



**Tension Episodes
(A Fragment of the History
of Literary Theory in Bulgaria.
The Case of the Bulgarian
Guillaumist School)**

Эпизоды напряженности
(Фрагмент истории
литературной теории в
Болгарии. Случай с болгарской
школой гийомизма)

✉ **DARIN TENEV** ▸ darin.tenev@gmail.com

SLAVICA TERGESTINA
European Slavic Studies Journal

ISSN 1592-0291 (print) & 2283-5482 (online)

VOLUME 20 (2018/I), pp. 118-149
DOI 10.13137/2283-5482/22385

The development of structuralist ideas in Bulgaria coincided with the liberalization of the human and social sciences during the 1960s and the 1970s and from the start was involved in various discussions, both internal and external. The present paper focuses on the case of the literary theoretician Christo Todorov, a representative of the Bulgarian Guillaumist School, and his curious siding with Pantelei Zarev, a powerful professor in the highest ranks of the Bulgarian Communist Party and at the time a Rector of the University of Sofia, during his attack on structuralism. At the end I propose a Guillaumist interpretation of the situation in which Todorov found himself, using his own methodological instruments.

STRUCTURALISM, CHRISTO TODOROV,
GUSTAVE GUILLAUME, PANTELEI
ZAREV, MODALITY, TENSION

Развитие структуралистских идей в Болгарии совпало с либерализацией гуманитарных и социальных наук в 1960-х и 1970-х годах и с самого начала принимало участие в различных дискуссиях, как внутренних, так и внешних. В настоящей статье основное внимание уделяется случаю литературного теоретика Христо Тодорова, представителя болгарской гильюмистической школы, и как он встал на сторону Пантелей Зарева, профессора в высших чинах болгарской коммунистической партии и ректора Софийского университета, во время его нападения на структурализм. В конце, используя его методические инструменты, я предлагаю гильюмистскую интерпретацию ситуации, в которой оказался Тодоров.

СТРУКТУРАЛИЗМ, ХРИСТО ТОДОРОВ,
ГЮСТАВ ГИЙОМ, ПАНТЕЛЕЙ ЗАРЕВ,
МОДАЛЬНОСТЬ, НАПРЯЖЕННОСТЬ

There is a tendency to look at the history of the human sciences in Eastern Europe during the socialist times as if they were sharing the same fate everywhere (cf. Znepolski). It doesn't seem to be the case and this becomes evident when one starts investigating carefully the destiny of the different trends that were popular in the so called 'West' (a generalization just as misleading since what was happening in Germany was not what was happening in France, in Italy, in the USA, etc.). If one uses the widespread – and often questionable – distinctions of different theoretical schools as introduced by American literary criticism readers and textbooks from the 1980s and the 1990s as a starting point (cf. Selden; Newton; Rivkin, Ryan), one can easily see that even aside from the Russian Formalism and the American New Criticism – labels that define the critical school geographically already on the level of its name – structuralist semiotics, hermeneutics, phenomenology, etc., are distributed in a quite uneven way throughout the different countries on both sides of the Iron curtain. The case alone of Marxism and its many divisions and subdivisions would suffice to make it clear that there was an inner dynamics to the historical transformations of any critical attitude specific to the different regions and thus even Marxism was “practiced”, as it were, very differently in USSR, in Hungary, in Poland, etc. The detailed tracing of particular cases could help the researcher draw a much more complex picture of the state of human sciences, a picture that would put in question the simplifying generalizations about “theory” in “Eastern Europe” and would lead to a reconsideration of the simple dividing line between “East” and “West”.

In this paper I want to address such a specific case, the case of the Bulgarian Guillaumist School which appeared during the years when structuralism was both most flourishing and most criticized in Bulgaria, namely the 1960s and the 1970s. This School and its relation to

other manifestations of structuralism in this country is to this date completely unaccounted for, even in the most recent research that maps out the general history of Bulgarian structuralism (see Garnizov; Nedelchev 2014, 2017; Trendafilov). I will focus more particularly on Christo Todorov (1938–1983) of whom it can be claimed that together with Krassimir Mantchev (1938–1997) is the co-founder of this School.

It should be kept in mind that the context of the debates around structuralism in Bulgaria is much broader and goes beyond the rather limited scope of a particular school, beyond also the field of literary theory, on which I will be focusing. It can be said that these debates have as a background ongoing processes of transformation and liberalization of the human and social sciences in Bulgaria that started by the end of the 1950s (cf. Deyanova 2009; 2015) and that lead to a surprising explosion of theoretical discourses in the philosophical and literary seminars in 1980s (cf. Nikolchina 2013, Goncharova). During the 1960s the “young”, the “non-conformists”, the “reformists” were often tolerated by the Party and scholars of today point to the noticeable “difference in the force of control” exerted by the Party over them compared to other cases (Deyanova 2015: 140–141).

A look at these processes would reveal that it was never a question of a simple opposition between the dogmatic Party representatives and the progressive researches introducing Western or underground Soviet theories. There was a constant negotiation born out of tensions both in the areas of scholarly work (competing approaches producing methodological ‘force fields’) and in the dominating ideological tenets (related to power struggles in the Party and all the important institutions – universities, journals, publishing houses, etc.). This situation created “mechanisms that imply incessant interactions and renegotiations, network games reducing uncertainties but also increasing the odds

1 Miglena Nikolchina points to this “double-edged hermeneutical problem” which the socialist history poses with the dissolving of the context in which certain parabolic levels of meaning were self-evident and with the simultaneous accruing of contexts previously unknown, the contexts brought up by the opening of the archives of the State Security and the like. (Cf. Nikolchina 2011) Of course, the very reading of the archives is quite problematic given the dissolving contexts and this puts in question the status currently given to recently accrued contexts (Nikolchina 2011, Deyanova 2015).

2 See Yanakiev 1960.

for submission.” (Deyanova 2015: 136) The mechanisms of the network games leave traces in the published texts that it is getting harder and harder to grasp.¹ Furthermore, there were interactions, actions and reactions, events which were not recorded in the published texts and whose reconstruction should rely on interviews, memoirs and oral histories dating from later. In the case of the Bulgarian Guillaumists even the personal archives of the scholars sometimes lack evidence as to the way they were treated and threatened, how and why they chose their strategy and so on.

If I turn now to the history of structuralism in Bulgaria, I should stress the fact that perhaps no other theoretical school was as influential in the domain of literary theory during the 1960s and the 1970s. Neither phenomenology, nor hermeneutics, nor thematic criticism, nor genetic criticism can be conceived as a significant factor in the literary studies of the period. Structuralist semiotics, on the other hand, – together with the exact methods in human sciences it was promoting – was from early on seen as important and it immediately provoked vivid discussions that were to last from the beginning of the 1960s (with the attack on what could be claimed to be the first Bulgarian structuralist book in literary theory, the book by Miroslav Yanakiev on the Bulgarian verse structures²) to the mid-1980s (and the attacks on Kleo Protochristova’s use of mathematical formulas in the analysis of prose rhythm) (Garnoziv 192–213).

