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“Texts Worth (Not) Editing”. Critical Edition as an Aesthetic Symptom of Cultural Change (Two Bulgarian Cases)

The first part of the title reflects the focus of an earlier version of this paper¹. The formulation grasps the ethical dimension of editing, one which I find crucial. Cognition-al operations and aesthetic effects of editing could be symptomatic of ethically relevant choices on behalf of the editor(s). These choices, altogether with the doers’ (non)awareness of them, could be revealing about cultural differences and similarities.

The second part of the title explicates two theoretical propositions: to view (critical) editions as aesthetic objects and to consider their aesthetic characteristics symptoms of cultural change. I hope to demonstrate the operability of this double perspective analysing two sequences of (close to) critical editions.

Neither of the two propositions, nor their juxtaposition is novel. I guess there is an element of novelty in the following re-accentuating of the first one: a (critical) edition might be viewed not only as an intellectual product complemented with aesthetic ‘accidentals’ but as a basically aesthetic object, as a spatial form or as a piece of spatial ‘art’ of certain kind². Besides, my case-authors (the authors whose works were comprised in the editions I examine) were not an object of a focused study of similar kind, that is, the corresponding national literary historiography did not make the sequences of critical editions of their works an object of a historicising aesthetical study.

As a main tool I shall use the distinction between editing ‘in the passive’ and editing ‘in the active voice’ which, while remaining on the boundary between metaphor and concept/term and seemingly replicating such trivial textual scholarship distinction as the one between “clear text” and “inclusive text” modes of editing (cf. Greetham 1994: 367-368),

¹ It replicates the title of a conference in textual scholarship where that version was delivered. I am much obliged to Dr Wim Van Mierlo for the subsequent linguistic improvement of the paper.

² In viewing pieces of wording as *spatio*-temporal forms or pieces of *spatio*-temporal and even spatial art I am dependent mostly on: Ghyka 1977; Frank 1979; Eriksen 2001; and, to a lesser extent, on Smitten, Daghistan 1981. The extrapolation of this view on books as well as on such complex structures as critical editions finds, as it seems to me, support in that understanding of the art of composing and decorating a book which was demonstrated by Vasilij Favorskij (1986) and to a lesser extent by Donald McKenzie (cf. below). Drawing on an implied ontological primariness of architecture and literature compared to other ‘arts’, I tried to sketch a variety of its expressions in a previous work (Lyutskanov 2011).

makes the observations translatable into the idioms of such productive aesthetical/poetological distinctions as those of Heinrich Wölfflin and Mikhail Bakhtin: baroque vs. renaissance and dialogical vs. monological. Appealing to old and probably out-dated distinctions should serve the purpose to demonstrate that viewing an edition as an aesthetic object, or, more exactly, as a piece of spatial art, is or could be organic within the humanities tradition of the last one or two centuries.

This tool is designed to approximate a poetics of editing and hence to help view editing alongside writing, painting and other creative activities.

Insofar as emendation and commentary are unthinkable as separate activities, they form part of a process comprising two contradictory impulses: listening to an alien voice *and* taming it. We are accustomed to think that through editing this voice is made interoperable with an impersonal norm. Yet the pursuit of such kind of interoperability is usually a sophistication or, at best, a sublimation of the impulse to tame. Intimidation is instigated – and at the same time disguised – by the very idea of such a norm. Commenting on claims for objectivity in East German “Textologie”, Rüdiger Nutt-Kofoth (2007: 36-37) has already touched on the impulse to tame. What I seek to do is to introduce these conflicting imperatives of listening and taming into a context which could concretise the hermeneutical presuppositions that support Nutt-Kofoth’s criticism. I find it apt to adapt some basic ideas of Bakhtinian theory of literature and art, as a version of dialogical hermeneutics, to consider editing. Thus I shall be able to view the intimate link between editing’s inter-subjectivity (inter-personality), its historicity and the aesthetical relevance of its products (of the editions).

Mikhail Bakhtin’s well-known definition of drama – a monologue staging a dialogue – leads us to differentiate between (supposed) editorial intentions (to listen or to tame) and modes of representing them (an ‘allegorical’ and a ‘tautegorical’ mode).

It can be supposed that editing fluctuates, through time, within the alternative of its ‘active’ and ‘passive’ ‘voices’. These fluctuations might be likened to certain alternatives in art: between a ‘naturalistic’ and an ‘idealising’ style, or between instances/phases of ‘indigestion’ and of eager assimilation of ‘influences’ within the lifespan of a ‘style’.

In order to check my supposition and to develop the analogy with which I accompanied it, I shall inspect sequences of posthumous critical editions of two Bulgarian writers, Penčo Slavejkov (1866-1912), and Pejo Javorov (1878-1914), the icons of early Bulgarian modernism. I shall compare editions within the first sequence, then I shall briefly attend to the editions within the second one and, lastly, I shall try to check and expand the validity of my conclusions by comparison between the sequences.

1. *Editing in the Passive vs. in the Active Voice*

Passive and active voice editing seem to have their pure representations: in some facsimile editions and in editor’s selections which sometimes suit the text to an implied audience.

'Editing in passive and in active voice' is a metaphor grounded in the idea that editing bridges gaps between epochs and persons, being concerned with *or* disconcerned with understanding someone/the 'Other'. Thus certain features of a critical edition could be symptomatic of an implicit theory or philosophy of history.

The alternative I am introducing is grounded in the idea that editing is a kind of translation, as well as a kind of representation. An edition is the editor's work, just as a work-to-be-edited is the writer's work. Both the writer and the editor can choose when, how and to what extent they let the impact of their 'material' – themes, words but also 'influences' – be felt. To summarise, the editor may leave the 'material' of the edition – the *edition* as 'an expressive form' – out, or he may not. Such an editorial decision is comparable to authorial decisions such as the selection of point of view (invisible and omnipresent narrator or not?). That said, which bits of 'material' are the editor's, which the author's? Where does the editor's contribution begin and end? How far the editor's introspection and frankness go? Out of the 'material' to be edited, editors will construct *one* of several potential texts, depending on their interventionism, and they will explain and justify (or not) their decisions. The editorial process, then, is a meeting of two consciences, the author's and the editor's, each of which is expressed textually, the latter having the final word.

The 'passive-active voice' alternative can be used in the four approaches to textual editing defined by Peter Shillingsburg (2009): the historical, the aesthetic, the sociological, and the authorial. But only the aesthetic orientation is congenial to 'active voice' editing. Editors can impose their values and opinions in various subtle ways. In short, an edition is definable as an expressive form³ and a structure reflecting a specific, presumably collaborative, interaction. The notion of passive vs. active voice editing implies that an edition, as a presentation of textual creation and a means of textual transmission, is conceived and should be regarded as a product of collaboration. It differs from "social textual criticism" (cf. Greetham 1994: 9) in that it involves *only* the author and the editor; it does not involve the other agents that see a text into print. The collaboration between author and editor seems to exemplify the basic epistemological model of scholarship: a conscience tries to approach/understand an earlier one⁴.

The main constituents of an edition thus conceived are the following two overlapping *portions of personalised speech*: either of the work or of the document⁵ under (re)construction (the first one), and of the edition that implements and embodies this (re)construction (the second one). Below I shall be referring to them as to 'piece/body of literary/writer's/authorial work' and 'piece/body of editor's/editorial work', respectively. 'Piece of literary work' will be signifying a work, and '*body* of literary work' – an *oeuvre*; 'piece of editorial work' will be signifying in this case a volume within a critical edition, and 'body of editorial work' – a critical edition as a whole.

