

**NEW BULGARIAN UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF NEW BULGARIAN STUDIES**

**Ognyana Atanasova Georgieva-Teneva**

**CIVIC VALUES**  
**IN BULGARIAN CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' POETRY**  
**(1878 – 1918)**

**SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION**

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## **STRUCTURE OF THE DISSEARTATION**

The dissertation comprises an introduction, seven chapters and conclusion, with a total length of 319 pages.

The bibliography includes 173 entries.

The appendix lists 136 sources – collections of poems, anthologies, literary miscellanies, schoolbooks, and readers.

## **CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
THE PRAGMATICS OF CITIZENSHIP IN POETIC DISCOURSE .....	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
CIVIC LIFE IN THE DIALOGUE OF ‘CHILDREN’S’ DISCOURSES .....	9
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AS A POETIC MESSAGE .....	12
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
IMAGES OF THE BULGARIAN STATE .....	17
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
POETIC PROJECTIONS OF SOCIETY .....	21
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	
CHILDREN’S POETRY IN MILITARY UNIFORM .....	24
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN</b>	
POETIC DISCOURSE ABOUT DISCOURSE .....	29
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	33
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS</b> .....	34
<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION</b> .....	34

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction presents the theoretical framework of the research.

*The choice of topic* is motivated by the fact that there is still an unexplored axiological field in Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry (1878–1918): the field of civic values. Bulgarian post-liberation writers demonstrated sensitivity toward the axiological changes which accompanied the reconstruction of the Bulgarian state. Their poetic reflection added new values to the existing patriarchal familial and national system of values which paralleled the development of Bulgaria's institutions of power and the restructuring of Bulgarian society.

*The object of the study* is the poetic work for children and adolescents from the first forty years after the Liberation from the Ottoman Empire, a relatively well-defined period in the development of Bulgarian literature (despite the inherent arbitrariness of any strict periodisation). The researched segment of the national cultural heritage is representative for the formation of the aesthetic tastes and value orientations of young readers in Bulgaria.

*The subject of the study* is the civic paradigm in Bulgarian post-liberation children's and adolescents' poetry. A great number of poetic images have been impacted by two important developments: the fact that individual Bulgarians have broken the encapsulation of closed communities and family ties as well as the fact that they have become increasingly aware of their rights and duties towards the state. These images construct *the civic discourse in Bulgarian post-liberation children's and adolescents' poetry*. In keeping with Paul Ricoeur's maxim "Discourse is a language event"<sup>1</sup>, we will discuss briefly "the event" of the discourse under investigation as we focus on its main traits.

First trait: "Discourse is always realized temporarily and in a present."

The years of 1878 and 1918 determine the endpoints of the investigated period because the historical events at that time exercised a strong influence on the two autonomous yet actively interacting fields of culture, which have sparked our research interest: literature and civic engagement, and also because in this timeframe a distinct type of discourse became more clearly manifested in poetic communication – civic discourse.; This occurred during a period

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<sup>1</sup> Ricoeur, P. *From Text to Action*, 1986. [Рикъор, П. *От текста към действието*. София, Наука и изкуство, 2000, с 136.]

when literature and the state (the state being a matter of interest to literature) came to be established and shaped as institutions.

Second trait: “Discourse refers back to its speaker.”

The speaking subject in the researched poetry is a civically engaged, active person, who has stepped outside the bounds of patriarchal order into the linearity of history and modern public life.

In the period under investigation, the poetic speaker is most often an actual “speaker”, a person whose speech is monologically self-sufficient and pragmatically oriented. The implicit role of the recipient child is usually that of the “listener”. We must recall that in the 19th century the literature for young readers in this country was predominantly perceived as a product of pedagogical activity, while the aesthetic component remained in the background. That is why the “place” from which the voice of the speaking Self comes is the “agora” – the open public stage, where the poetic speaker is not *among* the others, but somewhere *above* them, as if he were placed on a pedestal so that his role as a leader can be emphasised.

Third trait: “Discourse is always about something.”

If *the discourse topic* is construed as a semantic centre, which attracts and radiates the individual content lines of the text, then a new phenomenon can be identified underpinning *the relations between the members of society and the state* in the period from 1878 to 1918. This line goes beyond the traditional interest in the patriarchal man, immersed in nature, family life and the national collective body, and focuses on *the active citizen*.

Fourth trait: “Discourse has [...] an interlocutor to whom it is addressed.”

The researched works have an interlocutor with a clear profile: children and adolescents whose social, and more specifically, civic identity is in a stage of active construction.

The specific addressee of the poetry under investigation also begs the question of *how poetry speaks* and *what action it directs*, following John Austin’s theory of speech acts<sup>2</sup>. Recognizing the purpose of speaking in the illocutionary act, we can argue that the poetry for children and adolescents which conveys civic ideas makes use of *the appellative function, the rhetoric of persistent inclusion, and cogent persuasion*, whereas the perlocutionary perspective is manifested in the desire to encourage the reader to think about society and serve the public good, i.e. *to be a citizen*.

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<sup>2</sup> Austin, J. *How to Do Things with Words*, 1962. [Остин, Дн. Как с думите се вършат нещата. София, Критика и хуманизъм].

This heightened proactivity of the speech act directly bears on the role of conflicts in poetic imagery. In contrast to the main corpus of the researched children's and adolescents' literature, which suggests a sense of harmony and a rational, stable order in the world, poetry with civic messages is a turbulent space. Civic poetry abandons the traditional utopias of living in perpetual serenity and bliss, in which the main question is how quickly the young child, guided by adults, will become an integral part of the "regulated" and "self-reproducing" social mechanism. Society is represented as a dynamic and imbalanced system; a space of discord and contradictions, of tensions and conflicts, a battleground for struggles over status, money and power; a space of intense dialogue with the state or lack of it. Poetic criticism against different aspects of Bulgarian public life shows a strong affinity for the comic aesthetic tonality, which leads to the development of genre forms such as satire, pamphlet, epigram, aphorism, and caricature. At the same time, the genre strategies related to the dramatic experience of a tragic lack of civic sense bring elegy to life. The rare instances of civic satisfaction find poetic expression in the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the heroic, which, in terms of genre specificity, are realised in the poem and the ode.

*The system of characters* in the poetry under consideration goes beyond the family circle and includes various other communities with their views about the state. The resulting amalgam between the patriarchal and the modern is perfectly logical, according to G. Almond and S. Verba: they distinguish three types of political culture – parochial, subject, and participant, and argue that the citizen is part of a culture that is a "special mixture" of the other three types<sup>3</sup>.

The civic speech of the studied discourse is characterised by a certain *decline in the then popular overt moralising and didacticism*. The usual postulates, which boil down to "Know and love everything that is Bulgarian!", "Work hard!", "Study hard!", are pushed to the background and replaced by the general question, "*What does it mean to be a good citizen?*" and its problematisation. On the plane of communication, the answers to this question relate to both the appellative and the expressive functions of language.

Among the many prerequisites for the increased interest in the artistic impact at the expense of the pedagogical, the main one lies in the in-depth evaluation of freedom, which finds its expression not only in the meaning of poetic speech, but also in the way it is performed: the instructive tone is incompatible with the principle of freedom. However, this does not mean

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<sup>3</sup> Almond, G., S. Verba. *The Civic Culture*, 1963. [Алмънд, Г., С. Верба. *Гражданската култура*. София, Гал-Ико, 1998].

that the civic image has a reduced performativity in comparison to the didactic image: it has both the energy of the imperativeness and persuasiveness, expressed by means of an increase in the ludic and polysemantic content.

*The scope of the study* comprises texts with civic messages from single-authored books of poems, other poetry collections and anthologies, periodicals, readers and schoolbooks. The study does not seek to follow the model of “literary history as history of generals”, to quote Yuri Tynianov’s metaphor<sup>4</sup>; it aims to “bring to light” important features of civic imagery, even when its authors may rank as ordinary “privates”.

*The main research question* is “*What does it mean, according to the children’s and adolescents’ poetry, to be a citizen in the newly-liberated Bulgarian state*”, and the discussed sub-questions concern the relations in public space, the images of citizenship and civic consciousness, of conformity and constructive criticism, of social indifference and creative activities. This research presents both the findings of the close reading approach, which analyses the text “as it is”, as well as the intertextual connections, which are uncovered through open reading and which are brought into focus by the poetic dialogue about citizenship and the literary context embedded in it.

Up to this date, the issues addressed in this study have not attracted any attention in previous research literature: this is the first attempt to explore and analyse civic values in Bulgarian poetry for children and adolescents (1878-1918).

Nevertheless, several works have proved to be important for this investigation. First and foremost, S. Yanev’s “Bulgarian Children’s and Adolescents’ Prose” should be mentioned, which discusses values in literature (honour, dignity, humility, patriotism, love of learning) as a projection of the national educational ideal with the value of work being the dominant one. The monograph describes the moral system as “an ever-renewing system, adapting to the new distribution of social forces” – a view entirely within the perspective embraced by this research as well.

The monograph “Lotophagi’s Memory” by M. Enchev<sup>5</sup> has also been useful for our research – both with the conceptual categories and the specific analytical tools presented in it.

