

Review

by Assoc. Dr. Noemi Stoichkova

for the dissertation of Dimitar Radev Radev with the topic "Time and space in the Bulgarian novel and film after the Second World War. The opposition of sacred and profane time and space"

The abstract selects and emphasizes the main points of the work, the indicated contributions with adequate directions of the views of the doctoral student on what he has done. Claim 30 post points are available.

The work has a volume of 267 pages and 6 pages of bibliography. Structurally, the work contains an introduction, three chapters called parts, a conclusion and a bibliography. It contains 125 titles - Bulgarian and foreign, which show the wide scientific fields through which the doctoral student tried to examine the three selected novels and the film works based on them. I must note that apart from one citation of Docho Bodjakov, film criticism is not found in the literature used.

At the very beginning, I will draw attention to the report from the plagiarism system of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". According to him, the text presented for discussion slightly exceeds the permissible norms according to criterion 2 - for phrase matches of a minimum of 25 words, the upper limit of which is 5% (and in Dimitar's work it is 7.44%) and according to criterion 3 - for citations, where the upper limit is 20% (and in the present dissertation it is 26.31%). In this case, this definitely does not mean a problem with the author's originality, since I know two permanent characteristics of the doctoral student and his writing, which sometimes turn into a disadvantage - to be too narrative and to use long references. Apparently, the languages that Radev uses in cinema and literary studies are very different - he is verbose in literary studies, he is maximally synthesized as a screenwriter and director to have two short films awarded. While for its literary-research realization, more experience is needed to achieve a balance between informativeness, retellability and citation, on the one hand, and analyticity, synthesis and purposefulness, on the other.

Reflecting the propensity for voluminous quotation just discussed, the introduction begins unsurprisingly with 3 half-page excerpts from Julien Green's diary, which in this case manage to target labor issues. Through Bakhtin's concept of "vertical chronotope" (p. 4), realizing the timelessness of time, the introduction brings out the motivation for the subtitle of the work - "the struggle between sacred and profane time and space. It turns out to be extremely important because, in general, it holds the conceptuality of the work, due to its systematic running, but also running away in different spheres of humanitarian knowledge - philosophy, theology, mythology, psychoanalysis, postmodern theories - and due to the attraction of many and different

arguments - films, literary works and autobiographical texts. The latter are essential to the study, because one of its clear positions and proven in the analysis process is that the three selected works - "The Iron Lantern", "Time Separated" and "Exaltation" - share an autobiographical discourse: literal in the first novel and as narrative pattern in the next two.

The opening section, with an open bias towards postmodernism, indicates that each of the works under consideration and their film versions will be interpreted through different methodological lenses. On the one hand, this is defended through Ben Hutchinson's positions on the current interdisciplinarity of humanitarian studies in the era of globalism, and on the other hand, the aspiration for interpretive innovation is evident in the choice of perceptive strategies. Already here, it is deduced that "The Iron Lantern" and the film based on selected motifs from it, "The Iconostasis", will be placed in the fundamental mythological-folkloric study "The Sacred and the Profane" of M. Eliade and through the theological-philosophical paradigms of Nikolaus Ludovicos, Pavel Evdokimov and Alexander Schmemann. "A Time Apart" - the book and the film - will be read in parallel through the Freudian concept of mourning and melancholia, developed and practiced by Darien Leader; through the existentialist philosophy of Martin Buber about the "dialogical Eros" in the world of I-Thou and I-It and through some positions of the theologian philosopher Zizioulas. And "Exaltation" - the novel and its film adaptation - through the many intertextual layers - from the picaresque structure to the diary narrative in a broad literary and film context, to the parodic articulation of the revival macrotext and language games.

In this sense, the naming of the chapters as parts logically, albeit implicitly, emphasize precisely their independence, but this is problematic for the fulfillment of one of the leading tasks of the study - to conceptualize the range of interaction and repulsion between cinema and literature, as well as the different ways of these occurrences in the three twin research sites. Without being a specialist in the film industry, it seems to me that the embedding of the two fragments for the film "The Iconostasis" after the fourth episode ("Sultana and Katerina. Between the sacred and profane understanding of God") and after the fifth ("The wedding of Lazar and Nia and the iconostasis of Rafe Klinche") is compositionally and meaningfully grounded and is the only (compared to the other two films) more concrete and convincingly substantiated analysis aimed at the relation sacred/profane chronotope and accentuating the "Eucharistic" scenes, both in the film's beginning and in its finale. From Radev's positions, it follows that if Talev's novel could not be read in its entirety through a Christian, theological key until that moment, then the film based on the work's motifs, with the accent title "The Iconostasis", realized it at the end of The 1960s, or at least has the potential to be read that way with today's ideologically unencumbered gaze. More complex and problematic for me is the case of A. Donchev's novel and its screenplay based on Lyudmil Staykov's script, in which the doctoral student claims that psychoanalytic suggestions escalate. However, we cannot forget in which socio-historical context (in 1984-1985) this film appeared, with the highly symbolic export title "Time of Violence"

