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Made in Bulgaria

The national as advertising repertoire

Advertising in Bulgaria has always been tied to the national. In the late nineteenth century, it capitalized on the concern about the rapid invasion of western goods; during socialism, advertising took on the role of educator of the new socialist citizen; and since the 1990s, economic patriotism has attached itself to national mythology. Nevertheless, writes Milla Mineva, in Bulgarian political discourse, to talk of the nation means to talk non-politically. Advertising makes visible this depoliticization of the national.

We are those who were destined to walk a long road. We are those who start from the beginning. We are those who feast as if for the last time, who together enjoy small things and who together achieve much. And when we surpass ourselves, when fate turns her back on us, this is when we attain our heights: when we rise against this same fate, against injustice, against the arrogance of the mighty and against ourselves. And when we fall, all we are left with is the choice to rise again, to hope and to believe, to believe until the end, and even afterwards. Because we are Bulgarians, we all belong to one team.

The text is impressive, the picture dark; unless one plays close attention, one might think that this was a documentary film about the Balkan wars of 1912–13. However, the camera is recording not battle scenes but football matches; what we are watching is not a newsreel but an advertising clip. It is not inviting us to join the Bulgarian army or even to support the Bulgarian national football team. It enjoins us to a much more everyday gesture — to buy Zagorka beer.

This text is an example of how the nation serves as a repertoire for advertising. One is tempted to say that what is interesting here is the emergence of a new player — advertising — in the construction of national ideology. This is by no means new — advertising has taken part in this game since the nineteenth century in these lands.¹ The most interesting aspect is not the player but the context in which the national drama is deployed. Advertising becomes a cultural form in which we can see symptoms of this new context.

Advertising break

Why does advertising attract our attention? To answer this question, we must put advertising in its place, namely by considering it as a cultural form of consumer society. Thinking and interpreting modernity through consumption is an enormous research field whose presentation is impossible and

unnecessary here. I will stick to outlining the most general frame of the concept of consumer society. The basic premise of this research field is that modernity comes about simultaneously as an industrial revolution and as a revolution in consumption;² or, most generally, as an overall market revolution (Slater 1998). One of the promises of modernity is that it will achieve a good life for everybody precisely through mass production and mass participation in consumption. The industrial reconstruction of the world is conceived as an instrument for the creation of a "good society" based on the material happiness of the masses.³ This is precisely why "the most important validity test for political regimes is based on their capacity, quite literally, 'to provide goods'".⁴

Hence another concept becomes interesting to our text, namely, "consumer culture". Research in this field has several emphases. First, it tries to produce an understanding of the consumer as a social actor who, through everyday practices of consumption, invents, criticizes, and changes the world in which he or she is located. In short, the shop turns into an arena for negotiating socially relevant meanings. However another emphasis is more important here. This is the effort to construct a new concept of culture, carried out by Stewart Hall and the Birmingham Centre of Cultural Studies. Without dwelling on the debate,⁵ I will only describe its stakes. The first is to invent a concept of culture through which one can study modern cultures as authentic, in other words a concept that does not refer by necessity to the past, to the roots and the history of a society but that highlights the contemporaneity of cultural practices. The simplest definition in this direction is "signifying practice".⁶ Let us expand it in order to see more clearly the stakes. Culture begins to be conceived at the level "at which the social groups develop specific models of life and give meaningful form to their social and material life experience. Culture is the way, the form in which groups 'work with' the raw material of their social and material existence."⁷

What is new about this definition? What the Birmingham group did was to interpret practices that had until then been analyzed beyond their cultural dimensions; they turned the political and the economic into objects of cultural analysis. At the same time, this led to the politicizing of culture; the study of cultural forms turned into an interpretation of political struggles. The second stake is no less important, namely: the emphasis on the creativity of social actors, on their ability to change and redefine the situations they find themselves in. Thus, "culture is the way in which the social relations of a group are structured and formed; but simultaneously the way in which these forms are experienced, understood and interpreted."⁸ This conception assumes that the meanings of cultural forms are constructed in the moment of their consumption. This is why the concept of "cultural repertoire" begins to be used. It describes the process in which cultural forms are ascribed a meaning in the moment of their production. But this is only a possible, publicly declared meaning; it is not the definitive one, since it is subjected to different uses by social actors who can, in practicing it, even reverse these public meanings. Thus cultural forms begin to be interpreted not as public documents of rigid meaning but as raw materials of meaning production.

