

Nation vs. Region: Turkish Serials And The Fail of Mission of Bulgarian Historiography To Construct “Grand Narrative” of So Called Bulgarian National Revival Epoch

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ABSTRACT

The paper is focused on the image of Turkey and Turkish society in Bulgarian academic, school and mass publicity. According to author's ideas, hard nationalistic narrative was leveled by Turkish telenovellas, which were able to meet viewers' expectations and to match regional representations about cultural richness and depth. The main methodology frames used are content analysis, representation analysis, receptive esthetics and open reading, taking into account the background of social projects and ideologies.

Key words: *national ideology, social project, social construction, Turkish serials, media role, social transition, propaganda, soft power, modern and postmodern social paradigm*

Introduction

The image of the other is one of the pivot problems in contemporary humanities. Analyzed from various perspectives, its actuality is determined by the expectation of its social applicability. “Grand narrative” – an instrument, invented by Modernity, operates in social building. School textbook narrative is shaped in accordance with “Grand narrative” conventions. It's expected that school has the main role in programing the basic attitudes towards the neighbors. But, nowadays the popular culture and consumer society are more and more influential, disqualifying the modern epoch knowledge production centers.

The analysis is built according the chronological principle and has four parts. The first one is dedicated to the basic stereotypes of Turkey and Turkish people in Bulgarian publicity. The second is focused on the development trajectories, brought forth during the state socialist time. It's divided in two sub-periods by Prague Spring and so called Partial Liberalization. The time after the collapse of the socialism and stereotype-making are analyzed in the third part of the text. To understand Turkish serials effect is the main task of the forth section of the paper.

1. The image of Turkish essentiality in Bulgarian “Grand narrative”: basic (mis)conceptions and (mis)perceptions

The idea that Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and Ottoman dominion shape images both for region and nations involved, is out of any doubt. According to the viewpoint, actual in the popular publicity in Bulgaria, all the Balkan people, including Bulgarians, are inseparable part of European civilization¹. It is perceived by default that culture of

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¹ This concept is used here with entire consciousness that it is and problematic to be defined strictly.

Ancient Greece is the foundation stone in the building of contemporary Europe², established on values of glamorous Antiquity and Christianity. In their turn, Bulgarian people claim they are legal part of Europe, because they converted to Orthodoxy more than millennium ago and they first broke the trilingual dogma rhetoric arguments. This point of view is widely shared in today's media discourse, political speaking etc. Bulgaria's participation in European values and civilization model is expressed this way in the internet forums too – the most popular place for opinion sharing and probably one of the most social spaces at all. Such a way of thinking, even though superficial and unsatisfactory for scholars, occupies wide and accessible publicity with almost no possibility for any different project to attract the attendance of the people.

The picture changes radically in a moment when Turkey is calculated in. Although a considerable part of Ancient Greece now belongs to Turkish national territory, even though Ottoman Empire, inherited by Turkey directly, but not ideologically, wields a piece of European continent, its right to sign the project for European cultural identity is, if not denied, than at least highly disputable. Arguments start with the statement, born by literal reading of geography – Turkey belongs far more to Asia³ than to Europe. In its extreme forms this way of thinking describes Turkey as “cradle of barbarism and religious fanaticism”⁴, where human kind on lower level of evolution than Europeans could observe. Though this paradigm could forge myths, which can be dangerous for the society in long-term perspective, and it is obviously out of any new-liberal European trends for conceptualizing the other, it's still able to trap minds and to interrupt dreams of researchers and politicians as well.

The voices, purposed to humiliate contemporary Turkish state and society, are articulated mainly by persons with no particular interest in gaining empirical data in order to detail and reinforce their opinions and. Speeches in this meaning key are often held by people, who reach the remote control with anger and switch to the next TV channel, when seeing the traumatically active realium “Turkey” on the screen. They go on listing the newspaper pages, containing information about our south-east neighbors wrathfully, without any effort to read it, even diagonally. It is logical to ask about the inception of these anti-Turkish attitudes. Let it be clear: these kind of shared stereotypes are not characteristic for Bulgarian society only, nor they are Bulgarian invention.

In Western Europe anti-Ottoman spirits were transmitted by so called anti-Ottoman brochures, typical for the end of XIX c. They were written mainly by journalists, and they presented a cocktail of facts, but given in deliberately selected fragments, mixed with emotionally motivated estimates, based on recent impressions, part of which were not experienced personally, but mediated by newspapers.

² See Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, Wien-Köln, 2000; Ferdinand Seibt, *Das Begründung Europas*, Frankfurt am Mein, 2002.

³ This argument can be heard used in TV discussions, can be read in the press, it is one of the widespread points of view towards Turkey.

⁴ Stories about killing young women, seen guilty for having conversation with men, are used to spread and to reinforce this attitude – see http://www.dnevnik.bg/sviat/2010/02/05/853788_16-godishna_pogrebana_jiva_v_turcija_zashtoto_govorila/

It can be expected that in modern-time Bulgaria the main source of information about the past should be educational system⁵. History as school discipline is meant to be one of the essential channels for data exchange. A closer look at Bulgarian textbooks, dated back from socialist period, will certainly prove that the Ottoman invasion was presented in low-detailed picture⁶, dominated by metaphorical constructions and comparisons⁷. It was compared with natural disaster with no possible way to resist against⁸. All the warfare methods, invented by the Europeans in tri-millennium history of European civilization by then, were absolutely unable to avert the failure. The new-coming easterners were depicted in expressions, emotional and out of any rational motivation, amongst which a distinctive group are clichéd word groups, characteristic for monstrous and bestial figures.

All the school textbooks, edited from 1940s to 1989, offer this model of thinking the Ottoman invasion with no division between facts and interpretation. This representation, dating back from so called National Revival epoch⁹, has its dynamics; it could be traced, described and analyzed.

The Second World War brought great transformation in the countries from Eastern Europe. The project for rapid communization of the society included the re-forging of (self-)knowledge in the complex of necessary measures to be taken. Almost immediately after the communist coup d'état the “red” ideology was violently imposed on school disciplines, regarded as “pillars of bourgeois nationalism, chauvinism and monarchist-fascism”. In this number was history, heavily stigmatized to be upholder of the old regime, viewed to be responsible for the signing the Tripartite Pact treatise and joining the Nazi coalition by Bulgaria in 1941.

2. Socialist Era Development (1944 – 1989): Between Class and National Point of View

At first glance it can be expected that the fact Turkey didn't belong to the socialist block could favor this process, providing option to complete the transition in textbooks with minimal shock and with no social tension. Ottomans were still found under the notion “Turks”, adding acute accent in textbook narrative, leading the past-rooted attitude to concrete and sense-perceptive present, regulated by media propaganda and its oppressive tools. Ceaseless press releases revealed the situation on the common state border. It was more than dramatic: everyday diversion attempts from the Turkish

⁵ More information about the role of school in knowledge transmission and social attitude forging see in Philip Altbach, Patty McGill Peterson, ‘Higher Education as a Projection of America’s Soft Power’ – Watanabe Y., D. L. McConnell (eds.). *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*, NY, 2008, p. 37 – 51.

