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Bulgarian poetry in the nineteen seventies reflected in three propaganda and one marginal anthology

Summary: This article investigates the scope of ideology that infected poetry in the nineteen seventies; the processes of marginalization of uncomfortable poetic voices, and respectively, the mechanisms imposing propaganda and anthologizing the poetically wrapped agitation; the stabilizations and tensions along the centre-periphery axis; the role of anthologies by authors not from the capital in the process of making sense of the country (province) as one free from the political poetic category. In a synchronous plan, some anthological specimens were issued over a short period of time, e.g. "Poetic Anthology about the Silent Feat" (1974), "The High Wave" (1974), "Sprays" (1975) and "Poppies" (1977).

The first anthology is dedicated to the law enforcement agencies and to the state security. The second is an oriented and ambitious paragon of socialist realism poetry. The third anthology has been conceived of as a forum for the authors who were selected exclusively from among the members of the Union of Bulgarian writers. The fourth volume is a seemingly unpretentious collection that defines itself as an *antho-*

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Maya Angelova, *Poezja bułgarska lat 70. XIX wieku...*

logy. The compilation process, however, took pains far greater than expected – it was a three-year long odyssey from the moment the anthology of national/home poetry was included in the publishing plan for 1975 to the admission of an *unnamed title* in the publishing plan for 1977, as well as the resulting marginalization of the “Poppies” anthology after its publication.

Key words: censorship, socialist realism, ‘calm’ lyrics, ‘April’ lyrics, anthology, propaganda, marginalization, centre and periphery.

Poezja bułgarska lat 70. XIX wieku rozpatrzona w trzech propagandach i jednej marginalnej antologii

Streszczenie: W artykule analizie poddawane są takie zjawiska, jak zasięg ideologii, która zainfekowała poezję lat 70. XIX wieku, a także procesy marginalizacji niewygodnych głosów poetyckich oraz, odpowiednio, mechanizmy narzucające propagandę i antologizujące poetycką agitację, czy też formy stabilizacji i napięć wzdłuż osi środkowej krawędzi. Rozpatrzone też zostaje zadanie, jakie spełniały antologie poezji autorów spoza stolicy w procesie rozumienia prowincji jako miejsca wolnego od politycznych wpływów. W planie synchronicznym niektóre teksty zostały wydane w niezwykle krótkim okresie czasu, np. *Poetyczna antologia o cichym wyczynie* (1974), *Wysoka fala* (1974), *Sprays* (1975) i *Maki* (1977).

Słowa-klucze: cenzura, realizm socjalistyczny, teksty „spokojne”, teksty „kwietniowe”, antologia, propaganda, marginalizacja, centrum i peryferia.

The cases of incriminated books in Bulgaria in the decades of communism are an important object of research, yet the scientific works dedicated to the censorship on literature are but a few. The conference organized by the New Bulgarian Studies Department at New Bulgarian University in 2017 titled “The Censorship on the Bulgarian literature and book (1944–1990)” was the first major attempt to present the problematics regarding censorship in the times of the communist regime. With a view to my research on the censorship in the first half of the seventies, I chose to pick up the most important accents presented in the conference’s collection.

In the collection, the opening article by professor Plamen Doynov distinguishes the following types of censorship in the first decade of communism: *wartime* censorship, effected as political-ideological government control; *retrospective (library)* censorship, lists prepared by commissions at the Ministry of Propaganda; *censorship of deficit*, one that makes use of the lack of paper problem at the time. “Regarding literature, on the other hand, much more long-lasting and deep implications in that state of affairs come from the repressions and the terror which exerts collateral censorship effect”¹, summarizes Prof. Doynov.

Censorship in the seventies was the object at hand in the article by Maria Ogoyska titled: “Press Commission: a regulated censorship of the seventies”. She describes in detail the structures, groups and forms of censorship at that time, e.g. the setting up of the centralized Press Commission at the Council of ministers which “leads, coordinates and controls the publishing activity, book distribution, printing and photo-typing as well as photographing of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. It also produces operative forecasts regarding major events and prepares suggestions about their coverage in the mass information and propaganda media”². Ogoyska unanimously defines the

¹ P. Doynov, *Цензура в подсъпните на народната република (1944/1945)*, [w:] *Цензурата върху българската литература и книга 1944–1990*, red. P. Doynov, Sofia 2018, s. 13-29, Queen Mab, s. 27.

