chief Selte refused and chose to fight the Byzantines. He was defeated. As Attaleiates wrote, he "hid in a deep wood, like a small hare" (Attaleiates, 2012, p. 121, 122; Zonaras, 2008, p. 113; Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 137-138). Upon hearing this, Isaac decided to capture Triaditza and delivered a major blow to the Pechenegs (Comnena, 1969, p. 122-123). This campaign proved highly significant. As a result, Byzantine control over the Danube was restored. Basil Apokapes and Nicephorus Botaneiates were appointed to

govern the cities along the river. Although the Pechenegs, still living among the Bulgarian population, acknowledged Byzantine superiority, their nomadic lifestyle led them to leave the assigned areas and continue raiding nearby regions (Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 138).

Following these events, the Balkans once again became a zone of movement for nomadic Turkic tribes. One such tribe was the Uzes, who had reached the Dnieper region around 1048. They had been pushed into this area by the Cumans, who had been active along the Don River since the 1030s. From the 1060s onward, the entire steppe region of southern Rus came under Cuman control and became known as Deshti Kipchak. Pushed by the Cumans, some Uzes settled near the Ros River, while a larger group moved toward the Lower Danube and joined the Pechenegs. However, in addition to Cuman pressure, tensions likely arose between the Uzes and the Pechenegs. As a result, in 1064, the Uzes were forced to cross the Danube and enter the Balkans (Kurat, 2016, p. 179-180; Günaydın, 2020, p. 114-115; Paroń, 2021, p. 302). Although not detailed, Attaleiates provides information on this migration. The Greek historian states that the Uzes (Οὔζοι), said to number six hundred thousand, crossed the Danube by boat, defeated the Bulgarians and other tribes who tried to block the crossings, and captured many prisoners (Attaleiates, 2012, p. 153). Upon hearing of this, Byzantine Emperor Constantine Ducas (1059–1067) became extremely anxious. Realizing he could not resist the powerful warriors of the steppe, he sent envoys with valuable gifts and negotiated peace (Vasilyevskiy, 1972, p. 139). In addition, severe cold and disease, along with Pecheneg attacks, had greatly weakened the Uzes. The surviving Uzes were settled in Macedonia by Emperor Ducas. After the Uzes, control of the Danube returned to the Pechenegs, who in 1067 launched new attacks on Byzantine territory (Kurat, 2016, p. 181-182).

After Byzantium's defeat by the Seljuks at Manzikert in 1071, the Pechenegs took advantage of the resulting internal unrest in the empire. They used this opportunity to attack the Slavs and Romans living along the Danube. These two groups found the imperial financial support insufficient and made an agreement with the Pechenegs to revolt against Byzantium. In response, a Slav named Nestor was sent to Dristra to suppress the rebellion. That region was under the control of a Pecheneg chief named Tatos, which allowed the Pechenegs to move freely along the Danube. When Nestor realized that Byzantium had no real authority in the area, he reached an agreement with Tatos and betrayed the empire. Together with the Pechenegs, he began preparing to march on

Constantinople (Yücel, 2020b, p. 246-247). At the time, Emperor Michael Parapinaces (1071–1078) was elderly, so administration was in the hands of the eunuch Nicephorus. The people had grown weary of Nicephorus's despotic rule. The Bogomils, especially those living nearby, were deeply discontent. Nestor exploited this unrest and drew them to his side. In 1074, with the support of the Pechenegs, he besieged Constantinople. During the siege, the Pechenegs were sent to the emperor to negotiate. Likely due to disputes over the gifts they received during these talks, tensions arose between the Pechenegs and Nestor. As a result, Nestor lifted the siege (Kurat, 2016, p. 185).

A few years later, in 1078, public dissatisfaction with the rule of Michael Parapinaces reached its peak. At the same time, Nicephorus Bryennius and Nicephorus Botaniates declared their claims to the imperial throne with the support of the Pechenegs (Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 148). However, the Pechenegs had no intention of remaining loyal to any one side. At first, they supported the legitimate rule of Emperor Michael and marched against Bryennius. They entered Macedonia, plundered widely, and besieged Adrianopolis. Realizing he could not defeat them, Bryennius chose negotiation. He managed to persuade the Pechenegs to withdraw from Adrianopolis. Later, when Nicephorus Botaniates (1078–1081) succeeded in taking the throne as emperor, Bryennius gathered the Pechenegs who had been settled in Byzantine territory and marched on Constantinople. The siege was brief. His troops soon withdrew and returned to Macedonia (Kurat, 2016, p. 186-187). To eliminate Bryennius, Emperor Nicephorus sent one of his key commanders, Alexius Comnenus, who would later become emperor himself. Alexius advanced with Turkish and Latin mercenaries (Bryennio, 1975, p. 264). Bryennius's Pecheneg-backed army met Alexius's forces in Thrace near Calabria. In the early phase of the battle, Pecheneg units commanded by Bryennius on the army's left wing gained the upper hand (Bryennio, 1975, p. 266 ff.). However, because the Pechenegs moved too soon to plunder, their disorder disrupted the army's formation. Alexius took advantage of this and routed the enemy (Comnena, 1969, p. 42). After Bryennius's defeat, another figure, Nicephorus Basilakios, commander of Dyrrachium, rebelled against Emperor Nicephorus. Basilakios hoped to use the Pechenegs against the emperor. But when the Pechenegs heard that Basilakios had been defeated near Thessaloniki, they changed course. They headed instead toward Adrianopolis and attacked the homes outside the city walls. In this event from

1078, the Cumans appeared as allies of the Pechenegs (Zonaras, 2008, p. 155; Yücel, 2020b, p. 252).

During this period, the Byzantine Empire was experiencing internal turmoil. The Bogomils, especially those living in and around Philippopolis, posed a serious threat to the empire. To prevent the spread of this sect, the Byzantines relocated many of its members to Bulgaria. They intended to use them as a buffer against attacks coming from the Danube region. However, the sect unexpectedly gained followers in Bulgaria. Between 1078 and 1081, a Bogomil named Leka, originally of Greek origin, formed a family alliance with a Pecheneg chief. With their support, he launched a rebellion against the emperor in the region between Sofia and Naissos. Although Emperor Nicephorus reached an agreement with Leka, he could not stop the Pecheneg attacks. As a result, the emperor sent Alexius Comnenus to deal with the Pechenegs. Through successful maneuvers, Alexius cleared Thrace of their presence. This was probably the last campaign Alexius conducted against the Pechenegs before becoming emperor (Kurat, 2016, p. 189; Yücel, 2020b, p. 253-254; Meško, 2023, p. 54).

Emperor Alexius Comnenus's Struggle with the Pechenegs in the Balkans

Alexius Comnenus had proven himself not only through his military victories against the enemies of Byzantium but also as a skilled politician. After securing the necessary ground for his claim to the throne, he was crowned emperor of Byzantium on 4 April 1081 (Ostrogorski, 2006, 323-324). He possessed sharp intelligence and had a strong talent for public speaking, which he enjoyed displaying. His political cunning was shaped in large part by his experience in the imperial court, where he learned to understand people. He was highly determined in pursuing his goals and never left anything to chance (Chalandon, 1900, p. 51). The new emperor faced a serious challenge. The empire had grown weak and lost much of its defensive power. It was under attack from the Normans, the Pechenegs, and the Seljuks. Therefore, Emperor Alexius had to first eliminate the activities of the Normans and then confront the other threats to the empire (Ostrogorski, 2006, p. 330; Meško, 2023, p. 89; Kozlov, 2014, p. 84).

At the time of this change of throne in the Byzantine court, the Pechenegs were settled in the plains along the Danube and in the region known as Hundred Hills. Some of them were likely living east of the

Danube as well. One Pecheneg chief, Tatos, ruled Dristra. Another, Satazas, controlled Bitzina on the Danube. Anna Comnena also mentions a figure named Sesthlavos among the Pecheneg leaders. Based on this Slavic name, it is likely that the Pechenegs lived together with Slavic communities in these cities. From these regions, the Pechenegs launched many raids across the Danube and even captured some fortresses. During peacetime, they cultivated the land and grew millet and wheat (Comnena, 1969, p. 212; Kurat, 2016, p. 197).

Emperor Alexius carefully assessed the situation. He first eliminated the Norman threat, then turned his attention to the Pechenegs. The Norman campaign clearly influenced his decision to fight the Pechenegs. During that campaign, the Byzantine army had included 2,800 Bogomils led by Ksanta and Kleon. The Bogomils abandoned Alexius at a critical moment in battle, leaving him alone on the battlefield. In this difficult situation, Alexius managed to win the battle with Seljuk support. After returning to the capital, he severely punished the Bogomils for their betrayal. Unable to endure these punishments, the Bogomils chose to revolt. One of those affected by Alexius's harsh policies was a Bogomil named Traulos, who served in the imperial court. Influenced by Bogomils who had come to Constantinople and shared their suffering, Traulos took action. He gathered many followers and revolted in 1084 at the fortress of Beliatoba. He also formed an alliance with the Pechenegs against Emperor Alexius. To strengthen this alliance, he married a Pecheneg woman. This gave him their full support for the war he planned to wage against the emperor in 1086 (Yücel, 2020b, p. 258-259; Chalandon, 1900, p. 105-108). Emperor Alexius learned of these developments. He sent the Western Domestikos Pakourianus, a skilled commander, along with the brave soldier Branas, to confront the rebels. Pakourianus encountered the Pechenegs near the mountain passes while they were camped at Beliatoba. But upon seeing their numerical superiority, he avoided battle to prevent unnecessary losses. Branas was disturbed by this decision. Not wanting to be seen as a coward, Pakourianus ordered his troops to attack the Pechenegs. The sight of the large Pecheneg force terrified the Byzantine soldiers. In the fierce battle that followed, many Byzantine soldiers were killed. Branas was badly wounded. Pakourianus was killed on the field, and the remaining soldiers fled in all directions (Comnena, 1969, p. 212-213; Chalandon, 1900, p. 108-109).

