

# FUNCTIONS OF PREFACES TO BULGARIAN TRANSLATIONS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE 1948-1998. THE CASE OF *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*.<sup>1</sup>

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In order to address the broader issue of interest here, I have selected a sample case study of prefaces to a “single” work of American literature in its Bulgarian “translation” – that of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (to be referred hereafter as UTC). Clearly, the deployment of inverted commas is indicative of an intention that has something to do with attributing arbitrary singularity both to the work and its translation into Bulgarian. For the purposes of succinctly zooming onto the preface as such and the functions of prefatorial discourse of allographic, later or delayed, prefaces to works in translation over a historical period, especially with a view to dwelling in more detail on the contextual permeations into the text they introduce, rather than on the other side of their relation to the specific text they precede (or follow), it seems useful to me to suspend for the purposes of the present discussion considerations of concrete textual particularities of the translated text (indeed texts) of UTC – multiple adaptations, translations, and editions – but keep in mind their multiplicity. In short, that which is meant hereafter, unless specified, by the text of UTC or the text of UTC in Bulgarian translation is simultaneously “the fluid text of UTC” and the “idea of the text of UTC” in its *arbitrary singularity* and *de facto multiplicity*.

The selected case study, however, leads to expanding the time frame of proposed interest. The beginning of prefaces to UTC in Bulgarian falls well before 1948. When contemplating the idea of discussing functions within a period delineated by economic and indeed political signposts, it occurred to me that such an exercise would inevitably pull my reading into certain directions prompted by pre-delivered frames of such nature. On the other hand, the deployment of the term “functions”, indebted to Genette (237-293), leads one into a discussion of generic features that would benefit from a bigger picture. In other words and to modify this slightly, it appeared that reading the prefaces to a single work across time would be that which allows a set of texts from the designated period, 1940s-1990s, to be read within a continuum of genre conventions (prefaces do this and that in general: what they do, why they do it and how they do it) and an authorial/textual presence across time in a given context. An illustration might be helpful to elucidate the point which is made here – reading only the prefaces within the designated period may lead to thinking of rigid ideological frames solely in terms of hardened ideology or centralised economy across that period. However, if one looks at those both with genre in mind (abstractly) and across a larger timespan - there's not only a certain genre expectation that pushes the text of the preface in certain directions but also evidence that, for instance, what Genette terms “manifesto” qualities (271) are likely to emerge in different hues across different ideological dispensations that are seemingly less regulated than in the period in question. Additionally, taking a specific textual/authorial presence in mind as the presence actuated into being by the preface adds into the picture the continuum of that presence in a given context, which often carries with it – and carries over times and contexts – features which are no less decisively framing. The text of UTC, as well

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as its author Stowe, has more often than not been circulating with emphatic social and political attachments.

Henceforth, I will first outline the factual parameters of the case study, then consider – following Genette – their typological dimensions and generic functions. In doing so I will be rendering the entire preface/postface oeuvre surrounding UTC in Bulgarian and then zooming onto the four different prefaces that fall strictly into the temporal parameters of interest.

### **The factual parameters of the case study**

In the period between 1858 and 1998, there existed and circulated over 35 editions in Bulgarian of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It is one of the first books of fiction translated from English into Bulgarian and could be approached – as it has been to a degree – for the purposes of Translation studies (theory, history and practice), especially with regard to contextualised and focused considerations of translations from English into Bulgarian, also within the framework of Reception studies, i.e. reception of American authors into Bulgarian. Some scholars who have done so are Aretov (1990), Trendafilov (1996), Greenberg (2001), Kostadinova (2001), Filipov (2004), and most recently Pileva (2010). Even if tangentially recruiting specific prefaces to arguments related to issues of reception or particular translations of UTC, the prefatorial discourse has not occupied a central concern in those studies.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Bulgarian offers a variety of translations: both abridged and full, retold or adapted for children (for instance, from the 1901 rendition for children by Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall which circulated in Bulgarian since the 1920s). It has been translated from languages such as Russian and English, or French, with a background of consulted adapted editions from Russian, French, Swedish, etc. as indicated in the 1911 preface.

The various editions are accompanied by about 20 prefaces (or afterwords) which have been consulted in the process of the present study. Among them, there are 10 ostensibly different ones on the level of textual content, the rest are reprints with variations. The “mere” reprint variations range from substitutions of font to presenting a different pagination and offering updated norms of spelling or grammar. These I do not regard as different texts. Slight abridgement, as in the case of the 1942 preface, which reworks more substantially in terms of actively editing the ending of the 1911 preface offers grounds for considering them as different prefaces because of a significant shift – to a secular rhetoric – in terms of articulating the relevance of each paratext to its respective contemporary moment.