² M. Ogoyska, *Комитетът по печата: регламентираната „цензура“ на 70-те и масовата култура*, [w:] *Цензурата върху българската литература и книга 1944–1990*, red. P. Doynov, Sofia 2018, s. 55-76, Queen Mab, s. 58.

Press Commission of the seventies as a “mega-instrument for the production of concord”³.

Against the background of these researches, my text will lay out two major and two additional anthologies which were published in the seventies. I will provide the scope of ideology infestation of literature in the seventies of the twentieth century in the domain of lyrics using a juxtapositional approach.

“Poetic Anthology of the Silent Feat” was issued in 1947 and is a collection of odes, poems, ballads and other metric types of writing (most of them being overt agitation pieces) that are dedicated to the officers at the Ministry of the Interior and the State Security. It is furnished with some preliminary words signed by the state head, Todor Zhivkov. The anthology was published on the eve of the celebration of *three decades of Socialist revolution in Bulgaria*. The list of poets bearing testimony to their feelings comprises 27 names where the core represents the so-called *April poets*⁴, who are soon to be titled *the new administrators of official culture* in PRB in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century.

The overall weight of the anthology which extols State Security and the Ministry of the Interior, measured in ranks, high-party individuals of institutional and official posts – the awards and premiums for the participants inspires awe.

Some of the poets are included in the “departmental” collection by an already well-acquired reflex, actualizing biased verses which were typical for the beginning of the fifties (the so-called *period of the cult*), thematically ranging around the frontier, the far-away frontier post, the party. Nayden Valchev, for example, participates with four poems from his first volume of poetry “At the southern frontier” (1953). Ivan Radoev provides the agitation hit “Write a let-

³ Tamże, s. 59.

⁴ The poets who make their debut after the so-called thaw related to Stalin’s death are called poets in April, by analogy with the April plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, held between April 2-6, 1956, the long-time dictator Valko Chervenkov was removed from his posts.

ter to the frontier guard”, Ivan Davidkov with “The far-away frontier post”, Angel Todorov with “Frontier”, Venko Markovski with “Eyes of the revolution”, Lilyana Stefanova with “Evenings at the Rhodope frontier post”. While some of the aforementioned assert themselves as state poets in the decades to come, others like Ivan Nikolov and Ivan Radoev do produce original creative universes. We may endlessly speculate over the individual choices and compulsions, but in this case I find it more important to talk about the topical orientation of the works selected. While the older poets pick up the topicality that was actual in the fifties on the subject of the frontier, it is with decisive majority that the April poets direct their creative efforts at the (epi)centre of power, focused on the Ministry of the Interior and State Security (the latter structure has been under the direct control of Todor Zhivkov by a decree in 1974). The Aprilists extol the feat of the intelligence agent, of the chekist, of the common agent, of the militia servant and the inspector, and all of that done by specially written (within certain deadlines of party order) verses. It is enough to mention but a few symptomatic titles: “To the chekists” by S. Tsanev, “The Soviet agents” by Damayan Damyanov, “A poem for the agent” by Evtim Evtimov, “Ballad for the emergency commission” by Lyubomir Levchev, etc.

Bearing in mind the ideological link of poetry that has been published in the anthology, and the ideology that turns them into, literally, a *comment* on politics, we should distinguish the major political ingredients that were active at the beginning of the seventies and especially in 1974 that make it possible for the emergence of such a party opus, created mostly by the heralds of the April renewal and the creative freedom, and laid out within the norms of the first half of the fifties - a time which the *April line of the party* loudly condemns as *cult*.

