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MACEDONIA AND THE BIBLE**Jasmina Mojsieva - Guseva***Institute of Macedonian Literature**University Sts Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, Macedonia*

Summary: The text precedes the influence of the Holy Book, the Bible, on the Macedonian culture and literature from the period of its origin to today. Due to the two types of testimony, the historical and the religious, it is an important source of information that has considerable significance for the vague history of Antique Macedonia. In the Medieval period, the Bible and the Christian philosophy have a dominant role in the set up of ideological and contemplative concepts; thus, the complete medieval literature had to be oriented towards contents and stylishly expressed methods taken from the Holy Book. The literature of enlightenment is, above all, educative, moral, and critical; that is to say, serving as mockery to the limited spiritual theological assertions. The Bible is a universal cultural fact with specific philosophy in which, apart from the traditional religious topics, the actual issues of the contemporary world may be involved. Universal thoughts included in it are used as grounds for many modern and postmodern works promoting the imagination of the new types of artists. Today, it is as if the Bible has lost its seriousness and significance as it is mirrored in the suppression of its classical role to intrude the code of consideration and behavior. Even though its function in “the multicultural, multi-meaningful society” is entirely distorted, it is still fertile for setting up postmodern visions as a result of not only universality of foreseeing it comprises, but also its multilevel meaning: literal, symbolic, occult-esoteric, oracular etc., in favor of postmodern pluralistic ideas.

The relation of the Holy Book, the Bible, and the chronotope Macedonia is binary. The Bible and the biblical topics have a significant place in the Macedonian culture, but also Macedonia and Macedonian leaders have their own space in Jewish biblical papers. The Bible contains the presentation of the picture of the world from the time when it was written (in the period from fifteenth century BC till the beginning of the second century AD) as well as the specific philosophical view of the world that is based on respecting the authorities and believing that this is the way to explain the highest testimonies. Precisely because of the two types of testimonies, the historical and the religious, it is an important and unsurpassable source of information that in the past, as well as today, has a significant influence in the interpretation of the world.

In the Bible and in its special books written in the period of a thousand and seven hundred years we find ancient historical facts and data about the countries and peoples that don't exist any longer, and about peoples (such as Macedonians) whose ethnical origin is subjected to constant negation and reexamination, and the original evidences of their ancient past were systematically destroyed. We can find a confirmation of these insights in the comparative researches of the most eminent biblical translations made by the Macedonian researcher Gorgi Pop-Atanasov (Pop-Atanasov, 1995: 23-59). He compared the ancient Jewish text of the Bible (Biblia hebraica, 1950) with the authoritative biblical translations, like Alexandrian translation (Septuagint, 1950), the Latin translation (Vulgata) (Biblia sacra vulgatae, 1914), the Slav translation by Cyril and Methodius

БІБЛІА СІРѢЧЬ КНИГИ СВАЩЕННАГО ПИСАНІА БѢТХАГѠ И НОВАГО ЗАВѢТА

(1900), Bulgarian translation (Библия сиреч книгите на свещеното Писание 1925) and the Macedonian translation (Свето писмо на Стариот и Новиот Завет, 1990). If we start from the beginning, from the so called Lineage tablet of the peoples that reflects the ethnic division in the ancient world (1 Moses, Chapter 10), there is a notion of the Citims, as a separate ethnic group that he links to the ancient Macedonians, and he presents not only biblical, but also historical and archeological evidence for this believe. Especially symptomatic, for him, is the fact that the Jewish word Citim

צִיִּים

in the later translations is sometimes substituted with another word, and that causes inconsistency in the logical interpretations of the biblical texts. By the data kept in various translations of the biblical texts, he comes to a conclusion that the ancient Macedonians, in ethnical sense, were very close to the ancient people known by the name (S)cits. A fact that supports this is that Macedonians (Citims) are mentioned in the First Book by Makavej (1 Makavej 8.5) where it is stated that the tsars of the Macedonian dynasty (Philip and Perseus) are Citims tsars, („κτιτων“ in the Greek translation and „кийтиски цар“ in the Bulgarian one) and there is a notion that Alexander the Great got out of the land Citim (1 Makavej 1.1) (according to the data of the other translations), which differs from the Alexandrian translation of the Bible (Septuagint) where, instead of Citim, there is „Хеттим“ (Hetim) that is connected to the Hetits, a Hunan tribe derives from Het, one of Ham's descendents. Regretfully, we can not verify how it is written in the older Old Jewish version of the Bible and we can not compare to the others, because there aren't books by Makavej there, which opens room for intentional manipulation. The proximity of the ethnic group Citims with the ancient Macedonians is verified later by some Byzantine chronologists (Theophan, 930) who use the name Scits when they speak

