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(bilingual - in Bulgarian and English)

REPRESENTATIONS OF MODERNITY – CASES FROM THE BALKANS UNTIL THE FIRST WORLD WAR DIFFICULTIES IN HISTORICIZING/ CONTEXTUALIZING*

General ideas – Introduction

Representations of modernity(ies) in relation to ideas of modernity and urban culture have been the subject of intense discussion over the last two decades. It is my belief that the articulation of visual representations of modernity is one way to historicize modern art in the Balkans. This work focuses on the difficulties of historicizing/describing/interpreting the concrete images which are created and function under the specific conditions of this region among other images that represent (West) European “modernity”. In his article on **modernism**, Charles Harrison¹ acknowledges the contradiction in the concept of modernism from the point of view of the contemporary post-modern situation. This contradictory concept relates to the questions of whether modernism manifests itself as realism, to what degree works of art in the modern epoch are linked to human existence, and whether modernism can be reduced to certain formal qualities. In my opinion, we can describe the state of the modern mind through certain choices and expressive properties in art.

This research represents an attempt to problematize the relation between the adoption of European modernity as a cultural model in Bulgaria and Romania after the foundation of independent states and the assimilation/practice of different modernisms. The discussion on modernisms goes beyond the frame of form and style to present

* The author was a New Europe College Fellow within the Regional Program of the academic year of 2003-4.

relationships with the modernization of society, representations of ideas of modern man, urban life, nature, modern polygraphy, etc.

Difficulties of historicizing the local and the marginal through representations of ideas on modernity are a challenging topic, the importance of which goes beyond the local context. Discussing the connection of artistic phenomena in Bulgaria, Romania, the Balkans with the European narrative, and, at the same time, the impossibility of their being completely integrated into it, seems to be important for any a-central² position. A history of notions would take us far beyond the scope of this study. My intention is only to provide reference points for the use of the notions that appear in this text.

According to the article entitled *Modernism in Encyclopaedia Universalis*,³ the notion of “modernism” came into use in Italy to designate a phenomenon concerning Catholicism. In the following years it came to designate phenomena in social life, science, and culture. In what is relevant to our study – the visual arts of the twentieth century – artistic value in its autonomy was imposed as the only relevant value for a work of art according to the modernist concept. My statement, based on a contemporary determination for multiple (art) histories, affirms that multiple modernisms describe a specific connection of artistic endeavor with human existence in the differing conditions of the modern world. In the case of Bulgaria and Romania, it was my intention to bring to light a multi-disciplinary area between the study of concrete representations and the context of artistic practices.

Western European modernisms were related to industrial and urban development. In his article *The Premises of Modern Art*, Stephen Bann⁴ defends the theory that the institutional character of French artistic practice laid the foundations of the modernist initiative. Also worthy of mention and important in this approach is the study by Nigel Blake and Francis Frascina⁵ on the relationships between modern practices and modernism in the French painting of the nineteenth century. The purpose of this study of art in Bulgaria and Romania and the Balkans is to discuss the interdependencies of the ideas on modern times following European models and the appropriation/manifestation of multiple modernisms. Of equal interest are the conditions whereby the borderline becomes extinct between the so-called fine arts (in the Salons and Museums) and artistic activities in urban space.

If we imagine an art museum⁶ exhibiting modern Balkan painting, the first rooms would be devoted to the nineteenth century. They would

show sequences of images of modern city people, wealthy merchants, politicians, scholars with various objects (maps, globes, geometrical tools), writers, men and women reading, children studying, etc. – and not to forget military men (there are various examples of military men in Greek, Serbian, and Romanian painting, as well many important, though less numerous examples in the Bulgarian painting of the second half of the nineteenth century). At times simultaneously with the images described above, though mainly two or three decades later, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, *fin de siècle* town interiors, objects and clothes influenced by European fashion, boulevards and trams, café and theatre scenes also began to appear. The landscapes and plein-air scenes of the time, in their turn, reveal city people's new attitudes toward nature.

It seems to me that walking through the rooms of this imaginary museum devoted to the nineteenth and early twentieth century would be similar to walking through seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century (West) European imagery: from representations of seventeenth-century Dutch painting and the (French, German and Russian) Enlightenment to the age of impressionism, photography, and symbolism. However, the specificities concern not only the division into periods, which are difficult to establish, but also subjects and manners. Social issues, related to the big cities and industrial work; modern buildings and vehicles (factories, bridges, trains); the alienation of the individual in terms of work and social life and the estrangement of society in respect of nature, etc. – all these for the most part appeared in this Balkan collection of images after the First World War. It was again in this period that non-representational works of art, abstract forms related to different theories of perception, came to the fore. After the war this kind of representation and artistic practice, comparatively speaking, became part of and itself created a different context.

I made similar observations to these in my earlier NEC application project. In Bucharest, visiting the National Art Museum of Romania, I discovered that the real experience of this museum was not dissimilar to that of my hypothetical museum for Balkan modern art up until the start of the twentieth century. When facing these works of art, certain situational questions arise:

How should we discuss the eclectic representational conventions and suggestive properties of form related to Balkan modernity? Which works of modernism(s) in the Balkans can we use in an inquiry into the local

condition of modernity? Is the relationship between representational modernity and modernism in the Balkans similar to that in the large (West) European centers (urban, cultural, economic)?

Before looking more closely at concrete images in museums in Sofia and Bucharest, I would like to outline two more general questions that merit the devotion of a seminar in their own right:

What is representation? What does representational modernity mean in the Balkans?

As far as **the notion of representation** is concerned, the most important elements are probably the intuitions as to the range of what can be represented. According to an article by Richard Wollheim and Antonia Phillips,⁷ we can have representations of objects and representations of events. These can be real or fictitious (mythological, literary, etc.). But can we speak here of “representations of modernity”?

Representations of the fictitious can illustrate a pre-existing narrative/description. However, a picture/image is also able to bring fiction into existence by representing an object or event. In my case, the image is able to bring into existence the idea of modernity; that is, the modernity can be “produced” in artistic representation. It is my belief that every consideration on representational modernity which follows Baudelaire’s *The painter of Modern Life* began with this text.⁸ According to Baudelaire, the artist “is looking for that quality which you must allow me to call ‘modernity’ [...] He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distil the eternal from the transitory”, implying that only artists, poets, and writers have the means – metaphors, suggestive properties – to transform these fugitive elements into “modernity”, as if “modernity” could be observed/discussed only in representations. With the rapid development of photography and mechanical reproduction, the increasing circulation of images has influenced our ideas and perceptions in a powerful way.

To these I would like to add another range of intuitions: certain concepts and ideas, such as the idea of “modernity”, could be represented through visual conventions as well as expressed through different properties (color, light, line, etc.). To what extent is representation a conventional or expressive matter? This is a question that should be raised in every specific case. Another important question asks from what position are representations seen to be related to modernity – from that of artistic intentions, the contemporary viewer’s/consumer’s expectations or from my position as a present-day interpreter? In keeping with Richard

Wollheim, I accept that as far as the artist is concerned, he or she operates at the intersection of more than one intention. In this open relationship, the spectator – whether present-day or contemporary with the artist – is expected to be able to interpret or structure the work of art in more ways than one according to the principle of freedom of perception and understanding. “But this freedom is acceptable only if it is not gained at the expense of the artist: it must, therefore, be congruent with some requirements of his.”⁹

In another study, representations are associated with entities, such as genres (portrait, interior, cityscape, etc.), pictorial style (neo-classicism, romanticism, impressionism, etc.) or national artistic schools (Bulgarian, Romanian). In my perspective, these can be associated with representations, first and foremost with the idea of modernity. From the position of the artists, they were initially conceived as portraits of someone or land- or cityscapes of some place. However, I am convinced that one of the artistic intentions was also to represent the idea of modernity, to express a particular attitude to their present experience as an experience of modernity. And the only arguments I have to support my conviction are representational conventions and expressive properties, examined in a comparative way. Here, I would like to refer to Karl Popper’s famous article on historical interpretation, and make the point that interpretative approaches and points of view in the humanities, unlike those in the exact sciences, cannot be tested.¹⁰

In general, the artist should not be interested in rules that allow him/her to construct works unambiguously correlated with one “meaning”. Ideas and perceptions are influenced through the fusion and condensation of rules and evocations.

The term **“modernity”** in this research has a situational meaning. That means it is applied to specific representations in a concrete context and defined only contextually and in comparison. The transitory and situational, contextually changing consistency of representational “modernity” is the main subject of my inquiry into cases from the Balkans.

1. Cases and conventions of early representational modernity: modern men, modern women

Symbolic systems containing rules and conventions clearly extend the scope of representation, but this does not imply that representation is fundamentally conventional. The artist’s/spectator’s perception also plays

a role. Let us look more closely at a number of concrete images, as in the following scenario:

I walk into the National Art Museum of Romania, in Bucharest. Let us imagine that I know next to nothing (isn't that possible?) about the history of representation or the interest in pictorial representation which this place embodies. What kind of ideas can I get from the images I see?

In the first room I see mostly portraits – men, women, families – in traditional or European dress from the early nineteenth century. Most of the people portrayed regard me with self-confidence.

In one family portrait, the man/father is represented in traditional costume and decorated with medals; the son is in a military costume and bears a sword; the woman/mother and daughter both wear fashionable dresses and sport lavish jewelry. In her left hand, the mother is holding a letter (probably a family visiting card). The young woman is playing the piano – she has to appear well educated. The solid and self-confident air of the man speaks of his fortune and social status. A small white-and-brown dog, lying at the feet of the father and son is staring straight ahead. This is *The family of the Minister of the Interior Alecsandri*. The Young Vasile Alecsandri¹¹ is represented in family surroundings between his mother, father, and sister. The year is 1837.

