

## SHORT REVIEW

By Professor Doctor of Sciences Albena Vacheva,

For Dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 2.1. Philology, PhD program Bulgarian literature after the Second World War.

Topic: *Time and Space in the Bulgarian Novel and Film after the Second World War (Confrontation of Sacred and Profane Time and Space)*

Author: Dimitur Radev, Department of Bulgarian Literature, Faculty of Slavic Studies

### 1. Scientific achievements of the dissertation

The text presented for public defence consists of three chapters, a concluding part and a list of used and cited literature. The total volume of the work amounts to 273 standard pages.

The research of Master Dimitar Radev takes place in an interdisciplinary scientific field, in which literature (the word), and cinema (the visual) meet each other. Two completely different languages that create a complex communicative environment, provoking the reception of the audience - readers and viewers - on different levels. Reading the dissertation through such a perspective can provide a key to understanding some of the approaches in the analysis, which builds up its methodological toolkit, including attempts at psychoanalytical conceptualization/understanding of characters, situations, and even authorial and directorial decisions. As a result, the techniques of "close reading" clearly stand out, which all the time manages to keep a distance from the possible, and sometimes necessary even for this type of research, contextualizations. Comparisons and analysis are maintained in a sustained sequence from the beginning to the end of the exposition at the level of text - verbal and visual. On the other hand, where analytical techniques require the disclosure of contextual assumptions, a specific and frequently used rhetorical technique of auto-argumentation, derived from the text, and referring back to the text itself, is noticeable. Through it, the conclusions are motivated by the introduction of various techniques of textual de-semanticization, which places them in an interpretative framework that is collage-like in its internal nature. Verbal and visual pictures meet, mutually reduce or hypertrophy to represent some of the conclusions through their logical contradiction.

The chapters are called parts, and they successively explore the connections, tighter or more hyperlaxed, between the novel and the film *Zhelezniyat svetilnik* (first), *Vreme razdelno* (second) and *Vuzvishenie* (third). Key to the study is the concept of time-space (chronotopos). Its dimensions are sought and revealed both in the spheres of the sacred and the profane, and in the inner logics of psychological motivations, which reduce the transcendent to the philosophical and ethical. The meeting of Sultana and Stoyan is presented suprahistorically, it is also deliberately decontextualized to highlight the specific determinations of the philosophical understanding of the human. Freedom as a fundamental choice, placing the other in oneself, the iconic image of the other as an image of the truth, the good and the beautiful, are principles that, through the techniques of ignoring the socio-historical, lead to interesting conclusions and observations. Joy - in the analysis of "*Vreme razdelno*" (p. 203) - also. With the proviso that some of them need further argumentation, such a reading can be said to have its place in the unfolding of critical experiments on the verbal and the visual. As a side effect, perhaps, one gets the feeling that the analytical text itself is included in the internal dialogue between the works and

complementing their semantic structure. Another result, which is also easily discernible, is the removed restraint of the text from the ideologies that construct the epistemological features. This is an important constructive feature that views works through the prism of universalized meanings derived from the work and for the needs of one's own analysis.

The language of the exhibition also deserves attention because it carries the structure and implies all the interpretive diversity of the readings/views. The language is dominantly philosophical-essayistic, which implies the picture-situational nature of the connected parts in a cohesive unity. The paintings are bright and multi-faceted, illustrative-showy and at the same time meaningful. They are presented cinematically – with shifts of focus, with the alternation of close-ups and distant panoramic perspectives, with minimalistic projections and narrative hypertrophies. It is as a hypertrophied construction that one can read "the autobiographical diary in the novel *Vreme razdelno*" (p. 11) and the "diary" in "Exaltation", which are far from the classical definition of the genre. What motivates the uses of 'diary' in the text of the dissertation is its placement in a broad philosophical discourse where a diary can be not only the chronological marking of events, but also the making sense of, recognizing, fearing, searching for and moving away from the transcendent. And here the work demonstrates a postmodern destruction of genre boundaries, a faceted interpretation/use of genre norms, which is noticeable both at the level of language and at the level of analysis and connection of conclusions.

To understand the study, it is also important to point out the complex references built between films of different orders based on their semantic load. The work contains multiple references to multiple strips with different plots and social assumptions. What enables the application of such an approach is precisely the penetration into the semantic depths of the visual narrative, which allows for multiple heterogeneous readings. Readings Corresponding to Postmodern Collage. This directly corresponds to David Damrosch's understanding that literature is not only placed in a mode of complementarity with other arts, but also often enters open competition in offering one or another plot wholes, as well as keys for their interpretation (p. 224–225). As a result, argues Damrosch, quoted by colleague Radev, "literary scholars may have the uneasy feeling that literature is losing out to the competition. As readers give way to viewers, the results can be almost unrecognizable even when a literary antecedent is discovered" (p. 225). An understanding that gives freedom for the relativization of film-literary text relations.

## 2. Evaluation of the presented materials

The materials provided show a procedural sequence, consistent with all normative documents for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor". The defence in the Department was conducted within the stipulated time and during the discussion the doctoral student successfully defended his doctoral thesis before the primary unit. The public defence and the composition of the Scientific Jury are determined by Order RD-38-115/21.02.2024 of the Rector of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The abstract presents the full text of the dissertation. The contributions indicated in it are real and scientifically based. The reference for the publication activity of the doctoral student Dimitar Radev is a list of seven articles, which is in full agreement with the minimum scientometric requirements. In the text of the dissertation, no attempts at plagiarism and/or incorrect use of other people's author's ideas are registered, and these are also confirmed by the reference made for the originality of the work. The same can be said about the publications attached by the author related to the topic of the study.

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### 3. Conclusion

I support and recommend the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Dimitar Radev for his work "Time and Space in the Bulgarian Novel and Film after the Second World War (Confrontation of Sacred and Profane Time and Space)".

Sofia, 10.05.2024

Prof. Albena Vacheva