If, so far, we have spoken of the shift of the concept of culture from its inherently conservative understanding to an active and contemporary process of representation, we must now add the definition "consumer". Cultural forms in modernity pass and are practiced through the market. About this, scholars of consumer culture but also their vehement critiques from both the left (Adorno, Horkheimer) and the right (Ortega y Gasset, Daniel Bell) would agree. Hence, we must turn to something seemingly self-evident, namely the historical

construction of cultural forms. Why? Because critiques of the inscription of cultural production and consumption onto the market refuse to accept the specific nature of the cultural forms of modern society in which they take place. Refusals differ greatly. On the one hand, Adorno and Horkheimer see commercial culture as a conservative structure for maintaining the status quo and a technically advanced form of social control.⁹ On the other hand, conservative critiques interpret it as a moral and value regression from a utopian time when cultural forms were high, ideal, and generally widespread. I call it a utopian time in order to avoid differentiating (since this is not the centre of this text) between conservative critiques in which the normative form is designated as religious and those in which it is classical modern.¹⁰

What is interesting here is the basic premise of these critiques, namely that the mutual interweaving of cultural and market forms is not a specificity of modern culture but a deviation from the essence of culture; in other words, a refusal to recognize all historically constructed cultural forms as authentic with their own contemporaneity. If we identify a certain moment as a "turn", it is not because this is the first emergence of something, but because it is then that a certain discourse, earlier marginalized, is seen as a resource for constructing new concepts, schools, research fields. Precisely such is the case I am describing; it is largely related to a re-reading of Weber, Benjamin, and Gramsci.

Let us now return to cultural forms as historically constructed and specific to a society at a given place and at a given moment. On the one hand, society has at its disposal a historical storage of cultural forms that define a "field of possibilities".¹¹ This is the pre-given repertoire of an already articulated social experience that social agents use, transform, invert. On the other hand, the emergence of a new social experience cannot always be expressed in transformed cultural forms, thus the emergence of new cultural forms is linked to social change and the need to articulate new social experience. The study of Benedict Anderson is classical in this sense; he related the construction of the imagined community of the nation to the new medium — the newspaper (Anderson 1998). The first attempt in this direction belongs to Walter Benjamin, who tried to speak of the new social experience of modernity through the Parisian *passages*, an attempt unfortunately left unfinished. This project has since become a commonplace of inspiration to scholars of consumer culture. They tell a new history of cultural modernity that is a story not so much of the factory than of the department store.¹²

Against the background of what has been said so far, we can talk in general terms of a shift in the concept of culture toward practices of designation, in which social actors construct meaning in the process of consuming cultural repertoires. This immediately focuses the attention of the researcher onto those repertoires used by the greatest number of people. Thus, "mass" culture begins to be called "popular", and its separation from high culture begins to be conceived as a power practice by means of which elites legitimate their high positions in the society. What is more important, at least to our text, is not the critique of the concept of "mass culture" but what is expected of that culture. The expectation has been formulated by Stewart Hall through the re-reading of Gramsci and his concept of folklore. According to Stewart Hall, popular culture is, "in essence, a commonly accepted art that repeats — in an intensive form — values and attitudes that are already familiar, which secures and reaffirms, but at the same time brings in something from the surprise of art as well as from the shock of recognition". What is interpreted when one studies popular cultural forms is precisely the familiar: one seeks the construction of

everyday meaning rather than the articulation of new, alternative social meanings, which remains the trademark of "art for art's sake". Thus, what popular culture allows us to see are those repertoires through which the grand projects of society have managed to take root in everyday life, in "common sense" as a cultural system.¹³