(1988), which frankly removes the ambiguity of the novel's paratext and highlights the ideological priorities of the socialist times. Or at the very least, which I think is mandatory, to specify that because of the chosen psychoanalytical approach to the two works, the work will not discuss their socio-cultural situation in the mid-60s and the end of the 80s. This is also necessary for balance with the first part, which starts with the idea that the current mythological-Christian reading is not politically permissible until the end of the century. And one more thing: I think it is not particularly serious to draw analogies between the film adaptation of *A Time Apart* and Martin Scorsese's *Silence* "mostly in feeling and emotion with the character of Pop Aligoroko" (p. 220). This, for me, unproductive approach, which replaces the task of examining the relations between Bulgarian works of the same name, transposed in the various arts with parallels from the European context, continues in the third part. She examines Ruskov's novel in a European postmodern cinematic context (I mean its close juxtaposition with Godard's *The Mad Pierrot*), rather than talking about the 2017 film of the same name. Without exaggeration, the screen's *Sublime* is given one page, the last of the part. The claims that the film "fails to build on the postmodern and intertextual structure of the book initiated by the novel" (p. 263), that the film does not sufficiently express "the ambivalence of Gicho's philosophy of life and his 'ambivalence'" (p. 262), are not reasoned.

The unbalanced volume of the third part of 42 pages, compared to the first two, which are balanced - approximately 100 pages, is also striking. What has been said is not a statistical formalism, but an opportunity to account for the insufficient thoroughness in examining M.-Ruskov's work.

The first part sets one of the starting positions of the work - that of Eliade, that the sacred and the profane are incompatible and easily recognizable, and the entire text tries to keep its reply to the world philosopher and culturologist in the direction of aporeticity between the sacred and profane chronotope. Especially the part about the "Iron Lantern" rightly asserts that it will dialectically search for "synthesis forms of common existence of their incompatible opposites" (p. 18), because of their serious displacement in the various cultural layers - mythological, folklore, theological, historical. For this purpose, the dissertation examines in detail, through an emphasized cinematic thinking, six episodes of "The Iron Lantern", in which these borderlines are most productively concentrated and meet interactively and repulsively. Without dwelling on them in detail, I will highlight essential positive features in Dimitar's writing - broad erudition and good simultaneous handling of different cultural layers from ancient (p. 28), through the Old Testament (p. 25-27), evangelical (p. 38-44, 68-69), medieval (pp. 62-63), renaissance pp. 63-67, 82), as well as the addition of various cultural spheres - the theology of John Zizioulas (114-116), Alexander Schmemmann (pp. 119-120), the icon painter (of Andrei Rublev, pp. 68-70), visual arts (of Raphael and Caravaggio p. 121-122), the philosophy of Mikhail Shindarov and Edith Stan (Husserl's assistant), Western European literature, drama, cinema (p. 102 Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and p. 105 Bergman). However, I cannot help but mention

that this "limitlessness" in places also carries connotations of over-interpretativeness. At the same time, I must explicitly note a corrected thread that Radev made after the discussion in the Department of Bulgarian Literature, namely to create a metatextual context from the 90s until now through the studies turned to analogous analytical discourses about the Tale work. References to Ivan Stankov, Valery Stefanov, Paulina Stoycheva, and also to Toncho Zhechev, Boyan Nichev, Svetlozar Igov, Simeon Yanev, Efrem Karanfilov, who provide a literary-historical insight into the development of the novel during the considered period of the 1950s and 1960s, are useful. of the twentieth century.

