

TALKING ABOUT REDUNDANT ISSUES SUCH AS THEORY OF HISTORY

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*For my daughter Nikoletta*¹

I. "A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN"

When Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis invited me to participate to the Workshop "History and Society since 1970" (Bucharest, 7-11 April 2003), suggesting that it would be nice to talk about my own experience as a historian, the first book I picked up was Virginia Woolf's *A room of One's Own*. I should rethink theoretically my paper, and refine my awkward English, I thought, grabbing this essay. But I realized how deeply unconscious was my necessity by facing the ironical rhetorical question of my partner: "Why this feminist icon, aren't you attending the serious conference of Balkan history in Bucharest? Or, do you need to learn from her how to be original and successful?"

Of course, his smart remark, made half jokingly and half seriously, made me roar with laughter whose fading away had relaxed noting but confronted me with a corroding question: "Why actually?" I tried to find a theoretical approach for arranging my chaotic thoughts from the draft and I reached for Woolf's

¹ Encouraged by the invitation to speak on my personal experience I for the first time grasped how significant are the people to whom we confess our research frustration. How often these people are left out of our attention regardless of the ritual of the acknowledgements. In my perception these sections of the books tend to frame and schematize rather than to express what we every day receive from these people. I gradually transformed my daughter into my first translator. Her ironic remarks were more successful than the colleagues' reviews in making me realise the problems of inter-generational communication. Due to her I understood how dry is history's language, how little it conveys to the young people, how greatly it is a prisoner of intellectual fashions and established structures, of literary tropes and trivial expressions. The people that were close to me gradually turned into first readers, critics and editors of my texts. Provoked by their short sharp questions I analysed in endless monologues my crises, uncertainties, defeats... This I did on their shoulders, which I easily named "Freud's couch in the study". They helped me to tame my fears, to channel the aggression and to dominate over the tensions, created by the politics within my historical profession and by the struggle to be included in a project or to preside over such. If one opens the CVs of the new Bulgarian historical elite one could see that the participation in projects is emphasized, and not the list of publications.

essay. Did I do that only because of the context and its impulses? (Virginia Woolf's books and portraits were on the window display of bookstores. The critiques of *The Hours*, of Nicole Kidman's interpretation and her photos as Virginia Woolf with thoughtful look and yellow long fingers of an old nervous smoker revived the idea and image of "the suffering sensitive lady novelist"². Their aura filled, at least for me, the pages of serious English newspapers and journals.)

Or, I said, "I would be original and scandalous as a reaction to some deep cultural complex connected with the symbolical paralyzing perception of the excellence of English as created in my childhood?" No less frustrated by digging for some cultural atavism and fitted gender roles that seemed to me more like a transferring culpability, I continued rereading feverishly *A Room of One's Own & Three Guineas*. I did keep my attention with the book for I sought something else, apparently linked with my profound professional problems. Probably, I told myself, it was due to my endless conversations with my friend and colleague Tatyana Kotzeva, specialist in Gender Sociology, aimed at solving our professional problems of working women. We were unraveling V. Woolf's biography, and I might unconsciously turn it into the chief source of my academic actions. But, what performance I would like to legitimize publicly? A conscious aggressiveness and a spiteful attitude towards "old authority" and "new establishing scientific élite" – I allowed it only in a "room of my own" and sometimes I have charged and discharged it in talks on our professional situation with my colleagues-friends-women-sociologists Nina Nikolova, Tatyana Kotseva and Svetlana Sabeva. Or, was it only for the sake of originality and scandal? I went on fretting about it. Why did I take this "feminist essay"? What did it tell me about my professional preoccupations and searched academic actions? Did I try to challenge some deep fears and to unlock some suppressed emotions...? What anguish about my professional identity is there? Why can I not help thinking about the reasons that directed my hand to the shelves with Woolf's books?

Maybe, agreeing to answer the quite tantalising questions such as "What is to be done with historiographical production from the 1970s and 1980s?", I would have to rethink Bulgarian historiography in critical way and to be critical of my own work as a historian. This situation drives me usually to a scientific identity crisis: I start to feel insecure professionally and to realise the lack of self-confidence in my research and academic position. And, asking myself "Who are you to dare do that?", I used to suppress my problems rather than to solve them.³ Probably, I thought, this position is linked with some strategy for

² "A recent film *The Hours* presents Woolf in a way surely her contemporaries would have marveled at. She is the very image of a sensitive suffering lady novelist. Where is the malicious spiteful woman she in fact was? And dirty-mouthed, too, though with an upper-class accent", Doris Lessing writes on Virginia Woolf's newly discovered journal ("The Guardian", 14.06.03.)

³ The first critical reprisals of Bulgarian Historiography have been done by the late director of the History Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Issusov, 1991), and by Maria Todorova (Todorova, 1992).

surviving. I have worked it out, consciously and unconsciously, through the influence of my personal character and perceptions of tacit rules and written laws of the academic world of Bulgarian historiography.

Reading more and more Woolf's essay I overindulge in her acid remarks on why and when "the figure in the looking-glasses shrinks", on the use of "mirrors in civilized societies" ("they are essential to all violent and heroic action"), on the way to release the bitterness caused by the attitude of/to "other", on the fears of powerful person... and so on (Woolf, 2001: 28-37). That indulgence takes me by association to the reasoning of my own fears, of the rising idea that shocked me: "we have not had a real historical debate on the questions that my English colleagues are interested in".

"Old stories of old deans and old dons came back to mind", in Woolf's wording, when I recalled how rarely in our academic milieu we are able to rethink history, to criticize in ways related to freedom of mind and critical independence that have nothing to do with partisanship, aggression and "wounded vanity". Adversely, often rewriting history in a critical way risks being seen as conscious/unconscious necessity to "heal" our somehow concerned vanity, to deal with "the other", to confirm positions of "one's own circle" to the detriment of "enemy one", to endorse "network interest" legitimizing its establishment and enlargement of influence (explicitly or implicitly articulated at the different levels of scientific space). Those perceptions blur the science as a coin of "critical attitudes" and leave the bitter feeling of neglecting and marginalizing the own scholar and ethical values. And, the figure: "being critical" shrinks becoming only conscious/unconscious intentional act for politics' own sake.