⁶ *History of Bulgaria. Textbook for 11-th class of general education schools (GES)*, by A. Burmov, D. Kossev and H. Hristov, Sofia, 1957 (further cited as *Burmov, Kossev, Hristov*)

⁷ *Textbook for 9-th class of GES*, by V. Giuzelev, K. Kossev, G. Georgiev, Sofia, 1981 (Second ed. 1984), p. 100 – 102 (further as *Giuzelev, Kossev, Georgiev*).

⁸ *Giuzelev, Kossev, Georgiev*, *ibid.*

⁹ See Georgina M. Mackenzie; Adeline P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic provinces of Turkey-in Europe*, London, 1867; Христо Ботев, ‘Народът вчера, днес и утре’, *Събрани съчинения*, т. 2, София, 1958, с. 35 – 41 (Hristo Botev, ‘The people yesterday, today and tomorrow’, *Collected works*, т. 2, Sofia, 1958, p. 35 – 41).

side¹⁰; regular messages about the Turkish army and its constant increase in number. All this propaganda shared the same attitude towards Turkey and Turkish society as history textbooks.

Let's assert that media coverage of the events of Turkish present and Ottoman past in that particular period shared the same logic as well as former Ottomans were regarded as entirely and ideologically equivalent to Turkish people with absolutely no difference between "then" and "now"¹¹. It seemed that school narrative about Ottoman conquest was introduced in order to be used as firm filter, explaining the role of Turkey and its place on the ideologically incorrect side with inventing it historical depth needed. Totalitarian propaganda requires symphony and synonymy between past and present, and Bulgarian communist one found it in terms of abuse and fact deformation – past must be harnessed in order to prove the propaganda watchwords and to exterminate all the doubt whether the social project under feverish construction is the best and the last stage of humans' development as it was maintained by ideology.

2.1. From Communist Takeover (9.9.1944) to Prague Spring (1968): (Anti)Ottoman and (Anti)Turkish Plot Through Class Paradigm View

During the first decade after the communist takeover, led by principles of Marxism-Leninism, history suffered for infliction of the only correct interpretation. In accordance to it, the Ottomans, although they were regarded as barbarians with no possible human power able to be restrained by, the wide masses had even single chance to die as heroes and to establish a model to keep dignity in long-lasting and self-sacrificing defense, carried out with full consciousness of fatal predestination.

But, in contrary, the ex-subjects of Bulgarian king, engrossed by the new dominator from Edirne, oppressed by greedy feudal exploiters¹², were unable to revolt, and that's why Bulgarian kingdom died away without decisive battle, marked with the whole set of epic attributes – ruler got killed, capital captured, statehood destroyed¹³. This model, obviously and traumatically lacking of heroism, was used to demonstrate that peasantry has no revolutionary potential. According to communist ideas, as a group peasants were located to the correct ideological pole of the social model closely to the rightless mass, but nevertheless they had no ability for self-organization, because of shortage of developed enough class consciousness. Therefore, the role in history of them was seen achievable only under the leadership of working class, which was the only one able to enflame revolution and to steer it until the desired successful finish.

¹⁰ "Workers' act" („Работническо дело“) – the Communist party daily, was spreading propaganda stories about "Turkish class enemy" in accordance with Lenin's idea of unceasing revolutionary alertness.

¹¹ *Burnov, Kossev, Hristov*, passim.

¹² *op.cit.* p. 84.

¹³ More about traumatically lacking epic failure of Bulgaria see in Евгения Иванова, 'Османското завладяване на Балканите. Митотворчески интерпретации', *Slavia Meridionalis. Studia linguistica Slavica et Balcanica*, Warszawa, 5, 2005, p. 233 – 252 (Evgenia Ivanova, 'Ottoman conquest of Balkans. Myth-creating interpretations')

To summarize: the textbooks from the first two decades of the communist regime in Bulgaria showed that the hardworking ordinary people in the eve of Ottoman conquest had two enemies: one class and one national. They were poor and miserable, because of growing exploitation by their compatriot rulers, which, in addition, driven by limited viewpoint of their decaying class, let the cat near the goldfish bowl. The so called Turkish enslavement was not due to lacking potential of the people, but because of the leaders, which refused to be real leaders. That's why the Ottoman advance was easy and it progressed with no serious obstacles. Ottomans, the second adversary, were thought as factor, deepened the feudal relations and strengthened the principles of social inequality. Let's just mention that according to Marxist viewpoint feudalism was stigmatized as one of the worst social-economical formations, because it was regarded to be based on exploitation of man by man, and forces of production and power-relationships were divided in disharmonic way, because means of production were owned by the supreme feudal – the Turkish sultan, but not only due to that reason.

Albeit Marxist mainstream view insisted on thinking the religion as anachronism, whose near-dead reminiscences were predestined to be smashed by the all-mighty science (denominated “scientific atheism”), Medieval Bulgarian culture was considered as phenomenon, worthy participating in shared memory of the society. And, there was no way to be otherwise: it is elementary truth that Bulgarian National Revival project, took place in XIX c., was based on attempt to (re)construct Bulgarian nation and to legitimate pretensions of it, using the resource of Middle Age history – ancient, but meaningful greatness of Bulgarian kings and their deeds. It was stated that the emblems of Bulgarian nation, dating back from medieval past, which everyone, who had finished secondary education successfully, should be able to recognized, had highly esteemed value, regardless of the religious philosophy, which the peoples' mind-set and the entire system of culture in that distant epoch were dominated by.

Islam had no such a suspicious luck: it was unable to squeeze through the tight griddle of ideology. Firstly, it was denominated “Muhammadan religion” and more frequent “Muhammadanism”¹⁴ without any regard to correct notions. “Islam” and “Muslim faith” and their derivatives were used rarely and exclusively, but not as a result of systematic approach. Usage of these precise terms seems to be single omission or attempt to enrich the terminology with introducing synonyms.

The description of Islam sounds in harmony with that of the Ottomans – it is the main cause of all the disasters, suffered by Balkan people. It's the principal and the only source, of religious intolerance, peculiar to the invaders and named directly “fanaticism” in various texts. It's curious to involve the problem of human rights¹⁵ here: it is liberal issue, indistinctive for totalitarian systems. The implication of this conceptual framework, assumed in general conclusion role, was special feature of the representation model, culminating all the deficits of the Ottoman political system, religion, economy, and personality of Ottoman people. All these were seen as partial elements of the whole Ottoman character, clearly marked with “Asianism” – a notion, invented to indicate the origin of the new-comers, but in negative way and with

¹⁴ *Burmov, Kossev, Hristov*, p. 83, 100, 103.