At the same time, structuralism was so multifaceted that it is hard to point to univocal traits that can help the researcher of today understand which texts and authors were seen as structuralist and why. Thus, if one looks closely at the writings of Nikola Georgiev, a scholar who was thought at the time to impersonate the structuralist position *per se*, one cannot fail to notice that his approach is much closer to New

Criticism and Russian Formalism than to structuralism. And Mihail Nedelchev, who was accused at the time of being a “young structuralist critic” admits in recent texts that in a sense he was not and could not have been a structuralist and that the accusations were rather used in an instrumental way for a sort of ideological oppression (Nedelchev 2014, 2017). This alone makes it clear that the stakes of “structuralism” were both theoretical and political. And while some were labelled structuralists without it being so, others were avoiding the term precisely in order to introduce and develop structuralist ideas.

But if structuralism was so important in Bulgaria (so much so that two of the most prominent names of French structuralism came from Bulgaria – Tzvetan Todorov and Julia Kristeva³) why is it the case that so little is known about Bulgarian structuralism abroad? There were two Bulgarians (three if we count Julia Kristeva) on the executive committee of the International Association for Semiotic Studies – Miroslav Yanakiev and Alexander Ludskanov, the last being also among the vice-presidents with Juri Lotman and Roman Jakobson.⁴ And yet the same Jakobson, who has been exchanging letters with Yanakiev at least since 1960 (cf. Garnizov 239–243) and was holding in high esteem Ludskanov, in an interview for the Bulgarian journal *Lik* in 1972 forgets to mention Bulgaria when he enumerates where structuralist semiotics is mostly developed and names USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania from the Eastern Bloc. (Jakobson 1972). This is not an exception. In the same way in his introduction to the Brown University Press edition of Lotman’s *The Structure of the Artistic Text* in 1971 Thomas Winner writes that the semiotics of literature “have been a central concern of scholars in both the West (especially France, the United States, and Germany) and the East (especially Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union)”, omitting Bulgaria (Winner ix).

3 On the role of Tzvetan Todorov and Julia Kristeva for the development of structuralism and post-structuralism, see Todorova 2012.

4 The full list of the members of the executive committee of the Association, the vice-presidents, etc. can be found on the last page of the journal that the Association was publishing, the journal *Semiotica*.

5
In fact, already in 1972 the Belgium linguist Marc Wilmet (1972) speaks of a Sofia School of Guillaumists. Other members of the group include Alexandra Mantcheva, Roumiana Kamenova, Assen Tchaouchev, Yossif Simeonov, Radka Bechkova, Albena Vassileva, Silvia Boteva, Paissii Hristov and others.

6
For a general introduction, see (Valin; Hirtle 3–104, 205–236).

This effect of partial invisibility is most probably a product of the particular strategies adopted by Bulgarian structuralists, product of the games they played or refused to play with Party functionaries and dogmatic Marxists but also with other styles of thought and other theoretical approaches. In the limited space of this essay I will delineate only a fragment of this complicated history.

The name Bulgarian Guillaumist School usually denotes a group of linguists that were inspired by the work of Gustave Guillaume (1883–1960). The members of the group were not the ones who invented the name, it was rather introduced by French and Canadian linguists much later.⁵ The main principles of the group were articulated in the second half of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s in a series of articles written in French by Krassimir Mantchev and Christo Todorov separately or together (cf. Mantchev 1967, Todorov 1968, Mantchev, Todorov 1971, Todorov, 1971). The group continued functioning actively mainly in the universities in Sofia and Veliko Tarnovo at least to the beginning of the 2000s. In 2007 the French *Langages* journal published a special issue on “L’École guillaumienne de Bulgarie” (Gandon, Tchauchev). Not everything, however, was about linguistics. Christo Todorov from the very beginning started building a literary theory based on their own Guillaumist linguistics and later Krassimir Mantchev also turned to literary theory (cf. Mantchev 1998) transforming and developing further Todorov’s postulates. This line of theoretical and analytical work was continued in the second half of the 1990s by some of the texts by Boyan Manchev (cf. Manchev 2003) with a particular stress on the philosophical stakes of such a linguistic and literary theory.

Here, unable to present more fully Gustave Guillaume’s theory, I will but point to some of its aspects most relevant for the Bulgarian scholars of the time.⁶ For Guillaume, the mechanical explication of

linguistic phenomena is insufficient for it cannot take into account the inner logic of language and the causality of linguistic transformations which brings forth these phenomena. This inner logic and its causality can be grasped only on the level of the mental, on the level of thinking, for language is a way to conceive the thinkable and give it form. Therefore the mechanical explication should be doubled by a psychological one (cf. Guillaume 1970: 5–6), leading to the formulation of this theory as a psycho-mechanics of language. “The invention of the sign [...] is the second time of the phenomenon whose result is language; its first time is the creation of that of which the sign, when the invention will have been done, will be the vehicle. In the history of language the phenomenon is irreversible: it is not the sign that calls forth the idea, but the idea that calls forth the sign.” (Guillaume 1973: 241–242; translation mine.)⁷ The psychomechanical viewpoint permits Guillaume to describe not only the static but also the dynamic aspect of language, the becoming of linguistic categories such as the article, the tenses and aspects, the auxiliary verbs, etc. According to him, the becoming of a language forms part of the structure of this language and the genesis of the linguistic representation of ideas, which is also the genesis of the ideas themselves – what he calls *ideogenesis* – is not lost but preserved with every next development of the language. He calls *law of non-recurrence* the law according to which all the previous stages in the articulation of an idea remain part of the actual state. This means nothing less than the inscription in the actual of a dynamics that would keep it in transformation.

There are a couple of tendencies for the development of the idea and the tendencies themselves are based on *tensions* that form two types of movement. The first type comprises the movements between the universal and the singular, called singularization (from the universal to the

⁷ Whenever not specified the translations are mine.