³ Although probably not exactly in the way a book is; see McKenzie 2009.

⁴ This model issue is recurrently discussed by Vitalij Makhlin (2009).

⁵ George Thomas Tanselle's distinction between the text of a work and that of a document is relevant here and throughout my article (cf. Thomas Tanselle 2009).

This encounter between a work and an edition (and between a document and an edition) might be described not only in the terms of Bakhtin's aesthetics (theory of intercourse between the author and the hero), but in the terms of stylistic analysis (in the sense of Heinrich Wölfflin) as well. I cannot judge whether applying the second perspective would convince; but I hope it would provide a preliminary frame of reference for considering the shifts in editing in terms of art history. And I cannot judge now to what extent (if at all) these two aesthetic perspectives are interoperable; juxtaposing them, I hope to make them interact.

2. *A Sequence of Literary Works as a Work of Literature*

What is the definition of a literary work? Early modernists like Slavejkov may posit that a work of literature is a book – a selection of poems and other writings – rather than a single poem (cf. Mikhajlova, Mikhajlov 2001: 330). Therefore an editorial decision concerning the sequence of poems within a book affects the authenticity of the work no less than a decision concerning word choice or grammar. Furthermore, early modernists challenged the division between an artist's *work* and *life* and treated the artist's life as an artistic work in its own right⁶. From this viewpoint, a work to be edited might turn out to be a complex whole consisting of a cycle of poems (published or not) and of a bundle of (private) letters. In Bulgarian literature such an approach suggests itself in the case of Pejo Javorov.

3. *The Critical Editions of Penčo Slavejkov's Works*

Presumably, a writer's inclusion and persistence in the canon stimulate intentions among the qualified readers (the editors being among them) both to listen and to intimidate him or her. Slavejkov was canonized right after his death, and his works were published in several venues and forms. There are three editions of Slavejkov's works, worthy of being regarded as critical and (almost) complete⁷. The first critical collection of Slavejkov's works was issued in 1921-1926, in a commemorative, final-authorial-intention edition. The second edition, issued in 1958-1959, combined several editorial agendas, chief among which were the sociological and aesthetic orientations. A third edition was begun in 2001, along intentional principles (like the first), but combining this orientation with a historical one reconstructing the *dynamics* of authorial intention embodied in pre-print documents. The second edition sought to induct Slavejkov, as the first Bulgarian modernist, into the revised

⁶ For more on this issue (from the standpoint of Bulgarian criticism) cf. Nedelčev 1987. Reference to the corresponding phenomenon in writings on Russian modernism (in particular, symbolism) has become almost trivial (consider the term *žiznetvorčestvo*). From the perspective of such conceptualisations of Western modernism and avant-guard as Peter Burger's, the phenomenon could be viewed as an individualist prefiguration of the avant-guard's attempt to overcome the art/life dichotomy.

⁷ See Slavejkov 1921-1926; 1958-1959; 2001-2003.

– from the standpoints of Marxism-Leninism and of socialist realism – national canon; the third, to reassess his place within a canon by improving on the first edition.

Whatever the role of these three editions in aligning Slavejkov’s works with the national literary canon and whatever their actual scholarly achievements and failures⁸ examination of their commentary sections leaves no doubt that we deal with scholarly editions. In the late 1920s-early 1940s the first of them was repeatedly reproduced – partially or at full length – to serve a different purpose: not to edit a corpus of works in a creditable and authoritative way but to socialise the corpus or parts of it. In the 1960s – 1980s the second of them was used similarly – the textological and editorial work which had constituted it was used for and within editions of one or another particular work of Slavejkov⁹.

4. *The Distribution of Slavejkov’s Works Within the 1921-1926 and the 1958-1959 Editions*

I shall focus first on the differences between the 1921-1926 and the 1958-1959 editions, the main ones of the bourgeois and of the Soviet Union-dominated epochs correspondingly¹⁰.

The first was planned to have nine volumes, but only seven were issued, because of the editor’s death. The second one had eight. The works/volumes distribution in the 1920s edition is the following (volume number; year of first publication of the work or the version reproduced; the titles are given transliterated, then in English): *Epičeski pesni*, or ‘Epic Songs’ (I, 1907); *Săn za štastie*, or ‘Dream for Happiness’ (II, 1906); *Kărvava pesen*, or ‘Blood Song’ (III, 1911, 1913, unfinished); *Na Ostrova na blaženite*, or ‘On the Isle of the Blessed’ (IV, 1910); *Germanski poeti*, or ‘German Poets’ (V, 1911); *Bălgarska literatura*, or ‘Bulgarian Literature [Critique]’ (VI/1, VI/2; first publication); *Čužda literatura*, or ‘Foreign Literature [Critique]’ (VII, first publication). The series was accompanied by a volume deliberately lacking sequential number, which contained Slavejkov’s anthology of folk songs entitled *Kniga na pesnite*, ‘Book of the Songs’ (first publication 1917, posthumous); and two more volumes were planned (cf. below). The works/volumes distribution within

⁸ The editors of the 2000s edition claim that still there is no critical edition of Slavejkov’s works (Mikhajlova, Mikhajlov 2001: 327). Yet, in my opinion, their linguistically ambiguous pronouncement could be regarded as correct only if we take it in the sense that there is no *satisfactory* critical edition.

⁹ There were one or two more attempts to collect and represent Slavejkov’s works in critical editions but they failed. A 1910s attempt had to be ceased after five volumes were published; the editor, a literary critic and Slavejkov’s close comrade Krăstjo Krăstev, unexpectedly died in 1919. In fact, it was an edition not focused on scholarly reliable representation only; besides, it had to fulfill the more important task of just publishing unpublished works (some of them more or less prepared for publishing already by their author, Slavejkov). A mid to late 1940s attempt, within which two volumes were issued (Slavejkov 1948-1949), rapidly lost ideological actuality and had to be abandoned.

¹⁰ I shall postpone my comments on some aspects of the nowadays (2001-) edition for the end of the paper.

the 1950s edition is the following: Vol. I (*Săn za štastie, Epičeski pesni*); II (*Na Ostrova na blaženite*); III (*Kărvava pesen*); IV (*Kritika*, or ‘Critique’); V (*Kritika i socialni văprosi. Eseta. Pătepesi*, or ‘Critique and Social Issues. Essays. Travelogues’); VI (*Stikhotvorenija i poemi*, or ‘Poems and *poemas* [A Selection]’); VII (*Prevodi*, or ‘Translations’); VIII (*Pisma*, or ‘Letters’). *Kniga na pesnite* was once again issued out of the sequence.

I shall try to outline the aesthetic relevance of the differences between the two editions, examining them consecutively and focusing on the following issues: the distribution of data within the editions’ front matter (esp., within their title pages); the distribution of commentary within each edition (principally within the 1921-1926 edition); the distribution of writer’s works throughout the corresponding collections of volumes (principally within the 1958-1959 edition)¹¹.