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<sup>4</sup> Tynianov, Y. N. On Literary Evolution. Poetics. History of Literature. Kino. Moscow, 1977. [Тынянов, Ю. О литературной эволюции., 1977.] // Тынянов Ю.Н. Поэтика. История литературы. Кино. Москва, 1977]. As quoted in: <http://philologos.narod.ru/tynyanov/pilk/poet5.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Enchev, M. Lotophagi’s Memory. Communicative Strategies of the Poetic Text in Bulgarian Children’s Poetry. Shumen. “Konstantin Preslavski” University Press., 2000, 54-59. [Енчев, Мл. Споменът на лотофагите. Комуникативни стратегии на лирическия текст в българската поезия за деца. Шумен, УИ „Константин Преславски“, 2000, с. 54–94]

By and large, the themes of the poetic discourse typical of the period in question (each of the themes is regarded as epitomising coded values) – homeland, work, nature / God – guided us towards the understanding that *civic issues do not form an isolated thematic sphere, but rather represent an important dimension within the thematic fields thus outlined.*

P. Stefanov's "Children's Literature" is also worth mentioning as it emphasises the "dominant social role of the children's writer"<sup>6</sup>. It is precisely in the dominant social role played by the writers of children's literature that we can recognise the origin of civic imagery.

"Literature for Children: Changes in the Legacy" by S. Stoycheva<sup>7</sup> has also provided a significant impetus to this research. Though dedicated to a chronologically different period of the Bulgarian literary legacy for children, this work has been of great importance to us for at least two reasons: first, because it sets an excellent standard of original research and second, because it demonstrates a productive approach to values in children's literature.

*The research methodology* of the study includes methods of analysis, interpretation, comparison, description, culturological approach, and intertextuality.

*The research hypothesis* consists in the assumption that the fan of values in the investigated poetic texts is broader than previously thought as it should also include civic sense and engagement.

Among *the expected results* is a synthesis of knowledge that would throw into relief the axiological atlas of Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry.

The introductory part ends with a *discussion and negotiation of the working concepts* of "values", "citizenship" and "democracy".

## CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One "The Pragmatics of Citizenship in Poetic Discourse" addresses the cognitive, educational and aesthetic dimensions of poetic texts with civic messages. The approach is informed by the understanding that there is an inherent arbitrariness in the use of the term "knowledge" when it is applied to a work of art. The educational potential of the researched poetry is analysed against the backdrop of the traditional values expressed in poetic imagery. Special attention is given to a proposition which is of particular importance for this research: namely, that the literary work's aesthetic value does not relate directly to its civic

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<sup>6</sup> Stefanov, P. *Children's Literature*. Veliko Tarnovo, Abagar, 2013, 94. [Стефанов, П. *Детска литература*. В. Търново, Абагар, 2013, с. 94.]

<sup>7</sup> Stoycheva, S. *Literature for Children: Changes in the Legacy*. Sofia, Sonm, 2014 [Стойчева, Св. *Литературата за деца – промени в завещаното*. София, Сонм, 2014.]

function; that the “pure” beauty of the text and the possibility of transferring its poetic message to “real” life are two categories which are not directly interdependent, although they may interact with each other.

The sub-section “Poetry in the Mirror of Pedagogy” examines the typical nineteenth-century notion of the applied role of children’s literature, well reflected in a review by A. Teodorov-Balan<sup>8</sup>, in which it is argued that poetry “teaches and educates the child”. As is well known, in the earliest stages of its development, Bulgarian children’s and adolescents’ poetry often aimed to provide direct guidance and edification. Subsequently, however, the pragmatic function of the poetic text gave way to the aesthetic; the instructive component in poetic speech receded to the background and was gradually superseded by full-fledged artistic images, which encoded educational messages in unobtrusive, non-explicit forms. This process of transition from didactic to aesthetic impact was neither straight and uniform, nor was it irreversible.

How and to what extent does literature *teach*, in Balan’s words? Or in modern linguistic terms, what are the characteristic features of poetic cognitive pragmatics?

Charlotte Bühler’s experimental study (cited in Yordanova<sup>9</sup>) has revealed that the child is first and foremost interested in literature driven by cognitive motivation (the child’s interest in the unusual and exotic in creative imagination games comes in the second place, the third place is held by the dynamics of action, while the aesthetic interest comes last, in the fourth place). However, knowledge in poetic imagery is fundamentally different from knowledge in science, the latter defined by B. Russell and A. Eyre as denoting a real fact or “truth” in which the subject fully believes. As is well known, knowledge acquired through art is not a valid form of “truth” because it is highly subjectivized, and its nature is fictional, autonomous from the “real” world. At the same time, it would be unfortunate to ignore the fact that the domains of the real and the fictional are mapped onto each other and interact with each other. Although the fictional exists in opposition to the real, it invariably grows out of “a grain of reality”, in R. Ingarden’s apt formulation. Civic imagery in children’s and adolescents’ poetry is a special case of what has been argued above: its world does not reproduce “real” life itself – however,

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<sup>8</sup> Teodorov-Balan, A. Review // Periodical Magazine of the Bulgarian Literary Society, 1891. No. 37 and 38. [Теодоров-Балан, Ал. Рецензия. // *Периодическо списание на Българското книжовно дружество*, 1891, № 37 и 38.]

<sup>9</sup> Yordanova, N. Fiction and Spiritual and Moral Development of Children [Йорданова, Н. Художествената литература и духовно-нравственото развитие на детето.] // *SocioBrains*, № 34; [http://sociobrain.com/website/w1465/file/repository/183\\_187\\_NELI\\_YORDANOVA\\_BELLES\\_LETTRES\\_AND\\_SPIRITUAL\\_AND\\_MORAL\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_OF THE\\_CHILD.pdf](http://sociobrain.com/website/w1465/file/repository/183_187_NELI_YORDANOVA_BELLES_LETTRES_AND_SPIRITUAL_AND_MORAL_DEVELOPMENT_OF THE_CHILD.pdf)

it articulates notions, ideas, insights and opinions about the real world, and this evokes its unique potential to form values and attitudes.

When we turn our attention to education – the other component of poetic pragmatics in the researched literary corpus, we find messages in the spirit of the emerging modern values of *freedom of will and initiative, human dignity, resistance to humiliation, rule of law, public order, democracy of participation, regulation of journalism, constructive communication, overcoming of prejudices, critical attitudes towards abuse of power.*

The sub-section “The Civic and the Aesthetic” negotiates a reading strategy that guards against semantic reductionism and corruption of the aesthetic nature of cultural reception. It is widely accepted that the pleasure derived from literary texts can have many aspects: cognitive, informative, thematic, rhetorical, phantasmic, etc. No external goals, including civic goals, could serve as an excuse for neglecting the aesthetic experience.

The sub-section “Civic Values in a Literary-Historical Perspective” presents diachronically the civic axiological content, whose origin goes back to the Renaissance. After 1878, the creation and implementation of rules for independent socio-political life became a public necessity, and that, in turn, exercised a significant influence on the poetic works addressed to young readers – initially, they were characterised by a strongly pronounced didacticism, but later the effects of playfulness and artistic plasticity became more numerous. Changes occurred on a different plane as well: the laudatory tone towards the state was abandoned in favour of a more critical, sometimes even accusatory tone. The two tendencies, all things considered, were a manifestation of the simultaneous evolution of civic and aesthetic consciousness.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

Chapter Two “Civic Life in the Dialogue of ‘Children’s’ Discourses” presents different modes of civic engagement – artistic, as well as educational, journalistic, and anthological. Civic engagement is represented as a value for individual poets, writers, publishers and editors of periodicals, and even for functionaries in the Ministry of Education and the state school network.

The post-liberation educational discourse was at the heart of children’s and adolescents’ literature, which embodied the conviction that Bulgarian society needed not only well-educated people, but also good citizens. Curricula in literature, literary texts in readers and schoolbooks, handbooks by instructors, teachers and inspectors – they all testified to the fact that the formation of civic values became a state policy soon after the Liberation (1878): the school

subject of civics was introduced in 1884; a special section “Civics” became part of the Bulgarian language curriculum; a number of textbooks on civic education were published.

An exceptional contribution to the formation of civic consciousness was made by the school readers compiled and published by authors such as I. Vazov, K. Velichkov, D. Mishev, S. Kostov, I. Tserov, B. Angelov, to mention but a few. Each reader contained fictional, essayistic, and epistolary texts, which helped young Bulgarians to forsake the old, insular mentality, disguised as “healthy traditions”, and embrace modern views of public life.

Civic values were also reflected in various methodological manuals for teachers: “Essentially, in compiling the reader, I was guided by the idea of making it a “living thread” that would link children’s experiences taking them out of the narrow confines of their individual lives and introducing them to public life,” Samardzhiev wrote in his “Practical Guide to the Primer and My First Reader” (1905).

Periodicals for children and adolescents also played an outstanding role in the formation of civic consciousness. This tradition went back to 1871, when the first issue of the magazine “Pchelitsa” (Little Bee), published by P. R. Slaveykov, declared that “In serving the fatherland, the difference between an individual and a nation or locality disappears, it is the citizens who should come first.” Among the post-liberation magazines “Mladina” (Youth) made a special civic contribution in the period from 1891 to 1915. Created on the initiative of the teachers from the Kazanluk Pedagogical School and its principal Dr K. Krustev, the magazine attracted as collaborators some of the most famous poets, fiction writers, artists, and musicians (T. Ginchev, T. Tserkovski, S. Popov, J. Stubel, D. Gabe, A. Bozhinov, E. Manolov, etc.). It published both literary texts with civic messages and current socio-political materials with a civic focus in a way that was entertaining and inspiring.

G. Stoyanov, founder and long-time editor of the magazine “Svetulka” (Firefly), 1904–1916, argued emphatically in his first programmatic article that all publications should partake of a spirit “which would enable them to contribute adequately to raising a generation of worthy citizens”. The tendency started by “Svetulka” fulfilled its proclaimed objectives. In addition to being an energetic participant in public life, a democrat, a teacher with a strong civic consciousness, G. Stoyanov authored numerous articles on controversial public issues. Among them, and emblematic of his civic values, were “Monarchism or Citizenship”, “On Civic Education and the State”, “Art as a Social and Educational Force”, “Individual Authority and Institutional Authority in Education”. Stoyanov believed that education should necessarily include civic tasks in order to “prepare each individual to become a true, conscientious citizen, who loves not only his freedom, who protects not only his dignity, but also and above all loves

and protects the freedom and dignity of all people.” Thus, it makes perfect sense that N. Yankov should point out that “Svetulka” had a “strong democratic and humanistic character” and that it “instilled in young Bulgarians high moral and civic virtues”<sup>10</sup>.