Her immortal work, UTC, continues to develop in the hearts of readers until the present day a striving for light and truth and excites in them the love for God and their neighbour<sup>1</sup>. (1911: 21)

Her immortal work, UTC, kindles in the soul of readers until this very day a striving for light, justice, and freedom and awakens in their hearts love for the oppressed and wronged. (1942: 8)

### **The typological parameters of the case study**

Formally, the prefatorial discourse surrounding UTC in Bulgarian is a discourse in prose, typographically delineated, often bearing a generic title (1897, 1898, 1917) or simply stating the name of the author of the text (1898, 1911). Variations on the theme involve “about [author]” (all reprints of Filipov's since 1954), “about [book title]” (1924, 1936, 1939, 1947), or blended between the two (since 1985). Amongst these, the longest title is “How the book UTC came into being and notes about the life of the author” (1911). With its twenty or so

pages, this is the longest preface which offers a fictionalised narrative of the author's life-story, including dialogues like the scene from Harriet's early years in the school at Litchfield below:

The pastor did not know that this composition was written by his daughter and asked, "To whom belong these serious thoughts and who is capable of writing in such a wonderful style?" The teacher replied, "Your daughter." (1911: 6)

In terms of location, all until 1947 (five different ones, in several reprints each) are preludial, the rest are postludial (four different ones, in over a dozen reprints). The positional change in this case bears little significance on their functions. Only two prefaces make instrumental use of their postludial position which assumes that the reader is poised after reading the text. Within the period of interest these take recourse to closer references to the text – commenting on the storyline or the depiction of the characters, naming them with the assumption that readers are familiar with them.

Time and occasion have a more pronounced, even if almost uniform, bearing on the contents of the prefaces. These are late and delayed prefaces whereby only one is within the lifespan of the author (anthumous), all the rest posthumous. One of the effects of the posthumous timing of prefatorial discourse is that it leads to presentations of the author's life in both biographical facts and as related to a complete oeuvre. In such case, prefaces display – as indeed prefaces to UTC in Bulgarian do – a tendency to eulogise and fix the author in certain terms carried over across time, a tendency which also often projects to her work as well. Such considerations are especially relevant with regard to the above-mentioned 1911 edition – it marks an anniversary of the author's birth which could account for the fictionalised and romanticised rendering of her biography, among other aspects. Similar occasional considerations surround the prefatorial discourse in 1954 which presents the work to Bulgarian readers in its brand new contemporary translation by Anna Kamenova close to the hundredth anniversary of the first appearance of the book. With regard to time and occasion, it is worth noting that there is a single preface, in the Govedarov & Cie edition from 1898, which presents Stowe as a writer of a number of other published works. Even if listed in a footnote, they are critically evaluated and only then dismissed on the grounds of "not surpassing the level of mediocrity" (v). From there onwards, biographically as a writer, Stowe is exclusively treated as an author of a single book. It appears that with time there has emerged the consolidated vision of equivalency between this particular author and her book.

In terms of senders these are all allographic texts (Stowe's authorial prefaces have not been reproduced in Bulgarian), when the alleged author of the preface is a wholly different (third) person. These are unattributed, attributed to "the translator" or "the editor", signed R. M.<sup>2</sup> (1932), Yo Danailov<sup>3</sup> (1936), Vladimir Filipov ([1954], 1956), Anna Kamenova (1985<sup>4</sup>). I will return to these senders as authorities later on. For the moment suffice it to say that it is only Mutev in 1858 verbalises the authority of the sender through the deployment of "me", even if citing another authority, with regard to man being owned by man, "In vain do you tell *me* that there are laws which sanction this ownership". For the most part however the book and its subject matter are rendered through the third person singular. The senders of the Bulgarian prefaces to UTC are no exception amongst allographic preface writers in this respect. In the case of the prefatorial discourse surrounding UTC in Bulgarian the third person is the norm, with the strategic deployment of "we" which first appears as echoed from the preface of H. E. Marshall to her "UTC retold for children" from 1901 in Danailov's prefaces in the 1920s and 1930s and then "returned to" in the "manifesto" rhetoric of the 1954 postface and the blend between the two – being inclusive of children and issuing a communal appeal – in the preface of 1985.