5. *Editing ‘in the Passive Voice’, ‘Renaissance Poetics’, ‘Monumentalising Solitude’, and Personalism*

The cover page of the 1921-1926, soft-cover, edition (FIG. 1) features the following: the name of the author, the title of the literary work under edition (“*Epičeski pesni*”), the number of the edition issued (as well as the editor’s name, the publishing house, the printing-house, place of publication and year), and, at the bottom, the book’s pertinence to this particular body of *editorial* work: “Collected writings, volume one”. The cover page displays a conjuncture of a piece of writer’s work (“*Epičeski pesni*”) and a piece of editorial work (“Volume one [of this particular collection of writings]”). Presumably, the sequence in which bits of information appear on the page and the variation in size of the letters encode some kind of hierarchy (situational or essential). The cover page under discussion here apparently prefers the piece/body of writer’s work to the piece/body of editorial work, letting the first one to the fore and drawing the second one to the back. Page one (FIG. 2) features the author’s name, the title of the edition (or of the body of editorial work), and then the title of the work edited (or of the piece of authorial work). This sequence displays the body of the editorial work as encompassing or supervising a piece (and, by extension, the body) of the writer’s work, and thus partly counterbalances the cover page. Page three (FIG. 3) features the name of the author, the title of the work, the place of the present edition within the sequence of editions of the work, the editor’s name, town, and year. Thus in representing the authorial-editorial work conjuncture page three counterbalances, in its turn, page one. On each page the bibliographical codes form a (quasi)syntactic structure; and each of the three syntactic structures participates in a resultant ‘super-syntactic’ one. In simpler words, the three pages form an A-B-A sequence, within which the A-elements bring to the fore a piece of writer’s work and within which the B-element brings to the fore a piece (and the whole body) of editorial work. This A-B-A structure brings to the fore a book of poems, as a piece of writer’s work and as a unit of writer’s oeuvre, and lets it introduce into a ‘collection of writings’, as

¹¹ It is important to note that I deliberately avoid attending to aspects of editing and editions which have an obvious or generally recognised aesthetic relevance.

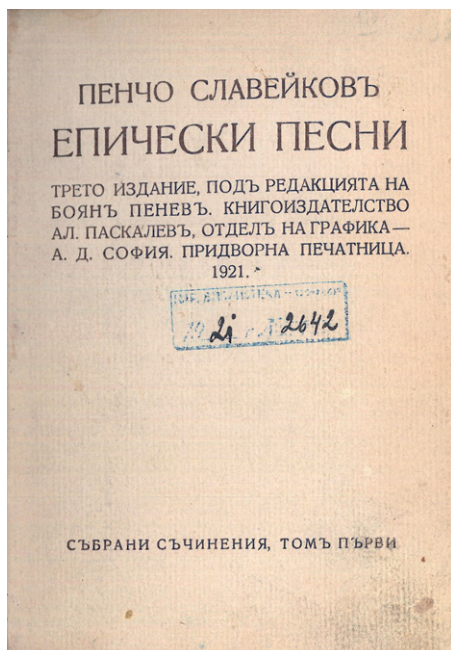


Fig. 1

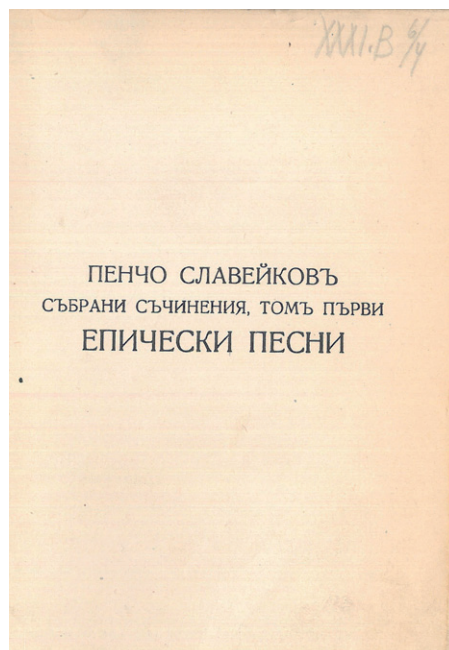


Fig. 2

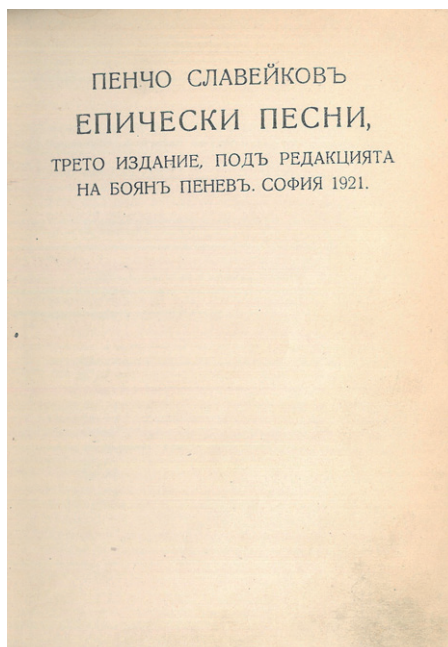


Fig. 3

a body of editor's work. The book of poems can be regarded not only as the writer's contribution to the edition's first volume, but as a part from a whole – be it the authorial (Slavejkov's *oeuvre*), the editorial (Slavejkov's *Collected writings*) or the one resulting from their conjuncture (Slavejkov's *oeuvre*-as-represented within this particular series of volumes) – as well. Therefore it is not only the prominence of authorial work over the editorial which is encoded here but also the autonomy of the part regarding the whole. Thus the 'syntax' of the peritexts within the 'front matter' – at least within its three initial constituents – of the 1921-1926 edition first volume recalls the principle of autonomy of the part regarding the whole: a principle characteristic of Renaissance art in Wölfflin's interpretation.

The bibliographical codes of this edition, far from being unique, not only instruct how to read the work. The 'instruction' itself, though usual in appearance and content, has 'syntax' approachable in terms of poetics. These terms are as diverse as those of Bakhtinian aesthetics and of Wölfflin's art history and I tried to demonstrate this in the preceding paragraph. I guess an inspection of the bibliographical codes of a subsequent edition would make the abovementioned aesthetic relevance more visible and my claim more convincing.

The 1921-1926 edition initial pages constitute a verbal-and-visual introduction into the body of the writer's work, and into the body of the editor's work as well, which leaves the former in monumentalising solitude: the editor's comment is postponed for an extra, planned to be the *ninth*, volume of the collection (consider note 15 below). Thus the edition conforms to a major, distinctive feature of contemporary Bulgarian literature: it becomes more and more individualised, sociolinguistically 'pure' and 'monological'. This 'high' homogeneity of poetic language blossomed in the 1910s; thereafter the language of Bulgarian literature became largely heterogeneous, or "democratic" (Georgiev 2001: §§ 32-33 of 208). To view the issue from a different perspective, the "clear text"- "inclusive text" dilemma in representing the literary work under edition can also be approached in terms of poetics and, of course, in the terms of the editing in the active vs. passive voice distinction.

Bringing the unit of authorial work to the fore implies an effect definable in philosophical terms. Presumably, the initial pages of the 1921-1926 edition of Slavejkov's *oeuvre*, which are at the same time the initial pages of the 1921 edition of his *Epičeski pesni* ('Epic Songs'), bear the promise of personalism rather than the imprint of individualism. The individuality of the book, a kind of a verbal clone of the writer's individuality, has in fact a history (or a story), and this transforms the individual into a person: the cover page and page number three announce that we are holding the third edition of *Epičeski pesni*.

6. Editorial 'Monologues Staging Dialogues' and Intermediality

In this collection of writings the editor favours the body of writer's work over the body of editorial work on various compositional levels, so it can be viewed as an instance of editing in the 'passive voice', yet, besides, as a monologue staging a dialogue. In this ambiguous 'dialogue' the writer speaks first, and the editor has the final words; unfortunately, the editor Bojan Penev passed away before he could complete the final two volumes (VIII and IX) of his edition.