In the same room I find another portrait, from 1841: a portrait of the minister of the interior Theodor Burada in European costume and without insignia.¹² Costume and posture play an important role in the representation of the idea of modern man/woman. The duality I referred to above was described in many of its aspects, but also in this particular aspect by Lucian Boia:

Iconography offers us some amusing images – in the salons of the day, men of more mature years, faithful to the Oriental mode of dress, appear alongside younger men and women of all ages dressed in 'European' style.¹³

With its two groups of figures, and with the father-son group slightly to the center, the portrait of *The family of Alecsandri* reminds me of eighteenth-century representations, the neo-classical clarity and unity of eighteenth-century portrait composition. Everyone in the portrait is staring straight ahead, so their faces can be clearly seen; they do not seem to be seeking contact with the spectator, but are, rather, confined in their own space. The space of the interior is defined by a pedestal with the base of

a large column on it, and creates the impression of solid architectural construction. Rich drapery cascades down the pedestal and the column. All sorts of insignia and accessories are also to be found in European (French, Italian, etc.) neo-classical portraits. The dog – a symbol of loyalty, independence, and prosperity – is also present in West European portrait tradition, though it is not so typical in the neo-classical one. Not only the iconography (the mixture of costumes and other elements), but also the stylistic features convey in this and similar paintings the impression of confusion. The recognizable neo-classical components are combined with stylistic properties of an early stage of academic painting and even remind me of the semi-primitive Russian “parsuna”.

The portrait of Theodor Burada is very different – unimpeded by attributes and insignia, the spectator’s attention concentrates on the face and posture. The painting shares the characteristics of the nineteenth-century psychological portrait.

* * *

The author of the family portrait described above is Niccolo Livaditti, and the author of the male portrait is Giovanni Schiavoni. Both names are foreign. I look around to see the names of other artists whose work is displayed in the room – between the 1830s and 1860s there were many foreign artists/portrait artists working in Romania. Again from Boia’s book I learn that at the end of the nineteenth century over half the population of Iasi and one quarter of the population of Bucharest were Jewish, Catholic or Protestant: the large urban communities were cosmopolitan. The early portrait gallery is representative of this cosmopolitan character, which can be seen both in artists’ names and the people portrayed. The various lavish (theatrically baroque) traditional costumes and head-dresses require special attention. The wealthy residents of the big cities – boyars and tradesmen – commissioned portraits of themselves and their families. In this respect, they demonstrated a very modern attitude related to urban life, even where they were not related to the bourgeoisie.

* * *

In relation to the foreign artists, a question arises as to art education: when did art schools and academies first appear in Romania? I look for the answer in the museum catalogue: the School of Fine Art in Bucharest was founded in 1864, while the school in Iasi had been founded four years earlier, in 1860 – meaning that both had been founded after unification. In Boia’s book I read that between the 1860s and the 1870s

“the young Romanian state adopted models from the European institutional and legislative system: constitution, Parliament, responsible government, legal codes, the university, the academy”.¹⁴ Among these first institutions of state were also art schools and museums. The establishment of the institution of fine art education is perceived as one of the main characteristics of the modern artistic practice together with the foundation of museums of art, art salons, art criticism in periodicals, and early art histories. I guess from the museum’s exhibition that during the 1860s and 1870s the newly founded Romanian state was in transition from pre-modern to modern artistic practices. Clearly, as everywhere else, such as in Bulgaria two decades later, the newly founded state, aspiring to become a nation-state, adopted European (in Romania, mainly French and Belgian) institutional models. The State Art Collection, founded as such in 1864, the same year as the School of Fine Art, was managed by the School’s presidency, meaning that in the beginning the two most important art institutions were related. Their common task was to establish and present artistic practices and artistic representation as national.

In Bulgaria, a united National Library and Museum institution was founded in 1879, the year after the establishment of the Bulgarian state as an autonomous principality. The National Museum became an independent institution in 1892; the State School of Art opened in 1896 and was the first institution of art education.¹⁵ As in Romania, the common task of the first institutions of art was to relate important artistic practices to the newly established nation-state.

* * *

Education and scholarly pursuits were of central representational interest for the West European Enlightenment. French and English painting, for example, often represented scientists¹⁶ and children with their books. The portrait of the scientist Petar Beron by the Bulgarian artist Nikolay Pavlovich¹⁷ clearly shares the spirit of the Enlightenment. The figure of the researcher is placed in an interior – a studio/home library full of bookshelves, books, manuscript scrolls, and various objects associated with an occupation in the exact sciences. Petar Beron is represented seated at a table, reading. He does not look at the spectator and the spectator cannot see his eyes. This position – in profile – allows the artist to represent books, manuscripts, an inkpot and pens, and other research-associated objects on the work table, and through them to represent the historical person portrayed. A large green cloth covers the table, falling down to the floor like drapery. In front of this drapery, on

the left-hand side in the foreground there is a three-dimensional model of the solar system. On the right-hand side in the background there is a covered image hanging on the wall, most likely a map. Beron had encyclopedic interests in the fields of philosophy, medicine, chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, and the social sciences. He was the author of *The Miscellaneous Reader* (1824), known as *Riben Bukvar*.

The artist Nikolay Pavlovich (1835-1894) was educated at the Vienna Art Academy (1852-1854) and graduated from the Munich Art Academy (1856-1858). Beron's portrait was painted many years after his death, in 1871, and is in essence a votive portrait. It was made from previous study drawings. The practice of posthumous portraits is related to the traditional donors' portraits in the Balkans. Here we observe the ambiguity between the West European Enlightenment portrait and the local representational tradition. We are confronted with an example of the difficulties of historicizing images created and functioning in the specific conditions of this region, among other images representing (West) European "modernity".

An even better example in this respect is given by the posthumous portrait of the teacher Radi Kolesov by Alexander Popgeorgiev.¹⁸ The long epitaph in rhyming verse on the right hand-side of his armchair ends with the words: "You are a glorious teacher and an enlightened man, who devoted great effort to education in our fatherland". The artist had no formal education. In this case both the votive character and style are related to the local representational tradition. But the iconography and the clearly suggested meanings are reminiscent of the pathos of eighteenth-century West European representational modernity.

* * *

Coming back to the Museum, my attention is attracted to the portraits of rebellious and military men, and, among them, that of the anonymous nineteenth-century portrait of Iancu Manu¹⁹ in particular. The portrait shows a young man with refined, dandy-like features, with a lavish oriental head-dress on his head, holding a rosary and a blue flower, and wearing a bracelet and a ring on his right hand. He regards the spectator with self-confidence. The military uniform and the decorated handjare-handle protruding from his belt reveal his military occupation. According to *History of the Rumanians*²⁰, Iancu (Ioan) Manu was a leading figure in the regional and state administration, a Chief Magistrate and, after the unification of the principalities, a representative of the minister

of foreign affairs. He came from well-educated, enlightened social strata, and was one of the founders of the Philharmonic Society in Bucharest in 1833.²¹ In the Balkans, the Enlightenment went hand in hand with the military vocation.

Many portraits of boyars in Romania – especially of the young ones – represent them as military men, with decorated weapons and spectacular costumes and hats. Modern identity in Wallachia and Moldova, as in Bulgaria, was related in artistic representation (including literary representation) to the struggle for an independent state. The duality underlying the choice of costume – a duality between local identity (the traditional) and the creation for oneself of personal originality (the modern) – combined with military insignia (weapons, military decoration) was a typical representation of the experience of modernity in the Balkans.

Constantin Rosenthal, as an artist who came to Romania from Budapest, studied in Vienna and traveled to Paris and London, had an experience of different identities (he too was of Jewish origin)²² and different traditions. Together with the portraits of the nineteenth-century English Romantic type he also painted allegorical representations of revolutionary Romania. This multiple skill and artistic involvement in a rather contradictory reality was a common feature of the modern Balkan artists of the time. Rosenthal was involved in current events not only through artistic representation, but also through real life experience – for his revolutionary activity he was imprisoned in Budapest, where he died at the age of thirty-one.

I would like to stress this important aspect of (visual, but also literary) artistic representation of modernity in the Balkans. In the Balkans, modern times were invariably associated with the struggle for an independent state and national unification. The representational experience sought in (Western) Europe was that of the bourgeois and national revolutions – the struggle for civil rights. Representations in allegorical compositions, in Balkans “Mariannes”²³, together with portraits of military men in military costume holding weapons, were an important part of the imagery of modern times in the Balkans, though without a proper bourgeoisie and its activity.

I recall a “self-portrait” by the Bulgarian artist Georgi Danchov (1846-1908),²⁴ in which he represents a young man with a resolute expression on his face looking straight ahead. The man is dressed according to the contemporary European fashion, “a la franga” (*à la française*), with a large striped bow-tie and golden-colored buttons on his coat. At the same time, he is wearing a fez and has a small moustache as

was the fashion in the Ottoman Empire at that time. The colors of his clothes – blue, white, red – are very distinct. I have known this self-portrait for a long time, but only now did I realize that these are colors of the French tricolor, something which could not have been accidental. The French Revolution as a symbol inspired enlightened circles, and not only in Bulgaria.

Like many modern artists in the Balkans at the time, Georgi Danchov was involved in the revolutionary struggle for an independent Bulgarian state. In 1873 he was arrested by Ottoman officials and sent into exile in Diarbekir. After the foundation of the independent Bulgarian state, he became involved in political activities and was elected as a member of the National Assembly and deputy mayor of the city of Plovdiv.²⁵ Meanings in visual representation take on form among other meanings.

* * *

Representational conventions similar to those in painted portraits could also be observed in the staged photographic portraits of the period. In a photograph of Alexandru Ioan Cuza²⁶ the man/prince is seen in military uniform sitting next to a table covered with books and holding a sword (rapier) in his left hand. What is especially interesting is that in the background we can see fragments of columns and drapery. Just as in the painted family portrait of Alecsandri, the staged interior space is defined in a neo-classical manner. The photograph is also similar to *Portrait of a Man* (Konstantin Vlachov) in uniform by Pera (Ch)Ristich,²⁷ on display in the Museum of Art in Plovdiv, in which the man stands in front of a neo-classical architectural frame that opens the space of the painting into a landscape. Representational conventions in early photographic portraits were borrowed from portraits in painting. Photographic studios staged pictures against backgrounds that imitated backgrounds in painting. In its turn, photography also influenced portrait painting – indeed, many portraits were made from photographs. Some photographic portraits, especially those of revolutionary men, were transferred into the medium of lithography so that they could be easily reproduced and circulated. The circulation of images of important contemporary figures – in photo-lithographs and shortly after in the press – related to the ideas and strategies of modern times in respect of visual influence on a mass level.