¹⁵ *op. cit.* p. 84.

transparent semantic link to “barbarism”. It was meant to exemplify the entire incompatibility of the Ottomans to the cultural background of the Balkans. According to the subtext-layer expectation decoding, this judgment should be accepted smoothly; and its validity – extended over the present day without any rational effort.

2.2. After the so called Partial Liberalization (1968 – 1989): from socialism to national-communism

At the end of 60-ies the liberalization of particular aspects of the publicity, imaginary or not, reflected in school narratives as well. History textbooks also started to loosen the ideological clutch, shifting certain elements of historical materialism mainstream with new trend, disposed to certain symbiotic forms of the former nationalism and Soviet communism. The Marxist-Leninist paradigm, probably present in its most vulgar version, wove in the school history textbooks as though it’s genuinely characteristic for the past facts’ skeleton of the narrative, was gradually modified and it started to fade, shifted by the nationalistically-aligned frame. But, “Turks” remained and kept on their outrage march on the textbook pages¹⁶, being thought with the meaning key of absolutely identity between former Ottoman troops, invaded the Balkans more than five centuries ago, and then-contemporary citizens of the Turkish republic, actually having nothing in common with the events, took place in the Late Middle Ages. The faith of “subjugators” kept on being “Muhammadanism”¹⁷ – a fact, in which isn’t reflected a signal for confessional connotation of the Ottomans, but lack of positive knowledge about the subject of description, added to explicit indisposition to acquire any information details.

Reproduction of negative stereotypes about neighbours isn’t the way to establish horizon for shared living, but it’s still more comfortable, because all the other options are effort-taking. This way of thinking could re-activate trauma and anti-Ottoman reflex, which Bulgarian society hadn’t and haven’t overcome fully yet. The trauma of the small state and powerless society, absent from the map of European intellectual and cultural geography with no visible enough contribution in the process of creation of the civilization, accepted as mainframe reference standard of the values.

3. Post-socialist (1989 – 2012) image-forging of Turkish essentiality and Bulgarian “Grand narrative”

It can be maintained that during the whole communist period in Bulgaria one of the strongest points of “Grand narrative” was the Ottoman plot, denoted deliberately as “Turkish”.

3.1. The textbook version

This misconception was repaired as late as 1990 in one of the first post-communist history textbooks in Bulgaria¹⁸. The authors collective, in which were included mostly university-professors, made great effort to come out of the ideology tag and to set

¹⁶ *Textbook for 7-th class of GES*, by G. Georgiev, Z. Stancheva and P. Drazhev (Panayotov), Sofia, 1979 (2-nd ed. 1982), p. 141 – 175; *Giuzzelev, Kosev, Georgiev*, p. 84 – 173.

¹⁷ *Giuzzelev, Kosev, Georgiev*, p. 100, 102, 103; *Textbook for 6-th class of GES*, by E. Agibalova, G. Donskoy, P. Petrov and S. Parashkevova, Sofia, 1978, p. 164.

¹⁸ A good example here is presented by *Textbook for 8-th class of GES*, by H. Matanov, G. Sotirov and L. Stanchev, Sofia, 1994 (further cited as *Matanov, Sotirov, Stanchev*).

new meaning mainstream, implied in this brand new network of used concepts. The school system and historical narrative in textbooks are extremely conservative, because they are supposed to forge national identity. Therefore, the process of outdoing the elements, proved to be inadequate, can't be expected to take place in one day time. The transition between the old terminology and the new one is closely related with the former social project and the new one. At first sight, this plan was completed successfully: "Ottoman Turks"¹⁹ shifted "Turks". The predicate was added in order to modulate the meaning-making direction and to re-accent the message from the past, transmitted by the textbook text.

The interpretation, embedded into the fact-tracing narrative, migrates from nationalistic register to more authentic one and more consistent with medieval sources. However, at the end of the lesson, dedicated to the Ottoman advancing, certain number of "Turks" was dropped with no additional epithet²⁰. From then on in history²¹ textbooks "Turks" and "slavery" disappeared in smoke. Adequate term substitutions were adopted: they belong to emotionally neutral zones of epistemology scale, and they were forged in close tie with historically correct core concepts "Ottomans"²² and "dominion"²³. Extreme tones in the narrative were lost; facts are now explained in a more prosaic way with tendency to escape from using the dictionary and genre techniques of hero-making paradigm. The Ottoman conquest of Europe was drama, but it could be seen as logical consequence of internecine wars, brought the region in uttermost political fragmentation, result of numerous bad decisions in forging strategy and tactics to resist the invaders. Local nobility was no more malicious, complacent minority, involved in endless fight for territory, voracious for countless treasures and ready to amass them on the work-worn backs of poor peasants, as it was insisted in the textbooks, being used during the period of dominant Leninist thought in Bulgaria.

In accordance to the newly-introduced vision for group identity the success of Ottoman troops was viewed as a consequence of crescent political ambitions of local rulers against the shortage of natural, demographic, military and financial resources of Balkan Peninsula. Viewed from this standpoint there's no other logic for Balkan states, but to fall under Ottoman dominion: this was the result of crushing military superiority, having nothing in common with "barbarian atrocity, close to the predators' one". The fortune of sultan's army was interpreted as due to the shock the local people suffered: they had never experienced such warfare. Ottomans – warriors

¹⁹ *Matanov, Sotirov, Stanchev*. p. 92.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 94.

²¹ After many reforms in Bulgarian school education system the idea of traditional school disciplines, based on the classical division of knowledge, was changed. Now we have no more history, but "history and civilization. History was used to have pivot role in the former social project, thus it is considered to be discredited. "History and civilization" refers to new-liberal European idea for history without conflicts, and Bulgarian clerks, eager to prove outstanding diligence, made such a newly-forged conceptual misconception.

²² Ognyanov, L.; M. Lalkov, M. Radeva, S. Trifonov, V. Kolev. *Essays about Bulgarian history (1878 - 1948). History for pupils, teachers and parents*, Sofia, 1992, p. 6; *Textbook for 5-th class of GES*, by V. Mutafchieva, R. Gavrilova, Sofia, 1994, p. 11 (further cited as *Mutafchieva, Gavrilova*).

²³ *Textbook for 6-th class of GES*, by M. Lalkov, M. Radeva, L. Zidarova, Sofia, 1994, p. 9.

or not – were outside the previous Balkan reality, that’s why they were strange, out of the world local people knew.