Facsimile editions represent another kind of editing in the 'passive voice'. There the editor gives the speech not to the text of a writer's work but to the text of a document. The passive-active voice editing opposition can be used in subtle differentiations, as between sub-types of facsimile editions. Photo-facsimiles, aimed at reproducing a document, could be regarded as a form of editing in passive voice within which the 'bits' of active are made virtually invisible (unhearable of) or are 'ex-posed' as a compact frame. In type-facsimiles, aimed at reproducing a work rather than a document, 'bits' of active are infiltrated into the plate of passive¹². In parallel text editions the voices intermingle in a way definable as a kind of 'observable regularity'. And so on. I guess that each type of scholarly edition could display a passive-active voice ratio and pattern of interaction of its own¹³, but to survey this fluctuation/gradation is not a task of the present article. What I want to suggest here is that the distribution of writer's and editor's 'speech' within an edition could approximate a kind of aesthetic relevance which is approachable neither in Bakhtinian nor in Wölfflin's terms. A sequence of volumes within which only the last volume bears the substantial commentary and evokes a sensual phantasm of its own, which is too vague or arbitrary to be verbalised but is, anyway, evoked¹⁴. Viewing this kind of edition alongside with another

¹² The indicated difference between sub-types of facsimile editions is congruent with the difference between "integration" and "transformation", as types of interaction between literature and spatial arts after Hans Lund's classification (after: Geller 2002: 6-7).

¹³ Literary genres and genera display such a shifting ratio and a variety of modes of passive-active voice interaction in a similar way; the implicit author being to the protagonist what is the editor to the writer. Thus, modern novel could be viewed as a form tolerating a tautegoric mode of representing characters in passive voice; lyric – as a form of tautegoric active voice; drama – as a form of allegoric (covert) active voice.

¹⁴ In a note to the afterword of the fourth volume, Penev declared that he planned to issue eight volumes of collected works, the eighth to contain previously unpublished autobiographic material, letters and diaries. He also intended to publish an additional, ninth, volume containing his own commentary on the variants (not only the published ones), his investigation on influences (foreign and drawn from Bulgarian folklore) that shaped Slavejkov, and a bibliography of works on the writer (see Slavejkov 1921-1926: 4, 273). The afterword was reproduced in a 1929 edition of one of Slavejkov's books; it is also available on-line: <<http://www.slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=61&WorkID=1017&Level=1>> (10.12.2016). The ninth volume somehow stands out of the series and I would call it a/the 'grounding' one. The eighth would have belonged to the main corpus, though it is, to some extent, intermediary inasmuch it should have comprised rather *material for* Slavejkov's works than works proper. In the ninth the editor would have spoken on his own behalf and in the eighth he would have joined the author's 'voice', in order to let the latter sound. Vols. I-VII and IX, on the one hand, and VIII, on the other, represent (or could have represented) two different modes of passive-active voice editing interaction, *on the level of a volume's* structure. Roughly speaking, the first mode is characterised with separation of the 'voices' and the second one with fusion. Besides, two intermediary modes of interaction could be discerned. First, pp. 311-319, vol. III of Penev's edition contain a body of editor's notes on the *unfinished* book this volume reproduces and thus volume III appears to represent a mode of its own. And, second, I would like to suggest that the af-

kind could make the mentioned (virtual) sensuality appear less evasive. A facsimile edition kindles a sensual imagination of its own, which I would call pictorial, pictographic, ideographic, but not sculptural.

I regard the 1921-1926 critical edition of Slavejkov's works as a specimen of *works* (and not documents) reconstruction; of passive voice editing; of a writer's monologue (and not of the collective monologue produced by the collective author [writer, designer etc.] of a book, as it would have been in a document-reconstruction-focused edition). We may expect a less elitist literary epoch – as well as one more concerned with the convergence of literature and pictorial arts and not music – to be more interested in reconstructing the texts of documents.

7. *Editing 'in the Active voice', 'Baroque Poetics', and Non-Sculpturality*

The front cover of the 1958-1959, hard cover, edition (see FIG. 4) bears only a calligraphic representation of the writer's name (probably an imitation of his handwriting); and the spine reproduces the writer's name in type, adding an Arabic numeral (to indicate the volume's serial place within the collection). Page one (see FIG. 5) marks the book's pertinence to a certain body of editorial work: "Collected writings in eight volumes", and bears the publishing house's emblem. Page two (see FIG. 6) features the names of the editorial board members, the name of the publishing house, and the place and year of publication. It is not until page three that a piece of the writer's work is mentioned. And it is a page overburdened with information: it reiterates the name of the writer and the title of the editorial series ("Collected writings"), designates the sequential number of the volume, and displays the titles of two works of the writer, with their respective editors. Finally, the page restates the name of the publishing house as well as the place and year of publication.

To summarise: the corpus of editorial work is given a definite prominence over the corpus of the writer's works. Next, the corpus's part is definitely subdued to the corpus's whole, in a triple sense. Firstly, on the level of the editor's work: its new-formed 'part', the conjuncture of two writer's books, *Săn za štastie* ('Dream for Happiness') and *Epičeski pesni*, is being announced under the aegis of the whole that encompasses it. (The whole is named "Collected writings"). Secondly, the titles of the writer's individual books are dwarfed by the title of his complete works¹⁵. Thirdly, and affecting the interplay of the writer's and the editor's works, volume number one conflates two autonomous parts of writer's work, that is, two of his books. In short, the body of the editorial work obviously refuses to be an imprint of the writer's. The body of the editorial work refuses to be an im-

terword of Penev's *fourth* volume shapes volume IV as a representative of another mode or kind. All kinds of passive-active voice editing interaction discussed in this footnote kindle some vague sensual imagination of their own; and their particular combination in the edition under discussion kindles such as well.

¹⁵ This dominance is expressed by sequence and by the general layout of the corresponding pages.