Georgi Danchov, the Bulgarian artist mentioned above, acquired a knowledge of photography and lithography during his stay in Istanbul in 1865-1866. During his exile in Diarbekir he opened a photographic studio, where he made photographic portraits. Danchov was not the only

portrait-painter of his time also to show an interest in photography – we can also mention Ivan Dospevski (1840-1889),²⁸ who had a photographic studio in Samokov.

The prestige that the photographic occupation enjoyed in the artistic milieu is confirmed by the fact that in the first Bulgarian art salon in Plovdiv in 1892 medals were also awarded for photography.²⁹

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The local/traditional and European/modern duality is also present in early female portraits, albeit given that women were portrayed more than men in European dress (which was sometimes complemented by traditional, “exotic” accessories such as shawls and head-dresses). Women from well-to-do families are frequently seen playing the piano or reading a book; sometimes they also hold spectacles or pince-nez. Women’s portraits were not conceived as historical. Subject’s names were not identified – they were labeled “Portrait of the Wife/Daughter” or simply “Portrait of a Woman”. Female portraits had a specific social (and later historical) character only in relation to the family.

The portrait of *Anica Manu and Children*³⁰ by Constantin Rosenthal is a good example of the representation of the woman’s position within the wealthy Europeanized family. The beautiful woman regards the spectator with dignity. She is proud of her social and family role (that of raising and educating her children). She is surrounded by her three sons; one of the boys is holding a shotgun, which is associated with hunting, and, by extension, is of aristocratic origin. The portrait is set in an open interior that includes architectural elements – a marble floor, parapet, column, drapery – and a framed landscape in the background. The compositional pattern – a slice of nature behind an architectural frame – is typical of the eighteenth-century English Romantic portrait. By including a landscape, but one that is still outside and separate from the representational frame of the painting, this type of portrait represents a compromise in terms of expressing the interest for nature of the enlightened strata.

In these family portraits, however, it is not easy to find representations of the middle classes. Assimilation/integration of cultural experience did not always occur simultaneously with the changes in urban space, commerce, travel experiences, and production. Early portraits of the enlightened strata more often followed the pattern set by portraits of the aristocracy than of the bourgeoisie.

* * *

A difficult problem arises in connection with the stylistic features of these portraits. It is easy to find similar portraits from the same period anywhere in the territories formerly under Ottoman rule; however, it is rather more difficult to articulate their formal and stylistic features through the established categories of academicism, classicism, neo-classicism, romanticism, realism, naivism, etc. In this text, as in any study that aims to establish a specific framework, I need to discuss the notion of style and the sense in which I use the term. In an encyclopedia entry on "Style", James Elkins admits that this is "one of the most difficult concepts in the lexicon of art and one of the chief areas of debate in aesthetics and art history".³¹ He begins with a provisional loose definition: "style is a term used to describe a coherence of qualities in periods or people." In this text, it is not my objective to examine different concepts of style in art history. Rather it is my intention only to mention some important ideas about the way this notion has been used – ideas that have been influential in my understanding and the basis of my research. One significant reference is a text by Gombrich from 1968 which develops the idea that the term "style" should be applied in a descriptive sense in concrete cases (following Karl Popper's view on historicism).³² The author affirms that "the limitations of scientific morphology are perhaps all the more galling when we realize that a style, like a language, can be learned to perfection by those who could never point to its rules."³³

The other important reference is an article on style by Svetlana Alpers from 1979.³⁴ I am ready to assume, following Alpers, that style can be considered in specific cases. This assumption is related to the historiographic approaches developed since the 1960s that discuss historical writing as the historical interpretation of specific facts and aspects of reality.³⁵

"Style is what you make it" is both the title of the article and its central thesis. The question of modality – the relationship of the maker to the tradition of making – is discussed as being significant in art historical writing. But the question still remains as to what kind of descriptive concepts we can use to discuss such hybrid artistic phenomena, the confusion of traditions and practices. Models in my Balkan cases, though of diverse types and from diverse periods, all belong to the European tradition. The established categories can never be entirely applicable in these a-central cases; however, it would be meaningless to invent other categories.³⁶

My research into representations of multiple modernities is grounded in the conviction that in a-central/different cultural situations there are no gaps/lacunae in artistic trends – rather, there are different presences. What I find of significance here is the articulation of the artificially universalized representational trends within the modern epoch's paradigm of art historical knowledge, which results in multiple specific cases. The difficulties lie in the need of verbalization: the most general question, "how can we speak/write about visuality?" remains unanswered. We still need these artificially universalized stylistic notions – not in order to be able to define large groups of works of art (to fill the notions with the substance of concrete works), but in order to be able to describe and compare through them the diversity of concrete hybrid forms. In other words: to make use of them in a relative, not substantial way.

It is my intention to problematize the intermediacy/a-central condition, not as an exception to the norm, but as shared ground; to think of it not as insufficient, but as valuable; to present fluctuations as possibilities, stability as impossibility.

2. Cases of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century representational modernity: the city and nature

I am now on the upper floor of the of the National Art Museum in Bucharest, in the rooms displaying art from the period of the modern state's institutionalization (the time of art schools, museum and private collections, art salons, etc.). I find there are far fewer names of foreign artists here. We also see evidence of the practice of different representational genres: portraits, landscapes, still life, interiors, genre images, plein-air scenes in parks and gardens, representations of wealthy milieus, salons filled with fashionably dressed people, women in moments of privacy (reading a book or daydreaming). The paintings are small and medium-sized and intended for the home interiors of the wealthy.

It is not easy to differentiate periods in the representational arts of the Balkans. For the Romanian condition, the first appearance of the new subjects and manners – related to modernity – occurred approximately two decades before that of Bulgaria. The definition of a period in this research could be made mostly in a typological sense – meaning that the works of art discussed in this part are of a type, conceived during these decades, and, especially in Bulgaria, some of these works were created later (after 1903-1904) during the next typologically defined period.

In his famous essay, *The Painter of Modern Life*, Baudelaire remarks that “all those other delightful artists who, though depicting nothing but the familiar and the charming, are in their own way no less serious historians.”³⁷ Could it be said that the paintings I have chosen to discuss bring into being a kind of history of modernity in the Balkans? Or is it mainly an idea, a kind of temptation, an eagerness for modernity, which they bring about?

“Is Art History?” is a revealing question and the title of a 1977 article by Svetlana Alpers.³⁸ Discussing seventeenth-century Dutch art, Alpers claims that the image can be considered as a piece of history. The point is that not only the object world, or the iconography, but also representation as a whole and the role of the spectator in the system allow us to regard an image as a piece of history. In the last decades of the nineteenth century (in Romania), and in the first decade of the twentieth century (in Bulgaria), we see this other type of representational modernity: together with the modernity of the Enlightenment visual representations of the new city life, following recognizable (mainly French) models of theme and style, begin to emerge. However, there are some peculiarities. Firstly, city life is represented mostly as private – in private spaces and with intimate manners of communication. Another particularity is that there are no clear characters with bourgeois behavior in these representations and the new inhabitants of the big city – small traders, employees, the “underworld” of city life – are missing.

To what extent is this situation in the representations connected with social conditions? I agree with the statement by Wollheim that “the link between art and society is in the broadest terms. The determination cannot be readily identified with constraint or necessity. Nevertheless there are very few cases where our understanding of a work is not likely to suffer from the fact that we misidentify it, or that we falsely locate it from a historical point of view.”³⁹ On the other hand, as Wollheim observed himself, the utility of the social context is very limited for the articulation/verbalization of the effect of some works of art. “The answer is likely to vary from one work to another. It depends on how much the style of the work is an institutional, and how much it is an expressive matter.”⁴⁰

* * *

Masked Ball in the Artist's Studio (“Soirée”: 1878) by Theodor Aman (1831-1891) represents the artist's salon, the place he used for work, crowded with fashionably dressed men and women. A domino left on a chair in the painting's foreground indicates the kind of festivity,

divertissement, theatricality going on; it suggests the idea of the transformation – simultaneously dissimulation and revelation – of one's "real" identity; it suggests the idea of multiple identities. Is it an over-interpretation if I consider the representation of the *Masked Ball* with the domino detail and self-portrait on the right-hand side of the wall in no other place than his studio as a suggestion about the role of the artist in this *mondaine* play of identities?

The walls of the interior in *Masked Ball* are covered with paintings. The stage/definite space of the salon opens up in the background through the large frame of a door in a kind of enfilade. Light from candles – a great number of them, near the walls, surrounding the "scene" – seems to unsettle the space and blur the outlines of the figures, which reflect in the shining floor. The frames in this image are clear, not blurred: frames of paintings on the walls, frames in the frame of the background door, flooded with light. The representation of light coming through a door often symbolically suggests the passage from inner to outer space.⁴¹

Could we say here which is more important – the assimilated experience of impressionism or the interest in symbolic suggestion? Is the choice of one of these denotations/ associations, or even the combination of the two, adequate for a discussion of Aman's work? Educated in Paris, Aman was clearly interested in the experience of the Barbizon painters, and probably also in Courbet and Manet. Not only can this thematic choice, but also the stylistic features can be considered proper to "modernity". He came into contact with and assimilated experience from these "traditions of making" (to use Svetlana Alpers' phrase). Aman's *mondaine* milieu – salons, gardens and parks, reading and even smoking women – is depicted in a dynamic manner and with the determining role of light over form. His small-sized images have the character of painterly sketches. At the same time, the suggestion of individual states of mind (dreaming, meditation), achieved through the interaction of abstract (light, color, etc.) and representational properties, places these works in connection with symbolism in the broader sense of the term.⁴²

I am curious to learn more about this artist. The Aman Museum offers me the chance to view a collection of paintings, drawings, and graphic works in the very same interior that is represented in these works. Along with the *mondaine* world and manners, I find a mixture of different themes, genres and styles: historical compositions, odalisques, and representations of Romanian villages (characterized by genre scenes and a variety of

characters). I learn that Aman was the first director of the newly created School of Fine Art in Bucharest. Can we consider as representations of modernity the paintings (or at least as concrete images) by the director of the State Institution of Art Education (reputedly a conservative institution, corresponding to the Art Academy)? We might find this mixture puzzling if we do not consider or perceive it in its specific cultural situation.