Islamic faith as it was represented in the history textbooks matched to its core concept. Firstly, it was no longer “Muhammadanism”, but Islam²⁴. The complex of statements, insisting on religious intolerance, was replaced by explanations, including the religion as basic element of traditional society thinking system. That’s why the political ideology of Ottoman Empire, when it was formulated, was rooted in Islam. Similarly political thought in South-Eastern European states until Ottomans took over the region was also based on the Orthodoxy. The restrictions, imposed to the Christian subjects, were not neglected, but the axiological procedure for building facts narrative was filtered by rational interpretation, subsuming it to the authentic Ottoman social and legal norms: as it was in all the empires, the legislation can’t recognize Bulgarians, Greeks, etc. Thus the problem of human rights was not (ab)used here, although a hint of discriminatory policy towards non-Muslim persons still persisted.

The story of endless campaigns of mass Islamization during the five-century period, constant narrative plot in earlier versions of history textbooks, was also faced with decisive counterargument. Actually, this manipulative representation was surmounted with the explanation, that Sultan had no interest to convert all the people to Islam, because Christians were obliged to pay higher taxes²⁵. There was no state administration, unwise enough to refuse levying higher taxes, bartering it for religious loyalty. Financial stability was one of the main cares in governing process.

The Ottoman invasion was and keeps on being one of the most care-given university disciplines in the Faculty of History at Sofia University. It could be easily noticed that the curriculum of the History specialty, the main and the numerous one in the Faculty, includes the narrative about the fall of South-Eastern Europe under the Ottoman dominion in six basic lecture courses. It’s problematized in the following lecture readings: History of Medieval Bulgaria, History of Bulgarian lands (XV – XVII cc.), National Revival History, History of Byzantium, Medieval Balkan History, and Modern time Balkan History²⁶. Ottoman plot is present also in lectures on Modern time European History, because it is well-known fact that the Ottoman invasion and broke off of the traditional road relations between Europe and Asia motivated Spanish and Portugal monarchs to pay a groups of adventurers, guided by experienced captains, to find new routes to Indies. The traumatic Ottoman matter is reflected in the reading of Modern time Bulgarian History, where the first lecture is dedicated to “reveal” in details the problems of Bulgarian people under the Ottoman rule and the “objective” need for liberation.

Not only students, studying at Faculty of History, are under the soft influence of the nationalistic doctrine, claiming that Ottoman invasion and violate interrupt of Bulgarian and Balkan statehood are the ultimate trauma in all national history narratives of the region, so it has to be a distinctive part of contemporary national identity of Bulgarians and all other Balkan nations. Byzantine and Balkan history are

²⁴ *Matanov, Sotirov, Stanchev*. p. 92, 98, 107, 115.

²⁵ *Mutafchieva, Gavrilova*, p. 29.

²⁶ <http://www.clio.uni-sofia.bg/BG/istoria-red09.pdf> (retrieved at 18.09.2012)

taught also at the two Faculties of philology, where students of Balkan Studies²⁷, Modern Greek Philology²⁸ and all the specialties, focused on the Balkan region, are introduced to listen to the narrative about the Late Medieval drama, caused by the bloodthirsty hordes, came from Asian steppe to ruin the civilized world. Although many of these courses of lectures were not initial parts of the curriculum at Faculty of History, tracking back the development of program of studies is not able to reject the standpoint that the fall under the Ottomans and the centuries on are not amongst the most attention-taking courses with position of key importance in the curriculum.

It's not necessary to get into statistical data about duration of these lecture courses in order to prove that Ottoman elements in Bulgarian history were and still are seen essential. However, the number of students from the specialties mentioned above, graduated in last twelve years, since the Marxist-Leninist model of historical materialism was marginalized, is significant. It means that probably thousands of people with university diplomas are convinced in historical guilt of the Ottomans and are ready to accept the conspiracy theory ideas, imagining new myths about the initially destructive role of Turkey in the faith of Bulgarians. If this conviction couldn't creep in group mentality by history narrative, which is more and more precise and academically correct, it would produce negative stereotypes by relatively heavy weight of the matter in the lecture and seminar schedule. Modern and studious research results, presented into the schemes of the outdate curricula, could change only the appearance, but principles of attitude shaping are fated to remain the same.

3.2. *Modern knowledge and post-modern social information infrastructure*

Notwithstanding, textbooks and course schedule analysis is able to provide only a part of the picture. The information about our past isn't school or university monopoly as well as educational system is not the only agent in the process of forging, canonizing, transmission and usage of history data in social context. The teacher is not the only character, responsible to equip young Bulgarian people with background knowledge of national identity, filling up their amorphous ethnicity feeling with shared content. Grannies' memories, narrated around the dinner table, while all the members of the family are listening to, should be included in the number of informal social institutions for conservation of the ancestral heritage and family tradition building. Some of the elements of these table narratives, parts of which are experienced personally²⁹, could be incorporated in "Grand narrative" and unified with the stabilized and canonized version of the history, ready for social consumption. This specific modality functions to exemplify the school history lessons and to show the words of teacher, tightening the necessary relation between text and act. It proves that the textual narrative used to be reality before it was sculptured by words in story, and provides the audience with actual and sensual experience.

²⁷ <http://www.slav.uni-sofia.bg/images/stories/pdf/Balk.pdf> (retrieved at 18.09.2012).

²⁸ http://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/bul/content/download/72700/583231/version/1/file/uplan_NG2010-2011.doc (accessed at 18.09.2012).

²⁹ Хейдън Уайт, 'Практическото минало', *Социологически проблеми*, 3-4, 2010, с. 122 – 140 (Hayden White, 'The practical past', *Sociological problems*, 3-4, 2010, p. 122 – 140).

That's why the relations between the different media, which create, modify and transmit historical data in wide social aspect, and define ways the information diffuse with purpose to form social attitude and values framework, are as important as the content itself.

The analysis wouldn't be satisfactory without tracing the dynamics of the image of Turkey in Bulgaria's wide social context, took place during last two decades. It can be maintained that nowadays "Grand narrative" and its infrastructure are in crisis. This situation could be understood as a reflection of the crisis, which the entire sphere of humanities is affected by. "Grand narrative" provides mechanisms to infuse personal and family experience into the canonical corps, which assigns the stronghold points of identity. Thus, uniqueness could be included in the frame of widely shared content, creating basic value coordination system to signify the mental demarcation lines of own and domesticated space and to lay them down on the geographical map, where the national territory always seems unfairly small.