about the insurrection of Macedonians – Strumjans (Tashkovski, 1966: 127). The mentioned facts prompted Pop-Atanasov to assume that the old Jewish word Citim צִיִּיִּם mentioned in the tenth chapter of the Book of Origin, refers to the ethnic Macedonians. Further on, Citim is linked to Noah's son Japheth, through Javan (1 Moses, 10.4) whose descendents populated the lands from Bosphorus to Italy and all of western countries (Latishev, 1906: 362). Besides the Citims (Macedonians) (who are Scitims in Semitic variants), as Japheth descendents through Javan are also mentioned Elisias (Greeks) (1. Mak. 6,2), Tarsis (Spaniards) and Dodanims. As a confirmation that the name "Citim" refers to Macedonia, Pop-Atanasov states also the fact that on the Macedonian territory (between Pella and the mountain Bermij) there was an ancient town Kition (Большая советская энциклопедия, 1954: 99), and the mountain named Kitos about which Xenophon (430-354 BC) in his work „Κυνηγετικός“ (“About the Lion” XI, 1) mentioned that rises above “Migdonia”. „Citim“ as an area between Pella and Eordia was mentioned also by Livius noting details from the voyage of the Macedonian army before the last military campaigns of Perseus (T. Liv, XLII: 51-53) in the Third Macedonian-Roman war (from 171 year till 169). About the connection of the Scit's areas with the territory of Macedonia there are other historical evidences, from which we'll cite the letter of the pope Ormazd to the Byzantine emperor Anastasius (approx. 505 BC): “Because in the Scit's area appeared a certain doubt in the Christian faith, that's why we decided to gather around the highly respected board in Heraclea, in the province of Europe, to achieve accordance of the souls...”¹ (Shivachev 1929: 93).

Contrary to these sources, some antic poets and philosophers (Hesiod, Diodor, Herodotus, Pompey) are adamant in emphasizing the Greek origin of the name Macedonia and the Macedonian leader Alexander the Great (Shukarova, 2003: 327), founding their evidence on the mythologem that Macedonia got its name from Macedon, the son of Zeus and Tia (the daughter of Deucalion), as the poet Hesiod states in his Catalogue, and later this legend was upgraded on by the historian Herodotus. Contrary to this belief stand numerous evidence that we can find, dating back to the rethors of Athens (Shukarova, 2003: 224-2205) (Demosthenes and others) that qualify Macedonians as barbarians that speak incomprehensive language; we can even mention the inexplicable ethymology of the word “Macedon” in the old Greek language, because it

¹ In the times of the Macedonian basileus Archelaj (413-399 BC) on the right bank on Vardar in the middle, the towns Dober, Gortinja, Atalanta and Europ were founded.

has Indo-European origin, as well as the fact that antic Macedonians and antic Greeks, much like today, were in constant conflict, and, at the end, what we find in the old Jewish version of the Bible that the Citims can be linked with Macedonians, as a separate ethnic group, different from Hellenic people.

On the other hand, we find interesting the fact that contemporary Bulgarian historians, like Kacarov (Kacarov, 1907:1-2), Cenov, Beshevliev, emphasize in the ethno-genesis of the ancient Macedonians the Illyric and Trakic participation. The numerous inconsistencies and illogicalities stated in the historical papers that have authors of Greek or Bulgarian origin, point to the idea that the statements of both are tendentious. An impartial common sense reasoning leads to the realistically drawn conclusion of Pop-Atanasov that the Macedonians are a separate ethnos mentioned even in the most ancient biblical papers as Cits, contrary to the many centuries long tendentious Greek falsifying of the Macedonian history that, as we can see, dates from the Alexandrian translation of the Bible (Septuagint). He supports his thesis turning our attention to the fact that in the old Jewish Bible the word Citim in the Old Testament is mentioned many times, and in Septuagint it is not always adequately translated. For the arbitrariness of the translation Septuagint further testify other mistakes. For example, in Dan