* * *

In the Zambaccian Collection, the painting *In the Forest of Fontainebleau*⁴³ by Nicolae Grigorescu (1838-1907) represents two figures – a couple – seen from behind and entering the forest. The woman is wearing a long blue dress, echoing the blue of the sky, and is carrying a white parasol. The man is wearing a loose white shirt and a straw hat. Other figures are seen further down the road, vanishing into the colorful shadows of the trees. Public gardens and the practice of promenading first appeared in the nineteenth century, and once again it was the city of Paris that led the way. The square next to Notre-Dame, which opened in 1844, is considered the first square to have been conceived from the very beginning as a public space⁴⁴ – before there had only been private parks and gardens, which would occasionally be open to a larger public, depending on their owners. In Bulgaria and Romania, gardens such as Cismigiu in Bucharest or the Central Park (later “Borisova Gradina”) in Sofia were from the beginning conceived as public spaces. However, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century representations of these urban spaces of leisure and socializing are rare, usually small paintings, sketches, and drawings. The subject of parks and gardens was a favorite of impressionist and post-impressionist artists. Although we do find examples of this subject in paintings by Bulgarian and Romanian artists connected with late impressionism, these usually represent parks and gardens elsewhere – in France, Germany, or Italy, for example.

The Bulgarian artist Tseno Todorov (1877-1953) has represented himself seated in front of an easel and in the process of painting *The Garden of Luxemburg (Le jardin de Luxembourg)*.⁴⁵ The artist has his back to the spectator and his eyes are turned to the object of his interest: the representation aims to express the relationship between artist and nature. In this case the artist⁴⁶ represents himself as the inhabitant of a modern city and his natural surroundings as a piece of nature incorporated in the city. The sculpture of a deer in the background suggests the ambiguity between natural and artificial, between nature and art. This composition reminds me, despite all significant differences, of the self-portrait by

Vermeer entitled *Allegory of Painting*. Impressionist lessons and symbolist dispositions go hand in hand.

New sensibilities and attitudes to nature, characterized by the personal and the intimate, were conceived in the early nineteenth century with the contribution of artistic representations. In his *Manifeste pour l'environnement au XXI siecle* [*Manifesto for the Environment in the Twenty-First Century*] Jacques Leenhardt⁴⁷ examines the ideas prominent in different periods after the Enlightenment about nature. According to him, after the French Revolution, from the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, a new kind of approach to nature can be observed in visual representations. City people took walks in the country in the hope of fathoming the depths of "human nature", worried that it could be lost in urban life. "The feeling of nature" became a subject of discussion. "It is more the attitude to nature than nature as such that occupies the pictorial scene."⁴⁸ As an important aspect of the inner world, nature began to be considered as part of modern culture and to be seen by the city. At the same time, in the nineteenth century, as mentioned above, nature was included in big cities in the form of city parks and gardens, which differed in scale, shape and function from the seventeenth- and eighteenth century parks of the aristocracy.

For Bulgaria the emergence of new attitudes to nature came later. A curious event that embodied these new sensibilities was the first hike to Cherni Vruh (the Black Peak) on the Vitosha mountain near Sofia organized for a group of intellectuals by the writer Aleko Konstantinov in 1895. As far as representational interest in nature is concerned, early amateur photography in Bulgaria was also connected with the first hiking initiatives.⁴⁹

The emergence of city people's new sensibilities and attitudes to nature in France (with the big city of Paris as a model) was related to the Barbizon School and the Impressionist movement. Those were the stylistic models adopted by Nicolae Grigorescu, who from the 1860s onwards traveled and exhibited both in Bucharest and in Paris. He spent the summer of 1862 in Barbizon, and in 1868 he exhibited together with Barbizon artists. From Grigorescu, I had already expected a variety of themes and genres. He was considered the primary leading figure of the national Romanian school of art because of his historical compositions (he took part in the War of Independence in 1877-1878) and representations of Romanian villages and village people (especially women) – not because of representational modernity.

For Tseno Todorov this French experience came later. He was educated at the Fine Art Academy in Paris during the first decade of the twentieth century thanks to a fellowship awarded by the Bulgarian state. After returning to Sofia he became a leading portrait artist of the realist and psychological trend and was promoted to the position of professor at the School of Fine Art in Sofia.

Even though the paintings by Aman, Grigorescu, and Todorov, as discussed above, were not of central importance within their artistic oeuvres and careers, these cases of representational modernity are significant in my investigation today because of the thematic and stylistic models they made use of and the potential they had for bringing into existence the French/West European idea of modernity in the Balkans.

* * *

Some years later (at the turn of the first decade of the twentieth century in Bulgaria's case), representations of a different kind of experience of nature – contemplative and intimate – began to emerge. A painting by Nikola Petrov⁵⁰ (1881-1916) represents a woman, seen from the rear, seated on a bench and contemplating the landscape. In the foreground, a little girl is playing with a dog. The plein-air space of the foreground is the cultivated space of a garden, with large pots of ornamental shrubs and flowers. This is a sort of a garden terrace designed to give a panoramic view of the wilderness. This kind of theatrical exposure of nature suggests, through the motif of vast distance, the desire for infinity and liberty.

A similar contemplative disposition to nature is also suggested in the painting⁵¹ by Elena Karamihailova (1875-1961) *By the Bodensee*. It represents a young woman dressed and coiffed in the city fashion, with a folded parasol, standing in the foreground in contemplation. Her head is turned to the depth-ground so that the spectator can see her profile and a fragment of what she can see – a lake, some trees, vegetation on the shore. The composition, with the representation of a human figure as if posing in front of a natural sight, reminds me of a photographic framing. The fragmentation of the framing view in cityscapes and plein-air pictorial representations was influenced by photographic images. Most painters of impressionist landscapes and cityscapes in France were interested in photography. This constitutes a difference from early photographic portraits, which borrowed representational frames and conventions from the painted portrait. But at the same time early photo-landscapes bear witness to an interest in pictorial styles. In the late 1890s, the English

photographer Peter Henry Emerson created images echoing paintings by Jean-François Millet (1814-1875), and in the last years of the nineteenth century he assimilated the impressionist experience;⁵² and he was not the only example.

The central representational motif in Karamihailova's painting is contact with nature in its intimacy. It is not the spectator but nature that this woman is in touch with. As far as the spectator is concerned, neither the woman, nor the landscape is fully displayed – if the landscape were of central interest, the framing would have been horizontal. The contact between the female figure and its surroundings is not only a matter of spatial contiguity – the light, intensified by the reflections and the brightness of the lake, seems to transmit to the figure the qualities of youth and serenity. Undoubtedly, this plein-air representation is related to the late impressionist practice. Elena Karamihailova studied painting in Vienna (1895-1896) and Munich, where she lived until 1910. The stylistic features of her painting could easily be assimilated into the late impressionist version of Munich's artistic milieu.⁵³ At the same time, some elusive suggestions, achieved through the visual properties of whiteness and luminosity, bring to mind the symbolist experience.

* * *

Can we make a distinction, in Balkan conditions, between the impressionists' enthusiasm for the representation of natural sites and gardens – both as attractive open-air spaces and as places for the socializing/mingling of different social strata – and conservative artistic circles' interest in representing *mondaine* manners in a new "scene"? In Bulgarian conditions, for instance, representations clearly could not be sufficiently "impressionist" in the French way, with respect to subject. But this does not mean that these representations are not related to modernity, to a modern urban life – albeit without an influential bourgeoisie, factory workers, or "déjeuners sur l'herbe". A distinction between the impressionist experience and the symbolist moment that could indicate the turn in this typological period is also hard to make.

* * *

As with representations of parks and gardens, representations of other modern urban public spaces are also uncommon in Balkan art. The 1912 *On the Terrace Oteteleshanu* by Camil Ressu⁵⁴ is, to my knowledge, the only example of a large painting of this genre. The painting represents an intellectual gathering of artists and writers in a popular Bucharest café. Unlike the group portraits of the seventeenth-, eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century European tradition, which represent professional guilds or groups of artists involved in a common task and sharing a common attitude (for example, seventeenth-century Dutch group portraits or eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French *hommage* scenes), in this case the position of each individual is of equal importance to the scene. Early twentieth-century modernity was represented as a new urban experience of enjoying an atmosphere of conviviality and spending time in a social space, but a social space also perceived as one's own surroundings. Some of the numerous drawings and the oil painting sketch of this image are suggestive of this.⁵⁵

However, for Ressu himself, this painting was an isolated experience. In the same period to which this painting belongs, he was mostly interested in country life and rural culture. In a 1910 manifesto article, Ressu pronounced himself in favor of the traditions of pre-academic and folk art and against foreign formulae and models.⁵⁶

The integration of artistic experience elsewhere was not always coherent, nor took place simultaneously with the changes in urban space, communication and travel experience with local common dispositions. Representations of trains, for instance, so exciting in an industrial surrounding, in Sofia or Bucharest, say, were still missing at the end of the nineteenth century.

The painting *Bucharest Boulevard on a Rainy Day* by Nicolae Darascu (1918)⁵⁷ offers a vivid glimpse of a big city with cars, carriages, and pedestrians carrying umbrellas. The rain motif provides further possibilities for the scenography of light and reflections. It is reminiscent of compositions by Monet, Pissaro, and Caillebotte, though it came some decades later. The ideas of modernity of early twentieth-century culture and those of late impressionism in Bulgaria have always been associated with Nikola Petrov's (1881-1916) Sofia cityscapes. My choice to discuss these rather than other works, however, was determined by the evocative power these paintings have today. These are examples in which the utility of the social context for interpreting the suggestiveness of the work is of only limited value.