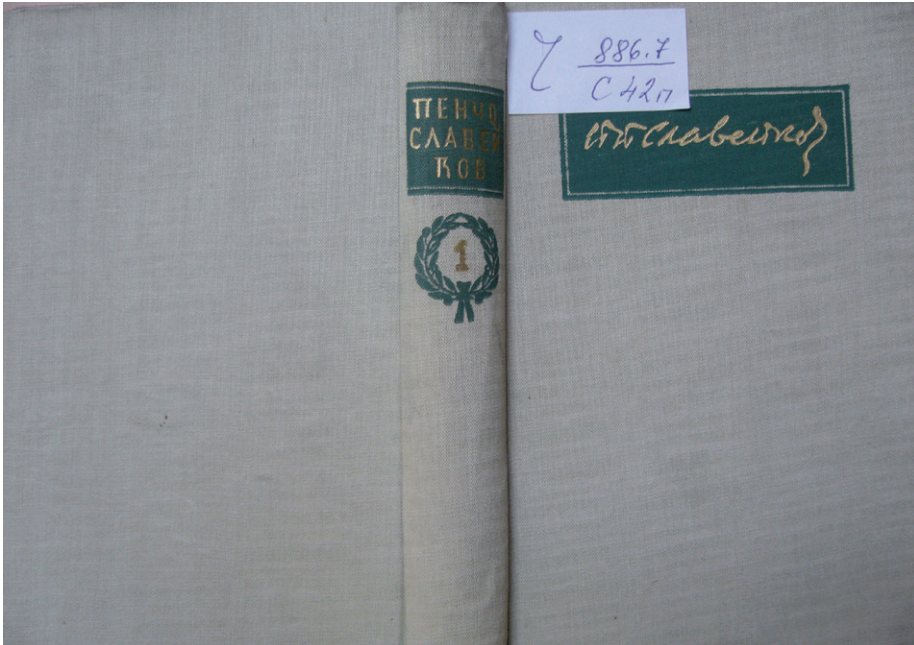


Fig. 4

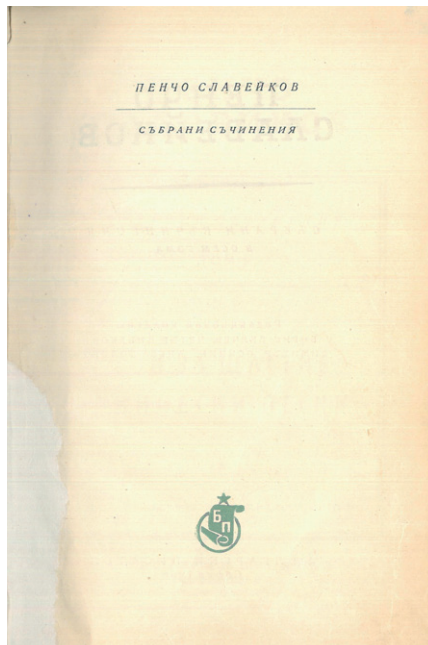


Fig. 5

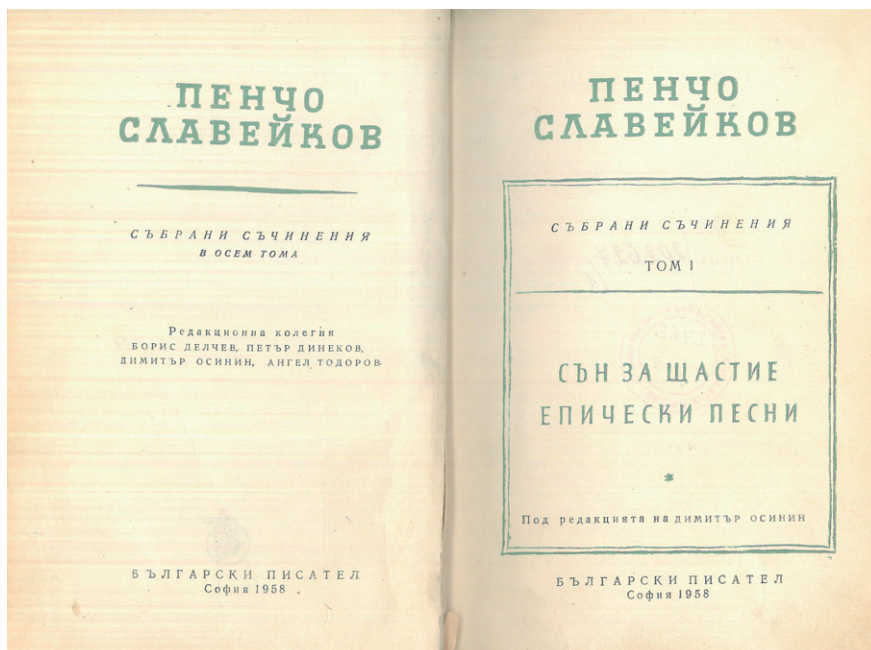


Fig. 6

print of the sequence of the writer's works, within which sequence each piece constitutes an autonomous part. But, *unsurprisingly*, the editor does not dare to (overtly) subordinate the figure of the author to himself. The writer's corpus is being supervised by the editor, the 'part' by the whole, and the work (editorially disguised) by its creator and by the publisher: on page three, where the titles of Slavejkov's works appear for the first time, much of the text is put into a frame; outside the frame remain only the writer's name and the details of the publishing house and of publication¹⁶.

The late 1950s edition displays a 'baroque' bending of the 'part' to the 'whole', and of the authorial intention to the editorial one; it is an obvious instant of editing in the 'active voice'. This edition displays, besides, an addiction to the corporeality of word and of lettering, as – implicitly and due to the inertia of the long-run cultural memory – opposed to the corporeality of a work and of a sculptural body, this aesthetical predisposition and recursion of cultural memory being embodied on the front cover, where the writer's name

¹⁶ As one of the peer-reviewers of an earlier version of this article aptly noted, the layout of pages containing titles of works and information about editorial board and so on (cf. the description of page 2 in the 1958-1959 edition above) is "largely determined by an inertia in the publishing tradition and in the Soviet period particularly by some official restrictions and guidelines"; consequently, my assumptions can be correct only "in terms of *result*" or *effect* on the reader. Indeed, the assumption of editors' *intention* with regard to the 1958 edition has to be rejected or at least needs examining the particular context of the edition's preparation.

is imprinted in the author’s hand. Presumably, this addiction is most telling and expressive in ideography and in calligraphy. The editor and the book-designers have combined to produce a dense aesthetic effect.

8. *Divisions Within a Volume and ‘Affected Modesty’*

The pieces of authorial work bound together in the volume are preceded by a lengthy biographical introduction entitled *Penčo Slavejkov* and signed at the end. This signature lends to the introduction a flavour of academic impartiality and modesty. The couple of authorial works collected in the volume are followed by editorial notes and by a table of contents titled *Content*. The *Content* section contains the item *Notes*, but there is no indication as to where the general notes end and where the notes on *Săn za štastie* or *Epičeski pesni* begin. This practice hampers the reader-friendliness of the edition, but it serves its function of repository of cultural memory. If a *Content* section is normally an invitation to use the divisions delineated by it, then the *Content* section in this edition shows, via changing the ‘focal distance’, that the editor’s notes are not as worth accessing/*inspecting*/using as the writer’s corpus¹⁷. (As a side effect, it prevents the reader from what we may call consumerist attitude towards both the corpus of commentary and, via it, the corpus of author’s works). Thus, in a ‘tautegoric’ mode, the *Content* section here reinforces the common opinion that a literary work matters more than the commentary, but this does not mean that the editors of the 1958 edition shared this opinion. The slight obscuration of the view and the impediment of the easy usability of the apparatus tell us nothing about how the editors actually viewed the work and the commentary, the authorial work and the editorial one, unless some contextual data we do not have at our disposal now is provided. Nevertheless these effects indeed contribute to the edition’s poetics. I would identify the practice of non-differentiation within the *Notes* corpus when marking its presence in the *Content* list with a condensed ideographical representation of the old rhetorical and literary topos of ‘affected modesty’¹⁸. In the context of the edition under inspection, the use of ‘affected modesty’ does contribute to its, of the edition, completeness as an expressive form displaying a certain intellectual and artistic style. Toned down yet traceable self-humiliation contributes to a covert self-assertion, the latter being restrained by the claim for ‘objectivism’. The style might be called neo-classicist, but, more importantly, it is a profoundly monologic style concerned with imitating dialogism locally, and it does require editing in the ‘active voice’

¹⁷ To deem the apparatus as important as the literary text itself is not unprecedented among textual critics: “In reversal of traditional editorial concepts, [Reinhold] Backmann ascribed to the apparatus an independent value compared to the printed text and even a larger amount of significance than the printed text. The decisive issue was Backmann’s demand that ‘*textual development*’ should be considered the ‘most important aspect’ of editorial conception” (Nutt-Kofoth 2008: 95). But I want to stress a slightly different issue: an edition can *appear as if* the commentary is ascribed an independent value or a value equal to that of the literary text.