The addressee, i.e. the reader of the text, is “poised for an imminent reading of the text” (Genette: 194) or, in the case of a postface, has just concluded a reading. Since 1897, the abstract reader of the text can be seen as acquiring specific characteristics. It is then that there emerged a specific category of readers, namely “our young readers” (1897) who were to benefit from reading abridged, retold, adapted versions even before the Bulgarian text of the UTC makes use of Marshall’s 1901 adaptation for children in English, which was in full swing in the 1930s. However, these do not preclude a posited “adult” addressee whether in capacities related to the “younger audiences” mentioned (be they parents, teachers, educators) or without such an immediate relation to children. The adult audience is rarely addressed directly but implied, especially when details of what Genette calls “philological rigour” (265) in the functions of the preface emerge.

### **Functions of Bulgarian prefaces to UTC *and* in the designated period**

In most general terms, just as their authorial doubles, allographic prefaces aim at promoting and guiding a reading of the work. They do so by presenting and recommending. They present information about the creation of the work as a text and in its material manifestation as a book. They also offer a biographical presentation about the author of the text and sometimes inform their readers about the other works by the same author. The latter aspect of information presentation – already bridging on interpretation and the critical – gestures towards the second main function, that of recommending the text to its readers from a position of authority.

The examples discussed hereafter are, in general terms, paratexts – texts that precede or follow, or are variously attached to the work UTC. They do acquire specific manifestations as texts, as attached to specific editions, as being posited at a particular time (even if sometimes written for another), as being written by specific authors, among other considerations, yet at the same time they share a generic logic. It is in this movement between the general and the specific that I hope to map the considerations of interest to this study.

The position of authority in allographic prefaces is occupied by a third person – the preface writer – who often is “the writer who is capable of adding value to a work – of adding an interpretation, and therefore an exemplary theoretical status” (Genette 268). In the case of works in translation the preface writer is “generally better known in the importing country” (Genette 268). Named or unnamed – but quite possibly known, even if unnamed, in her moment – the third person relies on an air, perception or reality of authority stemming from: (a) being the translator - a status with almost mythic dimensions of authority, yet relying on tangible parameters, such as knowledge (languages, access to sources, intimate knowledge of the text that affords her an expert position ); (b) being appointed for the undertaking in some professional capacity in an official institutional grid of what we call nowadays culture industries; and (c) more abstractly perhaps, occupying a space of authority by association with the “authority of the text”, the author of the text, and other authors of other prefaces to other texts, or even simply by virtue of being the first to address the reader or having the last word on the text. Yet, irrespective of that stance of authority, it is very likely that a preface writer, any preface writer, would echo the apprehensions expressed by Sartre on his prefacing of *Le Traître* by Andre Gorz before the “authority” of the genre itself:

But as soon as I seized the pen, an invisible carousel began turning just above the paper. It was the *Foreword [sic] as a literary genre*, which was seeking its specialist, a serene and handsome old man, an Academician... (Genette 274)

As already mentioned in passing, there are five named authors of prefaces to UTC in Bulgarian. Mutev, the first translator of UTC into Bulgarian, is the editor of *Bulgarski*

*kinizhitsi*, associated both in its moment and retrospectively with the entire oeuvre and mission of the periodical, together with its role in the Bulgarian Revival<sup>5</sup>. Danailov is a congregational minister and editor of collections of folktales at the time. Markov is the translator of the 1947 edition. Within the period of interest, there are two named preface writers whose authority is related to the issues addressed in this paper. Filipov is the author of the afterword accompanying the 1954 edition (and all subsequent reprints until 1979) in his capacity of the editor of Kamenova's new translation of UTC into Bulgarian. Also, he is an English studies scholar and staff member of the only English Department in the country at the time. His latter capacity has a bearing on both the content aspects of his afterword and on broader contextual considerations. One of the expressions of the former, for instance, is the first time introduction and definition of terms pertaining to the larger socio-political and historical context of the USA (variously related to the text of UTC), such as "the underground railroad" or "Ku-klux-klan" from a position of an expert. Additionally, he is the first to refer to authorial paratexts and cite from them, even if they have not been reproduced in Bulgarian editions. Secondly, in relation to broader contextual considerations, Filipov, in the role of a preface writer, is an example of the function which English studies scholars will be increasingly performing from the late 1950s onwards, in the period of institutional expansion and academic consolidation of English studies in Bulgaria. I address the potential implications of this elsewhere (Katsarska 374-86). Kamenova is a Bulgarian writer, translator, and intellectual, associated with the "Native Art" movement in the 1930s, and a cultural activist both before and after 1944. Kamenova's afterword which replaces Filipov's in the 1980s to go with her 1954 (slightly edited) translation raises a different set of contextually-bound considerations. The actual date of her writing this text is not certain, nor is it clear whether it has been edited or revised. It appears accompanying UTC posthumously – she died in 1982 – and was in all likelihood written much earlier (perhaps by decades). The positing of Kamenova's afterword at that particular junction has something to do with two interrelated pulls. Kamenova's authority status in the Bulgarian context was under reevaluation and reinstatement at that point – collections of her creative writing were published in the same period for the first time since the 1940s. The political and cultural reevaluation of Kamenova happened in a period when the significance of the 1930s "Native Art" movement (together with its literary associations) was emphasised, especially with a view to recruiting them to cultural policies concordant with ideas of national identity, heritage, and origin marking the 1980s. These contextual considerations intervened in significant ways in articulating the "present day relevance" of UTC to Bulgarian readers in the 1980s – even if quite possibly not specifically written for that particular edition of UTC, *Kamenova as an authority and the text of her afterword became the expedient means of framing UTC at that particular junction with superceding contextual concerns*.