8.21 the old Jewish word Javan יָוָן in Septuagint is freely translated with ελληνων (Greek), so Alexander the Great instead of a tsar that is descendent from Javan, turns out to be a Greek tsar. The same happens in Dan. 11.1-4,

where the Jewish syntagm מֶלֶךְ כּוּשׁ יָוָן (Javan's tsar) is substituted by ελληνων (Greek) tsar, which is totally incorrect translation, because from Javan descend not only Greeks, but also Macedonians, Spaniards, people of Rhodes and of the Asian coast. In Dan. 11.30, the old Jewish words

צִיִּים בְּתֵיִם (Citim ships) are illogically translated with Ρωμαιοι (Roman). Also in the parts of the Jewish Bible (Est. 3.1) where the text is about Aman Amandatov called Macedonian or Agag (habitant of the capital city of Macedonia – Ege, that some linguists pronounce as Ayga), the

Jewish word אֲגָגִי in Septuagint is translated as Βουργατον (Vurgeic) and later, in the book (Estira 9.24) the Alexandrian translators replaced the word אֲגָגִי with the word μακεδων (Macedonian)” (Pop-Atanasov, 1995: 54), which is another contribution about the inconsistency of this authoritative translation.

Apart from the Old Testament, we can find data about Macedonia and Macedonians in the New Testament, in the Book of the Holy Apostles, precisely in the known dream of apostle Paul when he was “summoned by

an Macedonian and asked to come to Macedonia (Works, 16,9) to bring Christian faith in these areas. After this appeal, the apostle Paul with his associates (Syla, Timoteus and Luca) departs immediately to the ancient town Philippi (situated opposite the island Thassos) (Kacarov, Dechev, 1949: 28) where he starts to preach his teachings “outside of the city near a river, where the inhabitants had a custom to pray” (Works, 16.13) which, of course, is similar to the known praying rituals of Macedonians, mentioned by many authors.

According to the biblical legends the first baptized Christian was “a God fearing woman from the town Tiatir, she was called Lydia and she was selling red fabrics... And when she and her family were baptized, she said to us politely: If you accepted that I am faithful to God, then come on in, live in my house! She made us do that” (Works, 16.14-15). Her lineage, persistence and hospitality, according to Pop-Atanasov (Pop-Atanasov, 1995: 109), suggest that she was Macedonian by descent. He takes into account that the distant city Tiatir (located between Sardis and Pergamon) is a Lydian city, founded by Macedonian immigrants who, after the numerous conquests of Alexander the Great, were scattered in various parts of the Empire.

The first Christian church county in Europe was founded in the Macedonian city Philippi (by the apostle Paul) and was governed by the evangelist Luca (in the beginning), who stayed there a long period, that can be easily concluded by the way of addressing people in the authorized text of the apostle Luca – The Works of the Holy Apostles. Namely, the text till the seventeenth chapter is written in the first person plural, and afterwards, since the apostle Paul with his coworkers Syla and Timotheus went to Thessaloniki, the text continues with the third person plural. The evangelist Luca stayed there many years, and apostle Paul frequently came to Philippi, which lead Pop-Atanasov to conclude that this active Christian county was a place for rich and various activity, including the writing of “The Epistle to the Philippians” (written by the apostle Luca) which together with the other three gospels, is a foundation of Christianity (Pop-Atanasov, 1995: 115). As a confirmation that Philippi is an important city in the development of the Christianity, Pop-Atanasov states the quote from the well known Western theologian Gredner who emphasizes that “the gospel from Philippi conquered the world” (Гяуров, 1963: 8).