The second part is the most useful part of the study. It begins smoothly with a reference to Joseph Campbell and his book "The Hero with a Thousand Faces", because it is in it that mythology, philosophy and psychoanalysis are intertwined. Stepping on Bakhtin's position of polyphonicity, Radev shares the point of view that each character of the novel/film carries his own voice and even that the chronotope of each of them "has its own sacred and profane, transcendental and historical language from the hypostatic (personal) philosophy" (p. 128). Undoubtedly, the psychoanalytic analyzes of both the "jumped vessels" Karaibrahim/Strahinja and Giuliano/Abdullah/Venetian/Slav, as well as Manol and Süleyman aga, are very convincingly defended. The melancholy of the spachia is traced, which gradually turns into a mourning mania for the guilt of the parents who abandoned him (pp. 130–137, etc.). The superstition of the former and the faith of the latter are examined (pp. 143–153), with the superstition of Karaibrahim/Strahinja seen as the fruit of replacing faith with something quasi-religious, with fanaticism transformed into existential delight and taking on multiple forms of hatred , reaching the impossibility of reciprocity with other people. It is interesting to guard the observation that when the Venetian's aggressive-narcissistic impulse subsides at the memory of the battle for Candia, then he begins to see his own Shadow in the cruel Karaibrahim, but also differs from him in the moment of his mercy, because of "pity and love in its highest spiritual octave - to accept the other as an image of God himself", to give the sinner time to rethink his behavior and life (p. 163). According to Dimitar, this happens through Slav's "car life", intricately introduced in an asynchronous relationship in the middle of the narrative narrative (pp. 164–168) and with Karaibrahim's second chance at life when he also meets Goran. Thus, after a logical and consistent transition, the work moves to the next fragment, where Karaibrahim physically sets off, because of his fear of connection with the other, to the paths of Thanatos "in a final play of his melancholic-narcissistic nature, obsessed with revenge and self-abasement" (pp. 184–202). In this sense, however, the grand statement, at the very beginning of the part (p. 123), that the characters undergo catharsis and a deeper understanding of their guilt and emotional deficits, does not apply to everyone. It could be specified for some characters - Süleyman aga, Manol, and especially for Aligorko and the Venetian, to whom the last fragment (pp. 202-220) of the second part is dedicated. It precisely ends with the episode of the bridge in the film: the bridge, a metaphorical place of hope for the permanent human path and of the idea of God as "comfort for the seeker". As a note to this part of the thesis, apart from the leveling of the novel text and the screen adaptation mentioned

at the beginning, I would mention one more thing. It is about the too frivolous, insubstantial and not essentially analogies (for the meaningful names) of the considered novel and film of the same name with contemporary, and in a quite different genre, cinematographic works such as "The Matrix" and "Star Wars" (p. 126-127, 139)

The third part, apart from being the shortest, is also the most untargeted – the introduction is not directly linked to the novel, but spreads over 10 pages dedicated to postmodern European cinema and the opposite trend, which has nothing to do with the selected works – the creation of novels by screen works. A provocative, intriguing postmodern attempt was made to bring the two arts together - literature and cinema - through M. Ruskov's novel "Exaltation" and the French film "Mad Pierrot" by Jean-Luc Godard. The basis for this is the picaresque found in various layers - the first-person narration, the complex and very dynamic spatial, wandering framework, the characteristic shrewd, weak-character and morally relatable characters who hardly develop (p. 227), through the theme of death, connected with the discourse of soul and conscience. The analysis centers around the autobiographical diaries of Pierrot and Guicho. I find the connection between Ruskov's debut book "Pocket Encyclopedia of Mysteries", where the author pays special attention to Meister Eckhart, and the travesty of his "Sermons and Tracts" into an imitative discourse in Guicho's philosophical diary handwriting, very curious to me. Through the words of the German philosopher and Christian mystic, the "ascending" Russian hero comes to the insight of the antagonism between the soul and the body. Through the Spanish existentialist philosopher Unamuno, the character touches on the problems of dreams as the "little death" of the soul. Gich's philosophical treatise also touches on the questions of prayer, God's providence, despair, nature and the phenomenon of time. The threads of his soul also stretch to Heidegger and his model of creative genius - Hölderlin, parallel to the idol of M.-Ruskovy Kotelents - Rakovsky and his "Forest Traveler". Radev makes an adequate conclusion that neither the picaresque, nor the carnival-satirical, nor the philosophical-religious concept can be excluded in "Exaltation" (p. 254), and that the text itself is heteroglossic.

The conclusion accurately synthesizes what was done in the dissertation through the optics of the sacred-profane in the chronotope and presents the selection of works through the time frame they cover - from the Ottoman rule to the Bulgarian Liberation. In the end, this is a kind of argument for the works chosen by Radev.

Finally, I will recall what I started with, that we are witnessing the initiation of screenwriter and director D. Radev in a literary environment. And this naturally bears the marks of a debut in need of refinement of the writing - from the accuracy of the statements (for example, that "The Iron Lantern" begins as a crime novel (p. 23); from more flexible connections in the text's structure and the ability to make summaries at

the end of each part; from avoiding essayistic inclusions and using rhetorical questions that do not function prestigiously in modern scientific philological texts.

After the noted strengths of the work and despite the raised remarks, I believe that the dissertation work presented by Dimitar Radev has the qualities to be publicly defended for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

Associate Professor Dr. Noemi Stoichkova