In such an approach, advertising appears as a specific and meaningful cultural form. It is the medium that manages to construct the public meaning of goods with which consumers play in order to invent their identities, and that describes as a whole the social space in which consumers are located.¹⁴ Another aspect of advertising makes it even more interesting, namely its ability to allow the grand projects of modernity to take roots in everyday practices. To demonstrate this process concretely, one must narrate the social history of advertising. To keep this long story short, I will refer to a number of studies that focus on separate points in that process. The nineteenth century was the era of great inventions that genuinely changed everyday life and constructed not merely modern public industrial society but also "modern" everyday domestic practices. The problem is that "machines" were not allowed to enter the home without resistance (nor, for that matter, the factory, if we remember the Luddites). Design and advertising succeeded in inscribing machines into images acceptable to the social imaginary. These were not images of modernity, but of Romantic mythology, of all things. The design of machines as natural or mythical objects: recall the Singer sewing machines with their curved bodies, wrought iron vines forming the pedal and the table, and the leaves and roses on the wooden panel; another version of design popular in the nineteenth century loads the construction with animals, fantastic creatures and fairies. Advertising either constructed products around the idyll of the paradise lost, or inscribes them into the sphere of the nuclear family, in which the machine has simply replaced the fireplace.¹⁵

In short, the modernization of private space goes on behind the back of the modern project; the disenchantment of the world passes through the enchantment of the private. This tendency is reversed in the 1920s, but it is only in the 1950s that modernity came to be perceived as a desirable and prestigious way of life.¹⁶ Together with the idea of modernity, advertising also roots the idea of liberal democracy into everyday practice. In the 1920s, the discourse of advertisement was strongly political. Advertisers used a set of political metaphors to construct the image of consumption, goods, and the consumer (quite problematic by that time). In fact, political metaphors was used precisely to create a consumer (who did not exist yet) of goods that were industrially produced, standard goods with "brands".¹⁷ But it also did something more, that is, to link consumption and democratic citizenship in both official and popular ideologies.¹⁸

Although in the 1920s one cannot yet speak of mass market, it is mainly the prosperous part of the middle class that consumes, at that time one-third of American society. Nevertheless, advertisements and advertisers construct consumption as a field of mass democratic participation: in the 1920s, the mass market was still an advertising idea with political implications. It is then that, through metaphors, the status of citizen and the consumer were equated, as was the purchase and the political choice; consumption was portrayed as "a time in which one exercises one's individual civil role and public identity."¹⁹ What, however, guaranteed the continuing functioning of the metaphor of consumption as political activity is that it "offered the means of activity and self-definition that were undermined or seriously challenged in other spheres".²⁰ Advertising is one of the cultural forms through which one can root

the grand political projects of European modernity into everyday practice.

The Coca-Cola side of life

According to a study by Ivan Ilchev, there are no convincing data proving the existence of advertising in Bulgaria until the 1840s.²¹ From then on, advertising announcements started to slip into the press. Since we are not interested in the logic of advertising proper, but rather in its ability to construct public images of the desired, let us pay attention only to the ways in which advertising was done at that time. One is impressed by the abundance of advertisements announcing periodicals subscriptions, new books, and textbooks.²² In these "Revival" advertisements, the space of desire is "Europe", or as Ivan Ilchev put it: one of the specific traits of the period is "the wild striving to become like 'Europe' at any price".²³ Desislava Lilova demonstrates how, in Bulgarian textbooks on world history, "Europe" played a central role in the construction of the national imaginary, and how the similarity between the periphery and its symbolic centre turned into the basis of the self-imagining national identity.²⁴ The advertising of Bulgarian goods, as far as the origin of the goods was mentioned at all, was mostly based on their lower price. Nevertheless, even back then, advertising played with patriotism to capitalize on "the concern in Bulgarian society about the rapid invasion of western goods" (Ilchev 1995: 171). An example of the link between the national and advertising is an advertisement for a new casino in Constantinople. It emphasizes that it is addressed to "the Bulgarian public" and that it is precisely for that public that "a Bulgarian casino" has been opened. The owner touchingly declares that "he hopes also his 'compatriots' would support him in his patriotic intentions".²⁵

As this example demonstrates, advertising is one of the oldest players in the imagining of the Bulgarian national collective identity. A study by Georgi Georgiev, *Sofia and the Sofiotes 1888–1944*, shows that there are reasons to talk of a continuing tendency. Despite its beloved public narrative, socialism did not at all presuppose a disruption of this tendency. During socialism, advertising was legitimated through its ideological function rather than through economic efficiency; it took on the role of educator of the new "socialist citizen" and was expected to change the structure of traditional consumption — a function, to be sure, bestowed on it as early as the nineteenth century — and to create modern models of consumption.²⁶ Besides that, it was also to "propagandize the successes of our people's economy",²⁷ and it is within that propaganda that the imagining of the national continues, especially from the end of the 1960s.