Moving on to the Information Age, it could be clearly notice, that traditional media and "Grand narrative" are more and more marginalized³⁰. Traditional social institutions as shared dinner table and listening to the stories of the older members of the family are deeply affected. The generation gap is now abysmal. Past memories and cultural heritage, produced by society in order to keep social cohesion, founded on of the ideology of shared historical being, are replaced by things, which can be touched and bought from the mall. Values were substituted for price tags – the conservative intellectuals complain. To be more radical: the financial prices are now social values. In the eyes of priests of the old knowledge type, the rapid change is considered as tragedy, because they are threatened to lose the positions of social leaders. Globalization and spamming advertisement attenuate sensitivity to the value set, which is characteristic for the last century.

But, it remodels the society, its inner relations and instruments to control it. The society is no more pyramid-like, ruled under the principles, based on the combination between hierarchy and multiple mobility options up and downwards, but it's now multi-measure network-like paradigm with flexible structure³¹. Self- and group identity is seen as construction with firm hierarchy, matching its canonized version no more, but as fluid system, where categories have no constant positions. Even further – no category has guaranteed place in mentality. The identity is influenced by trademarks, fashion, internet, personal strategies for social adaptation etc. It is produced by pursuit of pleasure and satisfaction. Rules of it are relative and highly adaptive in accordance with the purpose – achieving the fusion of pleasure moments in timeless coagulation of endless happiness, just one step away from the dream of permanent ecstasy. Self-definition, acceptance of group norms and adaptation in order to be recognized by collective are not related to the past any more. There's no history content in it. They are not "then" and "there", but "now" and "here".

³⁰ Димитър Атанасов, 'Маргинализацията на академичния исторически разказ', *Маргиналието в/на литературата*, София, 2011, с. 536 – 562 (Dimitar Atanassov, 'Marginalization of academic history narrative', *Marginality in/ of literature*, Sofia, 2011, p. 536 – 562).

³¹ Alexander Kiossev, 'Virtual Communities vs Imagined Communities. Festivities. Reading, Chatting', *LiterNet*, 25.02.2000, № 2 (3).

3.3. *Academic productions and school narrative: challenges to re-negotiate social values and attitudes*

From early 1990-s on mainstream school narrative insists on rhetoric, which discards concepts, deriving from black registry of nationalistic ideology. It's estimated as an element of the former interpretative tradition, rooted deeply in the XIX-century consciousness. Later in XX c. this ideology was mixed with Leninist redaction of the orthodox Marxism, having variable proportion depending on actual social project. If admitted that still-actual usage of ideologically burdened dictionary is due to social inertia only, it would provide only the first half of the answer.

There's no doubt that certain elements of Bulgarian society keeps the concepts of XIX-century national idea still alive. According to this point of view, the Bulgarian national identity is regarded in firm categories. It seems like monumental, respectful building, impossible to be re-shaped. That's why this social group is ready to charge the guild of professional historians, authors of textbooks³², for "intentional replacement of the conservative values, which saved us as a nation during the Dark Ages of the Ottoman slavery". According to this viewpoint, historians are supposed to be servants of foreign powers and to work in favor of wealthy states interests, which are able to satisfy their avarice. Nationalists claim that professionals are not priests of The Supreme Truth, having inside knowledge and the exclusive right to disseminate it, but mercenaries, willing to sell their conscience. That's why historians are not expected to produce The Real History. It can be touched through the corps of memories, bequeathed by the ancestors, because they had seen everything with their eyes.

This kind of rhetoric catches one of the continuous difficulties, related to the work of historian in the wide social frame. While stepping onto the thin ice of national dignity, the academic history researcher risks to collapse into the freezing water and to doom his intellectual efforts to be disregarded. One single wrong move and the results of hard work could fall a prey to the nationalists and their speeches, which are always easy to understand and tasty to consume by popular discourses. The ideological explanations don't require reading with care and mental efforts to catch the point; they don't need verification procedures in order to be proved as logically valid. As a consequence, researcher is faced with two options: to be uselessly weighty and to lighten in the eyes of the wide publicity, attempting to save its professional ethics from ideologically motivated aspirations; or to stand in front of the crowd of semi-scientific demagogues and knowledge abusers, violating guild values and professionalism. But, there's always one more issue: to declare that such paltry frictions don't deserve academic attention, the rescue of the drawn is his personal problem and nobody is obliged to intervene in it, that's why anguish of ignoramus has to be regarded likewise, because, as it is said by the anonymous ancient man of wisdom: "Aquila muscas non captat."³³

Let's add some thoughts about terminology with meaning gravitation centre in the concept of so called "slavery" and the principles, led to revise it, modeling entirely

³² In Bulgarian tradition textbooks are written mainly by university-professors.

³³ "Eagle is not supposed to catch flies."

disparate image of the Ottoman conquest and next few centuries. Of course, the radical political and social change, took place in Bulgaria in late 1980-s, could be calculated here. The hasty demonization of the former period leftovers, followed by loud denounce of the scholar paradigm of dialectical and historical materialism can provide just the first half of the solution. The more important reflection here concerns the effects of collapse of totalitarian regime in social perspective: according to the former tradition, the interpretation can be only one, because the truth is single and the Communist party has already decreed it. The role of scientific research was reduced to find proper arguments and to confirm and re-confirm the party orders. Now, the textbook content was liberalized and it's no longer ideology-dependent. The educational process returned to its own values with no political subordination. Value system, transmitted by education, is tied to the long-term social projects and therefore it's not mandatory for it to be loaded with short-period party interests.

That's why in the textbooks, dating from last two decades, Turkey is initial enemy no longer: insidious and lying in wait to massacre us. There's no need to stay in constantly intensifying vigilance in order to counterattack, as it was insisted by propaganda, especially during the campaigns of renaming Bulgarian citizens with Turkish origin. The capitalist antagonist in face of Greece were not actual as well, Yugoslavia in its last days was also removed from the number of enemies of Bulgarian people. The Eastern bloc collapsed, dragging down the rhetoric, which used to legitimate togetherness of all the socialist nations and its fundamental incompatibility with the alliance of the capitalists, viewed to be in constant decay and dying, but still existentially menacing.

New objective appeared on the knowledge horizon – to negotiate the socially valid version of group identity, leaving neighbor hate in history, where it should remain. The modern national feeling, constructed in accordance with liberal values, builds the Balkans as region with unique culture, where colorful variety of nations and faiths coexist in peace centuries long. Textbooks took in consideration this tendency and excluded the narrative, able to set the fire of the hatred; and eliminated the consciousness of national identity under permanent threat by surrounding countries. The other has equal rights and obligations, including the right for self-definition – this is the basic, which the new school history narrative were based on. The other is now conceptualized as different, but equal.

The choice of the historian, seen from this position, probably seems unquestionable: the relativity of knowledge has deeply rooted the idea of the dictate of the truth, legitimated by rhetoric strategy as a result of discussion, but not of the Truth capitalized and qualified by full article. It seemed liberated voices would launch fair play concurrence in order to prove validity and verifiability.