In the case of prefaces to UTC in Bulgarian, the presentation of information both about the author and the book dominates. No matter whether explicitly stated in their title, all the prefaces to UTC in Bulgarian identify Stowe as the author of the work and inform readers about her biography. At the same time they list details pertaining to the inception of the work – as a text and as a book. As suggested by the enumerated titles of these prefaces above, the emphatic focus might fluctuate between "about the author" or "about the book" (or both) but that fluctuation usually has a bearing in terms of the amount of detail in which her biography is rendered – those which forefront the author give more specifics of dates: birth, death, move to Cincinnati, marriage, etc., also dates as sporadic references to her life as a professional writer or names of places and persons associated with her life – birthplace, father's name and occupation, husband's name, children, references to relatives or circle of associates. It would be difficult to exhaust the generic imperatives that feed into the presentation of information about book and author, with a view to highlighting how these work towards specific

manifestations of interest here – *Bulgarian context and a particular timeframe*. But I will attempt to do so by a few examples of intentionally different order.

In the vein of presenting information about the book, the string of prefaces from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1911, then the reworked in 1942 preface and afterwards the 1997 postface, which in a number of ways returns to the rhetoric of much earlier prefaces (pre-1940s), provide details of the first publication of the original. Along these lines, the Bulgarian context sifts into this generic trend in its own generic right by offering details of the first publication of the work in Bulgarian. This is done by virtue of proclaiming its “accompanying the first translation” status in 1858, and then in 1897, 1898, and 1917 – *a fact to be returned to in the 1980s*. With respect to this line of bibliographic reference Kamenova’s preface conforms to a factual expression of a function (even if erroneously listing the date 1898 as the first Bulgarian translation), *while at the same time raising the relevant questions of why this return occurs then and what else might project a link between the specific moments in time*. One possible answer is that these are all marked by contextually-bound heightened national interest, coupled with a pronounced focus on “origins”.

Another stable presentation line, by extension recommending the book as well, is related to the book’s popularity and circulation. In this the basic variations of the presentation include – widely read, widely liked, widely translated, and widely sold. The excerpts below are indicative examples.

This work had an enormous success: in the very first year of its publication thousands of volumes were sold (in England alone it was reprinted 35 times), it was translated into 19 languages, and rewritten as drama 20 times. (1897: vi)

...this novel was received like a new gospel and swiftly gained popularity. Received with high-acclaim in America, immediately translated into almost all languages, popularised through dozens of melodramas, reducing millions of viewers to tears, it [the novel] has endured a number of editions and left an extraordinary impression in both hemispheres. (1898: v)

The book has been avidly read not only in America but throughout the world. In a short period of time, it was translated into about twenty different languages, so that all could read and understand it. (Danailov 4)

In one day they sold three thousand books. Within a year they sold three thousand books. [...] four months after the book came out, the writer got for it more than ten thousand dollars. In Europe the book had an even bigger success. Within a year, in England about a million books were sold. (1942: 7)

The book was translated into all languages. (1947: 103)

UTC was so famous that its first edition sold in one day. (Filipov 393)

For the first time the book was translated here as early as 1898. It has been translated into many other languages. In the Soviet Union alone, there are 59 editions with a total circulation of two million copies. . . . The first edition of the novel sold in one day, while in England it reached a print circulation of 1 million within a year. (Kamenova 306)

Within a year UTC sells three hundred thousand copies. Almost immediately the novel is printed in England, where in a very short period it sells a million and a half copies. (1997: 425)