On the basis of this history, one might characterize the nature of Bulgarian advertising: instead of being aimed at the individual consumer, it promotes a vision of the collective; it sells a collectively imagined good life rather than individualist images of happiness, as is the norm in the "West". It tries to criticize consumer culture but also its specific deviation in the form of "consumptive nationalism".²⁸ While advertising links the political project of liberal democracy with consumer practice, there is another doubtlessly modern project in whose framework liberal democracy comes about: that of the territorial nation-state. Nevertheless, there will be no talk here of the economic policies directed at the creation of a national market or of those encouraging national production (policies that accompany the emergence of modernity and capitalist forms of production); we are interested in the advertising through which the patriotic consumer is imagined.

At the beginning of the century (around the 1920s), the goal was to create a mass market at the level of the social imaginary. Advertisements tried to conceal economic inequalities that allowed only a small part of society to participate in the consumption of industrially produced goods. Advertisements aimed to replace the politically constructed image of a class society by the image of an undifferentiated and peaceful community. This community was precisely the nation. This is why the addressees in this period are "citizens" (or "Americans", "Frenchmen", "Englishmen", or "Bulgarians"): the construction of a mass market passes through the representation of participation precisely in a national political community.²⁹ What is more curious is that through consumption, the national enters the private space. If Benedict Anderson speaks of the role of the newspaper and the novel as cultural forms that succeed in creating collective solidarity, then advertising is what succeeds in nationalizing not public but the private lives. It started to portray most ordinary, everyday rituals and practices precisely as national; it is the cultural form that copes with the materialization and the "becoming everyday" of national affiliation, with all risks and benefits of that.³⁰

Let us tell this story not theoretically but through a particular case, that of the product Coca-Cola. Everyone of us has heard or seen how Coca-Cola rots teeth; but this is not what turns it into a pet aversion of anti-globalist or nationalist discourses today. There is another suspicion — it can rot identities. And it does so in a specific way — by rotting "authentic" local identity, American culture shines through. The grounds for these discourses lie in the product itself; it is sold as "an American product", as a symbol of the American way of life, as the company's advertising messages themselves announce. The linking of Coca-Cola with American identity is most interesting during World War II, when Coca-Cola expanded outside the US. It was then that the company started building its factories at places where American soldiers were fighting; providing a 5-cent bottle of Coca-Cola to each American soldier became the patriotic duty of the company. Seemingly, this was a loss for the company. In fact, the gain was enormous: when Coca-Cola went to war, its sales in the US rose sharply. The home-market advertisements of the period declared that drinking Coca-Cola was a way of demonstrating solidarity with "our soldiers". Besides that, the enlargement of the market provided long-term profit to the company. This was not the sole scheme in which Coca-Cola became a symbol of the American way of life. Another important thing was the narrative that the company told about itself. It was "American" in the essential meaning of the word, because it incessantly spoke of the American dream, the company incorporating the myth of the little man who believes in himself and manages to turn his mistakes into successes. Not least, Coca-Cola became national through external attack. The Soviet Union made a lot to equate Coca-Cola with America.³¹

Thus we see diverse strategies that in the final account link consumption to nation. I say that to show that even in the exemplary country of individualism, advertising does not necessarily construct individual consumers; on the contrary, it quite often gives repertoires through which to imagine collective, and in particular national, identities. Douglas Holt, analyzing not separate advertisements but "brands", argues for an even stronger thesis, namely that national myths have a central role in the creation of these brands.³² Thus, we can outline a circle of cultural production in which the national myth helps invent a "brand"; the constant advertising of the products of this brand, starts to function as cultural material through which to incessantly imagine, reinterpret and support national mythology.³³