In a brief manner I will point out the following moments: a heightened vigilance by the lawmakers responding to manifestations of the inner conspiracy net, and against Todor Zhivkov and at ideological sabotaging after the Prague spring; the establishment of Bulgaria as the most faithful and obedient satellite of the USSR and the ever-closer motion between the two countries. As an example, the 1974 functioning of State Security as an affiliation of the KGB of the Committee for State Security; the announcement of the phase of “mature socialism” and the “historical decisions” of the tenth party congress in 1971; the adoption of Zhivkov’s constitution in 1971 and the transfer of State Security into the hands of direct control by the first secretary of the Central

Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1974 that reflects the imposition of absolute power of Todor Zhivkov; the tense relations with Yugoslavia as well as the registered rise in the number of successful fleeing through our western neighbouring country in the period between 1971 and 1974 provokes requirement for raising the number of frontier soldiers and posts in 1974 and strengthening the voluntary groups which calls for propaganda distribution of measures undertaken among the population.

The jubilee year of 1974 has been announced on the pages of the "Literary front" newspaper using routine rhetoric for a year in which literature should again become a "powerful herald for mobilization of the power of the labouring forces into glorious victorious deeds." Publishing houses would produce numerous luxury jubilee series, collections and anthologies bearing the motto XXX (30 years of socialist revolution), while the future, looked at from the vantage point of the socialist three-decade period, relinquishes its chimerical horizons and redirects towards material and economic prosperity.

Simultaneously, by use of secret orders State Security which poets extol in a loud voice, also enriches its arsenal with new, interesting and sought-after items, namely, "explosives, fire, technical, chemical and other means for carrying out acute tasks (AT)⁵: mini-surprises, apparatuses for silent, mechanical shooting of special needles containing fast-acting poisons; powerful and fast-acting poisons." supplied by the KGB. In the anthology the structure of State Security which instills awe in the majority of people is an object of vehement delight: "I praise the chekists!.../ Let the sky ark loom dark!/ The Soviet CHE-KA exists/ like a shield for life itself!" (Matei Shopkin, "The Whitehaired warrior")⁶.

In the jubilee 1974, the measures for control and party leadership of literature are strengthened, and the reason for instrumentalization of out-of-deadlines mechanisms is the avalanche of memoirs going under preparation, connected with the events which lead to the pivotal timing for the system date – *the ninth of September*⁷. In order to foster and better the party leadership on

⁵ A special agent slang meaning secret operation to do with murder, sabotage and kidnapping.

⁶ T. Yordanov, *Поетично земеописание на България*, [w:] *Макове*, Varna 1977, Georgi Bakalov, s. 13.

⁷ Date of entry of the Soviet army in Bulgaria – 9.09.1944.

publishing⁸, at a Political Office meeting, they made the decision to set up a new non-departmental censorship structure under the control of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party to focus ideological control in the hands of a “group of highly qualified specialists in analysis and control on issues of particularly important political and ideological implications”⁹.

In 1973 and 1974 in a silent way, two volumes were withdrawn from the book distribution system and then totally destroyed¹⁰ because of cross-purposes with the positions of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Socialist Party. As it turns out, the reason behind was to avoid complications of relations with Yugoslavia. A symptomatic fact which makes clear the bringing back into literature of the topic of the feat of frontier soldiers was the need for the strengthening of the frontier guard with Yugoslavia. All that because of the increasing number cases of citizens from Bulgaria and other socialist countries running away through Yugoslavia.

Literature and art are again summoned to supply motives for not-so-popular political decisions, to provide creative arguments in favour of the accusation (against western countries) or in favour of the defense (of State Security and Ministry of the Interior policies.) It is also necessary to set up a new “field” positive character, to foster the ideological hatred, to heighten the antagonism between *two worlds*; an objective that April poets react to in due time. Some create apocalyptic images: “I praise the chekists!./ There is still/ famine and luxury around the world./ There is fear. There is a midnight cry./ And poison. And nooses. And knife.” (Matey Shopkin, “The Whitehaired warrior”¹¹). Others demonize using powerful allegories: “That is a truth!/The world grocer/ changes his name each evening./Under his bed he is looking for a secret wire,/

⁸ The citation is from *Protocol № 200 of May 1974 at a meeting of the CC of the BCP*: published in the site of State Agency “Archives” <<http://politburo.archives.bg/bg/2013-04-24-11-12-48/dokumenti/1970-1979/1120--200-14-1974->> [20.07.2020].