For example, recently after the fall of communism the new historian élite occasionally performed ostentatious discursive aggressiveness in public space: sometimes the lobbies of the University would recall Medieval place not only because of the darkness due to the architecture and spare lightning but also because of guild's relationships. Accusing the "old élite" of introducing communist politics and ideology in scientific life, rather than aiming at making room for new trends of history, they provoked nothing but difficult communication between generations. Aggressiveness of the "younger" evoked the stubbornness of the "older": they still held their academic power petrifying in "old history paradigms" (positive political history and neo-Marxist structuralism of 1960s and 1970s). The dividing lines between them were not drawn by age but by style of behaviour and academic affiliations. More often than to criticize the "old professors" was linked in 1990s with personal interests and was related to "squaring accounts" with "old political enemies". The "old élite" perceived these critiques as a sure way of the "younger" to advance in hierarchical upheaval of Universities of transition by pleasing the new anti-Communist political élites in 1990s, in a manner similar to the 1950s when the ostentatious affiliation with Marxism was a *sine qua non* of the successful professional position. This similarity made the criticism towards the "old professors" start

fulfilling political functions in some way. The “older” constructed in the early 1990s the image of “whistling the old professors” as a cultural reaction connoted with “dirty career intentions” and “thirst for power”. The rethinking and rewriting of history was deprived from positive scholar and moral values. In the Bulgarian context of 1990s this negative image of “being critical” functioned with clear disciplinary effects. It restrained the explicit aggressiveness and “bloody” personal attacks; it suppressed the debate on real scholar values of the historiography of 1970s and 1980s; the debate that would not take account of present positions of authors in new restructuring scientific space of history of transition. Leaving aside, for the moment, the discussion on “knowledge as the driving force behind political practice” (Hart, 1996: 10) in principle, I would only underline the creating of images through which exactly the critical and academic positions of recognized other (not belonging to my/our interests, politics, ideology of history-making) could be negatively connoted as intentional situation. Let put aside also the particular dispute about the impossible rewriting of history in post-communist societies as an act alien to politics and career intentions, to fears of marginalization and exclusion from the scientific and academic upheaval of transition. Here I would emphasize some facts that respond to the questions of our English colleagues.

The historical debate has never been supposed as an intentional situation; on the contrary, we were frightened of its emergence. It was never practiced as a need to release accumulated tension over inter-generation contradictions and over conflicts of interests in following different historical schools crossing the generational divides. Faced with the question of our session and focused on answering them, I discovered at least for myself: the missing debate on historical knowledge and scholarly and political limits of history did not allow us to come to terms with painful inter-generation relationships. In this way Bulgarian historiography preferred to suppress rather than debate; it missed a clear opportunity to display the nets of norms and values that connect and divide the different generations and historical schools. That explosion would have stopped the corrosion of the communicative channels in historian’s craft. In other words, many of the generational and scholar tensions would have been discharged. Some of the “younger” would have realised why and where they felt close to the “older” (i.e. due to shared values of national historical discourse) and why and where they differed and parted with their predecessors (i.e. because of the difference over the norms of traditional political history making). I was astonished that the cultural, political and social foundations of this situation were never problematized and thematized by the Bulgarian history didactics.

Moreover, this desire of rewriting and rethinking history in critical manner used to be labeled in public space of history as “Young Turks” rebellion. This term bears specific cultural connotations in the Bulgarian case: it represents the attitude to these critics and reduces the problem over historiography debates

only to the power conflict between the “young” and the “old”.⁴ Thus what was suppressed was precisely the “healthy necessity” for evaluation of the 1970s-1980s history production by its timing and contextualization in broader historiographic world trends. The tacit suppression translated an (un)conscious anguish to reveal the “shadows of biographies” as well as fears of ensuing historiographical coup d’état. The latter seemed to have been perceived as a sure way of creating new main resources for scientific power for “young” (a priori supposed to not be stigmatized as bearers of Marxist ideology “condemned” in the public space as a source of all evil) to challenge the establishment. The irony of fate: due to this situation, Marxism as a world recognized methodology with its serious critical potential was banished from the public space of history. In this way the scholarly achievements of Bulgarian historiography of 1970s and 1980s have never been measured in their real terms: the inner development of Marxist science, velocity of its self-exhausting, its movement to neo-Marxist structuralism. Instead of this the accumulated tension in generational communication was released in the University lobbies through spiteful remarks on the “venerable congregation”; often accompanied with piquant stories of personal biographies. That had nothing to do with scholar reasoning.

The scholar and social revenge to this is the return of the suppressed in the form of either crypto-Marxism/communism or clearly pronounced anti-communism exercised by the generation that started its career during 1980s and sometimes by us, their students – regardless if members of both generations are inside or outside Bulgaria. This hinders the way to the reflexivity and auto-reflexivity in historian’s work, which is supposed to help us, among other things, to stop thinking of debate as something that is aimed to threaten our positions in science and academic hierarchy.

One might call it one of life’s ironies, but after 13 years of transition the “young” ones became the “old” ones not only due to aging but also because of the performance. They are beginning to use the worn out expression of “Young Turks” with respect to their younger and scholarly more ambitious colleagues. This usage reconfirms the cultural functions charged upon this image in the public space of history: to tame the communicational tension between generations at the cost of suppressing the Bulgarian history debate. By trying to keep away from discussion on the new necessity of refreshing the history by topics and approaches with their proper language and figurative expressiveness we are still conceiving of rising new knowledge as a powerful source of challenging the balance of distributed symbolic and real capitals. Moreover, nowadays the

⁴ In this context both the specialists and the public often forget the case of the first textbook rewriting – it was done by Stayko Trifonov (Trifonov, 1991) who could not be accused of power thrust or of a drive to settle historiographical accounts. He simply laid down “his history” – a national meta-narration that emancipated the national history from the party one and equated the Thracian question with the Macedonian one in the “Bulgarians’ historical destiny”; thus he emancipated his identity discourse. The fall of the communist system permitted liberation and return of some of the layers that were hitherto suppressed by the official normative discourse.

critical opinion on established academic status quo is rarely accepted as an expression of professional ethics and pursuit of scientific values; such critique is usually thought as an “aggression” and is associated with feelings and fears of marginalization and exclusion from the newly emerging centers of power linked with processes of global politics. We tacitly resort to new tactics: to greet with silence the historiography that somehow has escaped from the symbolic power of recognised authority centres – in terms of either thematic content or theoretical approach. Everybody of us, I thought, plays such role in different situations: editor, supervisor of MA and Ph D theses, reviewer and so on. This role confronts us, at least in *A room of One's Own*, with our strained relationships with the texts that, in Jörn Rüsen's wording, challenge our identity discourse as historians; i.e. we are discomforted to recognize that some of our theses are obliterated and our knowledge power over the “young” is vanishing. The newly established institutions and young authors experience this silence and perceive it as an act of “condemnation” and a verdict of capital punishment upon their own professional status. This experience produces the bitterness that erodes the values of scholars choice; their response to their defeat brought about by our tactical silence creates conditions for clientelism.