The school magazine “Mayska Kitka” (May Nosegay), 1904–1905, published the column “Civics” on an irregular schedule, while “Art Gallery” (1905–1916) – the most influential journal for fine arts and literature – had a distinct civic profile; a fact that has so far not been discussed in research discourse.

Among the series of children’s and adolescents’ periodicals with a civic engagement platform was the magazine “Macedonian Star” (1909–1919): it was published outside of the territory of Bulgaria, in the town of Voden (present-day Edessa, Greece, at the time within the Ottoman Empire). With its very first issue soon after the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, “Macedonian Star” established itself as a beacon of modern values, such as ethnic group equality and parliamentarianism.

Although in circulation for only a year, the children’s magazine “Chavche” (Little Crow), 1913–1914, edited by Elin Pelin, also published texts marked by a distinct civic component.

The anthologies and collections of poems addressed to the young readership also sent civic messages, most notably the first anthology of Bulgarian children’s literature “Na Ranina” (1911), as well as “Selected Fragments” (1915) by “Alexander Paskalev & Co Publishing”, both having a distinct, consistently well-structured civic paradigm. Furthermore, the collections “School Songs and Poems” (1881), “Poems for Children – Schoolgirls and Schoolboys” (1902), “A Literary Reader” (1904), “Laughter and Joy” (1912), “Fragments by Bulgarian Writers” (1916), “Little Spark” (1918), “Our Children and the War” (1918) also showed civic engagement in varying degrees.

During the forty years of the period under investigation, the poetic messages to the Bulgarian young reader, for all their ideological changeability and aesthetic renewal, steadily pursued the goal of “forming young citizens”, to use a quote from “School Songs and Poems” (1881).

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<sup>10</sup> Yankov, N. *Books, Authors and Time*. Sofia, Bulgarian Writer, 1961, 178. [Янков, Н. *Книги, автори и време*. София, Български писател, 1961, с. 178.]

### CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three “Individual Freedom as a Poetic Message” examines the important poetic representations of the idea that the man of the New Era has free will, he is in control of his actions and is held accountable to others, he can write not only his own biography but also the biography of society.

In the first decades after the Liberation, two different yet intersecting concepts of children’s education coexisted in Bulgaria, which found their reflections in contemporary poetry. The first approach was grounded in traditional educational norms, often authoritarian, while the second one drew on the new pedagogical ideas that arrived in Bulgaria with Johann Herbart’s theory of education, focusing on the need to encourage children to explore, to seek and discover new information for themselves, and to make their own choices. Another new influence was the so-called “didactic art”, which formed part of the movement for “new education” and which strived to achieve a balance between the emotional and intellectual nature of the child.

There is no clear-cut demarcation line between the “two” types of pedagogy as attested in literature: the same author often embraces simultaneously the postulates of strict and uncompromising discipline, which, in one form or another, deprives children of their childhood, and the ideas of didactic “art”, which give children the freedom to be children.

This research substantiates the thesis that authoritarian pedagogy correlates with civic passivity, whereas liberal pedagogy – with an active, constructive social stance. In seeking to shed new light on the poetic postulate “Be obedient”, we are not interested in what the research literature has most often discussed so far – namely, what traditional values were imparted by children’s poems, but rather in what modern values were embedded in the poetic texts in their civic perspective.

Two collections of poems with the same title – “Children’s Gusla”, by V. Popovich and K. Velichkov, reveal child’s obedience as a pedagogical ideal (“Morning Prayer”, “Night”, “Evening Prayer”, “Repentance”, “Starry Sky”, “Beggar”, “A Noble Son after the Exam and his Mother” by V. Popovich; “When I Go to Bed in the Evening”, “Angel”, “To Parents” by K. Velichkov). Other poems offer instruction and advice (“Conversation. A Grandmother and a Little Girl”, “Run, Dear Child”, “Imitation of a Czech Song”, “Mother and Son”, “Little Peter” by V. Popovic; “Prayer”, “The Blind Beggar” “The Nativity of Christ”, “Think of the

Miserable” by K. Velichkov): according to them, the power of the guardian is absolute, very often its intransigent permanence is ordained by God himself. God stands above educators and at the same time strengthens their authority. The father and the mother are the “initiated” mediators between God and the child. Christian values, as understood by V. Popovich and K. Velichkov, imply unconditional obedience. Everything is from God, the poems of the two authors assert: the Universe and its harmonious order, beauty, matter, and spirit. God is the pedagogical super-authority – he creates, but he also judges and punishes. The poetic feeling is one of adoration, but also of awe. The supreme authority of the Creator and the Judge became an instrument of pedagogical guidance. With an imperative tone and an implication of no alternative, V. Popovich and K. Velichkov sent messages of humility, love, compassion and mercy, integrity and sincerity, religious zeal, repentance, liberation from passions, a sense of gratitude to God and human benefactors in this world. V. Popovich was a stricter and more demanding follower of authoritarian pedagogy. If the child inadvertently fails to be obedient, repentance should come, “*I am sinful, / sinful, sinful, / I have fallen into sin.*” K. Velichkov also portrayed the image of the obedient child, but it was only as an exception that the concepts of *child* and *sin* were linked together in his poems.

A number of poems by T. Kalchev, T. Ginchev, Z. Doychev, and many others were built around the idea that the child who attempts to be independent will face countless dangers. This is a special type of horror, influenced by folklore scary stories, which suggests with unrelenting determination that children’s initiative can lead to dangerous mistakes and may even be life-threatening.

What is the predictable educational effect of the analysed poetic messages? Beyond any doubt, it is the observance of discipline. Poetic teachings can be likened to directions for walking on a marked trail through a forest while strictly following the route markings. This controlled movement determines the success in achieving the previously set goal. Those who walk through the forest enjoy peace and safety; the educators are satisfied because they exercise maximum control over the emotions and desires of their pupils. According to modern child psychologist A. Kohn<sup>11</sup>, an obedient child is very likely to grow into an obedient adult and uncritical citizen. A similar claim was made on the pages of the magazine “Misal” (Thought) about a hundred years ago:

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<sup>11</sup> Kohn, A. *The Myth of Discipline: from Obedience to Cooperation*. Sofia, Iztok-Zapad, 2011. [Кohn, А. *Митът за дисциплината. (От послушание към сътрудничество)*. София, Изток-Запад, 2011.]

[...] the children who stand still and quiet, who do not tease their friends, and do not carry a ball or a toy in their pockets at all times, such children do not hold any promise. [...] Children should not be brought up in an overly ceremonious or submissive manner.<sup>12</sup>

As can be seen, even this brief quote reflected the new type of cultural consciousness propounded by the intellectual circle around “Misal”, for which individual’s freedom and initiative are important ever since early childhood.

Independent behaviour, personal choice and decision-making, individual initiative and entrepreneurship, love of freedom, and the independent, critical spirit were the values which the poetry for young readers affirmed and turned into a guaranty for future civic activity. As E. Erikson points out:

The indispensable contribution of the initiative stage to later identity development, then, obviously is that of freeing the child’s initiative and sense of purpose for adult tasks which promise a fulfilment of one’s range of capacities.<sup>13</sup>

In Bulgarian children’s poetry, it was P. R. Slaveykov who first gave young children “the right” to play freely without any restrictions in having fun. “*I am the wind, I raise dust,*” is a passionate plea for children’s activity and transformative action. The mature man in P. R. Slaveykov’s personality was altogether a sensible mentor, and not an unreasonable dictator. The pedagogical liberalism in Dyado (Grandpa) Slaveykov’s works was a product of artistic intuition and situational spontaneity, while in S. Popov’s collection of poems, it was quite determined and consistently articulated: this was evidenced in the self-reflection passage from the preface to “Detska Kitka” (Children’s Nosegay), which promised the poems would give children only happy experiences, as well as in the poem “To Young Readers”, which was, among other things, an aesthetic program of a kind, free from didacticism: “*It is a bunch / of many flowers / and the lesson it / does not confuse! / Little children, / it is for you – / may it give you / lots of fun...*”. The quoted verses marked a turning point in Bulgarian children’s poetry: it was no longer conceived of as an independent artistic space, governed not by school content but by the principle of aesthetic pleasure. It is no exaggeration to say that this work proclaimed that children’s poetry has (should have) the characteristic features of a game; it marked the beginning of a literary communication that set experiencing of pleasure as its goal. Popov’s collection of poems was an event in Bulgarian children’s literature – poetry and

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<sup>12</sup> Kolushev, N. “Children’s Vacation”. Children’s Magazine. // *Misal*, 1892, No. 12, 838. [Колушев, Н. „Детинска почивка“. Списание за деца. // *Мисъл*, 1892, № 12, с. 838.]