When Emperor Alexius learned of the heavy defeat suffered by his army, he mourned deeply for the fallen. The death of Magistros Pakourianus affected him profoundly. He immediately summoned Taticius, gave him a substantial sum of money, and sent him to Adrianopolis. He also instructed him to form an army. The emperor provided this money so that Taticius could hire mercenaries to fight the Pechenegs. Alexius also ordered Humbertopoulos to leave a garrison in Cyzicus and join Taticius along with the Celts. Upon seeing the arrival of these reinforcements, Taticius advanced straight toward the Pechenegs. Near Philippopolis, he saw that the Pechenegs were returning from a raiding campaign with heavy plunder. He quickly divided his army in two and ordered one group to attack. As the Pechenegs returned from looting, they saw the approaching Byzantine troops and hurriedly rejoined their main force by the banks of the Eurois River. A very intense battle followed. The Pechenegs were defeated. Taticius seized their plunder and returned to Philippopolis in triumph (Comnena, 1969, p. 213-214; Chalandon, 1900, p. 109-110).

While stationed in Philippopolis, Taticius began planning the details of a new campaign against the Pechenegs. Having previously witnessed their large numbers, he sent reconnaissance units in all directions to gather more accurate information on their movements. These units reported that a large Pecheneg army was concentrated near Beliatoba and that the surrounding areas had been plundered. Upon receiving this news, Taticius decided to wait for the Pechenegs to come to him. He realized he could not confront such a large enemy force directly. This put him in a difficult and humiliating position. Despite his distress, he chose to fight. At that moment, he learned that the Pechenegs were already on their way to engage him. He quickly began preparations for battle and crossed the Eurois River with his troops. He then organized his army. The Pechenegs, for their part, arranged their forces in their traditional style and showed a willingness to fight. In reality, both sides were reluctant and feared the outcome. Only the Latin troops showed eagerness for battle, but Taticius restrained them. As an experienced soldier, he wanted to observe how things would unfold. Both armies waited for the other to make the first move. For two days, they stood facing each other. At dawn on the third day, the Pechenegs began to retreat. Taticius pursued them with his men but failed to catch up. The Pechenegs crossed Sidera, and Taticius withdrew with his army to Adrianopolis. He left the Celts there, dismissed the rest of his troops, and returned to Constantinople himself (Comnena, 1969, p. 214-215).

The war against the Pechenegs resumed the following year, in the spring of 1087. That same year, the Pecheneg army led by Tzelgu had crossed into the upper Danube valley. This army, numbering around eighty thousand, included various steppe peoples as well as the deposed Hungarian King Solomon (1063–1074). After pillaging Charioupolis and the surrounding area, the Pechenegs set up camp at Skotinos. The Byzantine army did not appear until the invading forces reached Charioupolis. Once informed of their location, the Byzantine army under Nicolas Maurocatalon moved and positioned itself at Pamphilon. From there, it continued to Koule, a location along the road to Constantinople. The Pechenegs followed behind. At dawn, Tzelgu gathered his troops to confront Maurocatalon. In response, Maurocatalon climbed a ridge overlooking the plain with a few select soldiers to observe Pecheneg movements. Seeing that the Pecheneg army was extremely large, he returned to his camp and consulted with Joannaces and other commanders about whether or not to engage in battle. They decided to fight. Maurocatalon divided his army into three sections and gave the signal for attack. In the ensuing battle, which resulted in the deaths of many Pecheneg soldiers, Tzelgu himself was mortally wounded and died. The surviving Pechenegs fled but drowned in the river between Skotinos and Koule. Victorious, the Byzantine army returned to Constantinople (Comnena, 1969, p. 216-217; Chalandon, 1900, p. 112-113).

Despite suffering a heavy defeat, the Pechenegs returned to the Danube after being expelled from Macedonia and the area around Philippopolis. There, they established a new camp and continued to raid Byzantine lands. When Emperor Alexius heard of this, he refused to accept their presence on imperial territory. He feared they would once again cross the mountain passes and cause even greater destruction. For this reason, he ordered immediate preparations for a new campaign. By mid-June 1087, the Byzantine army had set out and arrived in Adrianopolis. From there, it marched to Lardea, located between Diampolis and Goloë. At Lardea, the command of the army was given to George Euphorbenus, who was sent by sea to Dristra. Emperor Alexius waited for forty days to assemble an army strong enough to confront the Pechenegs. During this time, he held consultations with his generals and reaffirmed his decision to go to war. The emperor could not stop the Pechenegs' repeated raids and also failed to sow division among them. He had made several attempts but was unable to persuade even a single Pecheneg to secretly side with him (Comnena, 1969, p. 218-219; Kurat,

2016, p. 203). However, Nicephorus Bryennius and Gregory Maurocat-
acalon opposed fighting the Pechenegs in the region of Paristrion. They
persuaded the emperor to cross the Haemus Mountains and confront the
enemy closer to the Danube (Comnena, 1969, p. 219). The Pechenegs
soon learned that Euphorbenus's army was advancing by sea along the
Danube while Emperor Alexius was approaching by land. Realizing
they could not fight on two fronts, they sent a delegation of 150 men to
negotiate peace. They promised that if their conditions were accepted,
they would support the emperor with 30,000 horsemen in wartime. But
Emperor Alexius was suspicious of the Pecheneg envoys. He believed
their peace offer was a ruse and feared a greater threat if he agreed to
their terms. Using Byzantine cunning, Alexius had the envoys arrested.
The captured Pecheneg delegation was handed over to the eunuch Leo
Nicerites, who was ordered to escort them to Constantinople. On their
way, near Little Nicaea, the Pechenegs attacked their inattentive guards
at night, killed them, and escaped. They used hidden paths and returned
to their own people. Nicerites, barely escaping with three others, re-
joined Emperor Alexius at Goloë (Comnena, 1969, p. 220-221).

When Emperor Alexius learned what had happened, he feared
that the escaped Pecheneg envoys might stir their kinsmen and lead a
large army against him. Determined to act first, he crossed Sidera with
his troops and set up camp near the Bitzina River, which flowed down
from the neighboring hills. Many of his men who had gone far to graze
their animals were cut down or captured. At dawn he hurried toward
Pliscoba and climbed a hill called Simeon where the Pechenegs held
their kenesh council. Those who had gone out for provisions there met
the same fate as their comrades. The next day Alexius reached a river
near Dristra, left his equipment, and made camp. The Pechenegs
launched a surprise attack from the rear on the emperor's tent, killed
several light armed soldiers, and captured some fiercely fighting Bo-
gomils. Confusion spread and galloping horses overturned the em-
peror's tent. Alexius with a group of soldiers drove the attackers away
from the tent, mounted his horse, and restored order. He then marched
on Dristra, surrounded the city, and entered through a breach in the
walls. Two of Dristra's fortresses were still held by relatives of the
Pecheneg chief Tatos, who had departed to seek support from the Cu-
mans in order to attack Byzantium. As he left, Tatos addressed his kins-
men with these words:

I know quite well that the emperor will besiege this town. When
you see him marching on to the plain, make sure you seize the ridge

that dominates it before he can do so. It's the finest position of all. Make your camp there. In that way he'll have no free hand in besieging the garrison; he'll be forced to look out for his rear, watching for trouble from you. Meanwhile you keep up incessant attacks on him, all day and all night, with relays of men (Comnena, 1969, p. 222-223).

Emperor Alexius was forced to withdraw under the terms. He lifted the siege of the fortresses and left Dristra. He camped near the Danube and consulted his commanders on attacking the Pechenegs. Palaeologus and Gregory Maurocatalon advised delaying the battle. They also suggested capturing the stronghold of Great Peristhlaba near the river. They believed it was impregnable. From there they could ambush the Pechenegs. The emperor approved this plan. He entrusted his tent and arms to George Koutzomites and sent them to Betrinos. He warned his troops not to sleep or light fires during the night. At dawn he broke camp and formed his army for battle. Nomadic Turkic tribes such as the Uzes were among his forces. The Pechenegs also took up battle formations. They set ambushes and used their covered wagons as shields. They advanced in detachments, firing arrows from a distance. They brought women and children with them. When the Pecheneg chiefs commanding thirty six thousand men appeared, the Byzantine troops knew they could not stand the numbers and began to flee. The battle was fierce. The Pechenegs won decisively. Leo, son of former emperor Romanus Diogenes, was badly wounded in the fighting (Comnena, 1969, p. 223-225; Kurat, 2016, p. 208-210). Although Alexius fought bravely, he could not hold off the attacks and withdrew with difficulty to Goloë. Palaeologus fell from his horse while fleeing. He found another mount and kept fighting the Pechenegs along the way. He reached Constantinople at last (Comnena, 1969, p. 227-228).¹

Returning to the accounts of Anna Comnena, Emperor Alexius did not stay long in Goloë. At dawn the next day, he moved to Beroë. The emperor stayed there for a while. His aim was to ransom the captives (Comnena, 1969, p. 227). The Pecheneg chiefs wanted to kill the

¹ There is no consensus among researchers about the exact date of this war. According to Kurat, Vasilyevskiy stated that the heavy defeat of Byzantium occurred after 20 July 1088. He also noted that Dieter opposed this view. Kurat rejects Chalandon's claim that Emperor Alexius made peace with the Pechenegs in 1089. He believes the war took place in the autumn of 1087. At the beginning of that autumn, the Pechenegs defeated Byzantium and were then besieged by the Cumans. After overcoming the Cuman threat, the Pechenegs captured Philippopolis. They plundered all of Thrace and even threatened the capital Constantinople. The emperor was forced to make peace with them (Kurat, 2016, p. 212).

prisoners. But most of the Pecheneg warriors opposed this. They preferred to sell the captives for ransom. This view was eventually accepted. Mellisenus, who was also captured by the Pechenegs, provoked them and wrote letters to the emperor to prevent the captives from being sold to others. At that time the emperor was still in Beroë. Upon receiving the news, he had a large amount of money brought from Constantinople and ransomed his men from the Pechenegs (Comnena, 1969, p. 228).

While these events were unfolding, Tatos, the Lord of Dristra mentioned earlier, reached the Danube with the Cumans he had called for help. When the Cumans saw the priceless spoils and captives held by the Pechenegs, they said to them:

We have left our homes. We have come a great distance to help you, with the purpose of sharing your danger and your victory. Now that we have contributed all that we could, it is not right to send us away empty-handed. It was not from choice that we arrived too late for the war, nor are we to be blamed for that: it was the emperor's fault — he took the offensive. Hither therefore divide up all the booty in equal shares with us, or instead of allies you will find us ready to fight you (Comnena, 1969, p. 228-229).