Native is cool

After describing advertising as a cultural form, as one of the symbolic structures through which the national is rooted in everyday practices, it is time to return to the contemporary Bulgarian context. I do that with the motto "Native is cool", invented in 2006 for a campaign advertising Bulgarian goods on both the domestic and the European markets. This was the initiative not of private companies but of state institutions, financed as part of Bulgaria's pre-accession communication strategy. The state promotion of "economic patriotism"³⁴ began in 2004 with the campaign "Made by a Bulgarian", followed by "Choose Bulgarian" in 2005. In fact, we may have to go even further back to 1994, when the "Made in Bulgaria" union was established. Since its inception, the Minister of Economy gives a yearly prize, "The Golden Martenitsa", to Bulgarian and foreign entrepreneurs working in Bulgaria. One of the holders of this high distinction is none other than President Georgi Parvanov. In his reception speech, he said that: "While we lead abstract debates as to what nationalism is and what patriotism is, the 'Made in Bulgaria' initiative succeeded in imposing high standards for the quality of Bulgarian produce." Patriotism emerges as a consumer strategy, or as "economic patriotism". What is curious is that "economic patriotism" starts to be promoted noisily only when political parties embrace nationalist discourse.

However, what is so interesting about economic patriotism? It is definitely surprising to anyone with at least a little experience of the socialist period and the beginning of the "transition".³⁵ Let us remember just a few things. The era of socialism created a space of desires whose name was "West".³⁶ Everything "good" came from there or, in Bulgaria, from its window shop, the Corecom.³⁷ I will not fall here into a sentimental childhood narrative about the chocolate eggs that we tried to obtain by diverse strategies.³⁸ I will only recall those status symbols that stood at visible places in the living room — the empty Coca-Cola can, the Johnny Walker bottle, the robot from the Marlboro boxes.³⁹ Naturally, the fall of the Berlin wall unleashed the desire for "Western" goods to such a degree that Bulgarian craftsmen produced labels of renowned brands that they merely attached to goods of unknown origin. "The West" came to Bulgaria, and together with that, money disappeared. This process, however, re-semanticized the notion of "Bulgarian". Let us remember the expression "a Bulgarian business", which is still used and which has only negative connotations. The expression "Bulgarian shoes", on the other hand, has become a "brand" to the extent that quite a few Spanish shoes have begun to us the word "Bulgarian" to describe quality production at an acceptable price.

Within consumerist practice, a positive definition of the national emerged that referred to the life we are leading rather than to the historical myth of the greatness of our ancestors. I would not describe this as a conscious strategy. It is instead related to the nature of consumption, which aims not at transcending the present,⁴⁰ but at creating reasons for positive choice today. At the moment when "economic patriotism" passes from the sphere of consumption into the sphere of promotion, the definition of "Bulgarian" changes rapidly. For example: the "Choose Bulgarian" campaign openly recycles the nationalist symbol of the three-coloured banner; its logo is graphically styled as folk embroidery. The "Made in Bulgaria" campaign, for reasons that are unclear, chooses as its symbol the lion that Bulgarians know from history textbooks as the sign on the hats of the nationalist revolutionaries; to make completely sure that the nationalist symbolism will be recognized, the lion hangs on a braided tricolour. We can see how economic patriotism, both as consumer strategy and

as advertising campaign, quickly attaches itself to national mythology.

Coverage everywhere

This is declared by an advertising campaign of the telecommunications company Globul, which assures us that if we use their service we will always be connected. The image is more interesting than the slogan: coverage is represented as a folk-style Chiprovtsi carpet. In another advertisement of the same company, an Asin dressed in a "Bulgarian" costume plays the bagpipe. Thus, we see how national images are recycled in advertising and how "the visual props of national ideology" are privatized, as Boyko Penchev defines it. The national flag flutters not only in the "Choose Bulgarian" and Zagorka advertisements, but has also appeared in a Gillette advertisement in which, under the shaving foam, the three-coloured banner shows. It is notable that the same advertisement can be seen with the German or French flags — this was a global campaign, localized through easily recognizable national emblems.

Far more interesting are the ads that use visual clichés of the national without naming it as such. For one of their campaigns, the M-tel mobile phone company chose haidouks with big moustaches and fur caps. One Rakia brand invented the figure of the returning emigrant who recognizes home through the shopska salad and, naturally, the rakia. In another such ad, a salami travels around the world to bring to the emigrant the warmth of home. Raw sausages do not lag behind. Some of them evoke the patriotic film "Measure for Measure" in order to sell Macedonian sausage as "the most romantic part of Bulgarian history". Others find their recipes deep in the Balkan mountains, which "keep their secrets". If Zagorka beer tells us "one people, one team", an earlier version of this slogan sells frankfurters: "One land, one people, one brand of sausage". And let us not forget to mention the renowned historian Bozhidar Dimitrov, who, standing in front of the Thracian treasures in the museum of national history, endorses "a wine of great rulers".