<sup>13</sup> Erikson, E. *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, 1994, 122 [Ериксън, Е. *Идентичност, младост и криза*]. София, Наука и изкуство, 1996, с. 164.

didacticism were placed on the opposing sides of a clear dividing line. “Detska Kitka” was an island where children were the sole sovereign: this was unique at the time. The poetic speaker often was a child whose voice sounds authentic. The protagonist was an ingenious child, who turned everyday objects into toys: the walking stick became a horse (“Petko”), the potato – a child’s head (“My Baby”), the curtain – a new dress for the doll (“Seamstress”). The child was an artist whose imagination provided everything that was missing in the real world “inherited” from adults. It turned its back on the toys it had at its disposal and invented new ones, cutting out not just dresses, but new spaces; it gave birth not to some potato babies, but to original ideas, whole new worlds – a true demiurge. “Mr. Popov’s language and style is simple and light, and the naïve tone of his songs demonstrates the author’s gift to communicate on an equal footing with children and understand the naïveté of the child’s perception of things...,” wrote P. P. Slaveykov in “Misal”, emphasising that the moralizing tone in children’s poetry should continue to be avoided in the future.<sup>14</sup>

Another original idea was put forth by S. Popov for the first time in Bulgarian children’s poetry – the idea that adults can make mistakes too (the poem “Oh! Oh! Oh!”). The systematic nature of the humorous expression also proved to be surprisingly new. The shift away from seriousness, discipline, levelling of emotions towards comedy and fun is also a sign of placing a greater artistic value on the ludic dimension of poetry – it is a sign of freedom. The fact that a little girl makes a dress for her doll from curtain fabric was quite endearing to the reader because of its spontaneous ingenuity, it made the reader laugh at the girl’s adorable impishness. As is well known, comic forms are always the result of the disparity between appearances and reality. In S. Popov’s poems, the discrepancy was no longer between the pretense of being a strict educator and the unsatisfactory results achieved by his pupil (“Little Pencho” by P. R. Slaveykov), it was between the child’s delightful desire to experiment and the unexpected consequences that follow.

In “Imagination and Creativity in Childhood” L. Vygotsky<sup>15</sup> substantiated the view that creative imagination originated in early childhood. The Russian psychologist saw play not as a reproduction of learned experience, but as a desire to combine what was already known with new ideas. In the years to follow, Vygotsky’s theory of play has been further problematised as a form of freedom. J. Huizinga, R. Barthes, M. Foucault, though starting from different

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<sup>14</sup> Slaveykov, P. P. “Detska Kitka” (Children’s Nosegay) by Stoyan M. Popov. // *Misal (Thought)*, 1899, № 1, p.. [Славейков, П. „Детска китка“ от Стоян М. Попов. // *Мисъл*, 1899, No. 1, 125].

<sup>15</sup> Vygotsky, L. *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*. [Вигонски, Л. *Въображение и творчество на детето*. [Vygotsky, L. *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*]. София, Наука и изкуство, 1982.]

theoretical premises, viewed child's play as a gateway to the world of the possible, a way of going beyond the existing conventions into the realm of improvisation and unpredictability. Today's psychologists and educators do not doubt the paramount importance of play for the formation of the child's active personality and creative self-confidence, of confidence in its own abilities and initiative. That is why, the impact of the first positive images of the role of play in Bulgarian children's poetry was all the more important. In the context of civic problematics – the subject of this research, the dimension of play, which relates to the social development of the child, is of great significance insofar as play presupposes interaction between children themselves as well as between children and adults, and all this is a prerequisite for the child to develop a sense of community, empathy and social skills. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century play was not a subject of focused research for educators. There is a long list of children's poets who affirmed that playing games was a manifestation of free will and original thinking: T. Simeonov, V. I. Stoyanov, Elin Pelin, S. Chilingirov, T. Tserkovski, etc.: in fact, all important authors, who wrote for children in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, linked together the concepts of *play* and *freedom* in a distinct, yet similar way.

I. Vazov, M. Balabanov, Ts. Kalchev, V. Iv. Stoyanov, Ts. Tserkovski, St. Popov, Al. Konstantinov (not so popular as a children's author) created characters of children who released a captured bird to the wild, instead of playing with this live toy locked in a cage. Freedom, which was held in high esteem, was also reflected in animalistic images, for instance, of a wild horse ("Zebra" and "My Little Horse" by T. Kalchev), of the starving but free wolf found in "The Wolf and the Dog" by K. Velichkov, and others. The children in S. Chilingirov's "Hey, Skip the Rope", on the other hand, played a game of impersonating slaves and free people. Images of happy, free children playing around were also created by K. Velichkov ("After the Exam", "Gaida" (Bagpipe)) alongside with the images of Christian humility, diligent study and obedience. "Children with lively disposition, who cannot stand still and who quite often deserve punishment, tend to be forgiven because they are both good students and children, and hold promise of becoming better citizens...", N. Kulushev noted in the magazine "Misal"<sup>16</sup>.

S. Mihaylovski also advocated the value of freedom with rhetoric fervour. ("Bulgarian Oppressors and Slaves"). With conviction and enthusiasm, he propounded the idea that a freed slave remained a slave forever; that love of freedom was a triumph of the spirit, not a gift that

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<sup>16</sup> Kulushev, N. Quoted essay, 838. [Колушев, Н. Цит. съч., с. 838.]

could be received without effort; that Bulgarian slavery was above all a state of mind and only then the result of external circumstances; in the long run, people deserved the political leaders who ruled or oppressed them. It should be emphasised at this point that the teaching aids and materials, officially approved by the Ministry of Education, included many texts extolling freedom and condemning all slavery and oppressors (by P. R. Slaveykov, I. Vazov, K. Velichkov, etc.).

To summarise, the possible effect of the investigated poetic discourse, perceived as a perlocutionary act, was to advance free individual's social criticism and creativity in the years to come. The poetic idea of encouraging the child to make decisions on its own, to touch, to try, to explore, to create was the main idea, which planted the seed of civic creativity. It was the alternative to the poetically expressed pedagogical dogma, which committed the child to obedience, to unquestioning, even unthinking submissiveness.

## CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four "Images of the Bulgarian State" is dedicated to the poetic representations of the state.

The earliest representations of the state are in the form of odic praise and mythologization of the state inspired by its restoration. The epochal shift in the everyday life of Bulgarians was interpreted as a type of birth, a genesis marked by a poetic response which carried the overtones of fanfaric festivity and mythical sacralization. The first answer to the implicit question *What does it mean to be a good citizen* was that a good citizen was an upholder of the state. Apropos, nothing new under the sun – Plato considered poetry as an instrument of education which must sustain statehood and reproduce its resources. Nonetheless, the high spirits soon subsided. Harsh poetic criticism was levelled at the new 'hero', the lowbrow person with deep pockets and the façade of a caring statesman. In the discourse about the state, the satirical tone eventually became dominant; however, sadder, elegiac notes were also apparent.

An important poetic focus was the portrayal of the ruling prince/ tsar who initially was considered a pure symbol of the state: "*Our beloved Lord, / Ruling Prince Alexander / and his state...*" ("School Songs and Poems", 1881). The character of the prince often reflected traits typical of traditional paternalism: "*For many blessed years our Prince, / Alexander / Lord / dear Lord of ours / keep us under your shield*". The poetic feeling was one of rapture and awe, similar to that in Christian religious poetry. In V. Georgiev's "Hymn" the birth of prince Boris

was represented as the fourth most important event for the state, preceded in significance only by the establishment of the Bulgarian state, the Unification, and the Serbo-Bulgarian War. Other works portrayed the ruling prince according to the ideal of national representation – “Sredets” by Vazov described a “*prince of the people*”. Poetic mythologization with Christian motifs, though spontaneously devised, became a universal tenet in portraying the ruling prince.

As a synonym of the state, the Bulgarian monarch was undoubtedly idealized, but the specific forms of individualisation that followed the initial joy of the Liberation contained the growing disillusionment in Bulgarian public life. The monolithic image of the homeland-state began to fall apart. Noble patriotism slowly dissipated and became a relic of the past. The ugliness of social existence gradually destroyed the beautiful myths of Bulgarian nationhood. The magazine “Chavche” with Elin Pelin as editor-in-chief, published “Inappropriate Praises” by K. R. – a pamphlet, in which the ruling prince was criticized for his vanity: “*Praises warmed the heart / of this vainglorious lord, / and whoever spoke them glibly / received honours and awards.*”

S. Mihaylovski voiced the harshest criticism: his works, though not directly targeting young readers, became widely known to them as they were included on a regular basis in schoolbooks and other publications for children and adolescents (slipping in works with adult themes into children’s and adolescents’ literature is not surprising; the phenomenon has been well analysed in the theoretical discourse for quite some time). The tsar was negatively portrayed even by ‘more composed’ poets who generally described the world as being balanced and harmonious. “*Indeed / he calls himself tsar, / thus, at their flesh / he gnaws*” (T. Kalchev); “*Our opulent palaces, / on the cliffs we build / and off the miserable creatures / our happiness we fulfil*” (T. Simeonov).

In the investigated poetry, the crown, once shining bright and pure, was now dull and dark; the halo of the crowned prince had grown dimmer. The poetic image of the head of state, which the young reader was exposed to, was of a power-hungry monarch – vain, narcissistic, and unapologetically greedy, who treated the people under his rule as subjects, not citizens.

Bulgarian post-liberation children’s and adolescents’ poetry also raised important questions of legal nature, which at first glance may seem to be far removed from young people’s consciousness. This set of problems sought to find an appropriate age modus in order to be made accessible to an audience without sufficient social experience. It revealed to such audiences, most often through negative imagery, that the rule of law was an important value of civic life. For example, the fable “Wolf-Shepherd” by T. Ginchev criticized the appointment of a wolf as a shepherd without asking the sheep for their opinion. Vazov criticized poor

financial laws, *“For the taxes and the budget / we have our members of parliament...”* (“In the Kingdom of the Samodivi”. “Svetulka” published poetry criticizing the discord in Parliament (“Rabbit Parliament” by Chicho (Uncle) Svetlio, “Rabbit Company” by K. Dechev, etc.). Negative portrayals of the judiciary system can be found in the works of P. R. Slaveykov (*“The innocent, never spared / he suffers, sternly punished; / but the powerful acts, as he pleases”*, “The Wolf and the Goose”), Vazov (*“Yesterday’s spies are today’s lawmakers”*, “A Sentimental Walk”), N. Lazarov (*“...men of law, chattering / flexible and bending, twisting and distorting...”*, “Owl, Goose, Cat and Mouse”). The images of justice usually appeared as brief poetic motifs, but they could also be found as main topics in their own right. Petko Slaveykov’s elegy “Prisoner” was a case in point: *“If I am a prisoner, I am not a villain [...] Here is what I did: Justice is what I sought.”* Justice was also the central focus of the poem “Right and Wrong” by S. Popov, which criticised the absolute power of injustice: *“The wrong is a virtue today / it is noble / it pleases king and minister / and even God.”*

The poetic messages, which were focused on the legal regulation of community life, problematized the relationships between citizen – government – rights – laws and urged readers to abide by the law and to fight intransigently against breaking the law.