At the same time “local wars” are waged, expressed in the personal/circles conflicts on different levels of scientific life over the trends of history development.⁵ Interests of authority structures and different university lobby groups (crossing the borders of different universities, NGO-s and departments of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) stand behind those encounters. Despite those “family quarrels” their fight for repartition of real and symbolic capitals has never become a “drastic retribution for the past”, nor a “fair struggle” for a “noble cause” (as an intentional situation). Probably, it is due to the Bulgarian context: inextricably interwoven interests of “old communist reformist and new anti-communist élites”, relatively high level of Bulgarian historical science of 1970s-1980s, international recognition for so many Bulgarian historians forming part of the “venerable congregation”. The Bulgarian historiographical world is articulated as networks in and out of the university and the Academy, circles of interests within the establishment and “friends circles” crossing the borders of universities, Academy and NGO-s. Somehow tacitly excluded from the Guild are the historians working in museums, teachers and authors of history books who are not affiliated with the above mentioned institutions; they are really voiceless. The silhouette of this situation is displayed clearly when the new international projects loom up in the Bulgarian scientific horizons blurring the dividing lines and drawing new ones in the historians' world. In the process a kind of clientelist attitudes is created, which reveals the powerful centres of

⁵ It will be very helpful to read the minutes of meeting to decide which new courses to introduce, which historians to invite and associate to the programs, of debates on titles, topics of MA and Ph D thesis and the votes of their advisers, and so on. Probably, they will be one of the more important archives of Reflexive History.

knowledge whose symbol capital do not necessarily coincides with the real one. The new international projects require different capitals such as: project experience, list of publications, archival and theory information, personal acquaintances and connections with global academic élite, money, and so on, which are not accumulated in only one of those powerful centers of history knowledge.

Moreover, the historiographical re-orientation to the new methodology, demanded by all those projects in principle, logically started to happen in provincial universities and in periphery departments in Sofia University, but not in the History Faculty of Sofia University or in the history institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences: normativeness of history science was maintained by the powerful centre, yet it left scientific niches in the province which were used for experiences – the situation due to the relaxing impulses of the current politics that sought to deal with the unified single communist version of the past. The historiographical *coup d'état* was achieved to a certain extent at those “periphery” places. It upset the relationships between periphery and center in the inter-institutional “race” for the international projects. Precisely these new projects led to rare fading away of the high tensions between traditional political history and other paradigms. The interest in history of socialist period re-established to certain extent the “pure political history”, the “history of events” that remained a privilege for the historians acquainted with party and state archives of this period. At the same time this history demands other types of archive, those of experienced history such as ordinary people’s memoirs, oral stories, interviews, letters and so on – a domain of the “new historians” dealing with the methods of historical anthropology, cultural history or social history of the German school of Jürgen Kocka and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. It is bewildering to see the same “scientific enemies”, that are exchanging spiteful remarks in the lobbies of universities and within “friend’s circles” and are expressing total disagreement with historical research done in the paradigms that they saw as foreign to their own history-making affiliations, to be suddenly sitting together discussing the strategy of a common international project. Whatever one might say about the present Bulgarian historiographic re-orientation, that tension continues to mark it. It can be discerned both in the spiteful attitude to the new methodologies and in their superficial appropriation in the historical studies in order to cover the requirements of the new international projects. This engenders some of the cultural patterns of the transitional historiography.

Probably, I thought, the Bulgarian historiographical situation is due to the ambiguous status of academic critique enmeshed in a double symbolic coercion⁶. On the one hand, currently a vision of powerful institution of “special authority centre” is set up (regardless of whether it is officially or tacitly

⁶ Here I can refer to the book reviews published in all Bulgarian historical journals (1948-2000).

recognized due to its bureaucratic or/and scientific positions within the establishment). That vision legitimizes and keeps in the public space of history the “figure of critic”: voicing the establishment’s opinion in a way to perform “special rites” for “excluding from and inclusion in” the Guild of Historians. That voicing urges us on unconscious/conscious auto/censorships of writings, preparing “newcomers” and ourselves to play roles, which are expected of them/us⁷ because of needed “appreciation of” and “recognition for” whose social and cultural functions have been claimed by all well-known theory of social. On the other hand, to be critical stands for idealistic images of freedom of mind and critical independence and for representations deprived of conscious/unconscious intentions for the power’s own sake. But precisely the first setting shapes the Bulgarian history critique as a discourse of power whose functioning corrodes implicitly and explicitly the ideological foundations laid down by the Enlightenment’s conceptions; this corrosion permits every “critical position” to be perceived and explained as a “squaring accounts”, irrespective of the goals of a “criticizing agent”. This allows every “critical position” to be downgraded to doing explicit politics, partisanships or (un)conscious outburst of “wounded vanity” despite of ostentatious manifestation of scholar ethics and implicit idealistic intention of fighting for the sake of science and ethics. This situation further worsened due to the attitude to academic book reviewing and Ph D thesis during the socialist period when the politics was installed in academic life. The absence of sense and scientific values ensued from the tacit recognition of that political play by the historians of the time; the official positions of establishment were a kind of winking at this play of complicity, saying: “Everybody like me knows what this position means!”. In this way the gestures of intellectual cynicism acquired the status of a valued position and expression of freedom. The real attitudes to research production and its politics and strategy were expressed only within the “friends circles” based on family relations and/or professional/career interests. The critical opinion was increasingly confided between the walls of office spaces or/and in *A Room of One’s Own* rather than unleashed on the review sections of the historical journals. The profanation of critical opinion could be seen in the replacement of Bulgarian public debate with the opinions and attitudes to colleague’s works made in colors. There the “thinking” and “talking” references in the mood of “praise” and “spatter” about colleagues’ works aims to include or exclude them from the Guild’s space. The scholarly positions are very rarely articulated in the “discursive catharsis” of the professional critique (setting the utmost limits of the professional discussion), and that is why, perhaps, our generation would bequeath to the next one the same historiographical problems.

⁷ I myself have played a variety of such roles by going personally through different academic promotions, by being supervisor of student M.A. theses, by ending as “soulmate” of many colleagues that needed to confess his experience of those procedures, by directing and participating in different regional and international projects.