The Pechenegs rejected the demands of the Cumans. Not getting the answer they hoped for, the Cumans could not tolerate the Pechenegs' attitude. A fierce battle broke out between the two sides. In this battle, the Pechenegs were defeated by the Cumans. Some barely escaped and fled to Ozolimne. There they were besieged by the Cumans for a long time. However, the Cumans lifted the siege and withdrew due to lack of supplies. Their intention was to attack the Pechenegs again after restocking (Comnena, 1969, p. 229). It seems that the conflict between the Cumans and the Pechenegs prevented their planned attack on Byzantine territory.

Emperor Alexius, who had ransomed his soldiers from the Pechenegs, gathered his troops in Beroë and armed all his men. The Count of Flanders, on his way back from Jerusalem, met the emperor there. He pledged loyalty and promised to send 500 men as auxiliary troops. Then the emperor marched toward Adrianopolis in 1088 with his new forces. Meanwhile, the Pechenegs had set up camp at Marcella, between Goloë and Diampolis. Fearing a Cuman attack, the emperor sent Synesios to propose peace to the Pechenegs. His aim was to meet their demands and prevent them from crossing the Danube, thus securing the region (Comnena, 1969, p. 229-230). Synesios succeeded in reaching an agreement. Around that time, Cuman forces approached the

Pechenegs fully armed. Not finding them at their previous location, they crossed the Balkans and arrived at Marcella. Upon arrival, they learned of the agreement between the emperor and the Pechenegs. They requested passage through the straits to fight the Pechenegs. The emperor declined, as he did not need their help at that time. However, by offering them valuable gifts, he avoided provoking their hostility. After receiving the gifts, the Cumans departed peacefully. But when the Pechenegs heard of the gifts, they grew bold. They broke the agreement and began pillaging the nearby regions (Comnena, 1969, p. 230).

Synesios informed Emperor Alexius that the Pechenegs had broken the agreement and launched attacks. Their siege of Philippopolis caused the emperor great concern. He lacked the military strength to face them in open battle. Therefore, he decided to use ambush and light skirmish tactics to weaken the enemy. He identified areas likely to be attacked and reached them before the Pechenegs. There he used hit and run tactics and ambushes. Eventually, both sides confronted each other at Cypsella. The emperor feared a Pecheneg attack on Constantinople, as the reinforcements he awaited had not arrived. His forces were too small to defeat the numerous Pechenegs. He offered peace once more. The Pechenegs accepted the proposal. However, the peace did not last long. They broke the agreement again, left Cypsella, and occupied Taurocomos. They spent the winter there and plundered nearby villages (Comnena, 1969, p. 231).

At the beginning of spring 1090, the Pechenegs left Taurocomos and moved toward Charioupolis. At that time, Emperor Alexius was in Bulgarophygon. Without hesitation, he prepared an elite unit known as the Archontopuli. He ordered them to attack the Pechenegs from the rear. The Archontopuli set out in full order to carry out this command. However, the Pechenegs had already hidden at the foot of a hill and were watching them. When they saw the unit advancing rapidly toward the wagons, they launched a fierce attack. In the brutal battle that followed, 300 Archontopuli were killed. The emperor fell into deep mourning over their deaths (Comnena 1969, p. 231-232; Chalandon, 1900, p. 125). After this victory, the Pechenegs moved from Charioupolis to Aspra and destroyed everything along the way. In response, Emperor Alexius returned to his former strategy. He reached Aspra ahead of them, likely intending to use hit and run tactics again, as his forces were too small for direct combat. Knowing the Pechenegs usually searched for food at dawn, he summoned Taticius. He instructed him to take the bravest young soldiers, all the Latins, and his personal guards.

They were to observe Pecheneg movements closely just before dawn. The plan was to strike when the Pechenegs moved far from their camp in search of food. Taticius followed the instructions and killed 300 Pechenegs, taking many prisoners (Comnena, 1969, p. 232; Chalandon, 1900, p. 125).

At that time, Emperor Alexius was fighting the Pechenegs in the Balkans while also trying to stop the Seljuks, who were advancing westward in Anatolia and plundering Byzantine lands. Surrounded on two fronts, Byzantium could not resist them alone. For this reason, the emperor turned to Western Europe and the Papacy to seek help (Kurat, 2016, p. 233). In a letter sent to Pope Urban II (1088–1099), the emperor wrote the following:

Thus in the name of God and all Christian saints we beg you warriors of Christ whoever you may be come to the aid of me and the Roman Christians. We entrust ourselves to your hands. We prefer the rule of you Latins over the yoke of pagans. Let Constantinople belong to you not to the Turks or Pechenegs. The holy relics that adorn the city of Constantine should be as precious to you as they are to us. The instruments of our salvation such as items related to the torture and death of the Savior the crown of thorns placed on His head the reed given to Him a fragment of the cross He was crucified on and others must not fall into the hands of pagans. These also include countless sacred relics belonging to the apostles and martyrs the head of John the Baptist the uncorrupted body of the first martyr Stephen. Their loss would be a great disaster and curse for Christians. If unexpectedly these Christian treasures do not move you I remind you of the countless riches and precious items in our capital. Some churches in Constantinople have such wealth in silver gold pearls gemstones and silk that they could adorn the churches of the entire world. The treasures of Hagia Sophia surpass them all and are only comparable to those of Solomon's Temple. There is no need to mention the countless treasures hidden in the chambers of former emperors and Roman nobles. So hurry come with all your people and give your utmost effort so these treasures do not fall into the hands of the Turks and Pechenegs. In addition to these countless treasures on imperial lands an army of sixty thousand soldiers is expected to arrive daily. The soldiers under my command are not trustworthy either for they too might be tempted by the hope of shared plunder in this chaos. Therefore act while there is still time so that the Christian Empire and more importantly the Holy Sepulchre do not slip away from you. In doing so you will not face punishment but receive eternal reward in heaven (Vasilyevskiy, 1872, p. 273-274).

But Emperor Alexius's letter did not prove very effective. The dukes who were to join the Crusade had views quite different from

those of Pope Urban II. Their opinions on the Crusade had formed independently of the pope. Although the pope's call for the Crusade was well received among knights from Flanders Normandy and France it overshadowed the call made by Emperor Alexius (Yücel, 2020b, p. 312). Judging from the content of the emperor's letter it is clear that the Byzantines wanted the Crusade to be launched against the Pecheneg and Seljuk attacks. On the other hand according to Anna Comnena the Turkish lord Tzakhas who had learned of the emperor's troubles in the West and his conflicts with the Pechenegs began to act against Byzantium by establishing a fleet (Comnena, 1969, p. 233). Tzakhas had been one of the Turkish captives brought to Constantinople in his youth. He lived in the Byzantine court until the accession of Emperor Alexius and managed to escape to Anatolia at that time. Apparently this Turkish lord who knew Byzantium closely had made up his mind to undermine its maritime trade (Chalandon, 1900, p. 126-127). Tzakhas did not stop there and also formed an alliance with the Pechenegs against Byzantium. When these allied forces besieged Constantinople by land and sea in 1090 Emperor Alexius was severely cornered (Ostrogorski, 2006, p. 332).

In 1090 and 1091 Constantinople endured an anxious winter under siege from both land and sea. Emperor Alexius realized that he could not fight alone against the Pechenegs Tzakhas and the Seljuks. Therefore he needed an external ally against the Pechenegs who constantly threatened the capital. Meanwhile Seljuk raids in Anatolia had reached the shores of the Bosphorus making it essential to secure an ally for the empire. The emperor quickly sent Byzantine diplomats to the north of the Black Sea to negotiate with the Cumans and succeeded in forming an alliance (Kurat, 2016, p. 215). The Cumans likely accepted due to their earlier hostility with the Pechenegs. The Cumans long awaited in the palace arrived in Byzantine lands in the spring of 1091. On 29 April 1091 a bloody battle took place at Lebunion between the allied Byzantine Cuman forces and the Pechenegs. The Pechenegs suffered a devastating defeat. Anna Comnena explain this with these words: "a whole people comprising myriads of men women and children was blotted out in one single day" (Comnena, 1969, p. 259; Ostrogorski, 2006, p. 333). This victory brought some relief to Constantinople. It also ruined the plans of Tzakhas (Ostrogorski 2006: 333). Furthermore the defeat at Lebunion marked the end of the Pechenegs as a powerful people. Anna Comnena hardly mentions them again after this event. Those who survived the battle likely fled to the Danube region

and the captives taken by Byzantium were settled in Macedonia. The Moglena region in Macedonia became a significant Pecheneg settlement. The Byzantine chronicler Zonaras even referred to them as the Moglena Pechenegs (Kurat, 2016, p. 269-270).

Conclusion

It appears that Byzantine Pecheneg relations had become quite tense by the reign of Emperor Alexius. Especially during his rule, Pecheneg attacks on Byzantium reached a serious level and nearly led to the capture of Constantinople. During this period, the emperor was surrounded from the Balkans, the north of the Black Sea, and Anatolia. Emperor Alexius analyzed the situation well and managed to maintain a balanced policy both domestically and abroad. The events show that holding the Balkans under Byzantine control was of vital importance. This explains why Emperor Alexius shaped his policy in that direction. The events also reveal that Byzantium was mostly in a defensive position at the time. While fighting the Pechenegs, Emperor Alexius also allied with the Cumans. This move prevented a possible alliance against him. In fact, he had fought the Pechenegs even before ascending the throne and continued these efforts with determination after becoming emperor. With Cuman support, he struck a final blow to his fierce enemies and saved the empire from a grave danger. Consequently, the Pechenegs ceased to pose a threat to Byzantium in the Balkans. Undoubtedly, this outcome was the result of Emperor Alexius's military and diplomatic capabilities. These prolonged and uninterrupted conflicts in the Balkans also had local repercussions. The settled population was adversely affected by the wars, suffering not only from loss of life but also from forced migration and resettlement across different regions.

