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## **Westernisation or 'insularisation'? Geographical imagination across the Black Sea**

I will try a comparative reading of two literary attempts to change a national geography, both coming from the Black Sea region. The first one is the early modernist anthology – mystification 'On the Isle of the Blessed' (1907) by the Bulgarian poet and actually 'Kulturträger' Pencho Slaveikov. The second one is the post – modern novel 'Santa Esperansa' (2004) by the Georgian novelist Aka Morchiladze. The former one can be read as an attempt of un – fastening the national territory from the central and north – eastern Balkans and make it float between two looser and wider geographies: of (post)Ottoman space and of the 'turning – its – back – to – concrete – topography' early modernist imagination. The latter one – as an attempt to create a second Georgia in the West, and as a post – modernist commoditisation of both realist/postsymbolist preoccupation with material topography and early modernist neglect of it. Both find a remedy in savoring of fragments of (post)Ottoman timespace and both tend to 'Italianise' their respective national chronotopes (the former through allegories and allusions appropriate to early modernism, the latter through the kind of materialisation made possible through surrealism and firmly established after the literary discovery of alternative history/ – ies). Through 'insularisation' of the respective national spaces, both books exhibit discontent with a fully embodied earthly existence, mainly but not only on individual vs. collective level respectively. One can speculate that 'On the Isle of the Blessed' both invoked and prohibited Bulgaria's entry into the First Balkan War (1912 – 1913) which put to an end exactly the *condition* of postponing of choice, of holding a plurality (or at least duality) of options *which actually made* Slaveikov's mystification *possible*; and the (un)welcoming anticipation of/contemplation on the Georgian 'Revolution of Roses' (2003). In my talk I will remain with the speculations, lacking knowledge to ground them historically and biographically.