3.4. The publicity of academic discourses and the crisis of knowledge production after 1989

The totalitarian state crashed and controlled publicity faded out, leaving just bitter aftertaste. This publicity used to provide the historian with tribune, and he had audience, ready to drink up with thirst every single word of him. The audience was interested in consumption historical information in order to reveal the truth about the maleficent role of neighboring nations – the rhetoric technique, used to keep the people in never-ending anxiety without any options to exit this matrix-like parallel

world. Scholars had higher social positions; their research results were always accepted and digested with no doubt. Because they were professionals, appointed to contact with the authentic sources – *sanctum sanctorum* of history, they were smart enough to keep their authority, sacrificing the ethics of the professionalism, and to testify to the Communist party interpretation.

There were no pretenders for the field of the former solid and controlled publicity. There were no applicants, willing to partition it and to be installed on a certain zone of it. There was no alternative mechanism, invented to compensate the necessity of publicity of social knowledge. Therefore, after the collapse of megapublicity the public relations of knowledge were irrecoverably broken. Collapse of this party-controlled publicity was experienced traumatically, probably as painful as the Ottoman conquest narrative during the former period.

The only publicity and the only politically correct narrative, based on the class, perceived as super-value in the first half of the communist period (1944 – 1968), and mainly on the nation, but without disregard to the class theory in the second one (1968 – 1989), disintegrated in multiple public microspheres. Focused inwards, lacking of access to publicity, they were found hermetically closed and with no normal outlet to audience, which academic narrative was targeted in. Scientific studies communication remained active only during the university lectures and in the school lessons. Yet, it became apparent that academically produced social knowledge is more and more peripherized, the voice of lectureship is silenced, and PR of the intellectual work, regarded as self-sufficient in the former social organization, are absent. Reasonable valences between knowledge and society, which were re-established after the Communist takeover according with the new social engineering project, were now forced out of the regulations set, maintaining its performance, proved to be unable to secure the conditions, needed for its normal functioning.

School and university had no more prestigious positions in shared values hierarchy; they lost the top of epistemological pyramid. No reform plan was capable to enable them in the role of knowledge hubs, part of modern society with plain structure and to re-shape the social paradigm they are existing in, transforming their social model from pyramid-like to flexible network-like.

After democratic changes the publicity of science and of knowledge in general seems to that of secret societies: turned inwards, they were unable to emit information with open access and fit to social consumption. The production of school teaching and university readings were destined to be valuable and to make sense only in the education buildings. The knowledge forging institutions, similarly to secret societies, are more and more charged for social phenomena, which they aren't responsible for.

Amongst the reasons for guilt of the science, its uselessness was pointed out with painful acridity: the knowledge process is sense-making in its definition, but now it is unable to maintain this basic relation and that's why it has no reason to exist anymore. Extreme posts claim that traditional centers for knowledge production are now unprofitable, therefore it's clear that they don't deserve budget subsidy. Research projects are impossible to use in practice, so ensuring finances by peoples' taxes surely must be avoided, because nobody is interested in spending money for nothing.

As it was mentioned earlier, advancing globalization and marching consumers' obsession of society intensified the process of marginalization of knowledge as shared value. Things, having no flashy billboards, are not registered at all. Even being a part of everyday obligation like school attendance, it is regarded as element of the obstacles succession, laid before the person, who is running to grab the glossiness on the shop window in front of it. It became apparent that care about the science and its outcome in the broad context, even though being under serious discussion, were able to guarantee the steady position of the knowledge and prestigious role of the professor in the society. State system was responsible to publicize the results of research projects, because it provides deep and staunch reasons for validity of ideological truth. In the eyes of the audience it seemed that the conveyer was working, no matter how. Of course, from my current standpoint I can't suggest it was effective indeed, but nonetheless it was able to maintain such an illusion during the communist times.

Until nowadays, no matter of joint efforts by school and university, the shared attitude towards Turkey, heavily burdened with heritage of former textbooks and other history narrative instances, are not fully changed: it is naïve to expect that social memory could be erased in one day time. Turkish people are still ferocious barbarians, living like wild animals; they have no culture of communication (they are always ready to defraud) and don't pay any respect to people out of their community (call non-Turk people "giaour"). Gender interactions of them are viewed abnormal, because women are treated as movable property, and they breed like rabbits. Today people in Bulgaria, thinking that Turkey must be left out of Balkans and European Union, are not deaf-and-dumb minority. But again, this is only half of the answer we are looking for.

4. Turkish Serials Effect

There is constantly increasing number of people, viewing Turkey as place, very similar to our own, where traditional customs match to that of the Balkan region and where personalities are warm and emotional like ours. During the last few years the statements, claiming that Bulgarians and Turkish people share one cultural row, are more and more widely spread. The society of our south-eastern neighbors is patriarchal too, men don't stand up from the table until they don't finish with their meal, and children are often forced to follow parents' commands against their will with no additional ratiocination, but just to obey the elder person. It is territory, where friends or relatives visit is ritualized, even though it is an element of everyday usual life. Step across the home threshold requires immediate taking off the shoes – habit, characteristic even for city homes. However, this custom has nothing to do with socialist "economy of deficit", but is rooted deeper in the people's traditions, dating back from ancient times. These customs are viewed on the TV screen.

Vladimir Ilych Lenin in his day managed to understand the huge significance of visual propaganda. "As long as people remain uneducated, cinema and circus are the most important amongst all other arts"³⁴ – he shares. No matter circus is not included in the number of arts. However, when one of the universally acknowledged masters of propaganda recognizes its crucial importance in life, he should be trusted.

³⁴ *Полн. собр. соч.* – 5-е изд., Москва, 1965 – 1975, т. 44, с. 579; Беседа В. И. Ленина с А. В. Луначарским (*Complete collected works*, 5-th ed., Moscow, 1965 – 1975, t. 44, p. 579).

Communist leader's insight, relevant in his age, could be expanded adding television to the channels, able to transmit ideology messages. TV is an indispensable instrument of global soft power³⁵. Unlike motion picture, which requires special attention and following the plot with concentration, television is, as it is said by Frank Lloyd Wright, "chewing gum for the eyes"³⁶. Speaking about television generally, it is easy to access, and its conveyer produces pictureware, targeted to be consumed by everybody. That's why it occupies the widest possible publicity. Seeking for a phenomenon, crossing point of all the tendencies of contemporary consumer society, TV is quite the thing needed. It's popular culture phenomenon, part of social communication infrastructure³⁷.