Trying to answer the question why the apostle Paul started to spread his religion precisely from Macedonia, and not from some other country, which he could’ve reached more easily and quickly, Pop-Atanasov states a number of relevant reasons. The primary reason, according to him, that he chose Macedonians, lies in their reputation in the antique world as a

famous and respectable people, to which testifies the grand connoisseur of the ancient civilizations Ernst Renan, who writes, “Macedonians are antique people that mostly resembled the Romans” (Renan, 1869: 137). The second reason is that the apostle Paul, knowing that in the major Macedonian cities a lively cultural activity took place, assumed that here his sermon would be heard, understood correctly and accepted. He wasn’t wrong, since the Macedonians accepted him well and supported his movement in any occasion, good or bad, contrary to the other believers and he states that in the biblical verses: “My heart was wormed for God, because you took such good care of me... And you know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the The Good News, when I got out of Macedonia, there wasn’t any church to give me something, nor did I receive anything except from you... (Philip, 4,101-7). The relation that the apostle Paul had with Macedonians (Philippians) was characterized with an outmost respect noted even in the first verses of his sermon to them, when he called himself “Jesus Christ’s servant” (Philip, 1.1) and making himself equal to them; that later, in the next verses, comes to be a divine brotherly love: “The truth is that I have you all in my heart – even when I’m in chains, when I defend and verify The Good News, because you all are my fellow participants in the wellness, God is my witness that I love you all very much with the love of Jesus Christ” (Philip, 4.1). With the same kindness he addresses the people of Thessaloniki: “And we, brothers, after we have separated from you for a short time, physically, not with our hearts, we had even bigger desire to see your faces. Because of that, we, that is mostly I, Paul, wanted to come to you twice, but we were stopped by the Satan. For who is our hope or our joy or a praised wreath? Isn’t that you in front of our God, Jesus Christ, who will come to us? Yes, you are our glory and our joy” (1 Sol. 2,17-20). This affection to both of them was noted by St. John Chrysostom Golden Mouth who interpreting the epistles said: “Oh, how gentle was his love for Macedonia!” (Golden Mouth, 1942: 190).

The data about Macedonia that we can find in the Bible are precious evidence about the existence of Macedonians (Citims) (mentioned in the Book of Origin); about their separate entity from Greeks (Hellenes) that is emphasized in many places by the apostle Paul; with their territory that in that time in the West reached Naples, Thassos, Philippi, to which we find confirmation even in the text about the first trip of the apostle Paul in Macedonia (Works, 16.11-12), all the way to the East, to the town Ber, which is situated an hour and a half distance to the river Haliakmon (Bistrica) from where came his associates Sylva and Timotheus to join him in his third voyage as a preacher “And when Sylva and Timotheus came down in Macedonia, Paul was...” (Works, 18.5).

Maybe that's why the significance of the Bible in our environment is even bigger, and its influence left numerous traits from antique times until contemporary ones. In the Middle Ages the aspirations were to convey the original meaning of the biblical texts, which was the primary task of the Christian church that took its basic liturgical forms from the Jewish religious services in the synagogues. The young Slavic churches from their foundations used the literary Slavic language in which Cyril and Methodius made the first translations of the Psalter from the Old Testament and the Gospel with the Apostle from the New Testament of the Bible from Greek to Slavic language. Later, on Macedonian ground in the schools in monasteries (St. Panteleimon and St. Naum in Ohrid) the intensive translating, copying and educational activities were continued.

Apart from these activities, many Slav saints from Macedonia (Cyril, Methodius, Clement, Naum) were engaged in writing praising texts and hagiographies about Christian saints and religious carols based on the textual and stylistically expressive concept of the bible text of the Old and the New Testament. (Stojchevska-Antic, 1997: 514). The Bible, as Ilija Velev shows in his book *Macedonian Literary 14th Century* (Velev, 1996: 370), has played an important role in the development of the whole structure of the genre system of medieval literature. "One part of the entire corps of the literary creative apparatus – states Velev elsewhere – is defined as biblical genre system, and the content of the Bible itself is the basis for the other genre forms" (Velev, 2000: 214). This is probably because the Bible and the Christian philosophy in that period had the dominant role in the building of the ideas and the thinking concept. The church tried to impose faith as a type of higher knowledge of the rational. The fact that faith plays a role in the external principle that regulates the behavior is evident, where moral is defined as a summary of the regulations of the behavior and customs that determine the relationships between people. The aim of the religion is moral action and judgment that are achieved through church sermons and rituals. To make them happen, old biblical texts, as well as new ones, were used. In fact, the entire medieval literature was serving the church and its spiritual experiences of the reality. Thus all medieval literature had to be oriented towards issues and stylistic expressive methods taken from the Holy Book. In the Bible lays the basis of the liturgical texts, panegyric-sermonic, hystorical-chronical texts, the texts with legislative-canon content, hagiographies etc.