8 Guillaume, and later the Bulgarian Guillaumeists, used as synonyms universal and general, on the one hand, and singular and particular, on the other. Therefore, in different texts *particularization* and *generalization* are employed instead of *singularization* and *universalization*,

9 To put things this way is simplifying and misleading. In fact, Guillaume's early use of the triad tension – extension – bi-extension in the description of the three plans of the time in *posse*, the potential time (including the infinitive, the compound and the double compound (surcomposées) forms), was substituted with the triad immanent – transcendent – bi-transcendent (see Guillaume 1973: 184–192), while the term *tension* started being employed for the general mobility or transformability in the direction of the actual or the virtual, resp. the singular or the universal.

singular) and universalization (from the singular to the universal).⁸ Guillaume calls these movements themselves tensorial movements (*movement tensoriel*) (cf. Guillaume 1973: 40) and speaks respectively of singularizing and universalizing tension. The second type comprises the movements between the virtual and the actual, respectively the virtualizing and actualizing tensions. The very term *tension* was often employed without an explicit definition, although already in his early work *Temps et verbe* (1929) he proposes a definition which holds also for the later uses. There he writes that the tension is “the impression of progressive mobility” and claims that it is inseparable from the potentiality of the idea. (Guillaume 1970: 15–16). In *Temps et verbe* however he described the actualization of the virtual as a distension, making use of the couple tension/ distension that he was to abandon substituting it with two tensions – virtualizing and actualizing one.⁹ Here I will retain the use of *tension* as *the immanent progressive transformability* of a state of affairs which imbues the state with a direction of change.

It would not be wrong to say that the couples universality-singularity and virtuality-actuality are homologous (cf. Guillaume 1973: 25–26). They allow for descriptions that are complementing each other. It should be noted also that when Guillaume envisaged a complex process like the two compound transition from the universal to the singular and again to the universal – as when he was describing the ontogenesis of the vocables of the Indo-European languages, or when he was analysing the ideogenesis of the articles in French (cf. Guillaume 1973: 25–45, 87–98, 143–183) – the initial and the final universal were not the same. The universal, what it meant, how it was grasped, etc., just like the singular, in this theory, is not a constant, but a non-predetermined variable subjected to the work of tensions.

Krassimir Mantchev used Guillaume's work as a ground for the development of his own understanding of ideogenesis, where the most crucial operation was *the progressive discrimination of subject and object*. The process of gradual differentiation of subject and object not only in the linguistic but also in the epistemological and philosophical sense was grasped as a linguistic event in which a semantic hierarchy among verbs was produced, where *being (être)* is at the basis, followed by *having (avoir)* and then by *doing (faire)*, *being*, *having* and *doing* being the three stable position in the progressive discrimination (Mantchev 1967). It is easy to note that the first two of these verbs ('to be' and 'to have') are also an auxiliary verbs and the third ('to do' or 'to make') can be used also in syntactic constructions in a special way in French (roughly corresponding to the English 'making someone do something'). Guillaume himself has noted that the verbs who become auxiliary are in no language just random verbs and insisted that 'I am' (*être*) pre-exists in the ideal filiation of words the 'I can' (*pouvoir*), which in its turn pre-exists 'I do' (*faire*) (Guillaume 1973: 73) but he never associated this with the becoming of the subject and the object. According to the law of non-recurrence, this becoming should be understood as a part of language, which means that people witness it again and again. Subject and object are not pre-given, they are in constant becoming. What is more, for Krassimir Mantchev and Christo Todorov in the gradual differentiation the different positions suppose not just a further development of the same type of subject and object, but the production of new classes of subjects and objects and also a new configuration of their relation (cf. Todorov 1985: 71-76, 147-148). Beside the three stable positions of being, having and doing, there are two unstable positions of transition. The first one, between being and having, is the position of the modal verbs 'can' (*pouvoir*), 'want' (*vouloir*), 'must' (*devoir*) where

the discrimination between subject and object is further operated. The second position, between having and doing, is occupied by verbs for perception and intellection called by Mantchev and Todorov *transmodal*. Here is the place for ‘see’, ‘hear’, ‘think’, ‘understand’, etc.

I will give a short and simplifying account of the hierarchy produced by the progressive discrimination of subject and object. At the position of *being* (*être*) subject and object are indistinguishable. No differentiation between animate and inanimate is possible here and from the point of view of the subject there is no difference between ‘He is smart’ and ‘The house is big’. In this position the subject is “plerotrope” (Todorov 1985: 73) and general. The distinction at the point of *ability* (*pouvoir*) is still too fable and it gives the image of a passive subject. There is a partial overlapping between *being* and *ability* to which testifies the semantic synonymy between, say, ‘being rich’ and ‘able to buy’. The position of *desire* singularizes the subject. It polarizes the subject and object, introducing an obvious direction from one to the other. Desire (*vouloir*) necessitates the appearance of an object and constitutes the subject as subject of desire. The *duty* or *obligation* (*devoir*) retains the direction and even intensifies it while simultaneously subjecting the subject to the object pole in the sense that *obligation* transcends the subject and is independent of the subjective desires. This produces a split dividing the subject into a neutral empty subject who is “the subject proper to the modal verb” and a real one put in a passive position, expressed by the passive voice of ‘I am obliged to...’ (Todorov 1985: 121, Todorov 2003: 198–199). Thus, here the true subject position, which is bound to be implicit, remains empty and unoccupied, while the explicit subject position is that of a “subject-patient” or “object-agent” – someone on whom the obligation or duty falls upon (Todorov 1985: 64–65, 73, 102). Christo Todorov describes the transition from *ability* to

desire to obligation in terms of increasing ‘force of actualization’ (Todorov 1971: 130). At the next stable position, namely the point of *having* (*avoir*), the subject and the object are separated, the idea of possession defining them both, the subject as subject of possession and the object as something being possessed. As a second stable position there is no longer direction here notwithstanding the obvious differentiation. A good example in English for the close relation between *obligation* and *having* can be given with the expressions ‘to have to do’ and ‘to have sth’. The transmodal position introduces an active subject (who listens to, thinks about, ponders over, notices, etc.) who however leaves the object unaltered. The last position – that of *doing* (*faire*) – produces an active subject who alters the object.

In this account of the hierarchy I referred to Christo Todorov’s texts written between 1968 and 1983, and I should add that these were not linguistic but rather literary-theoretical texts, that introduced Krasimir Mantchev’s ideas into narratology, genre theory and later into the history of French literature. Todorov’s understanding was that literature is not some kind of second-order language (I will come back to this), a connotative system that relies on the denotative system of natural language. Such a Barthesian conception, he claimed, leaves the researcher mainly with the problem of interpretation. For Todorov however, with literature before it is a question of interpretation, it should be a question of the immanent logic of the system, a logic that is linguistic in its core. The progressive discrimination of subject and object is operated in literary works as language and this language and the discrimination do not precede the work but are part of it forming its very structure. He puts an accent on the modal notions showing how they are at the basis of any narrative text¹⁰ driving the characters and constructing the coherence of the plot. Where there are only open

10 Unfortunately, in the limited space of this essay I cannot go into Christo Todorov’s work on poetry and I will have but to refer the reader to the second volume of his history of French literature dedicated to the French poets: Todorov 1982.