⁹ Tamże.

¹⁰ Collection “Remember”1973 by Venko Markovski and Bulgarian Encyclopaedia, published by BAS. The motives for discontinuation of the encyclopaedia are provided in *Protocol № 185 of 7 May 1974 at a meeting of the CC of the BCP*: published in the site of State Agency “Archives”: <<http://politburo.archives.bg/bg/2013-04-24-11-12-48/dokumenti/1970-1979/1121---185-7--1974->> [20.07.2020].

¹¹ T. Yordano, *Поетично земеописание на България*, [w:] Макове, Varna 1977, Georgi Bakalov, s. 18.

looks around himself in the church,/ at the meeting,/at a cocktail.../It seems to him that colonel Abel is always around./Always in suspicion Longsdale is in his trail” (Lyubomir Levchev, “Ballad for the extraordinary commission”¹²).

The legendary Soviet spies Rudolph Abel and Gordon Longsdale, prototypes of numerous Soviet spy novels win over the imagination of the Bulgarian readers prone to adventurous literature. The examples in the collection are various and the common denominator is the strife at presenting spies and agents of State Security as a secret and charming elite of the nation. It is hardly necessary that we should convince ourselves these days that the poetics of works written as an answer to an ideological order falls flat. The number of copies, on the other hand, commands respect – 15,000, distributed generously to each and any point of book selling venues where they just added weight to shelves in volumes, disregarded by readers or simply put in stores silently waiting to be recycled.

Here we should not bypass another aspect of the problem, All works dedicated to spies, chekists, agents could be thought of as a solemn address that, by protocol, is aimed at the authorities’ power, which exactly in 1974 was focused into the hands of a single person. The communication situation is even more interesting since here we may speak on firm grounds about oeuvres where the author is missing and the artefact is a result of the impact of authority over language. Let us remind the reader that the title page has been directly provided to the pen of Todor Zhivkov, who in that way, turns into a direct and indirect author and an overt *super*-addressee of the written work. The adequate question would be: what is the role of the poets in that closed communication chain other than the fact that it rotates printing barrels at 15,000 revolutions as if producing nothing? Further into the matter – the core of participants consist of those who in the sixties stand for the high degree of self-confidence of the lyrical I, who, as their memoirs claim, plunge into the perils of the fight for poetic freedom. An explanation, of course, is available: the anthology does not produce blank pages. It produces concord, homogeneity, unity. It monumentalizes.

¹² Tamże, s. 23.

After the rough strokes that marked the ideologically highest and politically most response-of-the-day, we are to redirect at one unpretentious (at first glance) collection, self-defined as an *anthology*, which comes to print through lots of efforts and pain. Behind a three year odyssey – from the date of inclusion into the printing plan for 1975 of an *anthology of the country poetry*, until the green light for an *untitled volume* in the 1977 plan, as well as the ensuing after its print marginalization of the “Poppies” anthology – there are some emblematic reasons which we are to look at presently.

We already noted that in 1974 under the editorship of Petko Danchev, there comes out in print *an anthology of Bulgarian revolutionary lyrics* “The high wave” which builds up an export-oriented image of Bulgarian literature. Its compilers are the well-established men of letters Zdravko Cholakov and Elka Konstantinova. According to the preface by Danchev, it is aimed at the *foreigner who has decided to come to know us*. In the entry text titled “Poetry of revolutionary-civil ardour” we also read: “the dominant, most powerful and enjoying the love of all people is the trend of the revolutionary, progressive-civil poetry [...] that is why there are no single notable, talented poets of ours [...], in whose art more or less there is no presence of the revolutionary as a topic”¹³. The last names in the list that starts with Dobri Chintulov, Hristo Botev and Ivan Vazov are those of Matei Shopkin and Nedyalko Yordanov. No single omission of a name that belongs to the monumentalized left cannon in Bulgarian literature.

The anthology completes the idea of ideological heights in poetry in the seventies and also reflects the hierarchy-setting, centripetal energy of *culture two* (according to Papernius) that values epaulets, ranks and merit, and that is a counterpoint to the values of the periphery, or *culture one*, described by Vladimir Papernius as myth creating¹⁴.