I should confess that very often my first attitude to colleague's works is overwhelmed to some degree by all those politics and strategies I spoke on above. Although being aware of that, you may ask: "Why she should involve us in her problems and project her tensions which are worsening her relations with surrounding milieu into our pure intentions of professional historians?", I cannot help asking these questions. How I am involved in critical positions which scarcely could be appreciated as something for the sake of science? How I internalised that to be critical always risks being perceived and performed both as "personal attack" and "squaring accounts" with the "old professors" and the new "networks of interests?" And here, I consciously agree with Janet Hart's reasoning of "autodidacticism with the final product": the writings in some way "propel me toward a consciousness regarding my connection with the world. That world is a place where we at least try, often with mixed results, to comprehend the meaning of personal and collective responsibility. I take the commitment to self-exploration to be fundamental to research..." (Hart, 1996: 10).

But, on the other hand, I neither absolutely share Harts' pessimism (identifying her's to Michel Foucault's bitterness) nor share Foucault's contempt for intellectual autobiography: "Referring to my own personal experience I have the feeling knowledge can't do anything for us and that political power may destroy us. If somebody thinks that my work cannot be understood without reference to such and such part of my life, I accept to consider the question." (Foucault, 1988: 16). And, probably because I have not had Janet Hart's experience marked by the warning generations of American children against "making a spectacle of yourself", I do not "recognize my own discomfort at the potential for spectacle" (Hart, 1996: 9) when I dare open the "room of her own". Saying all that, I do not intend to voice in utopian syntax some position of knowledge purged from politics and career ambitions. I only stand for understanding of my personal responsibility for and involvement with postponing the Bulgarian historiographical debate and for reflecting on stakes of my own and our complicity in it. Here I would refrain from the expected question "Who is to blame?", because all of us are involved in and responsible for. I think again, probably mistakenly, that precisely the suppressing of Bulgarian historiographical debate on "ancestor legacy", on historical schools and their theory and methodology has to do something with the answers to the questions asked in our session.

Moreover, to be a historian is somehow linked up with a specific cultural context marked also by "ancestral relationships" and its ensuing ethics. The links were wonderfully explained by Jörn Rüsen's study on the historians' work (Rüsen, 2001a) in a way to help us to reflect on the "burden of legacy" and on the cultural patterns of historical understanding as well as to assist us to deal with resurfacing of ideologically and politically unconscious; yet these links are rejected or neglected by our historiography as something alien to "the proper work" of a "true historian".

These situations were blocking my capability to reflect on our historiography and my own works, showing at the same time insufficient internalization of the values that I have imagined I was fighting for. I became more and more unable to deal with theoretical problems that I was confronting as a lecturer and researcher. I have not worked out a coping narrative strategy that could relieve me of the “burden of legacy” allowing me to express a really existing inside of me estimation of the “venerable congregation” as a part of my professional identity: they are my teachers indeed⁸. Coping narrative strategy – I used to say – that could help me to bridge the gap between the generations and historical schools as a sure and comfortable way to go on in my own historical research. Because this bridge, let say, even as imagined one, is providing me with an idea of stability (perceived as a land under my feet) and helps me not to feel lost and vulnerable to the inside and outside views (due to solved professional identity crisis through the freedom of debating on history and its theories and their languages, without fear of consequences to own scientific positions and without contemplation on the weight of politics on my own position). This bridge, I do not why, was imagined by me in the sense of *Die Brücke*’s painters of early 1900s as a route to over-going and under-going⁹.

That is why I found a kind of relief in Virginia Woolf’s: “Old stories of old deans and old dons came back to mind, but before I had summoned up courage to whistle – it used to be said that at the sound of a whistle old Professor – instantly broke into a gallop – the venerable congregation had gone inside. The outside of the chapel remained” (Woolf, 2001:6), because I related, absolutely wrongly I know, those impressions to the academic milieu and symbolic space of the University rather than to the physical one.

But, at the same time, I was intuitionally sure it was not what I looked for.

Since in my opinion I couldn’t find a satisfying link between Wendy Bracewell’s and Alex Drace-Francis’s invitation to the Bucharest Workshop and my spontaneous interest towards these particular Woolf’s texts, I abandoned those feminist stories. I left them consciously with a masochist explanation that most probably all that was a purposeful search for a haughty theoretical introduction. Hence, I concentrated on the “dry” historical text. I had decided to talk about my difficulties in overcoming the “structuralist in me” and about my

⁸ How much I am indebted to Professor Margarita Tacheva and Professor Tsvetana Gueorgieva, to the late Professor Milcho Lalkov, all of Sofia University! I would never succeed in expressing that, despite of my articles dedicated to the late Prof. Lalkov, of my research done specially to contribute to the Miscellanies in honor to the great ladies of Bulgarian History. Due to that I would want to state here: “thank you for all I have learnt from you; without you I would have felt like an orphan. I am especially grateful for your essential lessons not be afraid of being different and of paying the price for that, for your bequest to encourage professionally the opinion of the differing other in the name of the otherness as a cultural pre-condition of an independent mind.”

⁹ I appropriated in this way the ideas of the Manifesto of the artists’ group in Dresden that called themselves *Die Brücke* in allusion to a metaphor in Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-1885): “What is great in Man is that he is a bridge and not a goal; what is lovable in Man is that he is an over-going and an under-going...” (Wolf, 2003: 23).

painful transition to the phenomenological history, working with the experience that interested me. I thought to match my own defeats with events from the Bulgarian historiography and its inability to overcome the Marxism and neo-Marxism, displayed in the new postcommunist historical élite's attempt to rewrite the "Marxist" textbooks in Bulgarian history through the research methods of the contemporary world historiography. Reflections through which I looked for answering negatively to the one of questions of our section: "Why the complex theory has not emerged since the discrediting of Marxist historical schemes in our historian's milieu?" I had read with a great interest all really emblematic Bulgarian historic books of the transition period (from traditional political/event history to social, mentality and cultural one).

I was trying to reflect on the links between the lack of theories, inner exhausting of historical materialism and the suppression of our Bulgarian historiographical debate. This caused, I was convinced, the resistance of both "Orthodox" Marxism and neo-Marxist western structuralism of 1960s-1980s in our contemporary history-making. Despite of our explicit and implicit effort to part with them as methodological research approach, nobody reached the methodological point permitting our divorce with (neo)Marxism and "old social History" of Jürgen Kocka and Hans-Ulrich Wehler: phenomenology and its research devices, or, at least, "rebellion" of the new German school in the history of everyday life nicely argued by Alfred Lüdtke (Lüdtke 1995). All those ideas were clarified but not sufficiently systematized for being presented for 15 minutes, and as usually in the cases of conferences, I promised to myself that I would rework my paper either during the flight or the night before its presentation.