*Sofia in Winter*⁵⁸ offers a bird's-eye view of the city. In the foreground we see the new boulevards, broad and straight, intersecting one another, and featuring city transport and pedestrians; in the middle ground, we see the straight lines of trees in the city garden – a framed piece of nature in the city; while in the background we see the recently built National Theatre.⁵⁹ All these represent the modern urban environment.

But my reaction to this image is defined and dominated by the silvery light, which melts forms and contours and suggests the sensory effect of snow.

Another painting – an oil painting sketch – represents *The Mineral Baths Square in Sofia*.⁶⁰ In this case we have a closer, fragmented view of the citizens at a specific place with a specific atmosphere. Light, again, plays a leading role. An interest in city life and the effects of light, which is normally associated with impressionism and the Paris of the 1870s, appears in this case as a hybrid representational and expressive source. Petrov had no direct contact with the impressionist artistic experience; he had never visited Paris. In 1903 he had the opportunity to go to Rome, and in 1905 he visited Liège, Brussels, Munich, Vienna and Budapest. These short visits could hardly have had a decisive influence on him, though admittedly some of the works he saw were probably in tune with his intuitions and his intellectual milieu in Sofia. Petrov was a member of the Modern Art Society, created in Sofia in 1904 (the group was founded in 1903) and a graphic designer for the journal affiliated to the Society, *Hudozhnik* (Artist).

3. Images of modernity/images in the modern world – the experience of the visual arts in the years leading up to the First World War

In this situation I am trying to discuss, the relationship between maker and the tradition of making (to use Alpers' phrase) is a crossed relationship between different times and experiences. Makers were appropriating traditions of making from elsewhere. The normal European practice in art education of making copies of the old masters, thereby ensuring a succession of artistic experiences, was not – indeed, initially, during the “first modernity” period, could not be – applied in Balkan museums to the works of artists from the same a-central region.

The problem in this situation is that it is unable to resort to a single, sufficiently evocative specific case – I was barely able myself to identify an artistic representation that is important enough to justify extended interpretation. We are thus faced with the risk of over-interpreting an image. When I cannot find a specific image that presents a complete embodiment of a specific situation, I need more than one “piece of history”.⁶¹

* * *

Let us forget for a moment the (multiple) contexts, and relive the experience from the position of a spectator unacquainted with historical matters (though this is admittedly never the case). If a work does not appeal to me, then I need not discuss it from the point of view of form and style or context. Difficulties arise when I like the work but – as often happens – I cannot place it within systematized art historical knowledge.

Nikola Petrov's intense interest in light and his small, rhythmic brush strokes have led critics to define the artist as a (belated) impressionist or a post-impressionist (he does not, after all, use pure colors and he even makes use of black⁶²). However, in my opinion, such analogies do not suffice. *The National Theatre* is probably the most representative in this series of Nikola Petrov's cityscapes. The theatre itself appears to be placed on a stage, illuminated by footlights, with a *contre-jour* image of the garden that separates us as spectators. The light streaming from the theatre also relates, in my eyes, to another kind of artistic experience – that of symbolism. What matters here is not so much the illusion of reality, of sensory perception, but rather the suggestion of the idea of theatre.

Another cityscape, *The Church of St. Sophia*, appears to give off a glow that governs the suggestion contained in the painting as a whole. In 1899, Dr. Krastev wrote in *Misal (Thought)*, the most influential literary journal in late nineteenth-century Bulgaria, apropos of an exhibition organized by the Society for the Support of Bulgarian Art that artists need to paint "in a modern manner".⁶³ Given the character of the journal, it would be easier to say that this "modern manner" should be a gathering trend. In the broadest sense, "modern manner" should mean non-realism and non-academicism, a tendency to subjectivism involving stylistic features of symbolism and art nouveau. Could we justifiably call Petrov's cityscapes – or at least some of them – symbolist works? The symbolists seem to reject classic genres and these paintings are indeed cityscapes. Moreover, in Petrov's work we find none of the mythological, religious, or literary subjects preferred in the symbolist inclination. At the same time, in symbolist painting the effect of the objects represented and the means of representation (form/line, light, color, etc.) predominate over the easily recognizable iconographic conventions.

The entry on symbolism in *The Dictionary of Art* (1996) notes that it is difficult to provide a strict definition of the term. Of the artists associated with this trend, some tend to rely more on narrative, while others rely

predominantly on style. What they share, according to the dictionary, is a desire to represent visually that which is invisible and exists in the sphere of the subjective and the irrational – in reverie, quietude, meditation.⁶⁴ According to this relatively new and liberal interpretation of the trend, we can include within it both “impure” artistic phenomena and some of Nikola Petrov’s cityscapes.

In terms of the term neo-impressionism, in relation to these cityscapes it is thought to partly coincide with the term symbolism criticism today, according to the same dictionary. We can see in this how the cultural centers that invented the modern classifications of artistic phenomena are today gradually relinquishing their rigid distinctions guided by the idea of sufficiency in respect of the specific phenomenon.

The question of Petrov’s cityscapes does not concern the terms “post-impressionist” or “symbolist” – rather, it is a matter of the question, “How and why do these works affect us/me today?” The painting of light creates a sense of mobility, ephemerality, and a suggestion of beyondness. The flickering outdoor light and the brilliant whiteness are problems of perception, however the whiteness and light also presents a possibility for suggestiveness. Nikola Petrov’s works integrate, without contradiction, both the impressionist and the symbolist experience.

Similar things can be said of the works of Stefan Luchian, though there are many specific differences between the two artists. I will mention two paintings by Luchian: *Flowers*, from the Zambaccian collection, and *Corner of the Povernei Street*, from the Gallery of Constance (Roumania)⁶⁵.

The first image has a banal motif (pots with flowers on a staircase), but has in most parts an unusual close look and fragmented framing. The viewer is involved in the process of getting over the everyday experience. Colors and light – reinforcing each other and excited by the meditative gaze – generate the sensation of a brilliant, precious substance, of a kind of enamel. The (post-)impressionist commitment to light effects enforce the suggestion of another, non-mimetic space.

A different feeling – one of melancholy – related to the romantic and symbolist dispositions is suggested in the painting *Inseparable* by Goshka Datzov (1885-1917). The figures, as in other paintings discussed above, have their backs to the spectator and their eyes turned to nature, or, in this case, to some remote place flooded with light. Datzov graduated from the Fine Art Academy in Rome and was influenced by the symbolism in that milieu. Together with the symbolist experience, a kind of romantic

inclination is also evident in this painting in the form of a sentimentalism and a representational concern with the sublime.

The foreground of the image provides a short-distance view of the silhouettes of a man and a woman – of their melted contours, embraced in vegetation. The title the artist gave to his painting, *Inseparable*, suggests both feelings of love and a desire for fusion with nature. The sense of modern man's loneliness and anxiety are conveyed through the spectator's somewhat too close position. In an article on melancholy, Corinne Mandel observes that "In the modern age Dürer's productive winged genius would accordingly be transformed by the romantic into the anxious paradigm of modern humankind."⁶⁶

* * *

Let us now leave our imaginary museum of nineteenth-century Balkan art. After 1902-1904, in the period of what we can call the "third modernity", painting no longer played a leading role in representing/expressing modernity in the Balkans as elsewhere in Europe. It was artistic activities and presence in the environment – urban, architectural, interior – that became important and effective in art around 1900. The "union" between art and industry, which was a challenge in Western Europe, did not flourish in the Balkans because of the lack of growing industrial development – and this despite the existence of attempts to adopt art experience in everyday city life.

In this text I propose to examine some cases of polygraphical products. The design of books (including children's books and textbooks, literary miscellanies and magazines) and the various print forms (cards, university diplomas, share certificates, banknotes, and postage stamps), due to their large circulation and distribution, were the most common and diverse field for assimilating the Modern Style/Secession/Art Nouveau⁶⁷ experience in the Balkans. Another reason for choosing the polygraphical products was the influence of literary and poetical representations on the visual arts of the period.

As far as the Bulgarian condition is concerned, it is important to outline the various hybrid variants, common features, and differences with the European Secession/Art Nouveau movements. The specificity of the visuality in Bulgarian polygraphy can be interpreted in connection with European examples. Over the course of several decades leading up to the First World War, Secession decorative tendency (mostly the Middle European variant) was combined with characteristics of Symbolism

(predominantly Italian and German). During the same period (since the beginning of the twentieth century) the so-called “Bulgarian” style was invented/structured to outline a difference from the easily recognizable European models.

Those variants which were “non-pure” in terms of stylistic classifications were determined by the cultural milieu. We could not possibly describe, differentiate and comment on them only by means of style characteristics. Also of importance is the context of perception (both that of the artist/designer and that of the reader), intentions, functions and impact.

The artistic form of the book is an essential and changing condition of the meaning, and therefore also of the act of reading.⁶⁸ In the modern period, the publishing of a text in a certain form, and its second edition in another form with a different design, is closely linked to the cultural environment. The study of the relationship between the text, the visual design of the book as an object, and the cultural environment that “consumes” the book all presupposes going far beyond the description of the artistic style. “The subtle details of the typographic conception and design are meaningful,” affirms Donald F. McKenzie.⁶⁹

The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries in Europe are characterized by the mass expansion of the visual image – in books, periodicals, posters, advertisements. This situation is related to improvements in the printing process (the rotary press, manufactured paper, etc.) and graphic print. In institutional terms, the period also witnesses the establishment of publishing house structures and the book market. The initiatives of the big publishers boosted and maintained book design in terms of the Modern Style/Secession/Art Nouveau. In social terms, the changing image of the book is linked to the taste of the new readers in the industrialized societies, in the cities – the taste of both the connoisseur and the general public.