11
 In this Todorov's conception was analogous to that of Claude Bremond (Bremond 1964, 1966). As it was in accordance with his own Guillaumist understanding, Todorov accepted Bremond's idea for a transition between three phases: virtuality, actualization and result, but he criticized him for seeing this triad as an objective property of any real process, introducing an extra-linguistic factor in the narrative organization. For Todorov himself, the very knowledge of the real could not be but linguistic (language having the function "to apprehend the integrality of the thinkable", Guillaume 1973: 240) and therefore these categories are immanent to language (Todorov 1971: 128–129).

possibilities (like in Voltaire's *Candide* or in some adventure novels) the integrity of the story is weak, the episodes are relatively autonomous and the intrigue can be prolonged indefinitely. Desire introduces a clear direction and finality that only become stronger with obligation and thus these modalities hold the story together keeping it from falling apart. The clash of desire and obligation produces narrative conflicts; and when the conflict occurs in one and the same character the effect is psychologization. The conflict creates the strongest integrity of a story. (Todorov 1985: 163–170) In order to have a story, Todorov insisted, it is not enough to narrate different events with the same characters. Two sentences put next to each other still do not make a story. There has to be a modal link between the sentences (he called this link *lien interphrastique*), the events should be associated on a deeper level by the modal notions.

In the approach to the basic semantic level of the literary works Todorov's work was perhaps closer to A. J. Greimas than to any other theoretician. But how is one to get to the deeper level? Taking up Guillaume's understanding of the singularizing and universalizing tensions he described the finished literary work as a product of a singularizing tension that go from virtuality to actuality. "The virtual phase is assumed by the implicit modal notions, while the actual phase is expressed by the verbs for action themselves." (Todorov 1985: 162) The actualization of the virtual is the mental operation of *affabulation* (or the construction of the intrigue in the thought) whose final point is the narrative text itself. At the virtual phase there are many possibilities to tell the story; at the position of the singular only one of these possibilities turns out to have been realized.¹¹ Now, the usual direction of reading would have been to start from the singularity of the work and move forward with its *interpretation* based on the given

physical organization of signs (the signifiers). The mental operation of interpretation – be it psychoanalytic, “mystique, rationalistic, spiritualistic or materialist, progressist or reactionary” (Todorov 1985: 156) – generalizes and reaches a new kind of universality by investigating the different meanings attributable to the intrigue. If we term U₁ the initial virtuality with its universality, S – the singularity of the finished work, and U₂ – the universality which results from interpretation, it becomes obvious that U₁ and U₂ are rather different. U₁ – S forms the first tension and S – U₂ forms the second one. Christo Todorov’s own approach was not to interpret in the sense of moving in the direction to U₂, but to go back from S to U₁ and in this sense to focus on the first tension and the way the intrigue is built. He discovered that in order to move back from the realized work to its virtuality it is enough to *summarize* the story. The summary makes explicit precisely what in the narrative work of art remains implicit – the role of the modal notions. (Todorov 1971, 1985, 2003) Using the summaries of different works of authors from Corneille and Racine through Diderot and Voltaire to Camus and Marcel Aymé, summaries most often taken from textbooks, he demonstrated convincingly how the modalities of possibility, desire and obligation produced the integrity and the coherence of the works.

In his texts Christo Todorov was debating with A. J. Greimas, Roland Barthes, Claude Bremond and G. Genette. Gustave Guillaume and Krassimir Mantchev served as reference points. He used sometimes the Russian formalists and Vladimir Propp and only on very rare occasions the Soviet structuralists such as Lotman.¹² No Bakhtin who was most popular at the time in Bulgaria.¹³ No reference in any of the texts in French to any Bulgarian scholar apart from those belonging to the Guillamist School, most often people from the same university department. No Marx or Lenin.

12

To my knowledge there are only two occasions where he refers to Lotman. In 1971 he refers to Lotman’s thesis that literary value is not immanent to the work but is conceivable only on the basis of the relationship between text and context. Todorov seems to agree but adds that whatever the relation between work and context is, it has to be based on the degree of organization of the text, organization which is immanently produced by language. (Todorov 2003: 97) Later, in 1982, he includes Lotman’s *Analysis of the Poetical Text* (1972) in the bibliography to his work on the history of French poetry with a short annotation saying the book is important but without however actually referring to him in the text (Todorov 1982: 139, 142). As with the majority of his publications, both of these texts were in French.

13

On the reception of Bakhtin in Bulgaria see Enyo Stoyanov’s paper in this issue.

14

For a period of fifteen years Todorov published in *Literaturna misal* only three texts and one book review. Beside the article discussed here, the other two texts were a criticism of the anti-novel (1971) and a paper on the relationship between linguistics and aesthetics in literature (1984); the book review is on Georges Poulet and dates from the same 1973 as the article on which I will focus.

Most of his texts were published either in international semiotic journals such as *Informations sur les Sciences Sociales* and *Semiotica* or in the Annular of the University of Sofia. As I said, almost all of his texts, just like those of Krassimir Mantchev, were written in French.

Looking at these facts one can get the feeling that the Bulgarian Guillaumists were not living in Bulgaria, at least not in socialist Bulgaria of the 1960s and the 1970s.

There was one important exception to this strategy of writing in French and not dialogizing with the Bulgarian literary context – an article from 1973 written and published in Bulgarian in the most important journal for literary studies, the journal *Literaturna misal* (*Literary thought*).¹⁴ The article offered a severe criticism of Roland Barthes and the Saussurean-Barthesian type of structuralism. At the time one of the strategies for the introduction of foreign theories was to pretend to criticize them lightly as an excuse to present them in detail. This was not the case with Todorov's article. He had a genuine argument. Simply put, his point was that the structuralist semiology of Barthes had put the stress on the arbitrariness of the signifier-signified distinction and had privileged the signifier because it had a physical quality, thus reducing the role of the thought process and the mental operation behind the becoming of language. There is arbitrariness, Todorov claimed following Guillaume's conception, only on the level of sounds and words since they are discrete units, but with a phrase or with a text the meaning is global and not just a mechanical sum of the meaning of the discrete parts. The generalization of arbitrariness and the privileging of the signifier made Barthes – and Saussure before him – blind for the ideogenesis of language. This misstep further led to the application of the denotation-connotation couple to literature and to the understanding that literature uses the first order signs of natural

language and is therefore a connotative – or second order – system. This understanding resulted in the idea that the doubling of the arbitrariness of signs in literary text reveals the freedom for innumerable interpretations. As I pointed out above, for Todorov in order to grasp the nature of the literary work first one has to go backwards from the singularity of the text to the first tension ('backwards' means from S to U₁) and the linguistic becoming of the text structure, which is following the progressive discrimination of subject and object along the line of modal notions. And he believed that there is nothing arbitrary about that procedure. For him, Barthes's views were problematic as they, on the one hand, reduced the linguistic becoming or the ideogenetic part of literature, and on the other, made the interpretation based on the analysis of linguistic structures seem frivolous with the stress on the arbitrariness.