Children’s and adolescents’ poetry from the examined period also portrayed cabinet ministers, mayors, law enforcement officers. Positive representations were rare to find (one such example was Vazov’s “At the Grave”, an odic eulogy of five soldiers who died on guard duty). There was no end, however, to the poetic denunciations of abuse of power. This tradition started with P. R. Slaveykov (e.g. the fable “The Wolf and the Goose”, *“The evil, twisted nature / if it finds itself in power / evil it will bring to the people...”*) and was consolidated and further developed by K. Velichkov, S. Mihaylovski, T. Ginchev, S. Popov and many others. Power and talent were conceived of as two different things (“Cuckoo – Nightingale” by T. Ginchev); ministers and state officials abused their positions of power acting only in their own self-interest (“Patriotism”, “A Country Cousin in the Capital City”, “The Pragmatic Man”, “After the Rally”, “A Sentimental Walk” by Vazov); personal freedom served as a bargaining chip for “sweet morsels” (“The Wolf and the Dog” by K. Velichkov).

At the beginning of the 20th century, abuse of power became the subject of even more scathing poetic criticism. A number of poetic epic texts affirmed that institutional power was not only rapacious but incompetent as well. K. Velichkov’s “The Lion Sets Up Council” was a satire of bureaucracy and political primitivism. The most severe criticism, however, was delivered in the “Book for the Bulgarian People”, parts of which were published in the collection “Fragments by Bulgarian Writers”, a publication that targeted young students and

included programmatic pieces of literature for schools. Kostov-Mishev's reader published poems by I. Shishmanov whose civic messages had comic overtones; B. Angelov's reader published "What We Love the Most", where one could find the lines: "*What tempts us all the time? – Power. [...] / What is always on our lips? – The people. / What does our soul cherish? – Profit.*"

Another important research focus in this chapter addresses the changes in the aesthetic consciousness of the Bulgarian children's poets in the post-liberation period, the transition from didacticism towards the emancipation of aesthetic imagery from pedagogical determinism, the transition towards greater autonomy of creative imagination, the shift towards the fictional 'uselessness' of the poetic image and ludic forms of expression, entertainment and 'pure' pleasure. At first glance, it might seem strange that the serious issues of civic life could be coupled together with entertainment and gaiety. Nevertheless, Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry could boast of great achievements in this respect and had managed to present 'adult' problems in a children-appropriate way. Whether through intuition and spontaneity, or due to the influence of a more liberal pedagogy, the so-called 'coming-of-age' literature gradually moved closer to the child's perception of the world – it tried to speak to children in their own voice and aspired to fit its images within their worldview. The gap between the adult poetic speaker and the young recipient became much smaller.

Michel Foucault wrote in "Power/Knowledge":

One impoverishes the question of power if one poses it solely in terms of legislation and constitution, in terms solely of the state and the state apparatus. Power is quite different from and more complicated, dense and pervasive than a set of laws or a state apparatus.<sup>17</sup>

Insofar as power, in its poetic images, falls within the purview of this study, it is important to trace its diverse manifestations, which impact the political understanding of society and the existing and, more often, non-existing civic structures and relationships. This is the case because, as Foucault elaborates further, "The summit and the lower elements of the hierarchy stand in a relationship of reciprocal support and conditioning."

The next sections of the dissertation present the poetic portrayals of the 'lower elements in the hierarchy' of the social organism with the aim to highlight other important civic messages of Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry in the first forty years after the Liberation.

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<sup>17</sup> Foucault, M. *Power/ Knowledge*. 1980, p.158, 159 [Фуко, М. *Власт*. София, Критика и хуманизъм, 1997, с. 41, 42.]

## CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter Five “Poetic Projections of Society” is dedicated to portraying horizontal social relationships. The most common images represented subjectship and social atomism, passive behaviour, and lack of unity. The dream, a metaphor for incomplete existence and somnolent citizenship, was a frequent image in P. R. Slaveykov’s works: the poet wrote in “To Bulgaria”, “*Arise! / I came to sing to you / to wake you up from your slumber*”, while in “Shame and Pity” he raised his voice in condemnation of the “*living people / lost in the dream of death.*”

V. Metodiev points out that the power of the modern state resides within the power of small communities,<sup>18</sup> but the poetic texts under investigation describe an atomized society, a selfish type of insularity, never-ending contradictions, conflicts and serious clashes. Bulgarian children’s literature was packed with images of primal instincts and melancholic detachment from the ideas of modernity and liberalism. The principles of dialogue and tolerance, of mutual respect and public engagement were given merely an anecdotal representation in the post-liberation children’s and adolescents’ poetry, usually, as ideals of the poetic subject.

Although P. R. Slaveykov’s civic elegy “I Shall Not Sing” was not originally addressed to children, it found its way into numerous publications for children and adolescents, especially after it was included in the school curriculum of 1915. “My Cruelty Waned”, which was also published in a variety of readers and schoolbooks, gained universal acclaim too. It is important to note that Vazov, quite like P. R. Slaveykov, was not known to his young audience at the time for his patriotic ideas but rather for his civic messages: for example, “Desolation”, which discussed “*Desolation in society, in our heads, / next to kingdoms of sleep and frost*”, and the satire “The Frog” which ridiculed society’s passivity.

From the perspective of intertextuality, Bulgarian children’s and adolescents’ poetry explored destructive communication in ascending gradation of images. At the bottom of the hierarchy was the reclusion into the Self, “*Only my voice is heard, / there is no one to bother me. [...] How will I fatten myself...*” (“A Raven’s Song” by T. Kalchev); “*I am pretty like a queen / is there a prettier bird than me?*” (“The Hunter and the Goose” by T. Kalchev). The social futility of monologic behaviour was criticised in a number of children’s poems written by H. Maksimov, S. Popov, T Simeonov, G. Stoyanov and others.

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<sup>18</sup> Metodiev, V. *A Very Good Man. Konstantin Stoilov and Political Virtue*, Sofia, NBU, 56. [Методиев, В. *Един много добър човек. Константин Стоилов и политическата добродетел*. София, НБУ, с. 56.]

Disunity was placed at a higher level in the gradation of destructive communication. For many generations of Bulgarians, the concept was best exemplified by P. R. Slaveykov's emblematic fable "Eagle, Crab, and Pike", which was printed and reprinted countless times in different formats in the period under investigation, thus, becoming the most circulated text for children and adolescents.

The poetic images of hostility and bloody fights were characterized by intense dramatism. The animalistic representations of the predatory nature of society, of primitive rivalries, and of the primal instinct for survival were abundant: foxes versus rabbits, cats versus mice, dogs versus cats, wolves versus lambs, wolves versus dogs, eagles and falcons versus chickens, sparrows versus other sparrows, mosquitoes versus flies ("The Wolf and the Lamb" by P. R. Slaveykov, "Eagles" by S. Chilingirov", "The Pussycat" by T. Tserovski, "Sparrows" by Elin Pelin, "The Eagle" by V. I. Stoyanov, "A Little Fairytale" by Elin Pelin, "In the Coop", "A Child and a Rabbit", "Two Little Goats" by T. Kalchev, "Gathering" by S. Chilingirov and many others). The conflicts were depicted in a way to match the child's view of the world as being built in binary oppositions. An allegoric reading of the texts would reveal an analogy between the animalistic and the human, but the notion of the complexity of life in social settings could be interpreted even outside this context of reception.

Children's and adolescents' poetry from the researched period exposed yet another aspect of the lack of civic engagement: conformist behaviour. "... *I don't kick the thorn barefoot [...] I don't fight bigwigs / and I always let them walk all over me [...] I take my hat off to the rich / and I say 'yes' to the powerful,*" wrote Vazov in "How To Avoid Making Enemies", which was published in numerous editions, especially after it was included in the school curriculum of 1915 for the subject of Bulgarian language. "The Pragmatic Man" by Vazov, "The Eagle and the Snail" by S. Mihaylovski, and "Inspector Stoyan" by I. Shishmanov also gained wide popularity amongst young people.

The spineless behaviour in the public sphere, the renouncement of civic identity as a payback for a 'better' place in society were a consistent focus in Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry, and consequently, in literature education. Poems with anti-conformist sentiment were published in numerous periodicals for children. In the magazine "Zdravets" (Geranium), the poem "Nobility" posed the question "*What is it to be noble today?*", and part of the answer read "*To lick the boot of the strong, / to let the powerful walk all over you.*" "Picture Gallery" published the fable "The Crow and the Fox" by N. Lazarov, the moral of

which was to denounce flattery. The magazine “Chavche” also joined in the intertextual dialogue about the social damage incurred by servility.