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Faces of Women Victims of Inequality in the Prose of Alexander Kazbegi

Abstract: *The article discusses how the faces of women victims of inequality and the process of their evolution are reflected in the works of Alexander Kazbegi. The issue of women's inequality has been introduced into Georgian literature since the 1860s. It is directly related to the establishment of realism. Initially, the faces of rightless, unequal women are obscure, because the female characters with other functions and destinations dominate next to them, but over time these faces become stronger and culminate in the works of Alexander Kazbegi. The main characters of the mountain cycle stories "Elguja" and "Priest" reviewed by us are women with tragic fate in an unequal position in the society and family. They fail to raise their voices against injustice and, therefore, obey their fate silently. There are several reasons for this: socio-political situation and the factor of external forces, public order and psychology, traditions and customs of the society, the predominant position of a man in the family and society. "The Condemned" is a work reflecting the life of a city, it is autobiographical. One of the main characters of the novel Mari is a different character. She is a representative of an aristocratic circle, an educated woman who at some point in her life raises her voice against inequality and fights for personal freedom. Mari is a morally perfect person. A lot of things are unacceptable for her in real life. Although Mari also tragically dies and becomes a victim of the society of which she herself is a member, she is a progressive figure compared to other female characters.*

Keywords: *Woman; inequality; social environment; tragic ending.*

For Georgian literature of the 19th century, the images of women are mainly typical, who were ideal mothers and spouses, and if necessary, they sacrifice themselves and their children for the happiness and freedom of their homeland. This type of character was heroized as a woman who must elevate national self-awareness.

Since the 60s of the 19th century, when the social order changes and women emerged in the society, writers have been describing in their writings the lives of rightless, unequal women, both in urban and rural areas. In this case, we consider the literary works of Kazbegi "as a certain complex of socio-class aspirations and feelings" (Kapanelli, 1928,

p. 14), and the unequal position of female characters depicted in this context in the family and society.

When discussing the works of Kazbegi, the following circumstances should be taken into account, “Despite the great spiritual kinship with Romanticism, the basis for works of Kazbegi is realistic” (Andronikashvili, 1984, p. 110). He tells about his heroes with a tragic sense of real reality. “He explained intimate feelings on social background, presented nature in connection with lives of human beings” (Vardoshvili, 2017, p. 671). They often talk about the presence of neoromantic tendencies in his creation. When creating works, Kazbegi relies on three sources: historical facts, ethnographic foundations and folk material. He is one of the prominent representatives of critical realism, who reflects objective reality and not desirable one.

It is also important that in one of the small records, called “Woman’s Freedom” (Kazbegi, 1950, 235), Kazbegi tells the story of a gathering in Switzerland attended by several Georgian men and women. They spoke about women’s freedom, however, Kazbegi does not convey the content of the conversation.

Many stories have a woman’s name as their title chosen by the writer, such as: “Eleonora”, “Tsitska”, “Fati”, “Eliso”, “Tsitsia”. Where the writer tells us about the tragic fate of a woman, her unequal position in the family and society. They fail to raise their voices against injustice and, therefore, obey their fate. However, deep down they feel their inconsolable situation. The writer seems to want to wake them up, to inflame a sense of protest, to break their silence.

The story “Elguja” has a political nature. It is based on historical facts depicting the 1804 Mtiuleti rebellion and clearly shows the struggle of the Caucasian people against Russia. The action takes place in presence of the love between Circassian Mzagho and the Mokheve Elguja. We should note that “the characters of Kazbegi are the children of different peoples living in the Caucasus. They differ both in their ethnicity and religion. Kazbegi specifies their different religious beliefs and ethnic origins in his writings, but when he talks about universal human values such as friendship, love, struggle for freedom, there is no limit to the relationship between his heroes, they become the carriers of one idea” (Vardoshvili, 2014, p. 76).

At the beginning of the work, it reads: “Makhamet admitted that that woman was a Circassian and that she had been taken by Kist person to the Ossetians for sale” (Kazbegi, 1976, 18). In this case, the work

does not show Mzagho's desire or necessity to protest. She silently obeys fate and waits for her own verdict.

Elguja and Mzagho fell in love with each other at the first sight. Elguja decided, "I will go, show my bravery, make a name for myself, serve the community, and when I return home safely, I will ask Gagi for that woman" (Kazbegi, 1976, p. 24), he gets refused by Gagi and kidnaps Mzagho. A woman who seemingly obeys her fate will run away with her true love. "In the heroes of Kazbegi, love appears quickly and easily, this love is pure and selfless, the ultimate goal of which is to start a family" (Vardoshvili, 2014, p. 65). Kazbegi portrays Mzagho's nature, his inner world in an interesting way: "A Circassian prayed, but it was surprising that her request did not express a desire for the death of one person and the salvation of another; she asked for everything to end peacefully, for no one to die, and she would wish joy, happiness, and peace to all with her heart" (Kazbegi, 1976, p. 43). It is the highest expression of humanism and human love that characterizes the heroes of Kazbegi.

The question is: why should individuals like Mzagho not have the desire to express their protest? There are several reasons for this: 1. Socio-political situation and factor of external power. 2. Public order and the social psychology of the society of which they are members. 3. Traditions and customs in which they were raised. 4. The predominant condition of a man in the family and society.

In the letter of an ethnographic nature "Mokheves and their lives", Kazbegi describes the condition of a woman in Khevi¹: "Among Mokheves, the woman is in a different situation than the neighboring peoples around them. Here the woman is not so hidden, and participation in work remains unacceptable as in Ossetians and Circassians. Nor do they have the same privileged status as in Kartli. A Mokheve woman plows, sows and harvests together with men, and her duty is also to do housework, such as baking bread, making food, and sewing for men" (Kazbegi, 1950, p. 36). As we can see, women had to work hard, but they considered it natural and fair.

¹ Khevi is a historical-geographic area in north-eastern Georgia. It is included in the modern-day Kazbegi district, Mtskheta-Mtianeti region (mkhare). Located on the northern slopes of the Greater Caucasus mountains, it comprises three gorges of the rivers Truso, Tergi (Terek) and Snostsq'ali. People of Khevi were called Mokheves (Mokhevians). History, traditions and lifestyle of the Mokheves are very similar to those of other mountaineers of northeastern Georgia.

It is noteworthy that the stories of Kazbegi are often compared to the narratives of Prosper Merimee, the works of Exotic Cycle are meant, and to Shakespeare's work – with the intensity of the expression of love. The issue of women's inequality is clearly seen in "Priest" by Kazbegi. The scientific literature notes that the image of the active Priest in this work derives from V. Hugo "Misérables". The image of Myriel became a paradigm in Georgian prose of the 19th century.

It should be noted that historically in Georgia there was no distinction between men and women in terms of rights. Rustaveli magnificently expressed the equality of men and women in the 12th century in his "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"².

The work of Kazbegi shows how the attitude towards a woman has changed with the breakdown of the community, the change of social order and the establishment of Russian domination. "The high notion of a woman degraded by the laws of external force and reduced to the concept of a woman born for entertainment, to quench the lust of men" (Benashvili, 1948, 23), which is clearly seen in "The Priest".

"The Priest" was published in 1885 in the journal "Iveria" and immediately attracted public attention. The plot of the work is as follows: one of the main characters of the story, a fifteen-year-old Makvala, is lovelessly betrothed to Gela Goderdzishvili, who is in the service of Russian reign. Onise, who is madly in love with Makvala, she loves Onise, too, although she withholds herself. In the end, they will try to escape, but fail and the community will cut them off. She will take refuge in the forest, and one day, while frozen and on the verge of death, the priest Onofre finds and shelters her. Onise kills her in the Priest's hut. Onofre does not reveal the secret of Onise's communion, and dies in prison as the culprit. Gela Goderdzishvili also dies having been stoned by the community.

Kazbegi sympathizes with Makvala, who is in rightless and unequal position and characterizes her situation in the beginning of the story: "A woman who was wretched by fate did not love her husband, but since the wheel of fate turned in this way, she obeyed her fate, and became a faithful wife, cared for the family and defended the honor" (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 631). Makvala endures her situation in silence. The basis of their family life is inequality, because the spouse demanded complete obedience from her, often scolding and making the woman cry, so that Makvala did not fall out of habit of obedience.

² *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a Georgian medieval epic poem, written in the 12th or 13th century by Shota Rustaveli (Rayfield 2013).

The dire situation in Makvala has led to a sense of protest, she flees from the house. They convene a community assembly to discuss her issue at the Holy Trinity Cathedral. The community assembly takes into account that the woman was forcefully married and decided to divorce them. However, this decision was not subject to the law introduced by Russia and Makvala was brought back to the family. In this case, it appears that the decision made by the community assembly is more humane, it protects to the interest of the woman and democratic principles than the existing law, according to which it was impossible to separate husband and wife.

It is interesting to see what kind of psychology Makvala develops. After some time, Makvala and Onise meet again. Her entire life passes in the woman's minds. Kazbegi writes: "The woman remembered the bitter and unbearable moments of being forcibly married, remembered the nights spent in tears, remembered tramping on the decision of the community and forcibly settling down with her husband; bitter and sad days, when he had to humbly carry out the command of a willful man and to bow her head before his demand; she remembered and her heart sank, when these memories did not promise anything for the future either" (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 645). Despite the experience, the woman decides to forget about Onise, subconsciously feeling that this could bring misfortune to them. She tries to convince herself that she doesn't love Onise anymore. She is as if psychologically ready to remain a victim of inequality, but the struggle of Makvala with herself ends in vain. After each sight of Onise, the feeling of love in her being intensifies. Kazbegi tells us: "The first days of their love passed with the incredible pleasure. This is the spring of man's life! It comes is so hard, so rare that when it comes to somebody, they forget everyone and everything" (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 679).

It seems to be a turning point in Makvala's personality. The lovers decide to flee the village, start a happy life, forget about the past. Onise sells his house and the flock of sheep, however, his heart is broken that he should leave his village and relatives, but he gives up everything for the sake of his loved one.

Makvala suffers from double personality and at the crucial moment when they have to run away, she holds back as if some internal force is holding her back. We think she finds it difficult to overcome the psychological barrier, the reason of which is the unequal environment in which she lives. Makvala does not have the strength to fight for her own happiness to the end, she cannot give up her family, cannot

start a new life. Gela shoots Onise with a rifle, and the pious woman disappears somewhere.