¹⁸ On the *topos* see Curtius 1953: 83-85.

under the guise of one employing both active (when introducing an implicit hierarchy of genres and grouping Slavejkov's poems etc. accordingly) and passive (when still appealing to the authority of final authorial intention on the level of a single poem etc). In brief, we have a specimen of indirect, yet not very elaborate and not very steady in mimicry, 'active voice' editing. It exploits the ambiguity of its contemporary cultural milieu: the authorial intention centred inertia of readers' expectations was still strong and there were signs in the late 1950s that it would again come to power but the counter-individualist ideology imposed from above at least since the mid-1940s had already legitimised editorial intervention. It has in common and is contemporary with a literary language that seeks to fuse the individual voice into a collective one, but that subjects the democratic variety of social dialects to a centralised and well-orchestrated whole. Such a language might have resulted from the development that Bulgarian literature underwent (in two stages – until and since the mid-1940s) since the 1920s, till the early 1960s, and it could indeed be regarded as characteristic of the Bulgarian literature of the 1920s-1950s. Similarly, the poetics of the 1921-1926 edition reflects peculiarities and tendencies of literature and the literary language of the 1890s-1910s (cf. § 5 above). Both editions of Slavejkov's collected writings (the 1921-1926 one and the 1958-1959 one) represent the rearguard rather than the avant-garde, an outcome rather than a promise of a cultural change.

9. *Distribution of Edited Works Throughout Volumes, Non-Solitary Monumentality, and Dogmatic Realism*

To conclude, let us view the late-1950s edition as an *ensemble* of volumes and against the context of the 1920s edition. The contents of its eight volumes are as follows. Volume I contains two of the author's books, in an inversed sequence. (It inverts the sequence intended by the author who indeed had a plan how his own collected works should be composed¹⁹, and the sequence realised in the existing to the date editions)²⁰. Volumes II and III each comprise one of Slavejkov's books – *Na Ostrova na blaženite* ('On the Isle of the Blessed') and *Kārvava pesen* ('Blood Song'), respectively; and they display another instance of reverting the sequence intended by the author and fulfilled by the editor of his first posthumous collection²¹. When no reasons for editorial decisions are given, we ought to speculate on the reasons for these decisions. In both cases the 1950s editors might have preferred the chronological criterion: they placed books that had been published earlier at the beginning of each volume. It is a criterion universally recognised as scientific, or a substitute for it; it embodies the passion for classifying, one probably constitutive both for

¹⁹ See Mikhajlova, Mikhajlov 2003: 237-238.

²⁰ I mean the 1921-1926 edition and its late 1920s-early 1940s full and partial reproductions.

²¹ But do I justly equate the author's intention and the first editor's decision in this case? The contemporary edition (2000s) leaves me in doubt. Mikhajlovs intend to reproduce the 1950s edition sequence but still do not offer arguments in favour of such a decision (see Mikhajlova, Mikhajlov 2003: 238).

science and scholarship. In the 1950s, signs of scientific/scholarly objectivity should have been in accordance with objectivity as an aesthetic credo promoted by contemporary theorists and apologists of (socialist) realism in their a posteriori struggle with the excesses of modernist individualism²². The standard scholarly procedure of arranging a group of works chronologically violated, besides the supposed final authorial intention, the intuition that the corpus of an author’s works might constitute a single work; and in the case of Slavejkov we have reasons to consider even that intuition legitimate.

There could have been one more motive behind the editorial decision for replacements – one dictated by aesthetic judgement (not free from ideological bias). Most critics agree that *Sân za štastie* is Slavejkov’s most successful work (from the viewpoint not of intention, but of artistic result), and that the *Epičeski pesni* are only partly successful (as well as, generally speaking, experimentally bolder). As for *Kărvava pesen*, it was considered even more experimental and a great failure. The generically uncategorisable *Na Ostrova na blaženite* (an anthology of poetry of an imagined country) exceeded all in experimentalism and was very rarely deemed a failure; but it came second in the volumes’ sequence, not third. This double zigzag (of de/ascension and con/divergence) is underlined, however, by an upwards movement: from the intimate to the universal (from the lyric via the small epic to a complex whole transcending the epic and comprising both the lyric and the epic). But this happy sequence appeared to be unwanted: the ambivalence of *Na Ostrova na blaženite* brought to the fore experimentalism as such and not a convenient ratio of individualism, nationalistic collectivism and universalism. A certain form of national epic (such as *Kărvava pesen*), a kind of prefiguration of a socialist realism epopee, proved to be more acceptable to end the series of four volumes. Besides, positioning a work not mistreated by publishers²³ but considered an artistic failure at the end of the series reinforced the reputation of Slavejkov as a great conceptualist but not so great an artist. The volumes after the fourth compile works that could not be defined as ‘original (one’s own) poetry’: they are either criticism or actual (that is, non-hoax)²⁴ translations.

The 1921-1926 edition’s editor Bojan Penev had succeeded to prepare before passing on seven volumes, and the fourth, the middle one, comprised the work combining fiction-

²² The restoration of the ‘true’ sequence of the works could have been performed on behalf of not only ‘objectivity’ but also of ‘life’, to counterbalance the ‘subjective’ self-modelling ‘dream’ of the stubborn individualist Slavejkov and to achieve a post factum normalisation. As for the mentioned signs of ‘objectivity’, they should have been in accordance with an ideology and with a receptive milieu inclined to ignore the difference between scholarship and science and, in particular, to shape scholarship after science.

²³ *Kărvava pesen* had been reproduced relatively frequently (before 1958 it had undergone more than five posthumous editions being relatively acceptable for both the versions of collectivist ideology within the Bulgarian 1910s-1950s – the bourgeois-nationalist and the Marxist-populist).

²⁴ *On the Isle of the blessed*, being an anthology of imagined poets from an imagined country, implied that what was represented were translations, from the language of that imagined country. Of course, they were not.

ality with criticism, naivety with mystification, the position of the writer with the position of the translator; thus those seven ‘bodies’ of Slavejkov’s work had formed a symmetrical composition with a single centre of gravity (or an ‘aaaBaaa’ sequence). Delčev, Dinekov, Todorov and Osinin left eight volumes, grouped in two parallel sequences.

Those of Slavejkov’s books that had been designed to represent specimens of books of literary criticism were split into their constituent essays and partly poured into the fourth volume, under the title *Kritika* (‘Critique’), partly into the fifth (in chronologic order).

His book *Germanski poeti* (‘German poets’), an anthology of carefully arranged translations of, and introductory essays on, German poets, was inserted into the seventh volume, amidst other translations. Thus it lost in status, but, being placed at the middle of the volume, that is, in a kind of a marked position within a volume’s structure, gained compositional prominence within a narrower field: it was implicitly marked as the core of Slavejkov’s work *as a translator*. I do not know if this was intentional. On the mental map imposed on Bulgarian culture during socialism Germany hadn’t the prominence which Russia, for example, had. Thus the translations from Russian poets should have come first within the translations’ volume for ideological reasons though, of course, the editors offered a scholarly reason: chronology²⁵. And it is worth wondering (given the comparison between volumes IV, V and VII) in what cases a bit of material gains in prominence from being set in the beginning of a series and from being set in the middle. To conclude, the transfer of *Germanski poeti* from its private ‘home’ of the fifth volume to a ‘collocation’ within the seventh drastically changed the architectonics of the whole sequence of volumes. The first half of Penev’s collection ended with *Na Ostrova na blaženite* and the second half opened with *Germanski poeti* and thus emphasised the features which *this* contrast made evident – the deliberate fusion of imaginary and non-imaginary, of ‘own’ and ‘alien’ and so on.