Later, in the period of the Macedonian Revival, the reality, and with that the literature, is freed from the strong influence of the religion, and the Bible is viewed with an amount of criticism. As an outline, we can say that the literature of the Enlightenment is, above all, educational, moralistic,

critically oriented, i.e. in service of ridiculing the bounding spiritual theological claims. Simply put, the religious canons were no longer important, against the opportunity that was given to individuals to develop freely and to create new ethics. The spreading of the enlightening spirit in Macedonia, as well as in Europe a few centuries before that, was based in the belief that all people are equal, good and smart, and the propaganda was, above all, for the new ethical code that would make them happier. The faith in the progress was exclusively based upon a human will to act and the romantic rebellion that couldn't break from the utopia, that is, above all, a biblical orientation. In the foundations of the romantic altruism, we can also recognize the Christian ideology.

We can see that even in the time of the Enlightenment the Bible, through specific impulses and forms can achieve a certain significance that now, as is noted in one essay by Violeta Piruze-Tasevska (Piruze-Tasevska 1999: 276-280), is mainly about the modalities of the literature that uses a lot, from implications of biblical elements (pictures, illusion, symbols, poetical and narrative expressions) to the development of the imagination based on the biblical perspective. As typical examples, she mentions Zinzifov's poems, for instance Peasant woman (Zinzifov, „Сељанка“, 1983: 35), whose characteristic is the rhetoric of evangelistic purity “She prays, she crosses her chest/ With a soul simple and free/ With a soul of a woman that has no sins/ Her prayer is true/ From a pure heart and with no malice,/ Not a prayer wrong and shrewd...” and Player of the gusle in synod (Zinzifov, 1983:49) that awakes clear associations of the Christ's Sermon on the Mount: “He is naked, he is barefoot,/ no gun, no sward,/ A gust of dust from his feet rises,/ And it gets bigger and bigger./ Hungrily he watches from side to side,/ With his eyes he searches for his singer,/ He gently descends from the mountain,/ wearing the gusle, holding a wreath.”

Some parts of The Autography by Grigor Prlichev are no less indicative; in them we can sense the influence of the Christian ecumenical ethical ideal. The humanistic spirit of understanding and love is present in many dialogues and comments, like “It is a good thing when man does good things. Even to his enemies”; “Jesus Christ cares more about one sinner, than about ninety nine righteous men (Prlichev, 1967: 84). This kind of comments is evidently under the influence of the Christian ideology and the well known choice to respond to evil with kindness. The ethical spirituality of Prlichev is in consistent cohesion with the people's Gospel, that can appear unusual to someone, having in mind the fact that he was under the strong influence of the knowledge people got from the Revival. But, those expressions we interpret as lucidity, used also by Jesus, as a contrasting twist to get to the truth. According to Henry Fielding (Fielding, 1957) the

contrasting twist is based on an established opposition of a norm, an idea or an event in which the intended phenomenon and its negative form are appearing at the same time. In that case, the contrasting procedure brings to light everything that was hidden. That means that the opposing form aided with its contrasting character enables us to comprehend the whole content of the phenomena. That process of interaction in which the differentiation emerges from opposition has dynamism in itself that prompts the subject to action. But that action doesn't imply a harsh reaction of the external stimuli, but on the contrary, the Christian calmness that comes from the sense of fulfillment and pleasure because of the knowledge that we have come to the truth. It is clear that what Prrlichev is trying to achieve is the exposure of the truth about his own people and outlining the Macedonian philosophy about the democratic processes known even in the time of Alexander the Great².