The community cut off Makvala, Gela and Onise from their community. “Makvala, as a reason for all these misfortunes, a traitor to her husband and duty, a disgrace to the community and her home. Onise as a desecrator of the woman to the family and insult to the neighbor’s family and a transgressor of the community rule. Gela, as the person, who sheds the blood of his neighbor and fellowman, the cause of his wife’s behavior, who breaks the community rules” (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 700). Such is the judgment of the community, which takes into account all the circumstances when passing a verdict, but no one forgives the crime.

Even after meeting the Priest, Makvala again obeys her fate silently, she lacks the inner strength to give the Priest a confession and alleviate her spiritual condition. She thinks that by remaining silent she is protecting herself and her beloved, who will eventually take her life. The Priest “prayed for the soul of that woman, for her murderer, and for those people whose harsh decision had put the weak creature in this position. At that moment, the priest did not see any enemies” (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 718). The Priest is the ideal embodiment of Christian humanity.

In the works we have discussed, women are representatives of the lower social strata. The period of breakdown of the community is depicted. Generally, Kazbegi is considered to be the introducer of the mountain topic in Georgian literature, in his writings he clearly reflects political, economic situation in Khevi in the 19th century and the problems of the social order.

“The Condemned” is a work depicting the life of city, it has autobiographical nature and, unlike the stories of the mountain cycle, stands much closer to the traditions of critical realism.

The novel tells the story of the love of Mari and Levan. The uncle of Levan, Mari’s husband, is a person devoid of feelings and human dignity who is obsessed with ambition. The sense of ambition makes him especially associated with the characters of the French classic novel of the 19th century.

Kazbegi portrays vices of the high society living in the city. At the same time, he tries to draw an internal, intimate world of characters. The narrator in the novel is the main character Levan and everything that happens in the novel is seen through his eyes.

Levan often asked himself a question that made such a beautiful, young and educated woman to marry Porphyry Gelasiani. Mari's reply to Levan's question is as follows: "Well, have you ask the married ones? Have many of them chosen their husbands according to their own will? Have many married of their own free will? No Levan, you don't know yet in what state our women are... Many times they tell the grooms to their face, that they don't want them, not to marry them, but they still do not give up. Mom and Dad make them marry anyway" (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 455).

Levan thinks that marrying a woman by force is a crime, and if they defend themselves, the priest will not marry them. However, Mari is well aware of her own example that things are different in real life. After graduating from the institute, he was forced to marry Porphyry. At the first sight, she hated her fiancé and rejected him, but she found himself powerless against her stepmother and family. The woman feels that she is in an unequal position, but she is not able to fight, like many people around her. Here is what she says to Levan, who encourages a woman to fight for her own happiness: "I wish I knew by what right are you asking from women to fight for this? What education have you given them, how did you prepare them, so that they can fight in life... They grow up under slavery, get used to the execution of someone else's command, and marry by order" (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 455).

We think Mari's words fully reflect the unequal position of a woman and the social psychology of the society. This is a confession of a young woman who has no right to love, and when she and Levan swear love to each other, Mari breaks the silence and tells Porphyry the truth.

She wants to divorce her husband. Porphyry is ready to endure any humiliation from his wife, as long as the public does not find out about it.

The question is what is Mari's position, who, unlike her husband, has a sense of dignity: "So how can I live, what should I do? Should I have loves and deceive you and the whole world? Should I lie, be a hypocrite? I would not be able to live like this, I know you would forgive me for everything, you would not have noticed any depravity if it were hidden from the world and the people, if they did not have a reason to talk about it. But I don't want to, I'm not asking it from you... I demand human life, the kind of life I am entitled to and should be given to me" (Kazbegi, 1974, p. 477). With these words, Mari characterizes the society of which she herself is a member. In contrast to Mzagho and

Makvala, Mari protects her own rights. She is a morally perfect person, and many things are unacceptable for her in real life. Although her words will not bring results, but this move elevates her far above other female characters.

Mari's life ends tragically, she escapes from home and is declared insane as a husband and family denier and is placed in a psychiatric hospital. Levan is unable to help her.

Ten years pass, Levan goes from village to village, treats people, helps them compile complaints and search for the truth, and makes a living from this. In one of the villages, he meets Mari, completely robbed of her life, they barely recognize each other, the woman feels happiness for a moment that her dear has found her and ultimately did not abandon her. Desperate and condemned by life, Mari ends her life by committing suicide, she falls into a whirlpool. Although Mari also tragically dies, she is a progressive face compared to Mzagho and Makvala.

The artistically conveyed historical reality is reflected with great depth and completeness in the works of Alexander Kazbegi. Kazbegi portrays female characters who seem ideal at first glance but with complex psychology, whose fate tragically ends and the reason for this is the unequal social environment of which they themselves are members.

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The "New Wave" in Yugoslav Rock and Roll in the 1980s (Musical Creation within Totalitarian Frameworks)

Abstract: *In the last decade of communist Yugoslavia's existence, the totalitarian system gradually lost its power, retreating to nationalism. On the Yugoslav music scene, the "New Wave" brought different rock formats (punk, goth, darkwave, industrial). The paper is showing examples of the rock bands from Belgrade, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Skopje. The lyrics of the songs anticipate the collapse of ideology and of Yugoslavia as a state and concept.*

Keywords: *Yugoslavia; rock and roll; communism; totalitarianism; resistance.*

In the last decade of communist Yugoslavia's existence, the totalitarian system gradually lost its power, retreating to nationalism. On the Yugoslav music scene, the "New Wave" brought different rock formats (punk, goth, darkwave, industrial). The lyrics of the songs anticipate the collapse of ideology and of Yugoslavia as a state and concept.

Laibach is a music and cross-media group from Slovenia established on the 1st of June, 1980 in Trbovlje. The name of the band is the historic German version of the name Slovenia's capital Ljubljana. From the start *Laibach* has developed a "Gesamtkunstwerk" – multi-disciplinary art practice in all fields ranging from popular culture to art (collages, photo-copies, posters, graphics, paintings, videos, installations, concerts and performances). Since their beginnings the group was associated and surrounded with controversy, provoking strong reactions from political authorities of former Yugoslavia and in particular in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia. Their militaristic self-stylisation, propagandist manifestos and totalitarian statements have raised many debates on their actual artistic and political positioning. Many important

theorists, among them Boris Groys and Slavoj Žižek (Bell, 2011; Goddard, 2006; Hlačar, 2020; Komelj, 2012; Stefancic, 2023), have discussed the *Laibach* phenomenon both from an analytical as well as critical cultural point of view. The main elements of *Laibach*'s varied practices are: strong references to *avant-garde* art history, *nazi-kunst* and *socialist realism* for their production of visual art, *de-individualisation* in their public performances as an anonymous quartet dressed in uniforms, conceptual proclamations, and forceful sonic stage performances – mainly labelled as industrial (pop) music. *Laibach* is practicing *collective work*, dismantling individual authorship and establishing the principle of *hyper-identification*. In 1983 they have invented and defined the historic term '*retro-avant-garde*'. They creatively questioned artistic '*quotation*', *appropriation*, *re-contextualisation*, *copyright* and *copy-left*. Although starting out as both an art and music collective, *Laibach* became internationally renowned foremost on the music scene, particularly with their unique cover-versions and interpretations of hits by Queen, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, etc.

In 1984 *Laibach* initiated the founding of the wider collective of NSK (*Neue Slowenische Kunst*) together with the painters from the group Irwin and the theatre group *Scipion Nasice Sisters*. This led to the establishment of a strong platform for social, cultural and political activity within the climate of liberalisation and pluralisation in 1980's Yugoslavia.

Laibach was formed in 1980 shortly after the death of Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslavian post-war leader who had spent his political career establishing the principles of non-alignment within the 3rd, 2nd and 1st world and especially within communism. His death initiated a period of uncertainty in Yugoslavia, resulting in power struggles between conservative nationalist hard-liners and more liberal politicians; a period, which saw struggles and disagreements between the different republics constituting Yugoslavia. *Laibach*'s response to this confusion was to present their group as a totalitarian organization whose zeal for authority far outstripped that of the state. They announced their formation and activities through poster campaigns around the Slovene cities of Trbovlje and Ljubljana, utilizing elements of National Socialism and Socialist Realism propaganda imagery coupled with partisan folk art to create a startling effect. Confronted by these powerful images and the fact that *Laibach* is actually the German name for Ljubljana, Slovenes were forcefully reminded of their own wartime past under the Nazi and Italian occupation during World War Two. Hailing from the

small city of Trbovlje (16.000 inhabitants), in a region known for its industrial landscapes, mines and political activism, *Laibach* members were determined to keep this tradition of agitation alive and wilfully baited the Yugoslavian government at every opportunity. This was evident in their first outing in September 1980 when they staged a show called "Rdeči revirji" (Red Districts – popular name for the Trbovlje region, where Slovenian communist party was created back in 1937). This event was scheduled to take place in their home city with the sole intention of challenging a number of contradictions that the group saw as being inherent for the town's political structures at that time. Not surprisingly this provocative project was banned before it had even opened, on the grounds that it incorporated an inappropriate use of symbols, an accusation that was made constantly during *Laibach*'s early history.

The state intervened on the second year of *Laibach*'s existence, too, when their compulsory military service prevented the group from staging any projects during 1981 except for a minor retrospective exhibition mounted in Belgrade's Student Cultural Centre that featured painting, graphic works, articles and a presentation of *Laibach*'s music. Re-emerging in 1982, the group resumed their radical operations with an added zeal, staging their first concert in Ljubljana and following it with shows elsewhere in Yugoslavia before returning for a confrontational headline appearance at Ljubljana's Novi Rock festival in the centre of the city in September. Dressed in stark black and grey (mainly Yugoslav army) uniforms, *Laibach* performed ferocious noise assaults before a backdrop of totalitarian regalia and wartime slides with political speeches from Tito, Jaruzelski, Mussolini, and others spliced into the mix. Playing in front of aggressive hostile crowds was not without its risks as lead singer Tomaž Hostnik discovered after a bottle struck him during the show. Although bleeding from a facial wound he showed no reaction and the photograph of the wounded Hostnik is now one of the most iconic *Laibach* images. Unfortunately, Hostnik never performed to more appreciative audiences as in December 1982 he took his own life.