Turkish serials are mainly targeted to be exported abroad. Let's remind that they are warmly accepted in Arabic countries and in South-eastern Europe, but not only there. They are purposed to make a positive image of Turkey by screening well-balanced pictures of Turkish culture, consisting of Oriental habits, domesticated by rationalism and influence from the West. It can be maintained, that Turkish soap operas are popular culture phenomenon, part of "soft power"³⁸ tools, invented to provide effect on a terrain, where tools of direct propaganda are useless.

Turkish series are made to be viewed, similarly to any other "soap operas", accompanying everyday household activities. That's why they're expressive – emotions of characters are always intense, actors' performance is accented as if it is theatre play, facial gestures are over-accented. The film is meant to be viewed during doing-something. Therefore, sitting in front of the screen for hours and concentrated attention, peculiar to cinema or theatre hall view, is not required. Turkish series are designed to be housewifery silence breaker, when the spouse and children are not home. Plots of them are always easy to follow and to understand, demonstrating what is characteristic for everyday-living.

Emotions they represent are perfectly matching to the cliché about warm, Balkan passions. There are no barbarians; no cruel violation; only peoples' feeling and behavior are filmed. The major part of screen time is dedicated to dialogue modality in its various forms – a marker of civilized contact and affiliation to European cultural sphere. Islam is placated religion, essential element of the social traditions, part of tolerable and welcome otherness. Even though characters, especially female ones, use verbal formulas, referring to non-reflective religiosity³⁹, frequently, it is not stigmatized, but included into everyday-life understanding of the religion, representative for Balkan religiosity, regardless of Christian or Muslim faith is about. It is icon-less power, which activates atavistic fear and terror, but also primitive hope for

³⁵ Matthew Fraser, 'American Pop Culture as Soft Power. Movies and Broadcasting', Watanabe Y., D. L. McConnell (eds.). *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*, NY, 2008, p. 182.

³⁶ See Miller, T. *Television studies: the basics*, New York, 2010, p. 8.

³⁷ More about popular culture and propaganda see in Alex Edelstein, *Total Propaganda: From Mass Culture to Popular Culture*, New York, 1997.

³⁸ Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York, 1991; Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, 2004.

³⁹ It can be seen in series of formulas about invoking the God's power to solve family quarrel, for example.

keeping the balance in the world and protecting it in justice, peculiar for popular consciousness and influenced by pre-monotheistic paganism.

Universal acceptability of Turkish telenovellas is additionally helped by the lucidity of the headlines of them. They are targeted to broad audience, thus they don't demand interpretative efforts and don't provide alternative reading options. Probably that's one of the reasons why Latino "soap operas" couldn't join in Bulgarian group identity, and series like "Widow in white" were able to match receptive expectations and to formulate them next, but now they are almost erased from peoples' memory, replaced by Turkish productions. No doubt, Turkish serials are so popular also due to representation of Turkey and Turkish people in previous period textbook, which are still active and filter the attitude of many people, shaping images of regional, national and civilization geography.

Most viewers consider "Silver" ("Gümüş"⁴⁰), "Leaf Cast" ("Yaprak Dökümü"⁴¹), "Daydreaming" ("Kavak Yelleri"⁴²) "What is Fatmagül's fault?" ("Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?"⁴³) as warm, family novellas. This impression is made not only by the plot, characters, costumes, music, interior and exterior details, but also by technology of their making of. Here the filming style can be outlined. It's not popular in European and American cinematography, but it's more and more fashionable in Turkey. The aggressive close-up, taken while holding the camera "by hand", isn't invented by Turkish series directors, but by Scandinavian ones. Today avant-garde cinema and art-filmmakers consider this technique as one of the movie aesthetics nightmares. On the terrain of Turkish telenovellas the shaking of camera, imitating the heart rhythm of standing body, makes feeling of eye-to-eye contact. By this visual trick, the film director is intended possibly to eliminate the feeling of screen mediation and to convince the viewers that it's real-time performance and they are sitting and watching it. Ellipse-like diagonal movement of the camera with zoom on, invention of American series from 70-s, makes sense of gravity, adding regard for technical depth and fashion-following, because the visual cliché is widely recognized and it is viewed as reference standard in popular audience eyes.

Exterior scenes contain interesting and heuristically liable detail: characters are captured in open space – terraces, romantically pending over the weaves of the sea or with elegantly emphasized view to the seashore. It refers to Mediterranean custom to build open floorage, mirrored into the water, stable element of visual representations of European civilization. It is experienced as very European by Bulgarians as well and recalls the national complex for lacking European essentiality – due to climate conditions and insufficient housing space in Bulgaria most of people have no such open space terraces. In contrary, in most of villas in Bulgaria there is such place under the sky, looking at the lake water or mountain foot, where householder could enjoy sunset and/or sunrise. That's why exterior decisions create positive attitude towards Turkey and Turkish essentiality. The character, sitting down and drinking coffee, picturesque landscape of Istanbul, scream of birds – all these details are not nominal

⁴⁰ Directed by Tarık Alpagut and Kemal Uzun, first airing in Turkey – 2005.

⁴¹ Written by Reşat Nuri Güntekin, first airing in Turkey – 2005.

⁴² Created by Timur Savcı, directed by Kerem Çakıroğlu, first airing in Turkey – 2007.

⁴³ Created by Vedat Türkali, directed by Hilal Saral, first airing in Turkey – 2010.

elements of film scene, but significant details, revoking emotional image of the dream world, highly admired and closely tied to the desired version of the group identity.

A few words about music background: it's relaxing, but generally it's loaded with symbolical content. Conversation parts, coinciding with music, are very rare. As a rule, the speech scenes and musical background frames are radically separated – principle, characteristic for Soviet filmmaking and adopted in other socialist countries during the communist period. Sound has always perceivable, but not intrusive flavor of the Orient, made in accordance of the “world music” genre conventions – the last incarnation of new-liberal strategies, forged to get over the optics, which deform mutual apprehension and attempt to remove myths and negative stereotypes. The liberal principles above still remain in the sphere of wishful thinking with insignificant effect in the real life horizon sharing. Regardless of it, these techniques are able to produce propaganda images, and thus to succeed overcoming the negative stereotypes, insurmountable obstacle for academic people decades long.

Turkish TV series often include “ethnographic pictures” – dances or traditional habits descriptions, intended to represent culture of Turkey is easy to accept and suggestive mode, depicting it as colorful, rich and attractive. This definition meets the way Bulgarian culture is perceived by Bulgarians: folklore is deep and meaningful, cuisine is varied and tasteful, traditional dances can touch your soul, songs must be sung with maximal personal devotion only. Shared life made people's culture also unfold under bidirectional influence: so called “Bulgarian” architecture can be seen in Asia Minor, traditional songs and dances don't recognize language borders, national costumes all over the region have common elements, social phenomena and gender positioning in the society were developed under the same conditions⁴⁴ and it was now realized through the optics of telenovellas. Additional argument is provided by language influence – Bulgarians use numerous words of Turkish origin in everyday language, they are inseparable part of popular dictionary.