¹³ E. Konstantinova, Z. Cholakov, P. Danchev, *Високата вълна: Българска революционна лирика*, Sofia 1974, Partizdat, s. 9.

¹⁴ V. Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*, przeł. J. H. i R. Barris, (Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism.), New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

The compilers of Poppies anthology, 1977 Tihomir Yordanov and Andrey Germanov define their undertaking as a “Poetic land description of Bulgaria” where the major goal is to carry out a “check on the powers of the country as opposed to the capital”. Here go collected “lines springing out of sincerity, sung without pretense, hued by the particularity of each nook, rethought through the fate and experience of the authors.[...] At all costs we should point out the reduced scope of topics: the birthplace, the early life memories, the thrill before dating a girlfriend, [...] the sadness of the poet, the efforts of writing [...]”¹⁵.

In a publication¹⁶ by Tihomir Yordanov and in an especially appointed talk with him on August 4th 2015, we understand that this was exactly the idea when the editorial board of the Varna publishing house discussed the publishing plan for 1975. Yet at the discussion of that plan in Sofia at a meeting of the Union of Bulgarian writers¹⁷ a decision was made that the anthology to be published would include only writers who live in the province, and who **are members of the Union of Bulgarian writers**. Yako Molhov was appointed editor-in-chief. In his preface titled “Getting over the country”, and the title of the anthology “Sprays”, published before the end of 1975 was suggested by Tihomir Yordanov.

Today, Yordanov defines his actions regarding the publishing of a second poetic anthology, in which only the names omitted by “Sprays” are presented, “reaction to the oppression of the capital.” In fact, “Poppies” could be thought of as an addition, but it turns out to be something more. If it was only an act of provincial revenge, the reader would not be astonished by names like Binio Ivanov, Ekaterina Yosifova, Boris Hristov who provide the image of the *calm lyrics* in Bulgarian literature in the times of late socialism.

The authors are set in alphabetical order of their given, not surnames, which speaks not only of escaping hierarchy, but looking for a warmer link. The compilers, inspired by “noble sympathy” (Preface 1977), try to adhere to a princi-

¹⁵ T. Yordanov, *Поетично земеописание на България*, [w:] *Макове*, Varna 1977, Georgi Bakalov, s. 7.

¹⁶ Tegoż, *Макове*, „Literary World”, No 27, (March 2011): 8, <https://literaturesviat.com/?p=36014> [20.07.2020].

¹⁷ In his publication T. Yordanov says the following: “The writers’ union objected in the sense that it is not possible to mix names of *established* members with those of the plebs, as Peter the Great put it once. What to do? I found my way out in the following manner: we will publish two volumes – one with members, the other of no member names” (tegoż, *Макове*, Literary World, No 27, (March 2011): 8. <https://literaturesviat.com/?p=36014>) [20.07.2020].

ple of equality of positioning and when selecting the materials of the “*flowers not watered*” (Yordanov 2011): letters were sent to all district Councils for Culture, asking them to deliver new books by young authors to the publishing house, and additionally accepting personal suggestions of poets unknown by the councils. At the discussion of the 1977 publishing plan, the Poppies anthology was hidden, or “disguised” by being included in an extraordinary quota as an *untitled volume*, and with that the publishing troubles ended¹⁸.

The prefaces of the two provincial anthologies titled, respectively, “Getting over the province” (Sprays) and Poetic land description of Bulgaria (Poppies) mark interesting tendencies. We see that the province is disputed by the *two cultures* (following Papernius¹⁹) – *culture two* wants to centralize it, set it according to hierarchy, and based on the principle *divide and conquer* keep it as its periphery, while *culture one* strives to tear the province apart and saturate it with immanent values.