The poems not included by Slavejkov in the final versions of any of his works (books) were gathered in a separate volume, the sixth. The *selection* was based on aesthetic criteria and on the judgements of the poet Dimităr Osinin, appointed editor of this volume. It was arranged, first, following the logic of enlargement (interpreted as ascension) of virtual communicative space – from ‘pure’ lyric, through meditative lyric and lyro-epic (excluded from the final version of *Epičeski pesni*), towards larger forms in verse (*poemas*); and, second, chronologically (within each section). The structure of the volume reproduces the structure of the first ‘quatrometer’ of the volumes’ sequence. Both structures shape an ascension from intimacy to epic and from emotion to intellect and (re)produce temporal *prospective*. The deployment of this inter-volume ‘melodic line’ suited the optimistic and counter-individualistic *Zeitgeist* imposed on Eastern Europe by the 1950s. But I would like to stress another issue: a volume’s structure could mirror an inter-volume structure and it could not.

To sum up, it becomes clear that the primary concern behind this collection was to represent the author in his various roles or talents, and to demonstrate the capacity of

²⁵ The correlation between the ‘Russian’ and the ‘German’, as generally recognised, plays a significant role within Slavejkov’s mental universe.

scholarly community to perform a dismembering exhibiting of his works. And the collection shows that editing and art of the epoch were subjected to common stylistic imperatives. The kind of editing in the active voice demonstrated in the 1958-1959 edition implies a basic premise, and an epistemological imperative, which it shares with dogmatic realism: to disguise the outcome of one’s own work as a transparent imitation of an objective/natural state of things. *Semantic* and particularising imperatives, such as preferring monumentality to privacy/intimacy and relying on common-sense banalities (such as non-analytical following the chronological principle) instead on interpretation, come next.

10. *The 2001-2003 Edition as (Self-)Reflective Reinforcement of the 1921-1926 One*

Before bringing my paper to an end, I will look at an edition representing the contemporary (post-communist) stage of editing early Bulgarian modernism. Stojanka and Kamen Mikhajlov’s edition of Slavejkov’s works reveals instances of editorial intentionality that are more complex than might, at first glance, seem. In fact, it succeeds in synthesising authorial, sociological, historical, and aesthetic criteria, although favouring the authorial; moreover, it embodies a shift in criticism paradigm regarding Penčo Slavejkov (a shift which cannot be satisfyingly explained against the context of political history), although it makes no claim to academic excellence. The two premises of the Mikhajlovs’ edition are as follows: with Slavejkov, the word “work” applies most adequately to his books (at least not less than to his poems, essays etc.) (Mikhajlova, Mikhajlov 2001: 330-331; 2003: 238); and editorial choices will inevitably alter the works’ reception. The impact on the critical reception is the “inevitable shadow” that the editors will cast upon the edition²⁶, one that mediates between the writer’s work and the reader. The edition reinforces the tradition of reconstructing and representing Slavejkov’s books as autonomous entities: moreover, what had been a personal duty of commemorators like Bojan Penev has become a stance of the literary historians like Mikhajlovs. And by assigning a title to each volume (*Epika* [‘Epics’], etc.), the Mikhajlovs make the presence and the work of the editor visible – unassuming and, at the same time, not hiding himself behind quasi-neutral editorial titles like *Collected writings. Volume One. Dream for Happiness. Epic Songs* (cf. Slavejkov 1958-1959) which in fact prefigure, by means of world-order etc., disassemblage and re-assemblage, dismemberment and replacement within the oeuvre under edition. Yet, unlike editorial titles of the 1958-1959 edition, Mikhajlovs’ titles stand for the titles of writer’s works, as does *Epics. (Writings). Volume One* (cf. Slavejkov 2001-2003), and as did *Epic Songs. Collected Works. Volume One* (cf. Slavejkov 1921-1926).

11. *Editorial Poetics in the Critical Editions of Pejo Javorov*

Pejo Javorov entered the national literary canon still during his short life-time. He was more frequently issued than Slavejkov but the overall historical pattern of the critical editions of his works is almost the same.

²⁶ Hans Zeller, after: Nutt-Kofoth 2007: 40.

The first critical collection of Javorov's works was issued in the 1930s. The second one, just as Slavejkov's, was issued in the late 1950s. And there has been a new critical edition (though far from being a full collection) in 1993²⁷. These are the three editions representative of what can be considered (the) three phases in Javorov's editorial reception sub specie the national canon and sub specie the change in (ideology and methodology of) literary criticism. But, unlike Slavejkov's case, the editorial reception underwent, within its second phase, a particular development which led, in the late 1970s, to a new critical edition; from a scholarly perspective, this edition was definitely a step forward, but conceptually it harked back to the 1950s. Coinciding with Javorov's centenary, it bears witness to his more (compared to Slavejkov's) privileged position in the national canon of late socialism.

The 1977-1979 edition was the first (and the only) to include *all the variants* of (Petko Kračolov or, as usual: Pejo) Javorov's works *available in print*. This edition indicated the final point of a certain development in editing this poet and it announced editors' awareness of their peculiar stance. Following the general plan and principle of composition of the 1934-1936 and 1959-1960 editions, the editors made minor replacements, in order to "achieve complete genre homogeneity within each volume" (Javorov 1977-1979, I: 380). The trend of *spatialising* representation of author's work reached its utmost. Identifying the gamma of *printed* variants with a completeness of representation infers that it is a representation more monumental (and reluctant to display interpenetration between an/the internal/private and an/the external/public 'space') rather than intimate. "Thus the present edition is a concluding stage in systematising Javorov's texts in print. A next academic edition ought to be altogether a return to the manuscripts [...]" (*ibid.*). I would dare to associate this point of exhaustion with the exhaustion of a certain paradigm in humanities: the one exemplified by Saussurian *langue* vs. *parole* linguistics.

Mikhail Nedelčev's edition of Javorov (1993), representative of the third phase of editorial reception mentioned above and, in general, intellectually contemporary to Mikha-jlovs' edition of Slavejkov, is more traditionally-looking (claiming on the hard cover to be just a *Works* edition) and, at the same time, more daring than theirs. Nedelčev combines Javorov's works in a way they might represent aspects of unfolding the entity that transgressed the boundary between work and life and that comprised creating art and creating one's life, and gives these pieces of re-combinatory work titles of his own²⁸. Thus the editor

²⁷ See: Javorov 1934-1936; 1959-1960; 1993. The collections witnessing Javorov's more 'fortunate' editorial destiny (at both levels of intention and of achieved) are: Javorov 1926 and Javorov 1977-1979. The 1926 edition claimed to be a full collection, but only one volume was issued (and it lacked commentary).

²⁸ The first volume, entitled *I do not live: I burn*, represents "the more 'subjective' [or intimate] part of his works, the pieces to the utmost autobiographical" (Javorov 1993, I: 379) and the second one, *Freedom or Death*, "is devoted before all to Javorov's activity as organiser, agitator, publicist and memoirist of the Bulgarian national revolution from its last period (1900-1908)" (*ibid.*: 380). In terms of traditional criticism, Nedelčev defines his criterion as "thematic", in opposition to (the more frequently employed) "genre" one (*ibid.*: 379).

justly joins the critic, becomes the 'doing' extension of the 'talking' or 'writing' self, as-sociable with the critic. Editor's position fragmentises into a complex receptacle of 'active' and 'passive' pulses, which do not frustrate each other and are not aimed to imitate impersonality and objectivism, thus making a conversation with the predecessors look possible.