Todorov was not the first to criticize the arbitrariness of the sign from a Guillaumist position. This criticism was part of a more general disagreement with Saussure on the part of Guillaume and was taken up by his students. The title of a book by a Guillaumist linguist published ten years after Todorov's article, is much telling: *Against the Arbitrariness of the Sign* (Toussaint 1983).¹⁵ The 1973 article against Barthes is undoubtedly interesting for taking the debate in the field of literary theory. At the same time it is no less interesting for the one who is tracing the history of theory in Eastern Europe in general and Bulgaria in particular. For it appeared in a singular context.

The debates in Bulgaria around structuralism that began in 1960 with Miroslav Yanakiev's book (1960) on Bulgarian verse structures reached their climax in the first half of the 1970s.

In 1969 Pantelei Zarev, a powerful professor in the highest ranks of the Bulgarian Communist Party, who was at the time a Rector of the

15

There is an explicit reference in Toussaint's book both to Christo Todorov and to Krassimir Mantchev. Cf (Toussaint 13).

16

There were two series of the bulletin, a white one and a blue one. The issue on structuralism was in the white series, which was rather secret and was not distributed openly.

University of Sofia, published a small book criticizing structuralism. Even though he praised Lotman and the Tartu School and wrote that to an extent structuralist ideas can be useful, his attack was severe, as he claimed that structuralism was an “anatomy of the dead, and not of the living”, that it was “wrong” or “reactionary” in its exclusion of “the human essence of artistic production” and its intentional ignorance of the relation between the artist and the people. (Zarev 19–20, 26–27, 29). For him one of the problems of structuralism was that it had replaced “the organic whole” with a mechanical one, producing thus “a rupture between the work and the separate phrase, a rupture between the phrase and the word”. (Zarev 12)

It seems that part of this criticism was included in his rectorial address in 1968 and was immediately recognized as a threat making some of the youngest scholars leave to other universities (Manchev 2018).

The same 1968 in August Bulgarian students and professors were sent to Prague for the Sixth International Slavic Congress, where Miroslav Yanakiev was next to Roman Jakobson and Jan Mukařovský and the students, inspired by the formalist legacy and the structuralist semiotics brought back this inspiration to Bulgaria (Nedelchev 2017: 134–140). Later some of them were asked to edit an issue of the Bulgarian Writers Association’s bulletin¹⁶ on structuralism and in 1970, the year after Zarev’s booklet got out, they published there a chapter by Saussure, eight texts by Levi-Strauss, seven texts by Barthes, three by Philippe Sollers and one by Genette (Nedelchev 2017: 151; Garnizov 247).

In 1969 the International Association for Semiotic studies was founded with Miroslav Yanakiev and Alexander Ludskanov being on the Executive Committee next to people from all around Europe, including Jakobson, Umberto Eco, Lotman, Benveniste, Fonagy, etc.

In 1972 Roman Jakobson was invited to Bulgaria and gave a long interview for the *Lik* journal (Jakobson 1972). He was interviewed by some of the former students who went to the Prague congress. 1972 was an important year also because Lotman (1972) succeeded to publish in Moscow a volume with translations of semiotic texts from various countries and opened in a sense the Soviet academia to semioticians that were not “home-grown”. The book included texts by Levi-Strauss, Jakobson, Jiří Levý, Claude Bremond, Meyer Shapiro, Max Bense and others. It had an immediate impact in Bulgaria and it was mentioned as an important book in the preface to the 1972 Jakobson interview.

Meanwhile the attack on structuralism was getting stronger, involving critics and writers that presented it as “western” and “individualistic” fashion choking the life out of the literary works. It is difficult to describe the position from which the attack was launched. It comprised people with different views and different interests. On the one hand, it was the position of Marxist humanism of those critics who were already seen as dogmatic and who in hold of institutional power tried to maintain this power.¹⁷ Zarev’s small book can be included here. On the other hand, there were younger critics who were not dogmatic Marxist-Leninists and who were rather irritated by the introduction of the exact sciences in literature simply because this contradicted their own understanding of what literature is and how it should be studied. As I pointed at the beginning of this text the discussed period was one of liberalization of the human sciences and the ongoing transformation of the field of literary studies allowed for various forces to intervene and curious alliances to be formed. Thus there was a group of the younger scholars formed during the 1960s who were later called “essayists” and “impressionists” in which there were traditionalists and even proto-nationalists like Toncho Zhechev but also

17

I cannot go here into the problems the place of humanism poses to the researcher. For a more subtle way to pose this question, see (Nikolchina 2014).

18
I take the expression from Enyo Stoyanov's article in this issue.

19
On the structuralist-impressionist debate see Manchev 1999 and the texts of Enyo Stoyanov and Miglena Nikolchina in this issue. On Todor Pavlov's criticism of the proto-nationalistic views of Lyudmila Zhivkova's circle including Toncho Zhechev's group, see (Kiossev 174 n79).

20
Todorov's relation with Barthes and Greimas should be further researched, but it seems certain that he knew them both personally and that he was close with Greimas. I could not specify when he met them – was it during his first specialization in France (Nancy) in 1961–1962 or during the second specialization in 1967–1968 in the Sorbonne? According to Boyan Manchev (2018), at the second big Urbino conference on narratology in 1968 he had most probably a long debate with Barthes but unfortunately I could not find written traces of this debate. Todorov's text from the Urbino conference (“The Hierarchy of Narrative Functions”, Todorov 1985: 96–103) refers only to Guillaume and Krassimir Mantchev which is only natural as it was written →

progressive thinkers like Tzvetan Stoyanov and Julia Kristeva (before her departure to France) and it seems to be the case that apart from the personal friendship what was uniting them was “their agreement in identifying a problem in modernity”.¹⁸ It was the impressionists who in 1974, several years after the death of Tzvetan Stoyanov, started on the pages of the *Literaturna misal* journal perhaps the most important controversy on structuralism. At the time their attitude was getting more and more conservativist and they were criticized for that by some of the old Marxists such as Todor Pavlov.¹⁹ Structuralists, for their part, were often defending Marxist positions sometimes against the humanist dogma and sometimes not.