The review by Aleksandar Yordanov regarding “Poppies”²⁰ demonstrates irritation with the anachronism of the claim for “mobilization of the strengths of the province.” According to the reviewer, such a definition belongs to an already lived-out historical moment: “In this country there have vanished not only the differences between the village and the town, but also those between the capital and the province”²¹. Yordanov takes the names of Boris Hristov, Ekaterina Yosi-fova, Tanio Klisurov, Ivan Valev, Yanislav Yankov and Nikolay Zayakov out of the trap of the general in order to support the following statement: “In their

¹⁸ „Poppies” anthology is published in 3110 copies which exceeds the number of copies of the *union* anthology “Sprays” by precisely 1000 pieces. The copy number of “Poppies” according to T. Yordanov’s account of 4 May 2015 is justified by official opinions of the *Bookprint* union, *Prints* union, and opinion poll results by the distribution net of bookshops where most of readers in the countryside said they would like more *local authors*.

¹⁹ V. Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*, przeł. John Hill i Roann Barris (Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism) New York: Cambridge University Press. 2002.

²⁰ In his publication of 2011 T. Yordanov claims that the coming out of the book has not been noted by the literary media, yet “only in the annual review of poetic production, prepared by the secretary of the Union of Bulgarian writers Mladen Isaev” where “it has been mentioned in two dissatisfied sentences” (T. Yordanov, *Макове*, Literary World, No 27, (March 2011): 8, <https://literaturnensviat.com/?p=36014>) [20.07.2020]. I, on the other hand, happened to learn (incidentally) about the existence of an anthology “Poppies” namely by the review of A. Yordanov “Regarding an anthology and not only”, published in the Magazine “Septemvri” (nr. 5/ 1978).

²¹ Tegoż, *За една антология и не само за нея*, „September” 1978, nr 5, s. 47.

works the regional-intimate base is only an initial incentive which by the oeuvre grows to multi-meaningful common human connotations – the reason for being, “the everyday and festivity side” of life, the moral choice of contemporary humans, the split in two, and often the amorphism of his consciousness under the impact of the social and scientific-technological dynamics of the age”²².

That, indeed, is the very topical and imagery range inhabited by the so-called CALM LYRICS in Bulgarian literature. As a whole, disliked by the authorities, the current poets share a similar creative fate of purposefully marginalized authors of long-delayed debuts. It is exactly in Poppies where the “invisible” cohesion of the poets is affected, the poets who change the literary consciousness and are today considered to be one of the most authoritative men of letters of the late socialist times. Their refusal to refer to the high ideological horizon by use of their creative powers integrates well into the general direction of the lyrics represented in the anthology Poppies.

For the final part I would like to make it clear that the critical metaphor *calm lyrics*, used most often conditionally, points not so much at a lack of appropriate term, but rather the impossibility to amass radically *the other* related to party propaganda poetry by formally identifiable generic features. The term *calm lyrics* carries in itself, one of the strongest myths in the history of culture. We may say that the term at its very core is a *sacrum* or *ethos*, or both together. Separate moments from the opus of silence may be translated to the literary situation in the second half of the sixties and the seventies of the twentieth century.

Let us remind the reader that socialist realism also knows how to keep silent: as much pathetically inspired as it may be in its sunny admirations, to the same degree in the ballad genre it leans on the pathos of sacral calmness – that is a mystical space where the dead partisans live or the martyr-like silence of the partisans when tortured. It is not uncommon when calmness, or silence, brings about at its peak a linguistic admiration – *being lost for words, not being able to utter anything, words failing* and charged with a difficult-to-suppress volcanic inner drama. Also, besides *ballad* and *heroic* we will come across *solemn calmness, calmness-triumph, first-of-May calmness* as will convince us, the luxury, richly illustrated, export-bound *anthology of the revolutionary lyrics* “The high wave”. Such a discourse certainly repudiates calmness or si-

²² Tamże, s. 48.

lence which is expressed by retreat inwards into the language, thus providing the opportunity for the things themselves to speak.

If we are to call out something bigger – the *calmness* in the so-called calm lyrics reflected in the Poppies anthology that will distinguish it from that of party poets – it will *firstly* be its particular ethos. The moral code of communism which we can lay out in a few clear-cut rubrics, together with the particular *discursive mystics* of social realism's discourse, have turned concepts placed along the *good vs evil* axis into “preachers' merchandise” if we use the definition of Tsvetan Todorov, or (again in his own words) they have forged the *gold nuggets of good* into the coins of communist sacredness. This is precisely the reason to look in the silent ethos of the heart, that goodness for which Tsvetan Todorov says that in its depths “it is wordless, since there is no thought in it. It is simple as life. Even the preaching of Jesus has taken away part of its power – its power lies in the numbness of the human heart”²³.