During the discussions, however, something both pleasant and unpleasant happened to me – suddenly, I realized why I was hypnotically attracted to this "feminist essay" through the coming back of one of my traumatic memories that I had deeply suppressed. As we discussed the difficult financial situation of the Balkan historian and the influence of this over the contemporary science of history, a phrase jumped into my consciousness, and to my surprise in decent English: "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf, 2001:2). I understood that what I searched for was exactly this wonderful impression of woman necessities when they have to write – her own psychical space where one can be with herself, releasing fears, anguishes, frustrations and looking for her specific language of expression, guaranteed physic by her own room and money. In other words, to be free, at least for a while, from powerful outside and inside view controlling on her performance, trying to escape from it in order to reflect in her own dependencies on "rules of play", limits of independences from them and their prices to pay... I.e. to be angry, anguished, spiteful and reflecting why?

Of course, it does not mean to go too far, over limits that tamed our aggression and where the process of civilization is mirrored, according to Norbert Elias. It means only to problematize thus constructed relationships of

desired freedom of mind and critical independence (remaining always as intention foreign to the aggression and partisanship) with the building of artistic female self-confidence. It means only to reflect on the validity of those relations and their “psychological and physical (pre)conditions” to the process of professionalization of our generation. Problematization and thematization refer to the situations making, for example, the Frida Kahlo’s spontaneous excitement so intimate to female biographical experience of our époque: “I kept about twenty-eight paintings hidden. While I was on the roof terrace with Mrs. Robinson, Diego showed him my paintings and Robinson bought four of them from me at 200\$ each.” For me it was such a surprise that I marveled and said: “This way I am going to be able to be free, I’ll be to travel and do what I want without asking Diego for money” (Herrera, 1989: 226). Despite conscious keeping away from tantalizing swarm of questions on close relationships between “the room of her own”, the desire to travel and women’s emancipation, I am tempted to refer once again to Frida’s life experience: “After that (traveling in the broadest sense of the word – S.D.) – Frida Kahlo had gained self-confidence and financial and sexual independence and was recognized artist” (Herrera 1989: 226). Experience that fed to this obsessive image of allowing luxury of “room of her own” from where “she” will return as a self-confident professional woman.

And, exactly these deep needs to have “a room of her own” in order to legitimate the “right” of its existence were touched and disquieted by the invitation to speak on my own experience. Legitimizing, which, in my mind, somehow is confined to talk on possibility to make room for reflexive history similar to the reflexive anthropology, sociology and so on, and to bridge the gap between poetics, philosophy and history, fantastically claimed by Jörn Rüsen and categorically rejected by Bulgarian historians. But those relationships, I mentioned above, were founded on my painful personal history of identity crisis. Eight years ago I met Janja Jerkov, professor at “Sapienza”, First Rome University, who graduated in History but afterwards shifted to literature; she has been frequenting Lacan and Freud psychoanalytic seminars for 10 years. After some months of wonderfully spent time in professional discussions and autobiography analysis, I proposed to open one section in our journal “Balkanistic Forum”, called “A room of One’s Own” where we would have published the reflexive autobiographies of women concerning their academic career. I asked her to do the first one and she did, but I did not. Coming back to Bulgaria, I lost my self-confidence built during our conversations and did not dare to propose all that to my colleagues for I felt and perceived that the academical context would not allow that (1995). For that reason I did something that fitted very well in the historiographical policy at the time. I initiated the section designed as “Our interview” by printing a dialogue with Professor Francesco Guida. Or, instead of self-portraying a woman whose research corresponds to the French school of history of mentality and Lacanian textual analysis and has, in some way, been bridging the gap between literature and history, I presented a man, a well-known in Bulgarian academic milieu

Balkanist historian with his books that could be included in so called “new political history of the Balkans”. In this time our journal, essentially, provided space for the implementation of Oral History and historical anthropology of the Austrian school and kept on making history through the issues “where” the social is not a function of the political, and the political is not marginalized and euphemistically dissolved by the social. The images of my weakness, lack of self-confidence in my research interests and theoretical position, incapability to orientate in making academic policy drove me to the bitter questions about my identity as a professional historian. Of, course, successful start of “Our interview” and its prodigious continuation, settled my career into a somewhat calmer routine as well as Janja Jerkov’s comprehension – she never asked me about the destiny of her text – allowed me to cover with silence this problem and thus helped me to overcome this critical situation at the beginning of my professional life.

How I was affected by it, I realized during my experience with this Workshop (for the first time I was asked to speak and reflect on my own professional career as a part of serious scholar discussion) when the painful feelings and traumatic images exploded in my face. They were now returning under the corroding questions, which I did not ask myself eight years ago because of my professional and personal immaturity. These search and problematize our dependencies on the politics and the career pursuits, on the nature of our characters and on the traps of our biographical illusion; the questions that attempt to thematize the price we are ready to pay for being “a rebel”, the impetus to do that: fashion, selfishness, money, interests, specificity of character, academic values...? This problematizing seeks to release all tensions in order not to be consciously aggressive and spiteful towards the “old authority” and the “newly establishing academic elite”, even in a “room of my own”. Or, discovering one’s own ego history – making we can transform “I” – “a convenient term for somebody who has no real being” (in Woolf’s wording) – into “one’s self – professional woman”. Absorbed by this experience and its obsessed images due to the atmosphere and talks during first four days of the Workshop, I rethought and rewrote my paper the night before its presentation and it took the following form and content.