12. *Happy Dialectics*

The editions of Slavejkov's works display a growth (though not without interruption, reversion and side-developments) in their respective editors' self-consciousness. Yet the change in editing suspiciously resembles a Hegelian triad²⁹.

13. *Negotiating Between Theoretic Perspectives*

In this paper I referred to several issues, inspecting some of them and leaving others almost unattended. I attempted to represent an edition as the product of a *possible* dialogue between an author and an editor. I sought to imagine and describe an edition as an expressive form. (It is an attempt which might have well departed from the statement that "[w]e need to see the S[cholarly]E[dition]s and other bibliographical tools not as neutral prolongers of the life of the works and documents but as filtering media affecting them and our way of perceiving them") (Dalström 2009: 44). I tried to distinguish between the two different roles of a scholarly edition: to accumulate and display 'editorially relevant data' (products of archival research and so on) and to contribute to the building of a literary canon. I attempted to verify if the particular curve of (quasi-)aesthetic development discerned after surveying two sequences of critical editions corresponds to chronologically concurrent developments in literature and in social style. Next, I attended to the question of whether a critical edition as an expressive form pertains to the aesthetical avant-garde, or to the rearguard of its time. (A careful investigation could differentiate between the 'shares' of the 'aesthetic epoch', the editor, and of what is direct political demonstration or imposition). Last, I recalled the common truth that editing exemplifies and tests our attitude to the past.

In focusing on editing as presentation (and not as research), my chief aim was to make an epistemological issue (one conscience encounters an earlier, different one) accessible to formal analysis. In using such expressions as "the body/piece of editorial (*vs* authorial) work" (§§ 5-8 above), one of my aims was to recall a metaphor and suggest an analogy. Alluding to the metaphor employed by Hans Zeller to describe the editor's presence in the edition – the editor is casting an "inevitable shadow" (cf. note 26 above) – I tried to show that the "editor's shadow" can take corporeal shapes regardless of an editor's will to make his or her "shadow", or "time-bound bias", visible³⁰. How, to what extent and when do editors let or do not let

²⁹ A careful survey of how critical editions reflect change and continuity in literature and society should include an inspection of monuments from the 1940s, a decade of transition.

³⁰ "The shadow is caused by the light in which the subjectivity stands, and by its location. [...] The subjectivity of the editor is not undesirable. Recognized or not, it is the prerequisite for

their “shadow” be “cast upon” the piece of literary work of art? How does the command of a “shadow’s” appearance reshape the literary work, its composition and contours? A piece of editorial work is, of course, hardly separable, even mentally, from the piece of literary work that it has explored and represented. The parts of these presumably major contributors to an edition, the author and the editor, coexist both³¹ inconfusedly and inseparably³². An editor’s work can be roughly compared to a picture frame, an icon revetment, a casket, or with an architectural/topographical receptacle of a piece of art/architecture.

In my inquiry I focused on a few aspects of editing – on those (re)presented in/via an edition’s peritexts, commentaries and division into volumes. I had several reasons for this. My primary concern was to show how a *comparison* between particular editions can make the passive-active voice editing distinction work, rather than to show how *most* or *all* stages/elements of editorial work can support it.

Next, I tried to refrain from solving a number of interpretative/disciplinary alternatives in order to keep a number of perspectives open and I focused on aspects that could support such an approach. Peritexts and composition can be viewed simultaneously from bibliographical, aesthetic, semiotic and ideological viewpoints, and focusing on them could help maintain some balance between these viewpoints. I attended to aspects which are neither obviously semantics-related nor require excessively complex considerations in order to discern the passive-active voice correlation (a correlation in fact semantic, that is, aesthetics-and/or ideology-relevant). And I attended to aspects of an edition which are an exclusive product of editor’s work or of editor’s and writer’s cooperation (that is, which are not likely to be negotiated with the publisher and the designer). Besides, focusing on such features of the edited work that are in the least extent reiterative helped me to count as little as possible for the predominant temporality of the literary work of art (a feature which distinguishes it from a work of ‘spatial’ arts) and to conceive it through a countable number of relatively large elements, that is, as a model of a work of art in general. In brief, I examined edition’s elements upon which a glance ‘stumbles’ to become a reading. But these are elements which prevent reading both from becoming a ‘flowing’ (that is, from subduing one’s perception to the dominance of temporality within the literary work) and from becoming a ‘delving’ (that is, from overestimating the spatial aspects of an edition of a literary work).

understanding and insight. But it should be articulated”, that is, the “black” shadow of an editor who separates record and interpretation is preferable, for Zeller (1995: 22), to “indistinct shadows”. Returning to my key metaphor, I contend that the articulated subjectivity of an editor could be both a ‘dialogue’ and a ‘monologue staging dialogue’, could witness to an edition ‘in the passive voice’ but also to an edition ‘in-the-active-imitating-passive’.

³¹ Compare with Francisco Rico (2006: 10 [incl. note 9]), where two opposing views on the issue are displayed. Presumably, both can be considered valid.

³² I am deliberately alluding to the probably most known formula from the Chalcedonian Creed.

Lastly, I focused on aspects which had caught my immediate attention. To some extent, I tried to account for my personal response to a sequence of editions. Of course, I am aware that my response was professionally conditioned and that it is hardly possible to differentiate between the ‘professional’ and the ‘naïve’ reader in me.

In addressing these aspects, I referred to Bakhtin in order to elucidate the epistemological perspective behind the key notion of my investigation and to provide a terminological framework for an ethically relevant poeology of editing, and to Wölfflin in order to provide a framework of formal analysis that is neither too particularising nor too abstract and that can keep the door to the history of pictorial arts open. Some of my observations witnessed, however, the limitations of the latter perspective, to evoke the apparatus of intermedial studies. An editor performs ethically relevant acts, cast in forms analysable in terms of ‘dialogue vs. monologue’, ‘Renaissance vs. Baroque’, and ‘literature vs. architecture’.

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Abstract

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"Texts Worth (Not) Editing". Critical Edition as an Aesthetic Symptom of Cultural Change (Two Bulgarian Cases)

Combining perspectives of literary scholarship, textual scholarship and of studies in intermediality, I view critical editions as ethically relevant spatial artistic forms. I find some of Mikhail Bakhtin's and of Heinrich Wölfflin's basic aesthetic distinctions the most appropriate to employ. Exploring two sequences of critical editions of Bulgarian modernists (Penčo Slavejkov, Pejo Javorov) issued between 1910 and the early 2000s, I show that their aesthetically relevant parameters could be integrated in a history of aesthetical and cultural change while paying little regard to the scholarly 'progress' in understanding the edited authors. Focusing on such aspects of the 1921-1926, 1958-1959 and 2001-2003 editions of Slavejkov's works as an edition's peritexts, distribution of commentaries, and division into volumes, I am able to trace shifts from writer-friendly to writer-intimidating editing (and back), from poetics associable with 'Renaissance' to one associable with 'Baroque' (and back), from one that invites to pre-percept virtual sculpture to one that prevents such imagination, and some subtler developments. If we agree to think in terms of a single or dominant current of cultural change, and making use of our case, we would suggest that critical editions are predominantly indicative of the cultural and aesthetic rearguard of their respective times.

Keywords

Critical Editions; Editorial Poetics; Bulgarian Modernism.