

The counter opposition of the hero and his enemy along the lines of their differing *religions* can be interpreted as an additional element in the ethnic identification of the enemy. This is in fact the supraethnic foundation on which the southern parts of the Balkan Peninsula are united by their Orthodox Christian faith against the united Muslim enemy.

At that new stage of the evolution of the epic, the goal of the struggle - the liberation, acquires *socio-political dimensions*. The renewed goal in turn brings to life a qualitatively new object of struggle between the epic hero and the enemy - 'the three chains of slaves'. In tune with the other characteristics, 'the three of slaves' evolve into a *generalized image of the enslaved Bulgarian people* - a picture which is as much concrete as it is abstract; as much earthly and truthful as it is poetically elevated.

And in the final count, the continuous positive conclusion of the struggle where the epic hero is the victor that persists as a bright trace from the most archaic to the most modern stratum of the epic, bolsters the Bulgarian people's faith in their liberation from bondage and becomes the prerequisite for the emergence of that *optimism*, which Ivan Vazov later most properly described as 'the intoxication of a people' in his novel 'Under the Yoke'.

## Epske pjesme i društveno-povijesne promjene

### SAŽETAK

U središtu zanimanja su junačke epske pjesme iz ciklusa "Kralj Marko oslobađa robove okovane trima lancima". Te se pjesme ovdje tumače kao vrhunac svijesti naroda o sebi i vrhunac bugarskog epskog izraza. Motivi i slike u tim pjesmama uspoređuju se sa sličnim verzijama u kršćanskim epskim božićnim i đurdevdanskim pjesmama. Potonje, kaže autorica, vraćaju nas junačkom eposu a sve one upućuju na društveno-povijesne činjenice koje vezujemo uz period otomanske vladavine na Balkanu. Tako će se vrijeme turske okupacije Balkana moći promatrati u dvostrukoj funkciji. S jedne strane ono obilježava epske pjesme. S druge, prinosi kasnijim fazama demitologizacije eposa.