2. WOMEN AND FICTION-HISTORY, but no more...¹⁰

“Why did men drink wine and women water? Why was one sex so prosperous and the other so poor?” (Woolf, 2001: 20). Probably, those questions will provoke a lot of laughs in some societies, probably they could be relevant to the other ones and will encourage us to rethink our contemporary historiographical situation in the gender perspective. But, here, I would like to reword Woolf’s question “what effect has poverty on fiction?” in “what effect has

¹⁰ Woolf, 2001: 20.

poverty of theory on history, in the Bulgarian case?”. In searching for its answers, let me start by Voltaire’s motto: “When reading history it is but the only business of a healthy mind to refute it” (Voltaire: 427). Please, do the same with my paper, because I will be telling you anti-stories trying to talk on theory of history and its close relation to the fiction. And thus I intend to answer to Alex Drace-Francis’ first question: “Have any complex theories emerged since the discrediting of the Marxist historical schemes?” I think the very title of my paper responds negatively to it. “No, Alex, no complex theory has emerged in our historians’ milieu, created by us, the historians, because we do not like to deal with theories!” These are still perceived as something alien to our “proper Historian’s craft”. We are still waiting to be provided with theories from “outside”, either by sociologists or by philosophers – and this only if we get trapped in the research situation which requires it (often it is due to the application forms for fellowship and projects funded by western institutions where the theoretical approach and devices are demanded; only in some cases it is provoked by the need to deal with the avalanche of sources. More often we are spiteful about developing theory that is thought to be useless and unserious work which can only distract us from our true craft in the archives. We are still trying not to worsen the real work of a historian aimed to discover the truth through objectivity, impartiality and scholar virtues proclaimed as normative structure of history and guaranteed by its privilege to deal with archives (until today thought as a place where the Truth is kept). We still avoid the discussion about what stands for our interests to that and not to the other archives, documents. We still consciously prevent ourselves from disputing the background that directs our research policy and strategy (individual and collective). The theorizing is considered as a speculation proper to the ideological disciplines, and the history rarely is thought as such in our own milieu. The theory is seen as something that can blur the lens of our objectivity. Or, even if we are convinced in the helpfulness of the theory of history in order to be objective in the sense of Paul Ricoeur (following specific methodology and theory as an access to the research), we hand this work over to our colleagues from the departments of social sciences. We still avoid the question about the nature of historical narration or, at least, we evade to deal with it as a “process of making sense of the experienced time” (Rüsen, 1993: 4) bringing “philosophy and linguistics much near than usual to historical studies” (Rüsen, 1993: 3). We still do not stand for the critical discourse in Rüsen’s sense, i.e. that is the discourse, which is “based on people’s ability to say no to traditions, rules and principles which have been handed down to them. This ‘no’ stands before each intended alteration of cultural patterns of historical understanding. It opens up the space for new patterns” (Rüsen, 1993: 8). Why actually we do all that? “Because of the effects of poverty of theory on history”, I will answer.

First, we used to explain our attitudes by Marxism and its philosophy of history – the historical materialism imposed to our discipline from outside as a theoretical and methodological approach. This violence was experienced as a

trauma corroding our relations with philosophy of history. It made our relationship with theory an ideological one. It was thought by historians only as a negative act of introducing principle of class struggle in the research studies thus hindering the way to the historical truth. The truth search was supposed to be an ideal intention purged *a priori* from politics and ideology. I do not deal here with history works written for the sake of party history by introducing consciously the pure ideology whose topic, dictionary and style used to echo the communist propaganda in a way to profane the critical potential of the Marxist science and the work of historian.

For example, the same best historians of 1970s-1980s that were linked politically and ideologically with the socialist/communist establishment used the trends of the "April Spring" to rewrite the history in reformist-communist manner; they introduced the "national history" that was implicitly opposed to the international one. Even those 1970s-1980s historians from establishment whose names, to certain extent, could be cited in positive way as Marxist ones were convinced that their books on Bulgarian political and social-economical history were in the pursuit of "truth itself" based on scrutiny of archives that had nothing to do with the pure ideology and politics. That socialist era's tacit compromise and consensus among the historians' guild on history-making ensured that in the following years of transition period the image of the best representatives of this generation could be legitimately revealed in the figure: "nevertheless, he/she was a good historian". To illustrate this point one could open the recently published memoirs of a prominent Bulgarian writer, himself an offspring of a bourgeois elite family, yet making a successful career during the reformist period: "Nobody could doubt the professor's ideological devotion to Marxism, however he was a decent historian" (Danailov, 2002: 629). This figure kept on in the public space of history the idea of separateness of the scholarly and political biography of the historian of communist period.

The younger historians of 1980s, not (directly) linked with the establishment, considered that Marxism was closely entangled with the communist party's ideological history with its wooden language of propaganda. Hence, they tried to escape from the direct impulses of Marxism by focusing on topics of ancient history, on Bulgarian political, cultural and social history. The "perestroika elite" was recruited also from younger representatives of this 1980s generation performing historian's craft. They rewrote and rethought party history, history of socialism and communist politics by appropriating the perestroika approach to the past. The young historians' elite relaxed its tensions with "older ones" and with inadequate internal and external government policy. Echoing the perestroika values in late 1980s and early 1990s they were convinced that had purged their historical works from party pressure and ideological influence. They stood for the image of "Historical Truth" that will fill the "blank spots in historical knowledge" left by the ideological (auto) censorship. Consequently, they demanded a free and unhindered access to the archives as a first and all important step towards the "Absolute Truth". Like the

previous reformist-communist generation, they somehow linked the commitment to the pursuit of Truth to the hours spent in the archives and the number of cited archival documents. They shared the idea that the true historian's work aims at nothing but at discovering the truth through objectivity and impartiality, guaranteed by its privilege to deal with the institutionalized archives. To certain degree, the perestrojka historians claimed that the objectivity and impartiality are also a moral position of a historian's craft; the ethics that could be filtered through "honest dealing with archives and sources" (the expression used and bearing pedestrian rather than philosophical connotations). Thus they maintained in the public space of history the argument that the scholar character of our craft springs from the privilege to have the access to the truth of our past. Thus in the public space of history the ideas about specificity of historian's craft were constructed. They stood by the image of positive history, associated with rigorous archive research or erudite antiquity sources processing as the most trusted way to escape from ideological pressure on historian's work (somehow separated from the political and ideological links of author) and to achieve a historical truth. Precisely this emphasis on thorough labouring of archives/sources laid down the measures for assessing the work of 1980s and early 1990s historians, which in 1990s strained the relations with other historical paradigms. (I will not deal here with the use of these measures for "squaring accounts" with academic enemies within the same milieu of established historians). The historical élite continued to consider the political/event history as a major task of the historian and thus it made difficult to rewrite or rethink history in tune with other history schools such as *Annales*, the social history and so on. The term "Oral History" was a kind of a "dirty word" that had nothing to do with the true history. In an ironic turn several representatives of that generation switched nowadays to making autobiographical interviews thus including themselves in international projects researching the communist period. Thus the 1980s consensus on the criteria for a true historian continued to pervade the profession and to marginalize the burgeoning endeavours for discussion on the ideological, political and cultural content of our scientific interests and on the particular types of archives in use. A debate on the context and its role in history writing was once again suppressed as were any attempts to reveal the role of the ideological and political unconsciousness in our work.