A specific type of discourse, which we might call devotional-wishful, unfolded in lieu of the missing poetic image of cooperation. It can be found in works that invoked a desire to exert influence on the audience through religious imploration and even incantation. Literature, including children’s literature, being polemically related to life, often creates imaginary worlds, which are more harmonious than the real world. In this instance, poetry did not depict but instead wished for understanding in society. The poem with the emblematic title “You Should Pray” made the appeal: *“Everyone – the poor and the rich / should live an honest life; / all people should live / doing each other favours, / and like brothers should care / for each other”* (Anonymous). P. R. Slaveykov, in “Wolves and Sheep” and “The Frogs’ Song”, and many other authors, insistently called for keeping the social peace.

Insofar as they occurred, the poetic images of social unity most often referred to the vanishing patriarchal world or to the Bulgarian distant past (“Khan Kubrat”, “Krum the Fearsome” by Chicho Stoyan). Sporadically mentioned and for a long time without poetic representation remained the modern artistic idea that positive interactions find their roots in childhood – when *“we are united in play”* (P. R. Slaveykov, “Going to School!”).

The works examined in this chapter were sensitive to societal disunity and the strive for superiority contrary to the images, widely circulated in Bulgarian children’s literature – images of idyllic patriarchal childhood, natural balance, familial harmony and affection, the cosy sentiment of feeling protected within the small, safe world of love and understanding, of tranquillity and security. The analysed works revealed a different world: that of complex social interactions, of twists and collisions, a world where simple, easy-going life was impossible, and bucolic happiness was a thing of the past. As a counterpoint, which, however, could not balance the scales, there was the positive poetic imagery advocating solidarity. Characters who experienced a feeling of belonging to some sort of community were a ‘minority’ and cooperation in the public sphere was presented as something the poetic speaker could only dream of.

The poetic discourse discussed in this study was characterized by another important feature: there was a decrease in moralisation at the expense of an increase in entertainment. The civic implications in the examined works were presented unobtrusively, in a non-explicative manner: the child was not conceived of as an object of pedagogical influence but as a reader who sought to have a gratifying communication with a given work.

## CHAPTER SIX

Chapter Six “Children’s Poetry in Military Uniform” is dedicated to problems that have rarely been the focus of research before.

Linking together the concepts of *war* and *children’s poetry* may seem odd, an infelicitous oxymoron. Nevertheless, Ares and Euterpe have had frequent encounters on the territory of Bulgarian literature for young readers.

As we embark on this specific segment of children’s and adolescents’ poetry, we should take into account the complex interactions between culture and war within ‘real’ life and artistic life, as well as the inherent antagonism between two different fields: the field of art as a higher form of spiritual expression and the field of violent death on a large scale. At the same time, it is impossible to ignore the fact that, from the times of the Trojan War to the times of the Yugoslav Wars, for more than 33 centuries, literature, both for adults and for children, has never ceased to be interested in bloody battles – this has led to Homer’s *Iliad*, Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, Debelyanov’s “A Dead Soldier”, Dora Gabe’s “Silent Heroes”...

Nowadays, weapons are often thought of as being part of the “anti-culture”. However, from a historical perspective, the two concepts in the dyad ‘culture – war’ were not always in opposition: the modern states on the Balkans (and not only there) were founded in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century after armed uprisings against foreign rule. Bulgarian post-liberation children’s and adolescents’ poetry explored the topic of war and soldier’s duty with an intensity determined by the historical events in which arms were of decisive importance. However, the concept of war did not become part of anti-culture, nor was its humanistic side profaned or damaged.

What messages did the poems ‘in military uniform’ send to the young reader?

After the Liberation, military duty was one of the most active spheres in Bulgarian public consciousness. It should come as no surprise that Bulgarian post-liberation poetry, which from the very beginning was called to consolidate Bulgarian identity, was actively engaged in defending the national integrity. That was why, after the Berlin Congress in July 1878, the spiritual ardour and creative energy, in the field of children’s and adolescents’ poetry as well, often centred around the cause of a unified Bulgaria. The theme of military duty originated as part of the broader *theme of patriotism*. But the theme of military duty also had *civic aspects*, which were given prominence especially in the years after mid-1913, when the Bulgarian rulers brought the country to a national catastrophe.

The investigated poems on military topics were all created in peacetime; they followed various rhetorical strategies, which could be subsumed under four main categories: *didactic*, *historical-mythological*, *ludic* and *mournful*.

The emancipation of the aesthetic from the applied-pedagogical content in our children's literature was a long process. This may explain the didactic nature of the earliest children's and adolescents' poems on military issues. The lyrics of the "Bulgarian National March" (the first version of "Shumi Maritsa" created by N. Zhivkov in 1876) were published over and over again as they were representative of the military-patriotic spirit of the time. The refrain "*March!*", the lines "*with our general*" and "*soldiers dear*" expressed pride in Bulgarian military valour. Tens of poems championed similar ideas and argued for the need of armed defence of the newly founded state. One of the most ardent proclaimers of this type of civic values was V. Popovich, whose poems on this topic were quite different from his better-known work as they sent out stern admonitions within the Christian teachings. A distinctly didactic structuring of the military imagery can also be found in M. Balabanov's "Home Entertainment or Children's Songs and Other Things", where we see a convergence of the three semantic cores that had a direct bearing on the very foundation of statehood: national unity, Christian faith, and military power.

The Serbo-Bulgarian War of 1885 gave impetus to the development of the soldier's theme in our children's poetry. The poetic response to the field battles spanned a broad emotional spectrum: from rapturous approval of heroes and a feeling of national pride to empathy towards the ordeals of regular soldiers ("A New Name Became Famous", "The Night Blizzard Wails" by Vazov). The first examples of axiological bifurcation in the indivisible until recently poetic image of the *fatherland* and the *state*, however, merit special attention. The bifurcation became apparent after several works by Vazov, which, though not specifically addressed to children, found their way into several schoolbooks: "Only You, Wondrous Soldier" and "The New Cemetery of Slivnitsa". In these works, the admiration for the regular soldiers was intertwined with the feeling of discontent towards the military commanders and statesmen so as to present two types of civic behaviour in wartime that were set in opposition: on the one hand, there was the sense of duty to the state and the selfless protection of the state's territorial integrity, and on the other hand, there was a primal egocentrism and risk averse behaviour. By the way, it was no accident that Dr Krastev using the platform of "Misal" described our army as a "state within the state" and the military officers as the "new bolyar class", which enjoyed numerous privileges.

In the 1890s more and more poets engaged with military topics. K. Velichkov published “Soldiers” in “Detska Gusla” – a text with an upbeat marching rhythm that found a more child-appropriate format of the educational message by representing the poetic speaker as a child that obviously echoed ‘adult’ ideas. Similar rhetorical devices were employed by other poets as they developed the soldier’s theme with a pedagogical emphasis (V. Georgiev, T. Kalchev, N. Lazarov and others).

In addition, in the topic of military glory there was a distinct historical-mythological strand. It steered clear of didactic moralisation, and the overarching idea was perhaps the most humane in Bulgarian war poetry: weapons should only be used *in self-defence* (“Krankra by V. Popovich; “Tsar Simeon” and “Tsar Samuil” by I. Vazov; “Asparuh”, “Krum the Fearsome” by S. Popov).

At the beginning of the 20th century the poetic portrayals of child military preparation underwent a considerable change – initially a serious duty under the control of adults, it increasingly grew similar to an entertaining game. To march, to ride a warhorse, to sing battle songs: all these were presented as fun activities (“Soldiers” and “Musicians” by T. Kalchev; “Little Soldiers” by S. Chilingirov; “Let’s Line Up” by Elin Pelin and many others).

The youngest readers also became familiar with war images, usually through personified characters of animals (“Rabbit Goes to War” by T. Tserkovski). Special attention should be given to S. Popov’s “The Best Present”, which compared playing war games with reading books and posed the question about the power of weapons versus the power of knowledge.

During the Balkan War the military theme erupted with new force in Bulgarian children’s poetry. Most literary publications for children (“Svetulka”, “Mladina”, “Zvezdica”, “Picture Gallery”, “Our Motherland”), which from the very beginning had demonstrated their interest in socio-civic problems, were quick to respond to the armed conflict as early as their November and December issues of 1912. The poets became soldiers armed with a pen. We should recall that at the time war was considered “an entirely legitimate instrument for foreign policy, which, above all, is a policy of strength. This is true for the young Balkan nation states too, each with its ambitious goals and lands that need to be liberated.”<sup>19</sup>

In the poetic response to the Balkan War the dominant feeling was that of elation and hope for the fulfilment of the national ideal (“Cannons”, “At the White Sea” – Vazov and many

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<sup>19</sup> Daskalov, R. *Bulgarian Society*. T. I. Sofia, PH Guttenberg, 2005, 116 [Даскалов, Р. *Българското общество*. Т. I. София, ИК Гутенберг, 2005, с. 116.]

others). Human fate in times of war, however, also elicited other poetic reactions – shock from death and the desire to adhere to the Christian commandment “Though shall not kill!” (“Battlefield” – S. Panchev). The portrayal of the enemy was poorly fleshed out. The enemy was mainly associated with war weariness and lack of motivation to fight. Much to the credit of the poets, there were only occasional notes of fierceness. The chauvinistic line was not developed in this type of poetry. The sole example of belligerent poetry was L. Bobevski (“Flowers of the Battlefields”).

With the start of the Second Balkan War the dominant feeling was that of tragic hopelessness (“Mom, Where Is Dad?” by I. Vazov). The loss of the father was experienced as grim family tragedy, and the children’s poetry, which reflected the loss, began, ever more often, to replace the paternalistic-didactic tone with a mournful one. The topic of death, which was not a taboo in children’s literature<sup>20</sup>, ceased to be of marginal interest and became a central theme (“The Secrets of the Nightingale” and “Little Nightingales Are Singing” by G. Stoyanov, the long-standing editor of “Svetulka” and participant in wars, where he found his death; “Why Are You, Mothers, Grieving?” by Gorka Gorchitsa and many others). The mournful discourse was invoked by the feeling of empathy towards personal human tragedy. It reflected the modern understanding of identity: the individual was not less valuable than the collective.