It is in this complicated context that Christo Todorov's article on Barthes was published. The article referred to Zarev's criticism of structuralism as one of “the transformations of the contemporary bourgeois ideology”, stating that this aspect was already well studied by Zarev (Todorov 1973: 22). That it has been well studied meant among other things that Todorov himself did not have to dwell on this topic which allowed him to focus on his Guillaumist reading of Barthes. But the complexity of Todorov's gesture deserves attention. The reference to Zarev can be read also as a sort of insurance so that such a text be published in the first place. Such an interpretation is not without ground as it was a common practice at the time. However, in this specific case Todorov was pretending to criticize structuralism in general and in this sense it seems plausible that he would not have needed such a protection. Furthermore, albeit different in almost every point from Zarev's attack, the article shared with it something important. Both Zarev and Todorov criticized the privilege bestowed to the discrete units of language and both of them claimed that in this way a crucial part of the meaning construction is lost. And after all this was a sort of

a starting point for the whole ideogenetic theory. Also, as I said earlier, Todorov's criticism was not superficial, it was not just an excuse to present Barthes's views.²⁰ At the same time presenting his criticism as a criticism of structuralism as a whole meant stepping up and taking a position in the ongoing debates. And this position sided with the dogmatic functionaries and the conservative impressionists instead of with people like Miroslav Yanakiev. Was he trying to imply that the Guillaumist theory he and Krassimir Mantchev were developing had nothing to do with structuralism?

Zarev must have had liked the article against Barthes because two years later a shorter version of it was included together with Zarev's own text in a volume on structuralism published in Moscow and gathering authors from various countries (Basina, Polyakova 377–395).²¹ Judging from this collection of essays one cannot but get the impression that Pantelei Zarev and Christo Todorov formed a front in Bulgaria against structuralism as such.

The political stakes of literary theory in the Eastern Bloc are yet to be studied. It was rarely about the possible direct influence on politics. Sometimes, the explicit distancing from political questions was a political gesture. Sometimes, the production or introduction of theoretical thought was political in the sense that it created places of freedom; and then theoretical thinking in itself was an active transformation or subversion of a system that often tried to control it and reduce it. Also, theory always provides new categories for the analysis of what is going on, be it in a story, in a poem, or in a real event.

Christo Todorov's own theory can give the researcher tools for the understanding of his situation. The way Krassimir Mantchev and he were developing their Guillaumist theory lead inevitably to the particularization²² of the theory distancing them from the French

→ before the conference and therefore before the debate. On the other hand, in a note to a text of his published during the same year he thanks Greimas for his suggestions during the work on the text (Todorov 1968: 41). Which means that they communicated personally. Is it possible that with his criticism of Barthes Todorov was taking Greimas's side after the fall out of Barthes and Greimas that took place precisely at that time? Or is it rather the case that Greimas's approach with the focus on the semantic level and the deep structures was from the outset closer to Guillaume and therefore also to Todorov? Much is still to be clarified but even these facts would have remained unknown to me without Boyan Manchev's help, to whom I would like to express here my gratitude.

21

I want to thank again Boyan Manchev for drawing my attention to this volume.

22

Following Guillaume and Todorov hereafter I will use generality and universality, on the one hand, and particularity and singularity, on the other, as synonyms.

structuralists in general and from the other Guillaumists in particular (cf. Pottier 44; Gandon, Tchaouchev 3–12). The initial virtuality and universality were gradually reduced to a singular theory. From this perspective the reference to Zarev and the decision to publish the text on Barthes in Bulgarian can be interpreted as a move of generalization, to which the shared criticism of the Barthesian preference for discrete units and the following inability to see the global meaning testifies. In such a generalization and virtualization Christo Todorov was apparently searching to find the common ground between the dogmatic humanist-Marxist position of Zarev and his own Guillaumist views. However, on this level of generality no theory could have been developed; the development would have inevitably led to a new particularization. What is more, the generalization of Marxism and Guillaumist structuralism was producing simultaneously particularizations both in non-structuralist Marxism and in structuralism (Marxist or not). The generalization was not unification.

The virtuality of the common ground should be further questioned as to its modal structure and the subject-object relationship this structure presupposed. One possibility will be to see Todorov's own motives as based on the goal to achieve knowledge (an intellective and thus a transmodal notion), knowledge what literature is and what is the role of language in its constitution. In short, a desire for knowledge. A modal notion directed at a transmodal one. A subject of desire who desires to become a subject of knowledge. The desire however cannot be achieved if possibility/ ability is lacking thereof, for possibility holds a more basic position in the hierarchy of modal notions and desire depends on it. In the context of the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s the possibility for such type of knowledge was threatened and it is not improbable that this gave Todorov another motive for siding with

Zarev. Such a siding was a possibilization of the achievement of desire. The price he had to pay was that he had to occupy a position which was no longer the subject position of his desire. It is hard to think that Zarev himself, like Todorov, wrote his article against structuralism because he wanted. It would be much more appropriate to say that he had to, it was his obligation or even duty, because he was a subject put in the place of an object-agent by the empty subject of power. Siding with Zarev meant that Todorov also had to abandon being a subject of desire and become an object-agent, a tool in a game it didn't matter he liked or even understood. He was, indeed, instrumentalized as the 1975 volume clearly shows. Of course, there were struggles between different *devoirs* in the ruling Party as well as among the functionaries in the University, but the point is that the level of obligation meant a different subject structure. In the force field of literary theory in Bulgaria the articulation of a strong theoretical position was *possible* only if subjected to some of the obligations that the association with dominant Party figures presupposed.²³ Notwithstanding the internal power struggles, these “network games” (Deyanova 2015) produced empty subjects of power to whom the real subjects were subjected by forms of obligations and duties. The subject of obligation turned out to be the true structure resulting from the virtualization and the reaching of common ground.

So there was modal conflict, a modal conflict between “I want” and “I must”, between desire and obligation. It is clear what the choice Todorov made was. He turned to a new particularization, writing almost exclusively in French but after 1973 to my knowledge publishing only in Bulgaria. It was a sort of self-isolation. And even to this day he remains a figure unknown to the wide academic circles in this country.

23 This hypothesis could provide another answer to the question posed by Boyan Manchev (1999) as to why the Bulgarian structuralists did not produce a general literary theory. It could have been a choice not to play if possible the institutional power game which would put them in the position of object-agents.

24

In this sense the Christo Todorov's case would confirm Boyan Manchev's observation that the problem of the clash between structuralism and institutionalized Marxism in Bulgaria was never conceptual. Cf. Manchev 1999.