The Bible is a universal cultural fact formed on the basis of the thoughts of many people with a specific philosophy in which apart from the traditional (religious) subjects can also contain the current problems of the contemporary world. The universality of the Bible can be confirmed by its usage in the artistic achievements with modernistic characteristics that, by definition, are oriented against old systems and clichés. The project of modern rationality that frees the human spirit from religious and mystical boundaries doesn't suspect that, at the same time, limits it by imposing the faith in the beforehand predicted, exactly calculated, industrialized progress and success. The freeing project of modernity as the ultimate product brings again the limitation of the forms and the manipulation with the authentic values. It's not only about the decline of the values that announce the transformation of the civilization, but it's also about the ethical crisis. It's not only that the faith in Christian God dies, but also the faith in life together with the faith in the social progress and the sense of the historical stream. This devaluation initiates radical changes embodied in the requests of creating new image of the world. The whole 19th century in Europe passed with clear announcements of the destruction of the current world image and a suggestion of another, more contemporary one. The military events in the 20th century finished the suppositions of the greatest European minds "ending" the old world structured by a biblical concept. But, that doesn't mean the end of the biblical influence. On the contrary, the Bible is abundantly used in the modernistic achievements of the 20th century.

² In the royal dynasties of Antique Macedonian, the throne was given not to the first born, but in a democratic way with secret vote the best of all royal children was chosen.

Its use can be of a formal character, enabling certain important effects, but it can also express the essence showing the relation of the author with a specific historical image of the world. Contemporary Macedonian writers Zivko Chingo, Slavko Janevski and Petre M. Andreevski use the apocalyptic biblical matrixes as a background of their own associative experiences through which they express their negative opinion about wars as a phenomenon and about postwar events of their countries. Having in mind the ability of the modernistic art to shake and twist the common relations or through its avant-garde excessiveness to destroy them completely, we are not surprised by the unusual way in which the war is presented in the works of those authors. They express their protest picturing the war convulsion from the perspective of the miraculous and the magical, speaking about them in a parodical way, with metaphorical-symbolical and allegorical expressions that are close to the biblical narration. Precisely in such style of the three Macedonian writers we can detect the biblical matrixes using the miraculous things to explain the ordinary, the symbolic eschatological visions and the eternal cyclic motion. Using the apocalyptic biblical allusions, they are trying to show the future precisely through the testimony of the unpredictable. Such are the mystical appearance and disappearance of Nedelko Sivevski or the flying of Davide Nedovetniot in the novel *Weed* by Petre M. Andreevski. Then, there are the pictures of the strange cataclysmic happenings in the nature: the untamed water, the unexpected winds, the strange behavior of the animals; those are all signs, present in the works of all three authors, that seen in the context of the *Holly Book* get prophetic functions. On the other hand, the pictures of the rhythmical change of the years cycles in *Paskvelija*; the metaphorically used weed that in its genetic code contains the principle of eternity and renewal; the character of the vampire Borchilo Gramatik by Janevski, the witness-participant of the eternal struggle between good and evil; all these actions have the function to announce the death and the decomposition of an exhausted world and the creation of a new world: better, fairer, more prone to perfection (Mojsieva-Gusheva 2004:11-2).

Apart from the leaning to the apocalyptic visions of the New Testament about the destruction of the old world, the above mentioned writers also use motives from the Old Testament - for example, the dream of Joakim Doksimov about the big tree with a star on its top, from the novel *Locusts* by P. M. Andreevski. That tree obviously mirrors the biblical tree of knowledge about good and evil, pointing to the human curious, untamable, but also tough spirit. Taking a bite from a fruit of that tree, says Vesna Mojsova-Chepishevska (Mojsova-Chepishevska, 2000:167-179), "the socialistic man learns and comprehends that not everything is like it is

said it is", that the expectations can be betrayed, so at the end of the novel the tree is cut, which is connected with the disintegration of the Collective.

The Bible in the countries of socialistic establishment, as was Macedonia till 1990, despite of the government of the atheistic socialistic ideology, didn't lose its influence. The universal thoughts that it contains are used as a basic material for many modernistic and postmodernistic works encouraging the imagination of the new types of artists. Although the religious path, encompassing the faith in the absolute truth is completely opposite of the relativistic intellectual trend known as postmodernism, the biblical associations can be found very often in the new type of artistic orientation. Their presence is totally expected in the static eras from the period before modernism, because of the belief of the absolute, canonic, firm strictness of the Bible, while in the contemporary, dynamic and relativising society, at first glance it seems that there is no place for the influence of the Bible, which in these conditions is atypical, but it is still present.