The trope of numbers which is so obvious throughout the presentation of UTC has initially something to do with coming to grips with a phenomenon – that of a modern day bestseller. At the same time these numbers are implicitly recruited in the separate prefatorial texts to various aims (besides promoting the book for purchase). These, for instance, are posited before paragraphs rendering the book as influential in abolishing slavery in the prefaces between the 1890s and early 1900s, i.e. at the time when national interest would be high and retrospectively constructing a number of issues related to the frames around what slavery would be associated with in the Bulgarian context. An aspect of that retrospective reconstruction is emphasising the instrumental role of literature in achieving political, social and national agendas as well. Among other dimensions, this presentation line of how popular UTC is in terms of print circulations also *maps other contexts (linguistic or geopolitical) onto the phenomenon (UTC) at the self-same moment testifying to the “worthiness” of the work* in prefatorial terms *just as it maps the Bulgarian context - as taking part in this readership circulation by virtue of the respective edition – onto those other contexts*. Hence, a specific manifestation of a generic function in the emergence of popularity, authority, or “worthiness” markers related to the Soviet bloc space in the period of interest, for instance.

The authorial presentation of Stowe has many complex levels. These involve – but are not limited to – a presentation in which Stowe is revealed through her biography as an author of a single book, daughter, wife, mother, political figure, celebrity, and so on or any combination of these. Even if each presents a curious trace to follow, especially “woman” or as “attached to children”, I will illustrate the implications for the case in point only with the persistent line of factual references to her religious background and how they slip into the interpretative mode. With the only exception of the three prefaces by Danailov which make some use of Marshall’s preface where the biographical fact is perhaps implied in the phrase “[Stowe] possesses a merciful heart” (3), the occupations of her father and husband seem to form an indelible part of the author’s biography and then seep into, among others, the “content” and “message of her work” as well as the “the aim with which it should be read”. It transpires across the range of prefaces until the 1930s (most strongly in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 1900s) that because of these facts she is the embodiment of the spiritual elevation the text contains and is to bring to its readers. However phrased, in the 1890s Stowe is a “daughter of a famous priest – the minister Lyman-Beecher” (iv), in 1898 (the Govedarov & Cie edition), it is that Stowe “grew up in an evangelical American family, all the members of which made more or less famous names for themselves in the field of literature or theology” (iii), this presentation line is firmly associated with Stowe and the prefatorial discourse surrounding UTC in Bulgarian. So much so, that it is almost inevitably there. In 1947 – a border line moment between changing ideological dispensations – it is not there. In 1954 and thereafter until 1979, she is presented as the “daughter of a poor priest” (Filipov 392). In 1985, towards the end of the postface a redemptive recourse is taken to “truthfulness” as well as a critical interpretation of the sermon scene in the book, as follows,

Even though Harriet Beecher Stowe had grown up in a religious environment – her father was a priest, and her husband a religious studies professor – she actually kept the events in her book truthful. . . . She ironises the sermon of the priest that some people are created to command, while others to obey. (Kamenova 309)

Similarly, the earlier text framing UTC in the period offers a critical interpretation of what might be considered weaknesses of the writer herself and her text (in the portrayal of her characters). Here in my view arise questions about tensions on many levels. It is clear that a particular context interferes in the manner of a dominant ideology, yet at the same time there appears *a pull to exercise one's authority of preface writer to interpret, so as to protect, be that a reader or a book or, in fact, an author even from the facts of her biography.*

In the "liberated" environment of the 1990s, the beginning of the 1997 postface takes recourse to a return to previously existing (and no less constricting) terms of framing the author and by extension the didactic value of her work as follows:

She is the daughter of a protestant priest and grows up in a deeply religious family. Her first reading is the Bible from which she accepts the deep truths which would later inspire her literary works. (424)

The final illustration is about one of the lines of recommendation followed by prefaces to UTC in Bulgarian, namely that which is related to "contemporary relevance" – that which boils down to "read this book because it has a bearing on the present" - whether explicitly stated or implied. The following set of quotations, which appear usually at the end of each preface will serve as material for the subsequent discussion:

... now we are offering them [younger readers] an abridged translation and we hope that UTC will excite in the reader feelings of affection and sympathy towards wretched humankind. (1897: iv)

Her immortal work, UTC, continues to develop in the hearts of readers until the present day a striving for light and truth and excites in them the love for God and their neighbour. (1911: 21)