If Todorov was faced with a modal conflict between desire and obligation, then it becomes obvious that the problem was neither methodological, nor conceptual, for a productive singularization of a Marxist-Guillaumist theory is thinkable.²⁴ It was a problem of becoming a subject and what kind of subject is one becoming. The dynamics of the modal conflict reveals at least one more thing beyond a possible explanation of the situation. It reveals the political stakes of Todorov's Guillaumist literary theory. The stake of theory (and of that particular theory) was to explicate the relationship between the modal and the transmodal notions and in a reflexive way to indicate the crux of transformation. The modal notions characterize the actions, the transmodal notions characterize the subject of action (Todorov 1985: 171-172) but theory is the point where the transmodal can have as its object the modal, a reflexive point where the desire to know leads to a knowledge of desire. And the theoretical knowledge of desire is simultaneously a knowledge of the tension, of the inherent tendencies within a given context. Every movement of singularization and universalization was a tensorial movement. The tensions opened up directions, directions for change, even if the change that actually happened to these particular scholars was not the one they were imagining. The appearance of the generality, the tense generality of Zarev-Todorov, was a product of a non-predetermined potentialization disclosing the immanent transformability of the field beyond the particular agents. Above, following Guillaume, I defined tension as the immanent progressive transformability of a state of affairs which gives a direction of change. The tension episodes of Bulgarian literary theory in the 1960s and the 1970s *made evident* – and here is the transmodality of *theory*, both perception and cognition, reflexively turned to the dynamics of the modal notions it rests on – the immanent transformability and the constant becoming

of subjects. Some chose to play the game and change it from inside. Some chose self-isolation. Some immigrated and others just kept on reading carefully literary works. But theory made it clear, it does so every time, that things can no longer be the same, that every status que is filled with tensions that eventually will change it. ♡

References

- BASINA, E., M. POLYAKOVA (eds), 1975: *Strukturalizm: za i protiv* [*Structuralism: pro and contra*], Moskva: Progress.
- BREMOND, CLAUDE, 1964: Le message narratif. *Communication* 4. 4-32.
- BREMOND, CLAUDE, 1966: La logique des possibles narratifs. *Communication* 8. 60-76.
- DEYANOVA, LILIANA, 2009: *Ochertania na malchanieto* [*Outlines of Silence*]. Sofia: Kritika I humanizam.
- DEYANOVA, LILIANA, 2015: Socialnite nauki v arhiva na Darzhavna sigurnost [*The Social Sciences in the Archives of State Security*]. *Sociologicheski problem* XLVII, 1-2. 134-153.
- GANDON, FRANCIS, ASSEN TCHAUCHEV (eds), 2007: *Langages* ("L'École guillaumienne de Bulgarie"), 165.
- GARNIZOV, VASSIL, 2017: Strukturalism i kasen socializam [*Structuralism and Late Socialism*]. *Vekat na strukturalizma* [*The Century of Structuralism*]. Ed. Vassil Garnizov. Sofia: Nov bulgarski universitet. 178-252.
- GONCHAROVA, GALINA (ed.), 2013/2014: *The Academic (Under)Ground 1981-1989. A Special Issue of Piron Journal*. 8.
- GUILLAUME, GUSTAVE, 1970: *Temps et verbe suivi de L'Architectonique du temps dans les langues classique*. Paris: Libraire honoré Champion.
- GUILLAUME, GUSTAVE, 1973: *Langage et science du langage*. Paris: Librairie A.-G. Nizet.
- HIRTLE, WALTER, 2007: *Language in the Mind. An Introduction to Guillaume's Theory*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

- JAKOBSON, ROMAN, 1972: *Poetika-Semiotika-Literaturoznanie. Razgovor* [Poetics-Semiotics-Literary Theory. An Interview]. *LIK* 48 (23 December 1972).
- KIOSSEV, ALEXANDER, 2009: *Istinskiat naslednik* [The Real Heir]. *Kritika I humanism* 29, 2. 145–174.
- LOTMAN, YURI (ED.), 1972: *Semiotika i isskustvometria* [Semiotics and Art-Measurement]. Moskva: Mir.
- MANCHEV, BOYAN, 1999: *Interpretatsii na ideologiatata, ideologii na interpretatsiata* [Interpretations of Ideology, Ideologies of Interpretation]. *Literaturna misal* 1. 5–30л
- MANCHEV, BOYAN, 2003: *Nevuobrazimoto* [The Inimaginable]. Sofia: New Bulgarian University.
- MANCHEV, BOYAN, 2018. Interview with the author, taken on 29 January 2018.
- MANTCHEV, KRASSIMIR, 1967: *Hiérarchie sémantique des verbes française contemporains. Cahiers de lexicologie*, 10: 31–46.
- MANTCHEV, KRASSIMIR, CHRISTO TODOROV, 1971: *Eléments d'idéogénie. Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia*, LXIV.
- MANTCHEV, KRASSIMIR, 1980: *Approche de l'idéogénèse*. Eds. André Joly, Walter H. Hirtle, *Langage et psychomécanique du langage*, Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille.
- MANTCHEV, KRASSIMIR, 1998: *Sémiotique et Narratologie*. Sofia: University of Sofia Press.
- NEDELICHEV, MIHAIL, 2014. “Eskiz kam literaturovedski memoari” [A Sketch in view of the Memoirs of a Literary Theoretician]. *Nevidimata shkola* [The Invisible School]. Ed. Miglena Nikolchina et al. Sofia: *Literaturen vestnik*. 49–59.

- NEDELICHEV, MIHAIL, 2017. Kogato biah 'mlad kritik-strukturalist' [When I Was a 'Young Structuralist Critic']. *Vekat na strukturalizma* [The Century of Structuralism]. Ed. Vassil Garnizov. Sofia: Nov bulgarski universitet. 129–157.
- NEWTON, K. M., 1988: *Twentieth Century Literary Theory: A Reader*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- NIKOLCHINA, MIGLENA, 2011. Prochitat na komunisticheskoto nasledstvo mezhdurazplazvashtite I nabavyashtite se konteksti: Julia Kristeva and Vera M [Reading the Communist Legacy Between Dissolving and Accruing Contexts: Julia Kristeva and Vera M.]. *Sociologicheski problemi* XLIII. 3–4. 96–113.
- NIKOLCHINA, MIGLENA, 2013. *Lost Unicorns of the Velvet Revolution*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- NIKOLCHINA, MIGLENA, 2014: Inverted forms and Heterotopian Homonymy: Althusser, Mamardashvili, and the Problem of "Man". *boundary 2*, 1. 79–100.
- POTTIER, BERNARD, 1976: Sur la formulation des modalités en linguistique. *Langages* 43. 39–46.
- RIVKIN, JULIE, MICHAEL RYAN (eds.), 1998: *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishings.
- SELDEN, RAMAN, 1985: *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.
- TODOROV, HRISTO, 1968: Logique et temps narratif. *Information sur les sciences sociales* VII, 6. 41–49.
- TODOROV, CHRISTO, 1971: La hiérarchie des liens dans le récit. *Semiotica* 2: 121–139.
- TODOROV, CHRISTO, 1973: Kritika na literaturovedskite vazgledi na Rolan Bart [A Critique of Roland Barthes's Literary Views]. *Literaturna misul* 2: 10–28.