Why should advertisers turn the national into an advertising repertoire? Advertising agencies, when trying to sell a global product, have an interest in insisting on the specificities of the place. If there were no local differences, they would have simply distributed global advertising material. The invention of local specificity automatically leads to the need to produce or at least to adapt advertising messages. This kind of economic rationality determines the behaviour of advertising agencies all over the world. In the early 1990s, advertisements were simply imported to Bulgaria. Gradually, local products started to grow and advertising agencies became more and more powerful. The second reason to inscribe the product into some local imagined can be told through the experience of the other global symbol of American culture — McDonald's. The product that the company sells is standardized, but a certain percentage of it is localized, since, according to the policy of the company itself, consumers must recognize the product as theirs, as familiar, as something to which they have become accustomed. Thus a French sandwich appears in Paris and a haidouk burger in Sofia. In short, ads reaffirm local specificities because companies have interest in looking local rather than transnational.

This, however, does not explain the use national images and especially their use by Bulgarian companies, which should not need additional inscription into the context. As argued at the beginning of this text, advertising interests us as a cultural form that dramatizes common sense. This means that it uses already existing, historically constructed cultural repertoires; it is "an ideological

parasite"⁴¹ that uses the myths that are valid in a society. What the recycling of national mythology in advertising messages shows is that the nation has "coverage everywhere". Advertising offers not simply products but also dreams of the good life and repertoires of collective identities. What we see today is that it is only the national that still succeeds in producing collective identity. Or, more precisely, there is no other popular discourse through which to construct new collective identities and new solidarities. After the nation–state underwent theoretical deconstruction and practical bracketing–off, national mythology was unmasked and the national returned as a narrative of collective solidarities.⁴² If we follow Rogers Brubaker in his statement that the nationalisms "that are the result of the nationalization of the political space are different",⁴³ we must describe precisely this specificity. Therefore, the claim of the text is that the national in advertising is deeply non–political and it is this that makes it a suitable for the purpose. What does a non–political national mean, insofar as the national is a political project for the construction of a modern nation–state? After the nationalization of the political space, the national turns into the zero degree of collective identity. It would be hard to differentiate the political parties in Bulgaria along a nationalist/non–nationalist axis. This is most clearly seen in the party manifestos as concerns culture. Under the declared political consensus about Bulgaria's accession to the EU, there is another undeclared, self–evident consensus about the greatness of Bulgarian culture. The agenda of the Bulgarian Socialist Party and of that of the DSB, the party claiming to be the most radical political opposition to the socialists, agree that culture "is a source of national self–esteem". There is also consensus between them concerning the "protection" and "preservation" of Bulgarian culture and national identity. One may wonder who is threatening it and, if it is so endangered by the country's entrance into the EU, how one can legitimate the grand political project of the Euro–integration of Bulgaria.

The national has long ago ceased to be a specific political project. On the contrary, the "Bulgarian" is the definition of the "consensual" — the lowermost level of agreement. And more radically, the "national" in political discourse means to talk non–politically, not via different positions but using "common sense". Advertising makes visible this depoliticization of the national. To be "Bulgarian" is already a matter of everyday self–evidence about which one does not ask; this is part of common sense that is never put under question.

How the national became local

Does not the turning of national images into advertising repertoires tell a new history? This is what I would allow myself to claim. Let us once again survey advertising campaigns. Simultaneously with the nationalist advertisements of Globul are a few other curious campaigns. For a some time, Globul used to welcome passengers arriving to the Sofia airport with the seductive image of a watermelon with cheese and the slogan: "Eat local. Speak Globul." Another ad informed foreigners that "In Bulgarian, 'Thank you' is 'Merci'". And according to Hertz, there are four things one must do in Bulgaria. The fourth, of course, is to hire a Hertz car, but the first three, as shown in the pictures, are to eat in a Trojan style ceramic pot, drink wine from a keg, and listen to folk music played on a gadulka. These ads use national clichés like those described above, only their addressees are obviously different. This is a construction of specificity of place that differentiates it in a world conceived as transparent, interrelated, or global.