Determined to continue the work that Hostnik had helped to begin, in June 1983, the group made their first television appearance in an interview on the current affairs programme TV Tednik (*TV Weekly*). Wearing military fatigues and white armbands bearing a simple black cross, *Laibach* were interviewed in front of graphic images of large political rallies more than a little reminiscent of those in Nuremberg whilst

reciting their “Documents of Oppression”. Their flirtation with such controversial imagery once again revealed uncomfortable similarities between Fascist and Socialist Realist iconography; similarities which instantly posed questions about the freedom of the media and the message. Their extremely provocative appearance on this program prompted the show’s host to brand them “enemies of the people”, appealing to respectable citizens everywhere to intervene and destroy this dangerous group.

In the same year Laibach announced their highly important manifesto, “The 10 Items of the Covenant”, first published in *Nova revija* (No. 13/14, 1983), a Slovene magazine for cultural and political issues. Here the group describes itself as a collective, practicing anonymity, with membership hidden under the four names: EBER, SALIGER, KELLER & DACHAUER. Members of the group still use these pseudonyms and avoid the use of their individual names. Government officials and politicians had also watched the group’s TV debut and in response to a wave of outrage they banned all planned public appearances in Slovenia and even the use of the name *Laibach*.

Despite the total ban on their performances in their native Yugoslavia, the group made a successful anonymous appearance at the Malči Belič Hall, Ljubljana, in December 1984 before co-founding Neue Slowenische Kunst (New Slovenian Art), a guerrilla art collective and movement, created from the union of three groups, namely *Laibach*, Irwin – the visual artists collective – and the Scipion Nasice Theatre.

In comparison with many Western bands who demand political change in their native country, *Laibach* can be said to have both been in attendance at the making of history and to have helped bring it about. *Laibach*’s recording and touring history covers tectonic shifts in their country’s development, including a Yugoslavian war and Slovenia’s independence. In November 1995, at the NSK Država Sarajevo event, the national theatre in a besieged war-torn Sarajevo was declared NSK state territory for two days, involving two *Laibach* performances, an exhibition and speeches. NSK state passports issued at this event were subsequently used by several individuals to leave Sarajevo during the Yugoslavian war. In 1996, the Slovenian foreign minister Zoran Thaler ceremoniously handed *Laibach*’s NATO album to N.A.T.O. Secretary-General Willy Claes. As well as being Slovenia’s unofficial state band, these examples illustrate the way *Laibach* and the NSK are directly connected to their country’s political history. (Bell, 2013, p. 112).

"Malchiki" is the second single by the Serbian new wave band *Idoli*. Vlada Divljan, the member of *Idoli* wanted to create a song which would be a parody of the Soviet socialist realism. The Soviet embassy condemned the release of the song. In the video spot, the song depicts a sort of Stakhanov like proletarian who enthusiastically wakes up in the early dawn to go to work in a mine and a metallurgy factory. The official release of the song featured the following lyrics: ("Fiery dawns wake me from my dream / Factory mornings, smoke from the chimney"). (Janjatović, 2007)

The Yugoslav Serbian band *Ekatarina Velika* (EKV) emerged as one of the most influential rock acts of the 1980s. Through poetic and emotionally charged lyrics, EKV subtly criticized the constraints of the socialist regime and expressed a deep yearning for individual freedom. While never overtly political, their music resonated with a generation disillusioned by the system's emptiness and stagnation. EKV became a voice of quiet resistance, channeling dissatisfaction through art rather than direct confrontation. (Janjatović, 2007; Pogačar, 2015).

Another Serbian and Yugoslav rock band named *Riblja Čorba* is known for their sharp political satire, used their music as a vehicle for social commentary during the Yugoslav socialist era. Their song "Neću da budem član mafije" ("I Don't Want to Be a Member of the Mafia") cleverly plays on the double meaning of "mafia" as a metaphor for the ruling political party. Through biting lyrics and rebellious tone, the band criticized corruption, conformity, and the oppressive nature of political structures. The song stood as a bold statement of individual defiance in a time when dissent was often silenced. (Janjatović, 2007; Gordy, 1999).

The Croatian Yugoslav band *Azra* founded in 1977 was renowned for its fearless lyrical content and social critique. In their song "Kurvini sinovi" ("Sons of Whores"), frontman Branimir Štulić delivers a scathing indictment of the Yugoslav secret police, UDBA. The song's raw language and aggressive tone reflect the fear, surveillance, and repression that many citizens experienced under the regime. *Azra's* music became a form of cultural resistance, boldly confronting the dark underside of state power in a way few others dared. (Janjatović, 2007; Vučetić, 2012).

The Yugoslav and Croatian band Jura Stublic and Film, a key player in the new wave scene of the early 1980s, often used metaphor and irony to address social and political issues. In their song "Chicago," the lyric "In Chicago, gangsters robbed the entire people" serves as a

thinly veiled critique of Yugoslavia's own ruling elite. While the narrative appears to target American crime culture, the underlying message clearly points to the corruption and exploitation within the country's communist leadership. Through catchy rhythms and clever allegory, Film offered a subversive commentary that resonated with a generation craving honesty and change. (Janjatović, 2007).

Zabranjeno Pušenje (No Smoking) is a Bosnian rock band, formed in Sarajevo in 1980. The band was formed contrary to the then prevalent Yugoslav punk rock and new wave, closely associated with the New Primitivism cultural movement and the radio and television satire and sketch comedy show *Top lista nadrealista* (Janjatović, 2007). During their first Yugoslavian tour, at their concert in Rijeka on November 27, 1984, singer Nele Karajlić declared, referring to an amplifier that had just broken down, ("The Marshall croaked. I mean, the amplifier"), which was recognized as a pun on Tito's death, landing the band in trouble. They were criticized by the media and a campaign against them resulted in the canceling of their concerts and the removal of *Top lista nadrealista* from the air. The affair got attention of the Yugoslav Security Administration (UDBA) as well. They were rescued by some leading liberal intellectuals, and magazines such as *Polet*, *Mladina*, and *Slobodna Dalmacija* who raise their voices in the defense of the group members and that affair snaps without prison sentences. Later, guitarist Sejo Sexon said that their amplifiers weren't even Marshall, and that it was a joke. (Tomić, 2011).

Mizar is a Macedonian rock band from Skopje. The band got its name after Mizar, which is a guiding star for the orientation of travelers in the deserts. *Mizar* was formed in 1981 in the then Socialist Republic of Macedonia (part from SFRJ). Because of the band's avant-garde sound and image, its Christian leanings and support for Macedonian self-determination, they were viewed with certain degree of suspicion by the former authorities. Still, the group received great media attention including numerous appearances on the national television. The group is notable for its first self-titled album as it was the first popular music album in the former Yugoslavian countries in Macedonian language. The album was a major success and it is listed among the top ten rock albums ever released in former Yugoslavian countries. *Mizar*'s musical style is post-punk, darkwave and gothic rock. Besides influences such as Joy Division for instance, Mizar also uses elements of traditional Macedonian folklore and Byzantine music (Trajkoska, 2009).

The last decade of existence of Yugoslavia brought the complete fall of communist ideology and severe economic and political collapse. In 1991, a civil war started in Yugoslavia, which brought an end of its existence. These musicians in the 1980's were foretelling and foreseeing the events that eventually happened during the 1990's (Gordy, 1999).

In this context, at the beginning of the Yugoslav civil war in Croatia and Bosnia, which marked the start of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, we conclude our paper with the Yugoslav and Montenegrin musician and artist Rambo Amadeus. He used his public platform not just for satire, but for bold political statements in the face of war. During a live broadcast on TV Studio B in 1992, amidst the early stages of the Yugoslav Wars, he stunned the audience by saying: "While we are playing, bombs are falling on Dubrovnik and Tuzla. We will not entertain the electorate. Fuck all of you."¹ His words, raw and unapologetic, broke through the silence and fear dominating the media landscape. In a time of rising nationalism and censorship, Rambo's defiance on live television became an unforgettable act of artistic and moral resistance.

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¹ (Rambo Amadeus - Antiratna izjava na "Beogradskom proleću" 1992 godine, retrieved at 16. 05. 2025 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAR1R191sws>)

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BOOK REVIEW

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The Environment between Struggles and Heritage

Abstract: *The review presents the edited volume “L’environnement entre luttes et patrimoine”. This book explores the complex and often conflicting relationship between environmental struggles and heritage-making practices. Bringing together case studies from diverse geographic and cultural contexts, the book examines how environmental issues become sites of contestation, negotiation, and identity formation. It highlights how communities, activists, and institutions navigate the tensions between ecological preservation, cultural values, and political claims, offering a multidisciplinary perspective on the environment as both a field of conflict and a bearer of collective memory.*

Keywords: *environmental studies; heritage-making practices; cultural contexts; multidisciplinary perspectives.*



Antoine Heemeryck, Pascale Phélinas (eds.) (2022). *L'environnement entre luttes et patrimoine*, Paris: L'Harmattan, ISBN-10. 2343254400, 271 p.

The volume edited by Antoine Heemeryck and Pascale Phélinas is the result of an online conference, organized in 2021, which brought together authoritative specialists dealing with environmental issues, but also with natural and cultural heritage. The two main themes, environment and heritage, as well as their interpenetration, were treated both from the perspective of new research approaches in the social sciences and through the prism of

specific case studies illustrating new social, ideological, cultural, and political trends.

In the introduction, the two editors reviewed the problematics regarding the environment and its relation to heritage throughout the last century, emphasizing the fact that the protection of the environment evolved from the status of a subject of social mobilizations to that of a “framework for redefining the social world” (p. 7). Furthermore, according to the two editors, in recent decades the environment has become an ideological, but also a social and cultural battleground, overcoming its traditional definition as a condition in which human and animal life unfolds, being seen more and more as heritage that must be preserved, protected and passed on as authentic as possible.