The new postmodernistic philosophy with its different point of view is often criticized by the ones that promote the old, dogmatic, normative, religious thesis and they blame it on many aspects. The path from relativism to nihilism, as is said by the contemporary philosopher Ernst Gellner (Gellner, 2000: 64), is very short. Interpreting the connection between postmodernism and religion in his book *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* he shows that postmodern philosophy leads to an intellectual and moral nihilism. But, is that really so? Let's start with the moral degradation. According to the postmodernistic philosophy of François Lyotard (Lyotard, 2002: 58) in the essence of justice or of morality is the pluralistic presentation of the various justices that oppose all hierarchical privileges that can be found in the tradition of the great narratives, given by authoritative figures or saints. The relativized version of the discourse, in fact, only helps us to confront the dominating piety, of the passion for the truth and the slavery to the unique, which is, in essence, more unfair than the changeable fairness. As for the intellectual nihilism, the postmodernists negate the past tradition, on one hand, but also very much lean on that tradition, using it as a fertile ground for their works. That means that the presence of the Bible continues to be an important segment of the cultural life. The difference from the past eras is only in the way of usage and the goal of achievements.

Its presence is applied in different unusual forms, starting from the twisted bringing up of biblical allusions, through upgrading the documents of the apocryphal archeology, to the hermeneutic philosophy with its own axiological system, while the functions that are achieved in the new artistic

systems serve to prove a non-existing one and whole, of respecting the variety of the truth and glorification of the relativism. Most biblical allusions in the Macedonian postmodernistic prose can be found in the works of Venko Andonovski. His favorite subject is a parody of the representative power of language and the doubt of its accuracy in regards of reality. In his novels *The Belly-button of the World* and *The Alphabet for the Disobedient* through a creative, biblically motivated form of narration he will try to show us that the words are only adopted mechanisms that are not always able to represent the reality accurately, and that derives from the inconsistency of the language that can not describe the world around us and which, even worse, stands between us and the world as a canvas that misshapes our vision of reality. Not only words, but the whole system of knowledge is in question, the idea of encyclopedism is negated precisely in the moment when science is promoted as a center in the development of the world. In such circumstances, as the Russian scientist Marija Proskurnina explains (Proskurnina, 2004: 102) “the Bible is not only a source of different allusions, but it is transforming in the main postmodernistic structural motive - the motive of the book that guards the universal knowledge”, that is always in question in their works.

It looks like the Bible today has lost its seriousness and the importance that can be seen in the minimizing of its classical role to impose the codex of thinking and behaving. Although its function in the “multicultural multi meaningful society” is totally distorted, it is still fertile to build postmodern visions, not only because of the universality of the insights that it contains, but also because of its multilayered significance: literal, symbolic, occult-esoteric, prophetic etc.; that is for the benefit of postmodern pluralistic concepts.

To summarize, the contemporary concept of identity is not only tightly tied to the cultural development of the individual; which, according to Erving Goffman’s findings (Goffman, 2003: 10) uses the term performance to refer to the marks through which the individual presents itself to others and enters into an interpersonal communication with them; but it also stands in reciprocity with the dynamics of the whole system of society. This standpoint is shared by Patricia Curtin and Ken Gaither (Curtin and Gaither, 2005: 91), accentuating the changing relational approach to identity which is dependent on external factors, and Michel Bassand (Bassand, 1974: 142), who understands identity as a dynamic and functional category which is maintained through social conditions that are in a constant flux. In fact, dynamics and external influence define identity as a construct, which, in its relation to others, is ever changing and adjusts to the new-found conditions.

According to Raja Jayaraman (Jayaraman, 205: 476), it would mean that identity not only alters its constitutive parts, but that it endures simply due to this ability. Hence, we may conclude that our insistence on constancy and permanence is irrational and vain, since such a category cannot withstand the test of time. That which can indeed endure is the understanding that identity as a concept is not static, since both the biological and the sociological factors which determine it are prone to change. It keeps on growing and expanding, incorporating within itself the changes that occur around it. As self-awareness, about belonging to a group which had developed and grown historically, depending on the criteria that the group established through its relations with the other social groups, the cultural identity of Macedonians was always brought into question. Such a state forced the group to create cultural products, like the story of Siljan The Stork, which on the one hand stress a desire for constancy, while on the other, point out an awareness for the need of a dialog with the Others.

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