We must be happy it is thanks to UTC that the liberation of Negroes was achieved. We must be happy that the pen of a weak woman succeeded in breaking the heavy chains of slavery. Indeed, what greatness even the humblest man is capable of achieving when he loves his neighbour and works for his good. (Danailov 4)

Her immortal work, UTC, kindles in the soul of readers until this very day a striving for light, justice, and freedom and awakens in their hearts love for the oppressed and wronged. (1942: 8)

[After the publication of the book] . . . Many started talking about and writing against slavery. Several years later the government of the United States was forced to free the slaves. But what kind of freedom it was! Instead of lodgings, clothing and food rich Americans began giving the Negroes totally miserable salaries and wages for hard work in farms and factories. In this way the situation of the Negroes did not particularly improve. Even today in America the wretched Blacks are servants to the rich, and poorly paid workers. Negroes cannot marry whites; they live and work in designated places and do not in any way have equal rights with white Americans. (1947: 103)

UTC is a realistic novel, which presents to us a vivid picture of the life of Negroes in slaveholding America from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the

book is valuable to us not only from a historical point of view. Today, more than a hundred years after the appearance of UTC, the Negroes in the USA are in reality slaves. They are subject to various restrictions and persecutions. In spite of the written laws they have almost no political, economic or cultural rights. The fascist organisation of Ku-klux-klan keeps killing and torturing the Negro population. There also still exists the monstrous lynching in the USA. American capitalists, just as their Hitlerist predecessors, are trying to poison the American people with the idea that they are a “supreme race”, which must rule over all other peoples and especially Negroes. Stowe clearly reveals that Negroes are equal to the whites in every respect – both in intelligence and in abilities. In this way she exposes the lies of American capitalists with regard to white supremacy. In this we find the relevance of UTC. Her story evokes in us disgust not only towards Haley and Legree, but also towards their contemporary descendants. This is what strengthens our will to fight against their attempts to enslave other peoples and stop the building of our bright future. This is what we will not allow. Against them fight the Negroes and all progressive people in the USA and they will inevitably prevail. (Filipov 1956: 395-6)

But until this day the novel touches us. Not only because of the sincerity and truthfulness of the events and characters. There is another reason. The Negro issue has not yet been resolved. There exists inequality in the USA, persecution and racial discrimination in relation to its Black population. Certain organisations aim at challenging the Negroes and treat them as inferior. Blacks have no other motherland and naturally want to be recognised as equal American citizens. No Negro in America knows which part of Africa he originates from. Where is their proto-motherland? They cannot penetrate into their more distant past and discover the roots of their people. They only know that their great great grandparents were brought in chains to this land which is now their patria. For decades the Blacks have been humiliated, insulted and depersonalised. Today, confidence and pride awaken in them.

This is what gives the novel its contemporary relevance.<sup>6</sup> (Kamenova 1985: 309)

Viewed as above, the rather lengthy continuum of prefaces immediately suggests two observations. One, it appears that this text (perhaps strikingly so compared to other texts and authors) has been esteemed at each stage in terms of its ideological implications. In a way *there is a presumption of UTC being a socially-interventionist text, to be read and presented as such, as one which is tied with a social lesson and enables a social act.* These presumptions cut across socio-historical contexts in the Bulgarian case but are also part of the prefatorial discourse of UTC in other cultural and linguistic contexts. At the very least, they have been part and parcel of the authorial prefaces framing the work for American, English, or European audiences from the book’s very first editions. Two, *in combination with the imperative of the genre of prefaces in general and with a view to a historical continuum of prefaces to UTC in the Bulgarian context, there unfolds a stable imperative to articulate that “present day relevance” in such terms.* Along such lines, the last two quotations in the selection offered above conform to an imperative. It is in the particularities of their expression that there emerge the permeations of the context of interest here (Bulgaria in the designated time frame), permeations which supersede, as it appears, the text itself.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Blizhen*, in the Biblical sense of “love thy neighbour”.

<sup>2</sup> The initials stand for R. Markov.

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonym of Yosif Isakov Danailov.

<sup>4</sup> Unknown date of origin.

<sup>5</sup> To see how this association is articulated in detail refer to Aretov (1990), Trendafilov (1996), Greenberg (2001), Kostadinova (2001), and Filipov (2004).

<sup>6</sup> All translations into English from prefaces in Bulgarian are done by me. These aim at being faithful rather than balanced or idiomatic. The use of Negro in the Bulgarian idiom is closer to the connotations of its usage during the Harlem Renaissance (in the works of Alain Locke or Langston Hughes, for example) than to its present day associations in English.

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