- TODOROV, CHRISTO, 1982: *Histoire de la littérature française XVIIIe – XXe s. Deuxieme partie: La poesie*. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo.
- TODOROV, CHRISTO, 1985: *Etudes d'histoire de la littérature française (18–20 s.)*. Sofia: University of Sofia Press.
- TODOROV, CHRISTO, 2003: *La théorie opérative et la littérature française*. Veliko Tarnovo: Faber.
- TODOROVA, PETYA, 2012. *Kum istoriata na humanitaristikata ot vtorata polovina na 20 vek: bulgarskiat prinos za razvitiето na strukturalizma i poststrukturalizma (Tzvetan Todorov i Julia Kristeva)* [Toward a History of the Humanities in the second half of the 20th Century: the Bulgarian contribution for the development of structuralism and poststructuralism (Tzvetan Todorov and Julia Kristeva)]. Dissertation defended on 10 April 2012 at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
- TOUSSANT, MAURICE, 1983: *Contre l'arbitraire du signe*. Paris: Didier Erudition.
- TRENDAFILOV, HRISTO, 2017: *Izvanstolichni nauchno-prosvetni centre po vremeto na soc-a* [Scientific Enlightenment Centres Outside of the Capital City in the Socialist Times]. *Vekat na strukturalizma* [The Century of Structuralism]. Ed. Vassil Garnizov. Sofia: Nov bulgarski universitet. 158–167.
- VALIN, ROCH, 1954: *Petite introduction à la psychomécanique du langage*, Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.
- WILMET, MARC, 1972: *Gustave Guillaume et son école linguistique*. Paris: Fernand Nathan, et Bruxelles: Labor.
- WINNER, THOMAS G., 1971: Introduction. In: Iu. M. Lotman, *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*. Providence: Brown University Press. vii–x.

YANAKIEV, MIROSLAV, 1960: *Bulgarsko stihoznanie* [Bulgarian Versification]. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo.

ZAREV, PANTELEI, 1969: *Strukturalizm, literaturoznanie i esteticheski ideal* [Structuralism, Literary Studies, and Aesthetic Ideal]. Sofia: Balgarski pisatel.

ZNEPOLSKI, IVAYLO, 2017: Roland Barthes i Yuri Lotman: Semiotikata v Zapadna i Iztochna Evropa. Komparativni razmishlenia. [Roland Barthes and Yuri Lotman: Semiotics in Western and Eastern Europe. Comparative reflections]. *Vekat na strukturalizma* [The Century of Structuralism]. Ed. Vassil Garnizov. Sofia: Nov bulgarski universitet. 92–99.

Резюме

Развитието на структуралистки идеи в България съвпада с политиката на либерализация на хуманитарните и социални науки в страната и така от самото си начало се оказва въввлечено в множество дискусии, вътрешни и външни, както и част от все по-усложняващото се поле на литературознанието. В този контекст се появява и българската гийомистка шола, водена от езиковеда Красимир Манчев и литературоведа Христо Тодоров. Специализирали във Франция през шестдесетте, и двамата диалогизират повече с френските си колеги, пишат предимно на френски и почти изцяло пренебрегват в текстовете си българската среда. Сред малкото статии на Тодоров, написани на български, обаче се откроява една критика към Р. Барт от 1973 г., която се представя като критика на структурализма въобще и в която той взема страната на Пантелей Зарев, тогава ректор на Софийския университет, който още през 1969 вече е нападнал структуралистките тенденции навън и в страната от своите догматични хуманистично-марксистки позиции, функциониращи като официална позиция на БКП по въпроса за границите на позволеното в теорията. Въпреки че гийомизмът на Тодоров може да бъде видян като вид структурализъм и въпреки че изследователите, с които обсъжда идеите си по това време, са всичките структуралисти (А. Ж. Гремас, Кл. Бремон и т.н.), с тази своя статия той сякаш скрива този аспект на теориите си. Това съвсем не означава, че критиката му към Барт е повърхностно извинение за запознаване на българската публика с неговите трудове – напротив, става дума за сериозно несъгласие и добре обосновани аргументи, естествено изведени от гийомисткия подход. Може да се каже, че тази му работа се

намесва в един задълбочаващ се теоретичен разрив между Гремас и Барт, като сам Тодоров подкрепя негласно, но очевидно Гремас. Същевременно, с публикацията на български по странен начин не просто се указва към разрив в структурализма, но посредством това указване се разкрива и възможно разноречие в настоятелно неструктуралистичния български марксизъм. Въпреки това, шансът, който връзката с могъщата институционална фигура на Зарев дава, не изглежда да е бил привлекателен за Христо Тодоров, който следващите единадесет години спира да публикува в Литературна мисъл и се изолира повторно от по-широкия български контекст.

В настоящата статия се предлага хипотезата, че изборът на Христо Тодоров не се основава на концептуална невъзможност за теоретизиране, обединяващо марксистки и гийомистки предпоставки, а се дължи на модалности и модален преход от желание към дълг и задължение, описани в собствената му теория, при което се произвежда различен субект, „празен субект“ на властта, спрямо който реалният субект на действието ще бъде пасивен, сведен до обект-агент, инструментализиран. В този смисъл отказът от бъдещо сътрудничество на Тодор има не концептуални, а модални основания.

Въпреки привидния неуспех на стратегията му, направеното от него ще е разкрило напрежения и възможности в онзи контекст, които дотогава не са били видими.

Darin Tenev

Darin Tenev is associate professor at the Literary Theory Department at the University of Sofia and at the Sociology and Humans Sciences Department at the University of Plovdiv. He is the director of the Institute of Critical Social Studies. He has published two books in Bulgarian – Fiction and Image. Models (2012) and Digressions. Essays on Jacques Derrida (2013), as well various articles on literary theory, model theory, deconstruction, and contemporary philosophy, among which the most recent are: “Jacques Derrida” in Oxford Bibliographies in Literary and Critical Theory; “Models of Poetics. A Response to Robert Matthias Erdbeer’s Poetik der Modelle” in Textpraxis; “Modes of Fiction, Models of Fiction” in Literary Form. Theories – Dynamics – Cultures. Perspectives on Literary Modelling.