Manuel Castells states that the nationalisms today are more directed to culture than to politics; they are more "protective" of existing institutions than projects for the future. This is evident in the use of the national as an interpretive framework in which to think of "culture" and "identity".⁴⁴ I would claim, however, that the national is not spoken out as a "reactive identity" or, at least when used as an advertisement repertoire, it turns into something else. Let us remember the theses of Appadurai, Daniel Miller, Featherstone, Lash, and Richard Wilk, which, despite their different perspectives, show that the global circulation of goods, images and people does not produce a homogenization of the world but, on the contrary, leads to a differentiation of place. Thus my thesis is that the outburst of the national is related precisely to this need for inventing a local. National images are simply at hand, they are so constructed as to show specificities in a field of comparison, and that for a very long time.⁴⁵

Let us now compare the Zagorka clip and the novel *Under the Yoke*. However much pathos this clip may contain, it still speaks of football and not of the April Uprising of 1876. In fact, this clip is also an exception to the other "nationalist ads", precisely for its pathos. All the other ads do it "tongue-in-cheek". The haidouks can't agree whether to abduct the girl or the telephone, the expert on ham happens to be a priest who only eats meat on a Friday, the patriarch is referred to mostly through the jokes about mothers-in-law than the idyllic narratives of the "zadruga". Even the Zagorka ads recall the well-known song "Win or lose, we will get drunk". What has happened is that the national is de-dramatized. The images of the nation as advertising repertoires are separated from the national ideology of pride. They are recycled into local exotics. The local has no other alternative connotation, it still has not discovered its own narratives beyond those of the nation. On the other hand, the "Bulgarian" is suitable for the invention of local specificities. Since the late 1960s, the "Bulgarian" has turned from a political project into a spectacle of collective togetherness. In this sense, it is politically empty, but visually full. The national as an advertising repertoire does not construct a narrative of the "preservation" of any collective identity. On the contrary, it produces visions through which place can become visible in the global circulation of images.⁴⁶

¹ See: Ilchev, I. 1995. Advertising during the National Revival. Sofia: the Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House (in Bulgarian).

² I will not dwell here on the debate whether the process is to be defined as a revolution. The critiques of this concept who assume that the process is rather very slow and long-term relate this temporal conception also to industrialization, i.e. the basic assumption is that industrialization and consumption go on at similar speeds, simultaneously to one another (see McKendrick 1982).

³ See: Buck-Morss, S. 2000. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*. MIT Press, Cambridge and London.

⁴ Brewer, J. & R. Porter (eds.) 1993. *Consumption and the World of Goods*. Routledge, London and New York.

⁵ For an interesting and provocative interpretation of these debates, see Terry Eagleton's *The Idea of Culture* (Eagleton 2003).

⁶ Hall, S. 1983. Ideology in the Modern World in: "La Trobe Working Papers in Sociology", Sept. 1983, paper 65. This definition continues the tradition of Geertz.

⁷ Clarke, J & S. Hall, T. Jefferson, B. Roberts 1981. in: Bennett, T. & G. Martin, C.: 53.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T. 1999. *Dialectics of the Enlightenment*. Sofia: Gal-Iko (in Bulgarian).

¹⁰ This debate, although through different perspectives, can be found in the quoted Terry Eagleton's book *The Idea of Culture* (Eagleton 2003) as well as in the book, edited by

- Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson *Rethinking Popular Culture* (Mukerji & Schudson 1991). In his *Culture and Everyday Life*, Andy Bennett offers a rather succinct but very clear and ordered, almost textbook-style exposition (Bennett 2005).
- 11 Hall, St. and T. Jefferson 1976. *Resistance through Rituals. Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*. Unwin Hyman, London.
 - 12 Schwartz, V. 1998. *Spectacular Realities. Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*. University of California Press, Berkeley. It must be stressed here that the narratives of modernity as consumption in the beginning are in sharp opposition to the stories of it as industrialization. When, however, enough social history becomes accumulated, a new stake appears, that is, to tell an integrated narrative of modernity precisely as a simultaneous happening of an industrial and a consumptive project.
 - 13 Geertz, C. 1999. "Common sense as a cultural system".
 - 14 Douglas, M. and B. Isherwood 1996. *The World of Goods*, Routledge, London and New York.
 - 15 Jackson, L. 1994. *Fables of Abundance. A Cultural History of Advertising in America*. Basic Books, New York.
 - 16 Marling, K. 1994. *As seen on TV. The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London.
 - 17 Strasser, S. 1989. *Satisfaction Guaranteed. The making of the American Mass Market*. Pantheon books, New York.
 - 18 Strasser, S. & Charles McGovern, Matthias Judt (eds.) 1998. *Getting and Spending. European and American Consumer Societies in the XXth century*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 - 19 McGovern, C. 1998. "Consumption and Citizenship". In: Strasser, S. & Charles McGovern, Matthias Judt (eds.) 1998. *Getting and Spending. European and American Consumer Societies in the XXth century*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 - 20 Ibid. 57
 - 21 Ilchev op. cit. 39.
 - 22 On the relation between textbooks, newspapers, subscriptions and imagining the nation, see: Desislava Lilova, *The 19th Century Meanings of the National Name*, 2003.
 - 23 Ibid. 168.
 - 24 Lilova, D. 2003. *The Revival meanings of the national name*. Sofia: Prosveta (in Bulgarian).
 - 25 Ilchev op. cit.
 - 26 Mineva, M. 2003. *Narratives and images of socialist consumption*. *Sociological Problems*, 1–2, 143–165 (in Bulgarian).
 - 27 Central State Archive, f. 739, d. 3, archive unit 7.
 - 28 This concept belongs to Boyko Penchev: see his columns in the *Dnevnik* newspaper, August 2007, which very representative of the high levels of the discourse described above.
 - 29 Halter, M. 2000. *Shopping for Identity*. Schocken books, New York.
 - 30 Foster, R. J. 1999. "The Commercial Construction of 'New Nations'" in: *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 4(3): 263–282.
 - 31 I am telling the story of Coca-Cola from several sources: company information, a documentary film on the history of Coca-Cola, and Pendergrast, M. 2000, *For God, Country, and Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company That Makes It*. Basic Books, New York.
 - 32 Holt, D. B. 2004. *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*.
 - 33 Holt, D. B. 2006. "Jack Daniel's America. Iconic brands as ideological parasites and proselytizers" in: *Journal of consumer culture*, Vol 6(3): 355–377.
 - 34 I will draw no difference here between patriotism and nationalism: on the contrary, I use them as synonyms.
 - 35 I am using the expression "transition" because it is an exact time reference, but this text is not focused on a critique of the concept of "transition"; as far as I insist on my distance from that concept, I am putting it between quotation marks.
 - 36 As was shown above, "the West" as a space of desire has functions since as early as the National Revival (starting in the late eighteenth century), i.e. socialism only continues that; in blocking and stigmatizing the desire it actually reinforces it.
 - 37 See: Ditchchev, I. 2007. *Die Konsumentenschmiede : Versuch über das kommunistische Begehren*. In: Groys, B. (ed.). *Zurück aus der Zukunft. Osteuropäische Kulturen in Zeitalter des Postkommunismus*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt. An abbreviated version of this article was published in *Kultura* 22 Feb 2007. Also: Creed, G. 2002. "(Consumer) Paradise Lost: Capitalist Dynamics and Disenchantment in Rural Bulgaria" in: *Anthropology of East*

Europe Review, Vol. 20, No. 2.

- 38 I admit that I was among those "fortunate" children whose parents worked in Libya and had the legal right to shop in Corecom.
- 39 I would recommend to readers the collection *I lived in socialism*, collected and told by Georgi Gospodinov.
- 40 See Halter, op. cit. The advertising strategies which often sell through nostalgia and fantasy are not discussed here, however.
- 41 Holt. op. cit.
- 42 I would not allow myself to state that this is specific to Bulgaria, to postcommunist countries, to transition, because a sufficient number of phenomena talk of the rediscovery of the national all over the world.
- 43 Brubaker, R. 2004. Nationalism in new frames. Sofia: Critique & Humanism (in Bulgarian).
- 44 See: Castells, M. 2006. The force of identity. Sofia: LIK (in Bulgarian).
- 45 Dichev, I. 2002. From belonging to identity. Sofia: LIK (in Bulgarian).
- 46 This is a last-minute note before the publication. It aims at drawing the readers' attention into another direction that, however, supports the thesis of the text: the direction is the Internet. The interesting phenomenon there is the Bulgarian mall in the game *Second Life*.

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