The word “illustration”, meaning an image connected with a text and created on paper, first began to be used throughout Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was at that time that a number of large-circulation newspapers using the Storz woodcut⁷⁰ on their pages included the word “illustration” in their titles. Examples include *The Illustrated London News*, established in 1842, and *Illustration* in France, established the following year.⁷¹ In Bulgaria, a monthly magazine, *Bulgarian Illustration*, was published from 1880 until 1882. It was the first Bulgarian illustrated popular magazine for science and literature.⁷²

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the spread of industrialization made it possible for illustrated editions to increase their circulation and reduce prices, thereby reaching a wider audience – from the broad literate classes to bibliophiles. The renovation of book design and illustration⁷³ is connected on the one hand with the impact of literature on the creation of visual symbolism and, on the other, with the new taste for the peculiar object, both in terms of form and decoration. New aspects of the text-image relationship were discussed. Typographic realization had to maintain the text's suggestions. The artistic parts of the book – the fly leaf, illuminated letters, vignettes, decorative frames, title pages, bindings, illustrations, ex libris – were thoroughly planned.

At the turn of the century, book production in Bulgaria was relatively low in scale. The decoration of books and exquisite magazines consisted mainly of Secession vignettes, frontispieces and tailpieces, all directly borrowed from different European publishing houses (Vienna, Prague, Istanbul, etc.). It was usually eclectic and unrelated to the text.⁷⁴

After the period 1902-1904 and in the period up until the Balkan Wars and the First World War, there were examples of literary works that were related to Symbolism and in typographic forms, and graphism that was close to the recognizable European variants. Some of the best achievements in book design belong to the artists connected with the “*Suvremenno Izkustvo*” (Modern Art) Society,⁷⁵ such as Haralampi Tachev, Goshka Datsov, and Nikola Petrov.

The most renowned example of Nikola Petrov (whose paintings were discussed above) in bookdesign is *Na Ostrova na blazhenite* (*On the Island of the Blessed*) by Pencho Slaveykov (Sofia, 1910, Al. Paskalev, Court Printing House). As a friend of the poet, Nikola Petrov takes part in his idea for a simulacrum of an anthology – Pencho Slaveykov's poem collection is represented as a collection of poetic series by separate authors. The artist creates the portraits of these authors using different photographs of Pencho Slaveykov. The portrait of Silva Mara, the only woman included in the anthology, is made on the basis of a photograph of the female poet Mara Belcheva. The symbolist idea of the multiple identities of a given personality is thoroughly shared by the artist himself.

The illustrated weekly and monthly magazines are yet another area of the manifestation of the idea of “modern” visual graphism.⁷⁶ The magazines, their book series, and the artistic circles connected with them all contributed to the spread of visual art tendencies and taste. The mobility

of these periodicals and their ability to circulate quickly turned the Secession/Art Nouveau into a European phenomenon.

In Bulgaria, there was an early periodical connected with the Secession: namely, the *Hudozhnik (Artist)* magazine, which dated back to 1905. Its artists – Aleksander Bozhinov, Sirak Skitnik, and Nikola Petrov – created ornamental and pictorial motifs, vignettes and tailpieces. Nikola Petrov designed the cover of the issue of year III (1909) using plant ornaments, a decorative frame and written letters. Holding a lyre, a young woman in profile is represented in the center. The symbolism and the decorative aspect are in unison. The title page shows an unfolded landscape drawing with the recognizable silhouette of St. Sofia Church in the foreground. The weekly literary magazine *Listopad (Leaf-fall)* contains a number of artistic compositions in the “modern” trend of the Secession and Symbolism.

Goshka Datsov (discussed above in connection with a painting with a symbolist disposition) made vignettes, tailpieces, and compositional framing poems for *Listopad (Leaf-fall)*. Two of them recur in later issues (1913-1914). The first is a semi-recumbent female figure, whose silhouette is affectedly prolonged but then transforms itself into a landscape line-horizon. Above them, painfully twisted branches with falling leaves join together in a frame. The motif with the prolonged female silhouette that gently fades away is the artist’s favorite – both in his drawings and paintings. Goshka Datsov’s graphic compositions are comparable with secession and symbolist examples elsewhere in Europe (e.g. Italy and Austria). The second one is a landscape vignette showing a sunset. It seems to float downwards and out of the frame. In the foreground there is a female figure with her hair-stream covering her face, and, once again, there are falling leaves. The graphism here is clearly expressed and its quality makes it a rarity of graphic design in Bulgaria.

Together with individual alienation and problematic relationships to society and nature, the issue of national identity began to surface. What is called “Bulgarian style” appears to defy the earlier non-differentiated “European” variants of the Secession/Art Nouveau, which had been spread out. The processing of ornaments of ethnographic provenance (textiles, embroidery, and ceramics), as well as illuminated manuscripts, is one of the basic occupations of the stylization classes at the School of Arts in Sofia. Great efforts were made to integrate this ornamentation into print forms – book decoration, diplomas, banknotes, shares, stamps. The

“Bulgarian style” was formed by the joint efforts of decorators and architects from “Modern Art” circles.

In the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the newly formed state in the Balkans aimed to differentiate itself from the former Balkan mixture within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire by use of a specific cultural heritage. During the second half of the nineteenth century, certain cultural circles in other European countries were also purposefully involved in rediscovering local artistic traditions related with the aspiration to authenticity. Hence, they were on the lookout for artistic and literary material necessary for the creation of national myths – a part of the creation of identities connected with the nation-state⁷⁷. During the 1880s, there was a widespread movement for local craft work collection and the acquisition of the craftsman’s technical skills.

In the Bulgarian environment, a similar example of the interest in local crafts is given by the collection of embroideries compiled by Stefan Badzhov entitled *Bulgarian National Embroidery* (Sofia, 1913)⁷⁸. Its aim was to present the material used for new ornaments designed for various objects and textures. The idea behind the collection is comparable with similar collections elsewhere in Europe from the turn of the century. The differences lie in the degree of imagination with which they are processed. In Bulgaria, in many cases these embroideries were literally transferred onto porcelain forms, book covers, certificates, and bonds, etc.

Worthy of mention is the case of Yosef Peter (1881-1925), a Czech artist who worked for a long time in Bulgaria⁷⁹ and was involved in the study of illuminated manuscripts (ornamental letters, vignettes, etc.), as well as embroidery and interlacing ornaments from Bulgaria for the purpose of modern polygraphy and book design. He processed and molded local ornaments following the Central European Secession experience in order to apply them to book covers, calendars, diplomas, and other polygraphic forms⁸⁰.

Posters and advertisements, which were a major area of artistic presence in the urban environment, in Paris, Vienna, Bruxelles, and London, did not become influential artistic phenomena in Sofia and Bucharest until the First World War. The insufficient technological resources for printing (for color lithography) and the limited needs of the society did not allow for a large variety and circulation of posters in the cities.

During the industrial era, although significant industrialization did not take place everywhere, artistic representations/expressions became part of the experience of modernity in city life. It is in this subsequent (third) period of representational modernity in the Balkans that value was first attributed to the quality of the printed book and other large-circulation typographic forms.

Final points - Balkan modernity as revealed in representations

As a way of concluding this part of the study on representations of modernity in the Balkans, I suggest that we consider what modernity is with respect to the cases discussed.

During the first period – provisionally the 1840s to 1870s – modernity was defined in the field of public concern, through portraits and allegorical representations, as related to the struggle for liberty, an independent state and civil rights. Throughout the same period, and again in portraits, modernity was also associated with education in the sense of the European Enlightenment. Modernity and Europe (European educational models) were seen as synonymous. Pedagogy and education were representational topics of both public and private concern. Portraits were painted of both publicly known scholars, such as Petar Beron, and of women and children reading in private, family surroundings.

As far as social life is concerned, somewhat later in the second period – the last decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries – modernity was represented through both subject and technique (manners of representation), although the relationship between the two varied. Salons, promenades in the open air (in parks, in the countryside), and the bustle of city streets were the favorite representational subjects; and the late (post)impressionist technique was the most common representational trend related to modern sociality.

On the other hand, the café as a place of socializing for literary and artistic circles was not a central theme in Balkan painting of the period. It only appeared in sketches and drawings, in marginal and intimate forms of representation not intended for exhibition or sale. In Sofia, one such place that was often represented in sketches was the café on Tzar Osvoboditel Boulevard; in Bucharest, there was the Terrace Oteteleshanu, which was subsequently represented in the large painting discussed above.

Labor, related to machines, industry and the modern times,⁸¹ was also not represented. It was not a significant issue in the visual arts in the Balkans of those years. It was mainly the theme of rural labor that represented work as social relationships.

We find a wider range of subjects and manners of representation in marginal forms that were never exhibited to the public. The situation was similar to that in Paris, Berlin and elsewhere in terms of early representations of public places. Baudelaire observed that, "For the sketch of manners, the depiction of bourgeois life, and the pageant of fashion, the technical means that is the most expeditious and the least costly will obviously be the best. The more beauty that the artist can put into it, the more valuable his work will be; but in trivial life, in the daily metamorphosis of external things, there is a rapidity of movement which calls for an equal speed of execution from the artist."⁸² Sense of speed and current time became part of experiencing modernity on both sides – on that of the artist and that of the spectator. But in Sofia and Bucharest, the "sketchy" manner and non-representational forms, suggesting rapid movements, were practiced mainly in private artistic space: in the studio and between friends. In Bulgaria paintings characterized by speedy brushwork only appeared in exhibitions after 1902-1904. Thus the separation between public and private/intimate can be observed in a way in subject, manner, and the effect of images.

After 1902-1904 we witness a different, third moment in the relationship of artistic practice to modernity. Now we need to leave the Museum in order to discover the variety of images in the modern city. In Sofia, this variety was not as wide as in the urban centers of rapid industrial development, but was still significant enough in comparison with the preceding period. Book design and the great diversity of large-circulation typographic materials were an essential expression of/condition for the changes in the ideas of modernity in the Balkans.

Before the Balkan Wars, great efforts were made in Sofia and Bucharest, but also in other Balkan cultural centers, to identify/invent an artistic patrimony for the nation-state and to integrate it into a kind of national style ("the Bulgarian style", the "Romanian style"). Going back to the questions asked at the beginning of this text, I would say that we are not able to think of works of modernism(s) in the Balkans as an inquiry into the local conditions of modernity in a similar way to that in the European cities with big urban, cultural, and economic resources. It is not possible to consider the relationship between representational

modernity and modernism in the Balkans as comparable to that in Western and Central Europe.