The issue of the patrimonialization of the environment is highlighted by several articles of the volume. Carmen Rafanell, in her study entitled, *Nature en ville et mutations urbaines: Le Parc Văcărești à Bucarest* (Nature in the city and urban changes: Văcărești Park in Bucharest), argues that gradually, after the fall of communism, Văcărești Park turned from an abandoned place into a symbol of the city on the way to becoming a sort of heritage in a logic that turns nature into an object of contemplation for the senses, a nature that also must be protected legally and patrimonially.

Environmental protection from a legal point of view becomes a social reality in the West at the end of the ‘80s, the beginning of the ‘90s. The protection of the ecosystem, the prevention of the environmental degradation, but also the support for disadvantaged communities resulted from excessive industrialization and destruction of natural habitats became important issues in Romania much later, after the accession to the European Union as a result of a genuine evolution of the citizens’ mentalities and concerns. Diana Margarit, in her study, *Sur l'échec des manifestations contre la déforestation illégale en Roumanie* (On the failure of demonstrations against illegal deforestation in Romania), stated that although the mobilization to save forests, habitats, natural and cultural heritage was constant after 2000 and coalesced important forces of civil society, it did not lead to the stopping of illegal deforestation or to a more sustained protection of the environment and the natural and cultural heritage due to the neo-liberal development policies of the post-communist Romanian state, as well as to the pecuniary interests of some corporations, and to endemic corruption.

Neo-liberal policies, which raised inequality to the rank of art, borrowed from the civil society’s vocabulary the concept of moralizing

capitalism, through the so-called social and environmental responsibility of businesses and markets. Bernard Hours in his study, *La renaissance morale d'un capitalisme naturalisé* (The moral renaissance of a naturalistic capitalism), argues that capitalist markets and corporations “have become producers of moral goods” (p. 43) while the citizen became a consumer whose political power turned into purchasing power (p. 46). According to the French researcher, in today’s globalizing world, the market wants to replace society and transform citizens from individuals with rights and obligations into people who must be protected and helped when necessary. Therefore, especially in the West, most companies have special policies to support well-being of their employee, which usually hide draconian work requirements. These policies transformed the working and living environment of employees, and as Hours stated “replaced the strike with care” (p. 48). Borrowing a concept from geography and anthropology, corporations thus aim (at least declaratively) to create an ‘ecosystem’ beneficial to all their employees. The instrumentalization of the term ecosystem by global capitalism, a term which, in its classical sense, defined a community in close connection with the environment in which it lived, is not anodyne, but ‘naturalizes’, the market economy turning it into a natural phenomenon denying its historical and cultural roots, thus creating the feeling that this type of functioning of the economy and markets is a natural given that should not be changed, but preserved and passed on (pp. 49-50).

In this context, of neo-liberal moralization (ideologization), when everything becomes a commodity and the virtual citizen becomes indignant on social networks, human connections are lost in the fog of the Internet. Monique Selim in her study, *Luttes idéologiques et normes morales* (Ideological struggles and moral norms), highlights the fact that the excessive moralization of all social aspects actually hides an increased immorality of some, especially corporations and the rich who control them. “The euphoric therapeutic society, in a posture of permanent preoccupation vigilance” is something to be praised if it did not in fact hide the growth of inequalities and the super-enrichment of the already rich (p. 61). This excessive moralization creates important cleavages in society, an example in this regard, to which the researcher draws attention, is that of the moralization of sexuality, which divides society between predators and victims. Many times, predators are considered foreigners, thus deepening the cleavages in society. In Monique Selim’s opinion, the bipolarity, the rhetoric of the enemy, which increasingly dominates the public space (the exemplary case of France

being particularly discussed by the author) inevitably leads to the reactivation of populist and even extremist movements both on the right and the left of the political spectrum. In this context, the French researcher believes that the environment has become a prisoner of cleavage policies, the moralizing of society and the rhetoric of the co-production of knowledge by the lambda citizen. These developments, however, endanger democratic rights, scientific knowledge and ultimately the environment and sustainable development.

The term ‘sustainable development’, which appeared in the 1990s, has been increasingly associated in recent years with ‘sustainable capitalism’ and ‘sustainable growth’. Antoine Heemeryck in his study, *De la guerre froide au réchauffement climatique: développement, anti-environnementalisme et gouvernance bio-numérique* (From the Cold War to global warming: development, anti-environment and bio-numerical governance), describes the evolution of the notion of development, starting in the ‘30s, continuing with Truman’s speech from 1949, which relied on development in the fight against communist regimes, going through the challenge of this principle especially in relation to environmental protection, which gradually leads to the strategic readjustment of capitalism and its apparent moralization. However, the Covid pandemic has changed this dynamic of protecting the environment because it has been proven that the environment can be fatal for humans, therefore the idea that humans must also be protected has spread more and more. And not just protected, but transformed. This transformation, the dream of trans-humanists, however, needs a bio-political governance based on permanent surveillance and discipline (p. 38).

Disciplining and supervising businesses in relation to their attitude towards the environment has become public policy everywhere in the world today. In her study, *Les apories de la régulation environnementale: le cas du soja transgénique en Argentine* (The apories of environmental regulation: the case of genetically modified soybeans in Argentina), Pascale Phélinas argues that the environment and its protection contribute to the adoption of public policies not only protecting it, but also controlling the economy and private enterprises. Starting from the concrete case of the production of genetically modified soybeans produced in Argentina, the French researcher shows that nowadays the instruments of control and regularization are no longer only the traditional legal ones (laws, public policies), but also technological

(the creation of treatment plants, less polluting technologies, etc.) and economic ones (such as intervention on prices).

These new ways of approaching environmental problems, based on a combination of complex public policies, are the subject of the study, *La diplomatie environnementale russe en perspective* (Russian environmental diplomacy put into perspective), by Stavris Parastatov and Konstantin Pilipiliadi. Environmental policies in Russia are an integral part of Russian diplomacy which, having colossal natural resources, both renewable such as water, but also non-renewable such as coal, plays this card to create allies in the international arena. European green policies lead Russia to look for these allies in other strategic areas such as Asia, but also to diversify its offer by developing new green energy production technologies. A public policy project at the national level, entitled 'Environment', was established in 2019, its implementation leading to the increasing involvement of enterprises, the state, but also of some environmental associations in Russia, thus activating social and political activism in the direction of ecology and environmental law.

Environmental activism, as well as heritage conservation with reference to Romania, are described and analyzed by Ana Pascu in her study, *Activisme social et patrimonial en Roumanie postcommuniste* (Social and patrimonial activism in post-communist Romania). The researcher in ethnology highlights, starting from two concrete cases of some local heritage associations in Romania, the fact that the new global developments regarding environmental protection, sustainable development and conservation of natural and cultural heritage are becoming congruent, integrating more and more the notion of social activism involving especially local NGOs that implement new models of sustainable development, but also citizens in the protection, conservation and promotion of heritage.

Maria Mateoniu-Micu in her study, *Dynamiques historiques du patrimoine: de l'industrialisation au développement durable dans la Vallée du Jiu (Roumanie)* (Historical dynamics of heritage: from industrialization to sustainable development in the Jiu Valley), also highlights the importance of associations and local entrepreneurs in the valorization and promotion of industrial and cultural heritage focusing on the case study of Valea Jiului. A revealing case study for the evolution of the notion of patrimony over time, as well as of economic development and environmental protection policies in Romania. The Jiului Val-

ley exemplifies this local, national and international dynamic, beginning with the idea of heritage as a property right transferable from one holder to a successor over lands and goods (pre-industrial and industrial era of mining type) passing through the period of heritage as an economic human but also cultural resource managed by the state arbitrarily, monolithically and centralized in communism (both at the industrial and memorial level) to the recent period when the notion of heritage encompasses diverse practices and theories. In the last decades, almost everything is considered worthy of being conserved, protected, accumulated and passed on to the next generations (p. 203), the notion of heritage being more and more closely related to public policies of sustainable development and environmental protection. The only factor that is not fully aware of these public policies are the local people, the citizens of Valea Jiului, little informed about the processes of restructuring, development and patrimonialization of the region.

In Romania, citizens have always been the imperfect and mostly passive recipients of public policies, even though they were directly concerned and were heavily influenced by them, a fact highlighted by Cornel Aurelian Micu's study, *La précarité du droit de la propriété en Roumanie rurale* (On the precariousness of property rights in rural Romania). The Romanian historian convincingly demonstrates how the notion of land ownership took shape in Romania in the 19th century through a top-down process, from the ruling elites to the masses. It experienced important transformations during the communist period, when the state together with the citizens (at the rhetorical level) jointly own both the land and other goods such as factories, plants, means of production, etc. (individual property was accepted in certain cases though), while adapting, after the fall of communism, more and more to the requirements of the market economy and the circulation of people, goods and capital, a fundamental principle of the European single market and the driving force of the European Union's public policies. The latter also plays an essential role "in the process of redefining the relationship between land and people" (p. 267) in the context of a dynamic market economy in which agriculture and lands become a commodity that must circulate but which, at the same time, enjoy special protection thanks mainly to farmers and peasants who constantly put pressure on Brussels for an agricultural policy that takes into account their needs but also those of the communities in which they live.

This brief review of the topics addressed by the researchers in this volume highlights the evolution of the notions of heritage, sustainable

development, environmental protection, ecosystem, biodiversity, biopolitics over time, starting from concrete cases, and the stakes that have led to these developments, also listing the actors involved in these social, economic, cultural, etc. processes. Moreover, the primary and/or secondary factors of the changes of the last decades at the European and global level and their consequences on people, environment, but also culture and individual and collective well-being are also outlined by most of the authors. The detailed analyses and the comparative dimension make this work a referential one for Romania where these topics are not addressed in a pertinent way, lacking above all a theoretical and methodological framework in line with the new developments of scientific knowledge.