From the middle of 1913 onwards the poetic feeling of optimism completely disappeared, whereas pain and hopelessness set permanent camp (“Mother” by Vazov). Poetry began searching for who was responsible for the suffering and most often found guilt with the foreign enemy (“Little Flower Girl” by L. Bobevsky, “To Romanians” by H. Vitkov and many others). Special attention merits “The Spark of My Nights” by S. Mihaylovski, where different opinions on the Second Balkan War were presented with the implication that there was no such thing as objective historical truth. Thus, Bulgarian war poetry acquired a philosophical profile as well.

The Second Balkan War also provoked civic anger, while the poetic feeling of unity with the state, which up to this point was believed to voice the people’s prevalent moods, disappeared and was replaced by severe criticism. The question that resounded was who decided to wage the second war and whether they would be held responsible for the tragedy on the battlefields and in the peaceful homes, where pain and poverty reigned. People wanted to find an internal culprit: “*Who was the enemy that got us into battle*” asked the poem “Why Are

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<sup>20</sup> Enchev, M. *Ballad for Nangijala. Pragmatics of Death in Children’s Literature*. Sofia, Krugozor, 2018 [Енчев, Мл. *Балада за Нангияла. Прагматика на смъртта в детската литература*. София, Кръгзор, 2018.]

You, Mothers, Grieving?” by Gorka Gorchitsa. This was a new ‘adult’ question put forth in our children’s and adolescents’ poetry. It strived to take off the masks in the complicated theatre of war where the actors were crowned monarchs and decorated officers, and where they all waged military campaigns against their former allies. The military poetic imagery that appeared as an aspect of the national identity now acquired civic overtones. The children’s readership entered into a new orbit of literary communication where entertainment and playfulness, which had barely made their first steps, disappeared.

State authorities, represented by the Ministry of Education, attempted to counter the feeling of despondency. On 17 October 1913, Memorandum No. 12 3531 was circulated, which became known as the “memorandum for national education”. It emphasized that “First of all, we have to create faith in the national genius, to identify ourselves as a nation with one national ideal.” Teachers were entrusted to contribute to the education of “strong in spirit, energetic, and fanatically loving their fatherland youths and citizens”. Bulgarian poets showed an ambivalent attitude towards this appeal – some ignored it, while others created works in a healthier, more optimistic tone. (“I am a Bulgarian Child” and the “The Ohrid Lake” by Vazov, “A Song for the Bulgarian Child” by V. I. Stoyanov, “The Song of the Little Nightingale” by Y. Zemenski and others).

During the First World War the poetic world was immersed in sadness and sorrow. The system of literary characters changed considerably: the image of the foreign warring opponent appeared less frequently; the major poetic figure was that of the grief-stricken Bulgarian. The image of death prevailed. A new tendency began to emerge: poems dedicated to everyday life or nature mentioned war as a subtopic – an image construct, which embodied tragedy and the ways in which it had taken hold of Bulgarian consciousness, like a black veil covering every portrayal of life. The list of examples was long, suffice it to mention here the poetic anthology “Our Children and War” by Vazov, “Mom, Where Is Dad?” by Vazov, “Mothers” by Chicho Svetlio, “A Bride Reaps Wheat” by A. Spasov. These tragic pictures reflected the most poignant, harrowing, and inextricable contradictions of public life.

Towards the end of the First World War the children’s and adolescents’ poetry started to develop the theme of peace with great insistence. A comparison with the poetic reflection of the First Balkan War in the autumn of 1912 reveals a total upheaval of the ideological-emotional frame of reference. The enthusiasm, elation, and firm belief in the just cause of military actions were replaced by the shock from death and the hope to end all bloodshed (“New Year” by Chicho Svetlio). For a long time, war was not a single, “unified” topic, it was the tragic core, the deep semantic essence of the poetic world. The images of kindness, knowledge,

labour and love of life, typical of the early Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry, gave way to the pressure of the "non-children's" issues of war, tragic loneliness, disillusionment, and death. During the wars, the demarcation lines between the different ages of the addressees became noticeably permeable: more and more often, the young readers read about the same topics that concerned their parents.

The war did not mar the humanistic quality of Bulgarian children's and adolescent's poetry, as attested by the texts under investigation. This point was also demonstrated in the preface to the anthology "Our Children and the War", which, in the face of the national catastrophe, spoke not of hate but of love: the goal of the included literary texts was to contribute to the "cultivation of love for the motherland in our children". These words can be read as an epitome of the moral spirit of our children's poetry, which problematised war.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

Chapter Seven "Poetic Discourse about Discourse" incorporates freedom of speech as an important value of the New Era: it stipulates everyone has the right to share their opinion publicly without being persecuted by the state.

The Bulgarian children's and adolescent's poetry from the Liberation to the First World War comprises numerous works, which construe spoken communication as a phenomenon of the human condition and a mediator in the formation of social values and civic attitudes. Of particular interest are the images of the child in poetic discourse and the images of children's discourse. The question of language self-awareness of the child can be found even in the earliest days of our children's poetry: P. R. Slaveykov in "The Mouth and the Tongue" said, "*I have a mouth – a tongue I speak, / whatever someone asks, an answer I can give. / I alone can say what I want to do / and ask about what I do not know.*" In the context of the dominant didactics in the children's literature at the time, the quoted verses make a strong impression with their implicit liberal attitude towards the child, who answers the questions of adults but who can also state his own intention regarding what he wants to do and can ask questions on his own. The poem axiomatises the dialogic interaction, the active communication without prejudice towards age-related and social hierarchies – an early, yet strongly expressed, profound democratism at the heart of language.

After P. R. Slaveykov, the field of the literary problematizations of public discourse expanded considerably – we will analyse them through discussing specific works, which include collective images.

The conceptual focal point in the researched poetic discourse is the understanding that societal discourse is (should be) a *modus* of truth. On this view, the image representations of language in the poetic discourse under investigation can be grouped into two conceptual corpuses: the first one is informed by the Revival's well-known strategy of mythologization of the word as the sacred expression of the spirit, a divine Logos – in this perspective, the Bulgarian language, as a projection of the national identity, becomes salient; the second one, much more extensive than the first one, is based on the resentment towards partisan blasphemy.

Mythologization of discourse involved mainly the work of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius. “Saints Cyril and Methodius” by K. Velichkov; “Song of Saints Cyril and Methodius”, “Saints Cyril and Methodius” by V. Georgiev and many others conceptualised speech as true and blessed. It is important to note that we could not find the “Hymn of Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius” by S. Mihaylovski in the children's and adolescent's publications from the researched period – a fact which from a contemporary standpoint may come as a surprise. After its publication in the magazine “Misal”, Vol. 9–10, 1892, the text circulated mainly as lyrics of a song whose melody was composed by P. Pipkov in 1901.

“The Bulgarian Tongue” by Vazov mythologized discourse in post-liberation Bulgaria, but the poetic hymnography, dedicated to speech in the public sphere, is limited only to this work. The accent fell on something else – on the reasons to criticize such speech, on its exploitation for selfish purposes, on its manipulative uses and distortion of truth. Public discourses began to diverge, and they became increasingly dependent on the institutions of power. In children's and adolescent's poetry, language was reflected in predominantly darker shades – it was devoid not only of holiness but also of any glimmer of light. The poetic discourse of children's and adolescent's poetry “knew” of the fierce internal political struggles, of the officious and confrontational language, of the desire of the establishment to consolidate its power through propaganda, of the widespread practice to present negative events in a positive light, to resort to lies and manipulations. In Bulgarian children's literature, P. R. Slaveykov was the first to broach the subject about the discrepancy between reality and its poetic reflection: in “The Wolf and The Goose”, published in the magazine “Pchelitsa”, he wrote, “... *and the powerful man does, whatever he likes / and for all the evil he has done he calls himself a pious man.*” Discrediting lies in the public sphere involved a type of discourse that included many poetic voices. Among the earliest and subsequently, hugely popular texts, which exposed the discrepancy between fact and fiction, was T. Ginchev's “The Lying Boy”, an ingenious recreation of Aesop's famous fable. Likewise, “Vestnikarin” (Newspaperman) by S. Mihaylovsky construed the image of the widely distributed lie, which used the most effective

medium of the time: highly circulated printed publications. With every other image of journalistic discourse, S. Mihaylovski, who never changed his negative opinion about it, added new details to his subject's profile – the subject was “a rancid creature”, “a knight of the tabloids, rotting in vice” (“Bed-Bugs”), a symbol of “all stupidities” (“The Mutt and the Duck”), a political servant (“The Donkey and the Camel”). S. Mihaylovsky treated corruption, selling spiritual freedom for financial gains, servility towards the tyrannical rule as manifestations of self-inflicted slavery, a new page in the “ugly book of disgrace”, as the quote from the “Book for the Bulgarian People” went; the book itself, as we pointed out, was also part of the literary-educational discourse of the time.

Vazov demonstrated the same intolerance towards the lies in the public space in many of his works (“Desolation”, “The Elephant and the Whelp”), which the educational institutions of the time popularised among the student audience.

The poetry for younger children also contained a semantic layer which axiologised honest words. P. R. Slaveykov's “Cuckoo and Nous” mocked the exchange of mutual praises by the different public powers as they to consolidate their influence in the public sphere. “The Tom-Cat's Feast” by G. Stoyanov was an allegory for the social antagonism, which was apparent in language, and a criticism of manipulative communication.