According to the “soft power” paradigm, social attitude change, made by popular culture influence, is tied with organizations with certain profile – the commercials⁴⁵. They are interested in advertising their production in order to attract consumers' attention and thus to be profitable. Numerous researchers, analyzing on North American terrain, insist that trademarks are instrument for global domination⁴⁶. It bears hybrid concepts like Coca-Colonization, McDomination⁴⁷, which concentrate the ideas of “soft power”, consisting trademark (popular culture of consumer society) and dominance.

⁴⁴ See *В търсене на българското. Мрежи на националната интимност (XIX – XXI век)*, София, 2010 (*In search for Bulgarian essentiality. Networks of national intimacy (XIX – XXI cc.)*, Sofia, 2010).

⁴⁵ David Nieborg, ‘Empower yourself, defend freedom! Playing games during times of war’, van den Boomen, M.; S. Lammes, A. Lehmann, Joost Raessens, and M. Schäfer (eds.). *Digital Material. Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology*, Amsterdam, 2009, p. 39.

⁴⁶ See Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*. Berkeley, 1993; Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II*. New York, 1997; Matthew Fraser, *Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire*. New York, 2005.

⁴⁷ Kuisel, R., op. cit.; Pells, R., op. cit.

A wider empirical base could bring forth another perspective, whence it would be possible to understand that not only Turkish serials are used as a transmission mechanism for screening Turkish culture as domesticated Orient, addressed to forge positive image abroad and where cultural paradigms and values are being forged, in Western Europe. It seems that this image of Turkey is not characteristic for soap operas only, but it is Turkish-wide offered: Oriental motives based “world music” can be heard in a considerable number of cafes and restaurants⁴⁸; visual advertisements, based on “typical Turkish things”, are extremely close to stills of TV series; Turkish traditional habits, demonstrated on the screen, could be seen everywhere in street markets and shops in warm and heart approach to (potential) customers.

It is apparent that Turkish serials, an element of mass culture, don't match to the classical model of “soft power”. There is no single and private trademark-maker, interested in producing and selling goods together with positive image of the society they are originating from. It could be maintained that in Turkey nowadays a specific version of social contract is signed. Participants here are not only actors from private sector, but public institutions and resources as well. This contract is result of deeply founded strategy, built to re-shape the stereotypes, which filter the perception of Turkey and Turkish society by people from the world of rationalism. If the social contract is one of the foundation stones of Modernity, there's no doubt that popular culture, transmitted by TV signal, is phenomenon, belonging to the postmodern epoch.

In this context it can be stated it's legitimate new concept to be coined – soft power propaganda. It combines two different sets of ideas – propaganda ones, typical for modern society with hierarchical structure, and “soft power” theory and instruments, characteristic for postmodern society with plain, network-like model. That's how specific “national trademark” is established, having postmodern superficialities and modern fundament. Possibly the attempts to influence the key actors' stereotypes, involved in stereotype-making and consuming, appeals to multicultural paradigm, a basic new-liberal analytical weapon for understanding the other.

Large-scale popularity of Turkish series in Bulgaria marks the initial point of transformation process. Verbal aggression towards Ottoman heritage and suspicion on Turkey and things, belonging to it geographically or symbolically, is being gradually substituted for consciousness for togetherness, thought through the ideas of shared historical faith during the last seven centuries. In education sphere exhaustive efforts were wasted, attempting to make this change real. It's obvious that society were not respectful enough to the text, used to obtain the position of ultimate knowledge instance, thus it was not susceptible to its message.

Probably there's no single answer. However, a part of it is held in the problem of defected and crashed of publicity of academic knowledge in Bulgaria at the beginning of the post-communist transition. The second reason is that Bulgarian essentiality, which consists the image of Bulgarian particularity and all the Bulgarian features, immanent and out of time and space, is mirrored in the representation of the Turkish one. Watching Turkish plots and characters, Bulgarian people can see

⁴⁸ Academic events are also opened, using this music genre; presentations of universities – one of the most conservative social institutions, are also introduced with Oriental-based “world music” rhythm.

themselves, that's why even the nationalistic hard of stone could be moderated. Thereby socially active version of nationally-centered Bulgarian Revival epoch narrative is revised: Turkish people are not undersized, swarthy and bow-legged, but exactly like us; some of them are even beautiful; and all the actors involved are well-built! That's how chthonous languages of the nationality are invalidated – series, perceived with no differentiation between reality and fiction, made Bulgarians feel that there is neither persistent threat of Turkish assimilation, nor of physical extermination of Bulgarian genus.

5. Final Words

Acceptable or not, the idea of basic role of Turkish series in demythologization process of the most traumatic zone of the national project – the narrative about Liberation (3.03.1878) and restoration of the state after five-century dominion, can be considered as fact. This terrain, extremely slippery for scholars, was taken in ideological possession by Turkish telenovellas. Let's be even more radical: in scholars' eyes school and university narratives are separate spheres of knowledge, partially influenced by popular discourses. This influence is far stronger than it was supposed by academic historians. Consecutively, this conclusion can raise one more problem: in traditional knowledge theory different branches and fields are separated. Interferences are possible, but they don't touch the core definition of the field given. Now it can be noticed that a film is able to turn not only the life philosophy of single person, but it's powerful enough to re-emphasize and even re-shape basic attitudes in broader context.

Post-modern knowledge theory comprise that there are no traditional and recognized universally sources of knowledge and media channels. Media aren't only data transmitters, but they are now main information producers, sharing the row with academic ones. The former hierarchy is no longer valid and positions in knowledge process are now flexible: no more fixed roles of producer and recipient as well as no vertical, but network-like paradigm. Turkish series aren't only mediation tools. They have considerable meaning creation potential – position, reserved for academic players on the field in the past. It can be maintained that Turkish series and textbooks share one data row as they are both knowledge instances. TV box is not only chewing gum for the eyes, but powerful ideological instrument, part of the contemporary data transmission infrastructure, able not only to entertain masses, but to promote heroes and to take the role of "serious" knowledge agents. It could be considered that Turkish serials are one of the last appearances of the "fast" things: fast food, fast literature, tabloid journalism. Therefore now nobody keeps Latino "soap operas" in his active memory. They weren't matching to peoples' mentality; and they failed to cause any group attitudes turn. They're part of entertaining aesthetics, targeted to be widely accessible: affordable to buy, easy to accept and fast to consume, following the market imperative.

It's hard to forecast whether Turkish novellas would be forgotten after they fall out of the fashion list. It's out of any doubt that series "made in Turkey" were able to contribute in long-term social project, focused in building group identity with myths, but without envy and neighbors' odium.

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