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An Objective and Critical Look at Mustafa Kemal and his Era

Abstract: *The review presents the Bulgarian translation of the book by M. Şükrü Hanioglu „Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography“. In his book historian M. Şükrü Hanioglu offers a nuanced and rigorous exploration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk not merely as a military leader or a founder of modern Turkey, but as a complex intellectual shaped by the ideological currents of his time. Rather than focusing on biographical detail or nationalist mythologies, Hanioglu situates Atatürk within the broader context. The book traces how Atatürk’s formative influences – ranging from French Enlightenment thought to Ottoman constitutionalism – contributed to his vision of a rational, centralized, and modern nation-state. Hanioglu emphasizes that Atatürk’s reforms were not improvised or idiosyncratic, but grounded in a coherent, albeit selective, intellectual project. From language and legal reforms to secular education and the marginalization of Islam in public life, Atatürk emerges as a figure deeply committed to reshaping Turkish society in the image of what he saw as Western modernity. The Bulgarian edition, “Ataturk: A History of Ideas”, published in 2024, opens up this critical and scholarly perspective to Bulgarian-speaking audiences at a time of renewed regional interest in modern state-building, secularism, and the legacies of empire. It provides not only a portrait of a pivotal historical figure, but also a valuable case study in how ideas – both imported and locally adapted—can be harnessed to drive radical social transformation.*

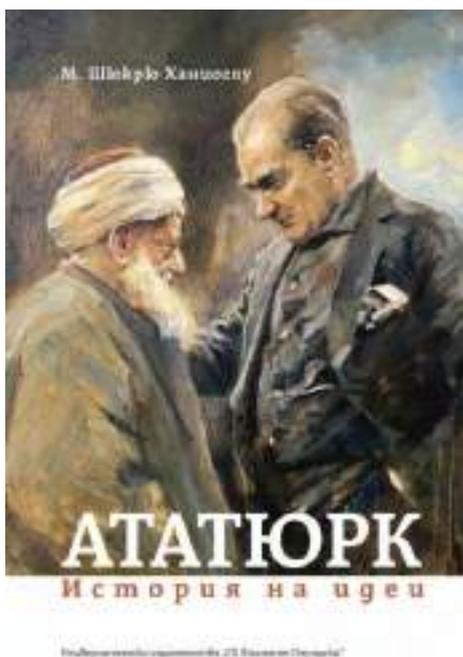
Keywords: *Mustafa Kemal; biography; history; ideas.*

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Държавна агенция архиви

Обективен и критичен поглед към Мустафа Кемал и неговата епоха

Ханиоглу, М. Шукрю (2024). *Ататюрк: История на идеи*. София: УИ "Св. Климент Охридски", ISBN - 978-954-07-5981-4, 196 с.

В края на миналата година на български език се появи нова книга, посветена на Мустафа Кемал и неговото време. Тя е дело на



известния турски и американски изследовател на късната Османска империя М. Шукрю Ханиоглу и беше публикувана от Университетското издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“ в превод на Явор Сидеров. Веднага следва да бъде подчертано обаче, че това не е политическа биография на Ататюрк, издържана в жанра „Малки книги за велики хора“. Не и животопис на неговата личност, тъй като личният му живот изцяло отсъства. Всъщност, последното би могло да бъде посочено и като известен пропуск на изследването, тъй като именно чрез него, през любовите, при-

ятелствата и разделите, през отношенията със съратници и врагове, се разкрива най-вече личността на човека. Книгата не е и стандартно историческо изследване на късния османски и ранния републикански турски период. Не е и апология на турския държавник и неговото време в духа на официалния историографски дискурс в Република Турция. По същество тя е научен текст върху социалния и идеен контекст, в който Мустафа Кемал се формира като личност и политик и който прави възможен възхода му като един от големите държавници на XX век. Едновременно с това, изданието не е и поредният превод на текста на Ханиоглу, този път – на български език (Hanioğlu, 2017, 2021, 2023). Авторът е добавил към текста специален предговор към това издание на книгата му, в който акцентира върху огромното влияние, което българското общество и държава са оказали върху бащата на модерна Турция. Другият момент, който той подчертава, е неговата съпричастност към Македонския въпрос и сложното влияние, което българското национално-освободително движение е оказало върху него.

Подходът на автора е едновременно критичен и аналитичен, без да подценява и заедно с това без да героизира Ататюрк. Методологически трудът може да бъде характеризирани като изследване

в областта на интелектуалната история, осъществено с инструментариума на класическата историопис. Той се е опитал да привлече най-разнообразен изворов материал от Османския архив, от личния фонд на Мустафа Кемал, от периодичния печат, включващ основните турски издания от 1919 до 1938 г. и огромен брой чужди източници. Въведението в изследването по същество представлява широко разгърната панорама на късното османско общество през XIX век, върху която се проектират етническият и демографски профил на самия град Солун, на пъстрата социална и интелектуална среда, в която се осъществява формирането му като личност. Едновременно с това ясно е очертана и появата на първата генерация младотурци в резултат на появилия се дълбок разлом в османското общество по оста: модернизатори – традиционалисти. Тази материя Ханиоглу владее до съвършенство, както е известно от по-ранните негови трудове (Hanioglu, 1995, 2008, 2015). Раздираната от национални и социални противоречия Македония се оказва онзи мощен подтик към съзряване и идейно кристализиране на младия Кемал, който ще се окаже решаващ и за насочването му към военна кариера и към цялостния му житейски път. Много показателен в това отношение е престоят му във военното училище в Битоля. По-нататък ние ще видим основния герой като офицер, като слушател в Султанската военна академия в Истанбул, завършил втори по успех във випуска си. Всичко това е разгледано паралелно с извършващата се по същото време реорганизация и модернизация на османската армия. Изтъкната е огромната роля на германските инструктори, които ръководят този процес и по-специално – мястото на фелдмаршал Колмар фон дер Голц в него. В тази динамична среда младият офицер изпитва силното влияние на идеите на Г. Лъобон, на социалния дарвинизъм и вулгарния материализъм. Това е идейният контекст на Младотурската революция от 1908 г., в която Кемал се включва именно като представител на втората генерация младотурци. В тази част от изследването авторът е отделил доста място на надеждите, очакванията и разочарованията на тази втора генерация, както и на вътрешните конфликти, започнали в нейните среди след учредителния конгрес на Комитета „Единение и прогрес“ през 1909 г. На него Кемал участва като делегат от Триполи, където по това време служи. Любопитен момент в цялата плетеница от събития представлява и зараждащият се конфликт на Кемал с Енвер паша – един от лидерите на младотурското движение, който по-нататък ще се задълбочи в

дълбока лична неприязън между двамата. Участието на младия офицер най-напред в Ита̀ло-турската (или т. нар. Триполитанска) война от 1911 г. и след това в Балканските войни от 1912–1913 г. е представено като преломен момент в идейното му съзряване. Впрочем, както успява да ни убеди Ханиоглу, тази катастрофа за османската армия стои в основата на изключително дълбока криза и нов разлом, обхванал вече и младотурското движение.

Съвсем логично, важно място в изследването, е отделено на участието на Кемал в Първата световна война и на превръщането му в герой. Става дума за неговото участие в Дарданелската операция през 1915 г., известна още и като битката при Чанаккале, което не само го изстрелва във военната йерархия до генерал и командващ армия, но и със средствата на военната пропаганда, го превръща в национален герой. Разбира се, като опитен изследовател, Ханиоглу съумява да разграничи реалните заслуги на Кемал паша в тази кампания от обвиването на този период от биографията му в митологията, съпътстваща култа към Ататюрк, развил се през следващите десетилетия. Факт е обаче, че от този момент наетне отделянето на истината от мита в биографията на героя става все по-трудно. Така например прехвърлянето в Хиджаз, след това и на Ара̀бския полуостров и успехите му все пак да задържи обширни части от него, въпреки бунтовете на ара̀бите, натиска на британците и непрекъснато спадащия османски боен дух, са едновременно част от личната му биография и едновременно с това – и от по-късната митологизация на личността му. Краят на войната и Мудроското примирие заварват Кемал паша в Александретa, която той е принуден да предаде на британците. Вероятно с това можем да обясним и неговата фиксация към Хатай, който в края на живота си (макар формално този процес да приключва след смъртта му) все пак успява отново да върне на Турция.

В центъра на цялото изследване е поставена турската война за независимост, започнала през 1919 г. Тук за първи път ние виждаме Кемал не само като военен, но преди всичко като политик, лавиращ умело между султанското правителство в Истанбул и редица местни фактори – мюсюлманското духовенство, остатъците от разпадналия се младотурски комитет, различните групи офицери. Виждаме го и като дипломат – при преговорите с различните субекти на Съглашението и по-специално с французите, с руските болшевики, с индусите и дори с афганците. Виждаме го отново в най-силната му роля – като военачалник в Гръцко-турската война,

в битките при Инъоню, при Сакария и Измир, където се изковава турската победа.

Последните глави от изложението са посветени на мястото на Ататюрк като държавник. Те отново го поставят в широкия контекст на неговата епоха, която прави възможна самата поява на доктрината на пантюркизма, която той последователно изгражда. Тук подробно са разгледани постъпателната борба с мюсюлманската религия, поведена от него, премахването най-напред на султаната, а след това и на халифата, раждането на турската република, общият триумф на секуларизма в новото общество. Може определено да се каже, че това е и най-критичната към Ататюрк част от изследването. Особено това се отнася до частта, посветена на идеологията на кемализма. Авторът последователно разглежда заместването на основните постулати на османизма с нови идеологии, проникнали, а впоследствие и здраво установени в историята, антропологията, лингвистиката и т. н. На практика става дума за изграждането на една нова идеология, в която старият вулгарен материализъм на младия Кемал е хипертрофиран до новия турски ултранационализъм на късния Ататюрк. Специфично място в нея заема и отношението към Запада, на което е посветена последната глава от изложението. В новата идеологическа система, изградена от турския държавник, Западът – в широкия смисъл на това понятие – има амбивалентно значение. От една страна самият кемализъм черпи енергия от цялостния стремеж към модернизация и европеизация на турското общество. От друга страна обаче, Западът е разглеждан и като негов лукав и враждебен антипод, с който колониализмът и дори расизмът са практически срастнати. Именно в намирането на равновесната точка между тези две противоположни тенденции и конструирането на цялата идеологическа система върху нея се състои големият успех на кемалистката доктрина.

В заключение следва да се подчертае, че в ръцете на българския читател се намира действително сериозно и задълбочено изследване върху Ататюрк и неговата епоха. Богато снабдено с библиография и обяснителни бележки, то може да се чете както като научен труд, така и като добре написано популярно четиво, даващо много широк исторически контекст.

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