The structure of almost all 1980s history books was thought to have been done in agreement with this attitude countering the influence of ideology. The theory was confined to the introduction within several phrases and terms, often quotations of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Bulgarian influential party leaders on the respective issue while the "real historian's work" – done in archives and telling the real truth about our past – remained foreign to the ideology. That is why plenty of books on political history and on Bulgarian nation-building (with revised or unrevised introductions) were reprinted as relevant and valued historical works during the period of transition. (Here do not discuss in the republication of the best books on Antiquity and Medieval History.) The

republished books were explicitly thought and perceived as a “detached study” based on documentary archival scrutiny and supposed to be ideologically free and alien to passions and sentimentality of the bourgeois predecessors (1878-1944) – positions so dear to the 1980s Bulgarian historians and their alumni. (To a certain extent this feverish work of printing houses was a response to the boom of republished memoirs – and scholar studies in some cases – of the interwar generation).

The Bulgarian historian of 1980s rarely claimed him/herself to be a Marxist one. Adversely, the distance with Marxism was underlined; the positive history and work with archives were solid channel of achieving historical truth and as a preventive defense against possible profaning influence of ideology on historian’s work (somehow separated from the political and ideological links of the author) Believing in this achievement became their symbolic capital. I remember nice moments when as a student at history faculty of Sofia University, I used to admire the verbal art of my best teachers to play with Marxist terminology. They were making ironical remarks on “class struggle”, on “socialist progress”, and “on proletarian culture” acquainting us with “bourgeois Bulgarian” and contemporary European historiography. At first glance their lectures had nothing to do with Marxism and in some way their historical interpretations clashed with our studies of dialectical and historical materialism in the formal classes in so called “Scientific Communism”; and I believed they told me the historical truth perceived as a highest scientific value. After years, when I started to analyze their texts professionally through the techniques of discursive analysis I was astonished to discover implicit historical materialism: I came upon the Marxist scheme of interpretation that regards the societal development as a relation between the base and the superstructure and that retells the past through the concept of linear time of progress. I was astonished to discover a kind of crypto-communism and some manifestations of ideological unconsciousness anti-European ideology of reformist-communist discourse in the studies of European perceptions on the Balkans. Both, they reproduced to certain extent either the appropriated neo-Marxist western structuralism of 1960s-1980s (despite their formal distance from this approach) or the historical materialism.

Leaving aside the artificiality or impossibility of thus performed ambiguity of historical works of 1980s, to which I will come back soon, let’s ask: “what effect has poverty of theory on history?” By refraining from using Marxism proper as theoretical approach, i.e. to deal with it in the way of their colleagues, western Marxist historians, Bulgarian reformist-communist establishment split history from theory and thus hindered the route to reflexive history and to the social history in the western Marxist traditions. This impoverishment has been felt by the generation of transition trying to shift to social history – it lacked the terms, themes as well as knowledge on western “purifying” 1970s-1980s debates on social theory and history research. This generation refrained from theories and left some vacuum of debating values and norms. By and large it

continued to appropriate positivism and to believe in objectivity as a normativeness of history. Precisely the lack of theories and hostility to them produced the internalization of Marxist scheme of economic structure and ideological superstructure that unconsciously plotted the historical narratives making room for the ideological premises and assumptions. The best researches on ethnology and national and political history, including Bulgarian historiography in the best traditions of *histoire événementielle* and approaching it to Braudel's school, Levi Strausse's structuralism and so on, have proved that to the different extent.

The reformist-communist historian élite achieved the re-differentiation of the national topic as an autonomous identification resource. They constructed historical narratives articulating the key idea "of the authors and their readers" about their continuity in time and space: the efforts of the Bulgarians to emancipate Bulgarian *ethnos* as a separate "national body" within the historically attested borders in the Balkan cultural/political space. Thus three narrations emerged that began implicitly or explicitly to structure almost every historical discourse at the time: historical materialism, on party ideology, and on national narration. Though related and being in mutual interference, each one had its own inner logic and interpretative scheme. On the one hand, the historical materialist narration frequently referred to the notion of "Bulgarian society" designed as a framework of social relationships. On the other hand, the national narration made an extensive use of the symbol of "land": liberation and unification of the lands forcefully taken away from Bulgaria; herein a "land" did not imply territory but *ethnos*; Bulgarian lands were defined as predominantly Bulgarian populated ones; their unification within national state was postulated as a *thelos* of Bulgarian historical time. Thus the two narrations coincided in certain points, but the historical-materialist line played the crucial role as a major cause of national development: neither the accumulated ethnic strains, nor the people's dreams, nor certain traditions, cultural or educational ones, but precisely "the growth of capitalism", "the national markets" and so on laid ground to the Bulgarian national renaissance. The emphasis was placed on the events following from the objective laws governing the society's evolution – an approach typical for the historical-materialistic narrative. The modernization ideologies were engrained here: the development of modernity was connected with such undoubtedly capitalistic phenomena as the initial capital accumulation, the bankruptcy of small owners, the aggravation of class conflicts. At the same time when the emphasis was laid upon specific given moments it tended to evolve within the context of the national narration (Boundzhilov et al., 1995).

The historical-materialist narration told the history of Bulgaria as a playground of the grand collision between backwardness and progress, as an offshoot of the worldwide processes. The national narrative told the history of Bulgaria, its tragic destiny, the story of its loss, of its calamities and failures, of the conquered. The historical materialist narrative imposed optimism on the reader whereas the national narrative put forward the question "who is to

blame?” The ideological layer of the normative official memory – the Marxist philosophy of history – reproduced the normative scheme of the positive historical science – scientism, objectivity, and impartiality. Some appropriation of the Braudel’s structuralist approach could be discerned in the emphasis on the structures that had supposedly preserved the Bulgarian nationality – organization of family economy, the cultures through which the space was mastered, the religion and community patterns. The prominent place among them was attributed to the unofficial folk culture that was free from the restraint of the foreign official norms during the long ages of Ottoman rule. It was represented in the figure: “stimulating element that freed the creative energy of the people”. Thus despite of ostentatious resistance of historians to theory and philosophy of history and their demonstrated distance from Marx, the latter’s philosophy of history did serve as an ideological layer of normative official memory and influenced to a substantial extent the development of historiography of the time.