Secondly, calmness is the screen before which memory unfolds in opposition to the prophetically oriented to the future socialist realism's discourse.

Thirdly, the calmness of the *calm lyricists* can be apprehended of as a natural reaction to the neurotic character of ideology-infested language, yet also (*in the fourth place*) as a sort of humanization of the *sterile* socialist realism's discourse, in which “*all events [...] not only do not belong to the subject, but are also in principle incommensurable with the limited ability for reaching them*”²⁴.

The metaphor “Lyre without strings” (in the context of socialism, a more telling version is (a bell without a tongue)) which modernity inherits could be understood in a broader context – here what matters is the lack of or refusal to speak/write, as may be interpreted by the exceptional gesture of *shutting up* by Boris Hristov and his poem “Black Cross”, but also various forms of looking into words, between them and further into them – to the reasons for creating and existence of poetry²⁵. It is namely those indirect forms that carry in them-

²³ Tsv. Todorov, *Аксиология на разума*, Sofia 2011, East-West.

²⁴ M. Ryklin, *Метродискурс*, “Topos. Literary and Philosophical Journal” (13.07.2005): <http://www.topos.ru/article/3805> [20.07.2020].

²⁵ We will rest on the words of G. Krasteva, regarding the “self-observing model” in the lyrics of the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, which is connected to the *particular attention of poetry to itself, with its ever harder glancing at its own creation and raison d'être*. “*Those are the literary times when a number of authors push away from the pathos-banging “April poetry”*”

Maya Angelova, *Poezja bułgarska lat 70. XIX wieku...*

selves additional representative potential and expand the possibilities of poetic impact of the calm lyrics²⁶.

Yet, following the reduction of words, the language of *calm lyrics*²⁷ could achieve its *program maximum* as well: “realization of a different true being in the assaulted by totalitarian country Bulgarian polis”²⁸. Or something simpler – to reduce language to a gesture, to waving to the time passing by in vain: “what I have missed, what I could have had”²⁹.

and demonstrate a rejection to put their art into a particular ideological project. Very spare in their social creative engagement they come to be generously dedicated to the populating of strictly personal poetic territories where often the dominant topicality is to do with the creation of verse, the sense in art, the place of the poet (G. Krasteva, „Поетическо изкуство” или разноликият канон (Наблюдения върху българската поезия от 60-те и 70-те години на XX век в контекста на проблема за лирическата самонаблюдателност), [w:] Пространствата на Словото. Юбилеен сборник в чест на проф. д. ф. н. Светлозар Игов, t. I, red. K. Protohristova, Sofia 2012, s. 629-645).

²⁶ „Silence, the refusal to speak doubles the silence in the “calm lyrics” and charges it with system-menacing unuttered or half-uttered messages. The silent poet of that period is not a Roden thinker since his silence is active, and in its own turn, doubled by the ambient silence. At first reading the protagonist of the “calm poetry” may leave the impression of mediation. But that is only on the surface. In the sense-making aspect silence actually invites, shouts, and sometimes even yells for communication and community” (I. Stankov, *Поетът и тишината*. “Literary Gazette” 13-19.05. 2015, nr 18).

²⁷ „Speaking less means producing less lies, and if you manage to accomplish the speech of silence, to speak through silence, that most possibly would bring about telling the truth only, to speaking, and why not living not-in-lies. That is the gradually revealing through the decades after 1968 poetic and ethic program maximum of the “calm lyrics” which in its deep civic dimentions is, of course, a political program, i.e. a program for realization of a different true being in the assaulted by the totalitarian state Bulgarian polis” (P. Doinov, *Защо „тихата лирика” не е „тихая лирика”*, “Literary Gazette” 13-19.05.2015, nr 18).

²⁸ Тамże.

²⁹ I. Stankov, *Поетът и тишината*. “Literary Gazette” 13-19.05. 2015, nr 18.

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