Conformist speech was often exposed in poetry (“The Pragmatical Man” by Vazov, “Sutor non ultra crepidam” by Veliksin and others). Empty words (“Desolation” by Vazov) and unprincipled criticism (“The Mule and the Nightingale” by P. R. Slaveykov, “The Eagle and the Snake” by K. Velichkov, “The Donkey and the Camel” by S. Mihaylovsky) were also unmasked. Likewise, “Public Opinion” by I. Shishmanov ridiculed the ever-changing opinions of sycophants. Journalistic manipulations were criticized “In the Kingdom of the Samodivi” by Vazov.

The total profanation of public language compelled the moral person, disgusted with the din and cry of society, to remain silent. “Don't Dip Your Quill” by Vazov recorded a tragic situation for civic life, in which honest speech went quiet in an attempt for self-preservation so as not to be swallowed, weakened, yelled over, and ultimately undone in the shouting match of confrontation. From a Neo-Romantic perspective, speech found solace in silence in order to preserve its strength for the times of civic maturity, which sooner or later would arrive: *“The great and new / don't come easily; / the time of the word will come, / and it is not far away.”* Vazov proposed a similar conceptualization in “Manure”, while his poem “A Prayer” gave value to the idea of true communication.

One of the rare examples of positive poetic conceptualization in public discourse was S. Mihaylovski's "The Peacock and the Swallow" where the subject of honest speech was the ordinary man, who dared to act as a corrective to the vainglorious speech of authority.

To summarise: Bulgarian children's and adolescent's poetry reveals that there were different types of discourses in the public sphere: the politicians' discourse was monologic with occasional attempts to present itself as dialogic, despite the fact that the addressee was not perceived as an interlocutor but merely as the object of manipulative influences; speech communication between different political powers was unproductive – it either occurred in the form of destructive arguments or as a mutual exchange of flattery; communication did not impact societal progress – covertly or overtly (sometimes with brutal cynicism) it only defended its own interests; journalistic discourse was merely an appendage to political discourse without any inherent connection; the newspaper publisher had no voice – he resonated with the voice of power, and if his language would sound slightly different, his voice turned out to be theatrically staged by a mastermind who eventually turned out to be a politician; public speech of the masses lacked spontaneity; the refusal to express in speech actual thoughts and feelings was caused by fear, instilled by authority – speech was obsequious and never critical. People could speak freely only in exceptional circumstances and only when the men in power could not hear them.

In summary, according to Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry (1878–1918) public speech was often a tool for manipulating society. What citizens society would bring up to a great extent depends on the way society uses language – this position is asserted in tens of children's poems. According to them, the total control of lies, hypocrisy, and conformism gave rise to non-civiness and the self-inflicted slavery in one's home country; when dialogue was non-existent, it was impossible to achieve mutual understanding and prosperity. Sacralisation of speech was evidenced only in the culture-historical context of Cyril and Methodius or as an aspect of national identity, but not in regard to the current socio-political discourse, characterised by monologism and manipulateness.

According to M. Bakhtin, spoken communication is realised through the "active role of the Other", while the speaker "does not expect passive understanding which, so to speak, only duplicates his own thoughts in someone else's mind. Rather, he expects response, agreement, sympathy, objection, action, and so on."<sup>21</sup> H. Arendt's view is similar: speech occurs in a

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<sup>21</sup> Bakhtin, M. *Toward the Aesthetics of the Word*, 1979. [Бахтин, М. *Эстетика словесного творчества*. Москва, Искусство, 1986, с. 258; 260.]

context of openness to the Other, while also realizing the difference and at the same time equality of the two speakers.<sup>22</sup> Just as M. Buber claims, “The element of speech ‘I – Thou’ creates the world of connection.”<sup>23</sup> In the context of these similar statements, which were put forth by different philosophers, the society discussed in Bulgarian post-liberation children’s and adolescents’ poetry, as a rule lacked any dialogism. The direction of speech was from the ruling class towards the masses, usually determined by the politicians and/or (without much difference) by the journalists. Feedback did not exist, nor the addressee desired it.

The negative image of speech in Bulgarian public life had an educational purpose, which was no less effective than the purpose of the positive messages, of the indisputable values and role models. Negative portrayals most often had a comical tone, which was predominantly satirical. This would require the reader to have developed skills necessary for comprehending works with different aesthetic accents. Hence, the addressee of the poetic works were adolescents rather than children, and the texts were published mainly in secondary school and high school readers and other publications for adolescent audiences.

## CONCLUSION

In the last section, the analysis summarizes the main propositions:

- The change in the socio-cultural context in the years following 1878, which was connected to the restoration of Bulgarian statehood and the transition from a parochial-subject culture to a participant culture, provoked the artistic consciousness and brought to life a poetry with civic messages;
- The civic message contributed to the artistic completeness of poetic texts: it was inherently intertwined with other important factors of aesthetic pleasure – the originality of figurative language, the strong impact of poetic expression, and authentic emotionality;
- Bulgarian children’s and adolescents’ poetry sent civic messages featuring individual freedom, national sovereignty, observance of the rule of law, active and creative

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<sup>22</sup> Arendt, H. *The Human Condition*, 1998. [Арендт, Х. *Човешката ситуация*. София, Критика и хуманизъм, с. 152].

<sup>23</sup> Buber, M. *I and Thou*, 2010. [Бубер, М. *Аз и Ти. Задушевният разговор. Божието затъмнение*. Варна, Стено, с. 6.]

participation in public life, free and honest speech, intransigency against the arbitrary acts of the authorities;

- The poetry with civic potential was characterized by intricate interactions of artistic denotations, a great diversity in the aesthetic tone, which covered the spectrum from the sublime-heroic to various nuances of the comical;
- Towards the end of the 19th century, Bulgarian children's and adolescent's poetry emphasised the image of the playing child – the child, which explored and invented, which was not afraid to be disobedient and simply to be itself – this child could be considered an investment for future civic engagement.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

The dissertation

1. highlights civic imagery in Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry (1878–1918) as a significant research problem, which has not been the focus of the history of Bulgarian literature before.
2. interprets the analysed texts as a poetic reflection on larger societal changes related to the restoration of the Bulgarian state, the functioning of its institutions, and the formation of civic awareness.
3. outlines the major thematic fields of the analysed poetry.
4. reveals that the “two types of literature” (children's and adults') are connected in many ways, not least through the building of bridges between the different spheres of civic thought.
5. systematises and analyses the specific elements in the figurative-aesthetic system of the researched poetry.
6. affirms that the civic set of problems, which endorsed the values of freedom and democratism, proved to be incompatible with the direct moralisation typical of early Bulgarian children's and adolescents' literature, and that this was an important factor which contributed to intensifying the fictional-expressive type of discourse.
7. adds the new component of civic values to the axiology (previously investigated in literary research) of the Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry from the period of interest.

## **LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION**

1. Civic values in Bulgarian children's and adolescents' poetry (1878–1918). Sofia, Prof Venedikov, P., 2021, 319. [*Граждански ценности в българската детско-юношеска поезия (1878 – 1918)*. София, Проф. Петко Венедиков, 2021, 319 с.]

2. Democratic values in the children's writing of Petko Slaveykov. in: *Children's Literature and the Birth of Identity*. Sofia, Prof. Petko Venedikov, 2020, 9–28. [Демократични ценности в детското творчество на Петко Славейков. – В: *Детската литература и раждането на личността*. София, Проф. Петко Венедиков, 2020, с. 9 – 28.]

3. “Bulgarian Reader” by Vazov and Velichkov: modelling cultural identity. in: Democratic Values in children's writing of Petko Slaveykov. in: : *Children's Literature and the Birth of Identity*. Sofia, Prof. Petko Venedikov, 2020, 29–50. also in: *In The Spirit of the Bulgarian National Revival and a Modern View*: anthology in honour of 80-year anniversary of Prof Milena Tsaneva. Sofia. Institute for Literature. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2012, 238–250. [„Българска христоматия“ от Вазов и Величков: моделиране на културната идентичност. – В: *Детската литература и раждането на личността*. София, Проф. Петко Венедиков, 2020, с. 29 – 50.

[Също в: *С възрожденски дух и модерен поглед* : Сборник в чест на 80-годишнината на проф. Милена Цанева. София, Институт за литература, БАН, 2012, с. 238-250.] ]

4. The Question of What Our Society Should (Not) Be According to the Poetry of Vazov for Children and Adolescents. – in: *Children's Literature and the Birth of Identity*. Sofia, Prof. Petko Venedikov, 2020, 51–62. [Въпросът какво (да не) е обществото ни според поезията на Вазов за деца и юноши. – В: *Детската литература и раждането на личността*. София, Проф. Петко Венедиков, 2020, с. 51 – 62.]

5. Christian Humility and Civic Intransigency in the Children's Writing of Konstantin Velichkov. – in: *Children's Literature and the Birth of Identity*. Sofia, Prof. Petko Venedikov, 2020, 63–72. also in: *Bulgarian Language and Literature*, 2019, 5. [Християнско смирение и гражданска непримиримост в детското творчество на Константин Величков. – В: *Детската литература и раждането на личността*. София, Проф. Петко Венедиков, 2020, с. 63 – 72.]

[Също в: *Български език и литература*, 2019, 5.] ]

6. Civic Ideas in Bulgarian Poetry for Children's and Adolescents (1878–1918). Sofia, Seps-Infoma, 2014, 176. *Граждански идеи на българската поезия за деца и юноши (1878 – 1918)*. София, Сеп-Инфома, 2014, 176 с.

7. The Motherland as a Foreign Land in Bulgarian Post-liberation Poetry for Children and Adolescents. // *130 Years of German Education in Ruse. Anniversary Anthology*. Ruse, Lenin, 2013, 118–129. [Родината като чужбина в българската следосвобожденска лирика за деца и юноши. // *130 години немско образование в Русе. Юбилеен сборник*. Русе, Ленин, 2013, с. 118 – 129.]