In Sofia, Bucharest, and other big cities in the Balkans representations of modernity were as much an inquiry into the local conditions of modernity as an assumption about the experience of modernity in Western Europe. These assumptions were based on different sources, including other visual representations. In their turn, these representations brought new fictions into existence.

The artistic milieu of modernism(s) in the Balkans experienced different conditions of human existence in comparison with (West-, Central-) European milieus that “produced” modernist trends. They had another “schedule” and “scale” of industrial and urban development. Additionally, Balkan artists aspired to similar representational conventions and expressive qualities. I have taken the liberty of making this assumption, though not without bearing in mind today’s artistic practices.

A moment can be identified when ideas of the present begin to be expressed through images of the present, and not through representations of the past. From the time of self-representing modernity, artists have never resorted to representing this modernity as the past. “The past of modernity” has never been a representational theme in painting or graphics. City life in Sofia and Bucharest at the beginning of the twentieth century has been represented as the past only by film-producers. The rapid development of photography and, subsequently, the appearance of the moving image (cinema), challenged representations in painting and graphics.

During the period of the Balkan Wars and the First World War, radical changes in the ideas of modernity took place in the Balkans, like everywhere in Europe. Faith in the Enlightenment seemed to have been destroyed in the aftermath of the First World War. For the first time in this cultural space, modernity was represented/expressed as fear and misery.

Speculation as to the nature of modernity and modernism(s) in the visual arts could (and should) be carried out in another text, which considers representations and expressions of modernity following the First World War.



1. Giovanni Schiavoni, *Portrait of the Minister Theodor Burada*, oil on canvas, National Art Museum of Romania.



2. Nikolay Pavlovich, *Portrait of the scientist Petar Beron*, ca. 1885-1886, oil on canvas, National Art Gallery, Sofia.



3. Georgi Dantcov (1846-1908), *Self-portrait*,
ca. 1867, 69,5 x 48,5 cm., National Art Gallery, Sofia.



4. Theodor Aman, *Masked Ball in the Artist's Studio (Soirée)*, oil on canvas, National Art Museum of Romania.



5. Tseno Todorov, *The Garden of Luxembourg*,
oil on canvas, National Art Gallery, Sofia.



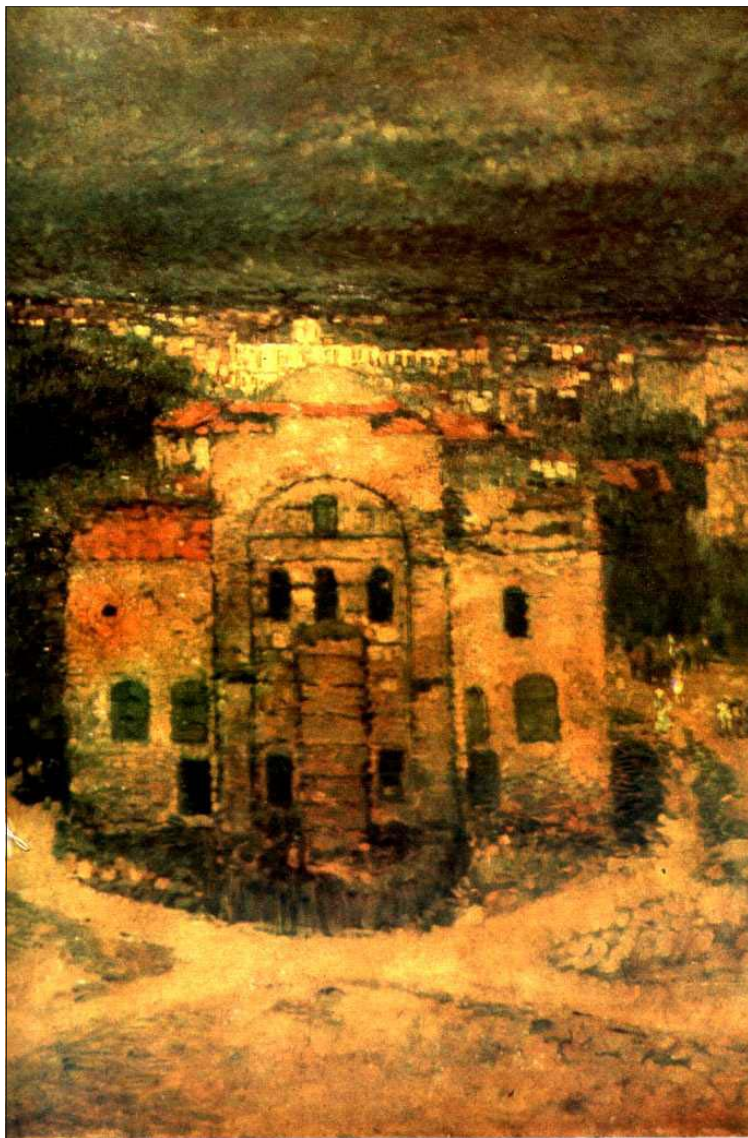
6. Elena Karamihailova, *By the Bodensee*, 1914, oil on canvas, National Art Gallery, Sofia.



7. Nikola Petrov, *The Mineral Baths Square in Sofia*, 1911, gouache on paper, 26 x 40 cm., National Art Gallery, Sofia.



8. Nikola Petrov, *The Church St. Sophia in Sofia*, 1909, oil on canvas, 86 x 120 cm., National Art Gallery, Sofia.



9. Nikola Petrov, *The Church St. Sophia in Sofia*, 1909, fragment.

NOTES

- ¹ In *Critical Terms for Art History*, Chicago University Press, 1996, pp. 142-155.
- ² The term "a-central" is used here rather than "peripheral" in order to avoid any pejorative connotations. I use "a-central" to denote a cultural milieu that principally assimilates influences, usually from more than one place. "Central", in its turn, is used to denote a cultural milieu that principally exerts influences. Definitions of central and a-central should always be considered in a relative and specific way (in a specific relationship and moment). One and the same artistic practice could be central/influential in a given moment/milieu/relationship, and a-central/unimportant in another.
- ³ *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, France S.A., 1996, Corpus 15.
- ⁴ Stephen Bann, "The Premises of Modern Art", in Christos M. Joachimides – Norman Rosenthal (eds.), *The Age of Modernism. Art in the 20th Century*, Berlin – Stuttgart, 1997, pp. 517-524.
- ⁵ Nigel Blake and Francis Francina, "Modern Practices of Art and Modernity", in Francis Francina ...[et al.] *Modernity and Modernism. French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press 1993, pp. 50-140.
- ⁶ Idea, related to the famous book by André Malraux: *Le musée imaginaire*, Éd. Gallimard. Paris, 1965.
- ⁷ Richard Wollheim and Antonia Phillips in *The Dictionary of Art*, Macmillan Publishers, London, 1996, vol. 26.
- ⁸ Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life", first published in *Figaro*, on 26 and 28 November and 3 December 1863.
- ⁹ Richard Wollheim. *Art and its Objects*, Cambridge, 1968, p. 139.
Wollheim claims that "The nature of art has to be understood simultaneously from the artist's and the spectator's viewpoint." "The indeterminacy possessed by art effects a convergence between demands made of art by the spectator and demands made of art by the artist."
- ¹⁰ Sir Karl Popper. "Situational Logic in History. Historical interpretation", in *The Poverty of Historicism*, Routledge and Kenan Paul. 1961, pp. 147-152. First published in 1957. Concerning the unavoidable selectiveness of history, as a point of view and material considered, Popper stated: "...The only way out of this difficulty is, I believe, consciously to introduce a preconceived *selective point of view* into one's history; that is, to write *that history which interests us*. [...] [This] means that we need not worry about all those facts and aspects which have no bearing upon our point of view and which therefore do not interest us."
"Such selective approaches fulfill functions in the study of history, which are in some ways analogous to those of theories in science. [...] But as a rule, these historical 'approaches' or 'points of view' *cannot be tested*. [...] We shall call such a selective point of view or focus of historical interest, if it cannot be formulated as a testable hypothesis, a *historical interpretation*.", in Francis Francina and Charles Harrison (Eds.), *Modern Art and Modernism*, London, Harper&Row Ltd, 1982, pp.12-13.

- 11 Vasile Alecsandri Junior (1818[1821]-1890) was a politician and writer. See: Kurt W. Treptow (ed.) *A History of Romania*, Iasi, 1996, p. 262.
- 12 A similar duality of the ideas of self-representation embodied in costume is evident in the votive portraits in the Ghica Tei Church (reproduced in Dana Harhoiu's book): Gregori IV Ghica wanted to be represented in traditional costume, and his brother Alexandru Ghica, in modern, European clothes.
- 13 Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, CEU Press, 2001, p. 31. First published in Romanian at Humanitas, Bucharest. 1997.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- 15 Just as in the newly established Bulgarian state, in the 1880s and 1890s the first foreign artists in Romania were of Czech, Hungarian, Croat, and Italian origin. But what I see as a special characteristic of the Romanian situation is that in Romania, from the 1860s onwards, the models adopted in artistic life were claimed to be French ones.
- 16 To recall just one example, the portrait of Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier and his wife by Jacques-Louis David, 1789, New York, Metropolitan Museum.
- 17 Nikolay Pavlovich, *Portrait of Petar Beron*, ca. 1885-1886, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 50. National Museum of Art, Sofia.
- 18 Alexander Popgeorgiev, *Portrait of Radi Kolesov*, 1862, oil on canvas, 100 x 70. Jambol Art Gallery, Bulgaria. Published in: Blagovesta Ivanova, *Portretat prez bulgarskoto vazrajthane*. Katalog na izlojbata NHG, Sofia, Izd. "Dios", Sofia 2001, p. 33, N 208.
- 19 Iancu Manu by an anonymous artist, 19th c. Museum of the Art Collections, Bucharest.
- 20 *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. VII, Tom I, *Constituirea Romaniei Moderne (1821-1878)*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2003, p. 953.
- 21 Alexandru Măciucă, *The Art Collections Museum. A Guide to the Collections*, The National Museum of Art, Bucharest. 2003, p. 74.
- 22 See: Amelia Pavel. *Jewish Painters in Romania 1848-1948*, Bucharest, 1996, pp. 15-17; Vasile Florea. *Romanian Art. Modern and Contemporary Ages*. Meridiane Publishing House. Bucharest, 1884, pp. 52-58.
- 23 There are such examples by Pavlovich and by Rosenthal.
- 24 Georgi Danchoy, *Self-portrait*, ca. 1867. Oil on canvas, 69.5 x 48.5. National Museum of Art, Sofia.
- 25 See: Blagovesta Ivanova, *Portretat prez bulgarskoto vazrajthane*. Katalog na izlojbata NHG, Sofia, Izd. "Dios", Sofia 2001, p. 40.
- 26 Reproduced in *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. VII, Tom I *Constituirea României Moderne (1821-1878)*, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2003, p. 453, Fig. 192. Alexandru Ioan Cuza was the first prince of the United Principalities (1859-1862) and of Romania (1862-1866) – See: Kurt W. Treptow (ed.), *A History of Romania*, Iasi, 1996, p. 286.
- 27 Pera (Ch)Ristich, *Portrait of a Man (Konstantin Vlachov) in Uniform*, Mid. 19th c., Plovdiv Museum of Art, published in *Portretat prez bulgarskoto vazrajthane*. Katalog na izlojbata NHG, Sofia, Izd. "Dios", Sofia 2001, p. 34, N 213.