How deeply this normative structure (scientism, objectivity, and impartiality of positive history) had been internalized to the different degrees by us, Bulgarian historians, could be seen in the attempt of rewriting the 1980s history textbooks by the transitional generation of the 1990s. The Bulgarian historiographical situation reconfirmed Rüsen’s conception about historical narrative and its capacity to “establish the identity of its authors and listeners”, persuading the listeners of their own permanence and stability in the temporal change of their world and of themselves (Rüsen, 1993: 5).

The analysis of both the 1990s history curricula and the Bulgarian History textbooks of the transitional period reveals that history continues to be charged with function to resolve the crisis of national identity (by forming the key idea “of the authors and their readers” about their continuity in time and space). It is still supposed to provide the chief legitimizing source of the political elites’ current power. The “hidden ideological program” of the official Bulgarian curricula (1992-2000) required from the historical narrative, in Rüsen’s wording, to guide “the temporal change of humans and world, to which the listeners must accordingly adjust their lives in order to cope with the challenging alternations of time” (Rüsen, 1993: 7).

Since the official historical discourse was unavoidably bound up with new visions of identification with “Europe” and with the universal notions of parliamentary democracy, market economy and welfare society, the post-communist textbook was expected to provide historical resources legitimizing this transition and giving an European identity to the Bulgarian past. The privileged political history of the previous reformist-communist élite had to be challenged for its 1980s textbook’s images of otherness that became unacceptable in the new transition period: negative vision of the Other, non-Slavic and Western capitalist Europe; elevated figure of Russia-Soviet Union as “natural ally then and now”. The 1980s representations of “foreign or enemy Western/Capitalist/Latin/Catholic world” were in sharp conflict with the trends of the new geopolitical perspective: the symbolic identification with “Europe”, a

vision which emphasized the “universal” rather than the national identification (Grekova et al., 1997).

This was supposed to be accomplished by the historiographical transition to social history and its two essential themes, everyday life and modernization. By introducing the social history the new textbooks sought to marginalize the traditional event history that privileged the political élites’ perspective from above. By using the new venues of everyday history the schoolbook of 1990s was supposed to produce new historical sources to national identity able to weaken the value-normative power of political history narrative that set up the negative identity of the “Europe and European” and over-emphasized the ethnic sign of the Bulgarian (uniqueness of language, traditions, culture, past...) in a way to confront it and exclude it from the European space. The social history, articulated by the stories of everyday life and modernization, was expected to legitimize the civic society and market economy by emphasizing the civic layers of national identity and suppressing the ethnic ones. This new history was seen as a narrative re-appreciating such European social and political institutions as family, education, parliament, constitution, government. All these structures, it was demonstrated, had contributed to the advancement of the Bulgarian nationhood and its progress.

Hence, the textbook writing was charged with tensions that reflected the crisis of the respective author. These crises were caused by the conflict of the interpretive scheme of the implicit educational program with the historical discourse with which the respective author identified himself. The major layer of their identity discourse was the national narration of the reformist-communist generation: it appropriates the Bulgarian through its ethnic structures – language, family, religion. The only new trend is the shifting from Marxism, from its scheme of structure – superstructure with its proper language, to the 1960s-1970s western structuralism: to think the social through Braudel’s agents of progress.

In this way the 1990s textbooks fell victims of the basic deficiency of our own historiography: the non-realised theoretical debate left room for unconscious continuation of the old ideological and paradigmatical practices of history-making.

Although removed and suppressed from the textbook content on the explicit level, the Marxist schemes on the social-economic formations and the figures of anti-European pathos and ethnic nationalism returned on the implicit level. The mechanisms, described by Freud as pushing away, suppressing and return of the layers of the collective non-conscious, are likely to have worked here. The avoidance of normative pressure of the educational program, the returning and filtering of the collective unconscious in the implicit content of some narratives, the resistance of the older patterns of history-making were repeated in the textbooks in Bulgarian history that dominated the Bulgarian school in 1990s.

The new textbooks resulted from and displayed the weak points of the Bulgarian historiographic situation during the transition. The unveiling of the iron curtain in the historiography did not open a Bulgarian debate on the

reception of the historical science and of the theoretical orientations and scholar achievements of the Bulgarian and West-European researchers. For that reason the enlightening levels of the new conceptual terminology are still not revealed, nor a consensus is reached on its use in history writing. Instead of this, the Bulgarian historiography often assimilates rather mechanically theoretical models on the political modernization or on the structuralism. It stops its terminological development with the 1960s-1980s European historiography.

Continuing to say “no” to the theory of history we still live under the deficit of methodological devices of archive work. Many archives, especially those of social history, remain closed due to our inaptitude to approach them. While trying to shift to social history we often face questions we are unable to answer, and then we transfer this responsibility to the sociologists.¹¹ Essentially, the clues to those research problems lie in the silenced unopened documents in the national, regional and private archives, in fiction, in films and so on. Probably in order to end this silence we must open avenues to the interdisciplinarity in historian’s craft, we must liberate ourselves from our own fears and prejudices. Trying to answer the questions “What is a historical narration? How we are constructing our stories?” (Sâbeva, 1999), we will realise how close we are to the poetics and fiction.

By crossing the invisible limits of our work, hitherto drawn by the different inside and outside pressures, we could more freely analyse the different levels of dependencies and hidden ideologies in our historical work. We could make an idea of how the society is functioning. Probably if we reflect on our work of Balkan historians we would be able to come to terms with our traumas caused by the feelings of political and ideological pressures upon our work, by the images of colonisation and by metaphors of self-colonisation; we will open doors for newly arising theories on our societies (Rüsen, 2002b). We will come closer to the reflexive history: to the understanding “the form, in which the historic science considers its reasons”, and to achievement of the kinds of open historical narration, in which “the histories are told in way that the addressee has the chance to agree or not with them” (Rüsen, 1998).

However, all these processes are still unrealised, and this substantially facilitates the deep internalization and maintenance of the 1980s reformist-communist discourse that preserves the ethnic and prepares the ground to the turn to Levi-Strauss or Braudel’s structuralist approach narrating everyday life.

In these circumstances, the only way to come to terms with Marx and to settle the historian craft’s relations with him is to open the door to reflexive history and make 1980s historiography a serious subject of its research. Thus we could say: “Goodbye, Marx! Goodbye, reformist communism of 1980s!”, in the same reflexive but less nostalgic manner of the German film “Goodbye, Lenin!” After that, we might bequeath a more relaxed history than the one we inherited from 1980s.

¹¹ For example see the newly published very interesting and scrupulously written book on Bulgarian woman and their education (Nazarska, 2003).

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