- 28 See: *Portretat prez bulgarskoto vazrajdanje* [...], p. 40.
- 29 The art salon took place at the First Bulgarian Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition. Foreign artists took part as well. The gold medal for photography was awarded to Ivan Karastoyanov (1853-1922). See: Petar Boev, *Photographskoto izkustvo v Bulgaria (1856-1944)*, c. 1983.
- 30 Constantin Rosenthal, *Anica Manu and Children*, National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest.
- 31 In *The Dictionary of Art*, Grove, 1996.
- 32 Ernst Gombrich, "Style", in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, Ed. Donald Preziosi. 1996, p.159.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 34 Svetlana Alpers. "Style is what you make it: The visual arts once again". In: *The Concept of Style*. Ed. Berel Lang. Cornell University 1987 [1979].
- 35 On this issue see note 7, Sir Karl Popper.
- 36 The Bulgarian historian Rumen Daskalov, faced with the same difficulty (in the field of historiography), wrote: "The question is that if we don't want to insist on our absolute uniqueness, we can hardly avoid such assimilations, as a result of the universalization (effected from one 'center' and from one given moment) of Time and History". *Kak se misli bulgarskoto vazrajdanje*. Izd. LIK, S. 2002, p.83.
- 37 Charles Baudelaire. *The Painting of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne. New York 1986 (London 1964), p. 40.
- 38 Svetlana Alpers, "Is Art History?", in *Daedalus*, 1977.
- 39 Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*. 1968, p. 151.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 147.
- 41 Helene E. Roberts (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography*, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers. Chicago – London 1998, p. 502.
- 42 Jane Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*, in thirty-four volumes, 1996, "Symbolism". Vol. 30, pp. 168-169.
- 43 *In the Forest of Fontainebleau*, 53.5 x 38 cm. Zambaccian Collection, Bucharest.
- 44 See: Domonique Jarrassé, *L'art des jardins parisiens*, Paris 2002, Ed. Parigramme, pp. 9-12.
- 45 Tseno Todorov, *The Garden of Luxemburg/ Le jardin de Luxemburg*, 1904.
- 46 Tseno Todorov was educated in the Fine Art Academy in Paris.
- 47 B. Laville et Jacques Leenhardt, *Villette Amazone*. 1996. pp. 21-51.
- 48 Jacques Leenhardt, *ibid.*, p. 43.
- 49 Petar Boev. *Izkustvoto na fotografijata v Bulgaria 1856-1944. (The Art of Photography in Bulgaria 1856-1944)*, Sofia, 1983.
- 50 *Woman on a bench*, 1914, 51 x 80. Plovdiv Museum of Art.
- 51 Elena Karamihailova, *By the Bodensee*, 1914.
- 52 See: Françoise Heibrun, *Landscapes and Nature*, Musée d'Orsay. Paris 2004, p. 16.

- 53 Elena Karamihailova attended a private academy for women in Munich.
 54 Camil Ressu, *On the Terrace Oteteleşanu*, 1912, 200 x 255. National
 Museum of Art, Bucharest.
 55 See: Theodor Enescu, *Camil Ressu*,. Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1984.
 56 *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228.
 57 Nicolae Dărăscu, 1918, National Museum of Art, Bucharest.
 58 Nikola Petrov, *Sofia in winter*, 1907, 64 x 120. Pleven Museum of Art.
 59 The National Theatre building was inaugurated in January 1907.
 60 Nikola Petrov, *The Mineral Baths Square in Sofia*, 1911, 26 x 40. National
 Museum of Art, Sofia.
 61 I am thinking, by way of comparison, of contextual interpretations like the
 interpretation of Pierro della Francesca made by Michael Baxandall, or that
 of Courbet's and Manet's images made by T.J. Clark. (Both of these authors
 have been cited as examples of successful art historical writing.)
 62 See for instance: Irina Mihalcheva, *Osnovni idejno-hudojestveni nasoki na
 bulgarskata jivopis 1900-1918*, Izdatelstvo na Bulgarskata Akademija na
 Naukite, Sofia 1977, p. 102.
 63 Quoted in: Bojana Balteva, *Nikola Petrov*, Izd. Bulgarski hudojnik, Sofia
 1989, p. 30.
 64 *The Dictionary of Art*, Grove, 1996, p. 169.
 65 Stefan Luchian. *Corner of the Povernei Street*, ca. 1903-1904. Oil on canvas.
 87 x 57. Constanța Art Gallery, Romania.
 66 Helene E. Roberts (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography*, Fitzroy
 Dearborn Publishers, Chicago – London, 1998, p. 587.
 67 Secession/Art Nouveau are the two most popular names of an artistic
 movement which emerged in Europe around 1900. The numerous names
 of the new style express its diversity in terms of sources, fields of manifestation
 preferred, motifs, names, artistic circles and the periodicals connected with
 them. In Bulgaria the new movement is most often called "secession". In the
 catalogue on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Modern Art Society,
 Haralampi Tachev clearly points out that Andrey Protich has a grounding in
 the arts and particularly in "the then new trend – Secession". The new trend
 is called by the term that is most widespread in the German speaking
 countries (Austria in particular). Further on, it becomes clear that Tachev
 and Protich have chosen the name of the new group in Bulgaria – Modern
 Art – "under the influence of the modern movement in the West". Modern
 Art can be interpreted as a translation of Art Nouveau. In Bulgarian, however,
 the expression is perceived more broadly than the style movement and it is
 difficult to link it with its characteristics. Possibly this is one of the reasons
 why the new art is not called after the name of the group most conspicuously
 associated with it, but using with foreign terms instead. Among them,
 "Secession" is preferred, most probably because of the active contact with
 German speaking cultures, with Austria and middle Europe.

- 68 Cf. Donald F. McKenzie, "The History of the Book", in Ani Gegova and Krasimira Daskalova (ed.), *The History of the Book. The Book in History*, Sofia, 2001, p.73.
- 69 Cf. Donald F. McKenzie, „The Book as a Means of Expression“, in Ani Gegova and Krasimira Daskalova (ed.), *The History of the Book. The Book in History*, Sofia, 2001, p. 212.
- 70 Woodcut on a wooden plate, cut against the timber fibers, which began to be practiced in Europe from the end of the eighteenth century onwards.
- 71 Cf. Segolene Le Men, "L'art du livre autor de 1900", in *L'art autor de 1900*, Dossier de l'art N 65, mars 2000, p. 66.
- 72 Cf. *Encyclopedia of Fine Arts in Bulgaria*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, vol. I, Sofia, 1980.
- 73 *L'ABCdaire du Symbolisme et de l'Art Nouveau*, Ed. Flammarion, 1997, pp. 66-67.
- 74 Cf. M. Kirov, "Tendencies in the Development of the Bulgarian Illustration from 1878-1920", in *From the History of the Bulgarian Fine Arts*, Vol. 2, Sofia, 1983.
- 75 "Modern Art" was founded as an artistic group in 1903, and as a society in 1904, in Sofia. See note 63.
- 76 In the last decades of the nineteenth century such magazines were published in Europe – *La revue blanche* in France, *Pan*, *Die Jugend*, *Simplizissimus* in Germany and *Ver Sacrum* in Austria. These magazines published texts by poets and prose-writers together with illustrations and ornaments created specially for their pages. The elite periodicals usually have a short life. The only exceptions are *Die Jugend* and *Simplizissimus*, which managed to gain popularity.
- 77 If we look for typological comparisons with the Bulgarian case, with territories outside the centers of Secession/Art Nouveau, we can find them, for instance, in Scandinavian countries. In Norway, an increasing number of references were made to the Viking art (the so-called "dragon" style) so as to underline the difference of Norwegian art from art in Sweden. In Finland, the attempt is aimed at differentiating its art from Russian art.
- 78 These illustrations are reproduced graphically by Yan Shents in Prague; the edition is bilingual, in Bulgarian and French. Cf. *Encyclopedia of Fine Arts in Bulgaria*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, vol. I, Sofia, 1980.
- 79 From 1909 to 1921 he taught at the State Art School and the State Art Industrial School.
- 80 Cf. R. Todorova, "Yosef Peter in Bulgarian Applied Graphics", *Art Studies Quarterly*, 1991, special issue.
- 81 This brings to mind the famous movie by Charles Chaplin, *Modern Times*.
- 82 Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life", first published in *Figaro*, on 26 and 28 November and 3 December 1863. Quoted from: *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays by Charles Baudelaire*, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne, 1986 [1964, Phaidon Press, London], p. 4.