

OPINION

Of

Prof. Stanimir Trifonov, PhD

About the dissertation text

RANGEL VALCHANOV'S FEATURE FILMS – AUTHENTICITY TRANSFORMATIONS

by Antonia Milcheva

Academic advisor: Prof. Georgi Dyulgerov

towards award of educational and scientific degree “Doctor”,

It was with great pleasure and no less curiosity, that I accepted the invitation of New Bulgarian University to participate in the scientific panel, not only because a new author appears in the area of Bulgarian science, but also because the thesis focused on the authenticity in Rangel Valchanov's works and personality are particularly significant for our national film historiography.

Over the years, while Valchanov was still alive, the Bulgarian critics and our film theory authors have paid great attention to his numerous films, theatrical productions and acting incarnations. And their faithful (but sometimes also defamatory!) analyses have hardly addressed the practical aspects of his directorial methodology. Which is so dynamic and volatile throughout his creative life that even he sometimes ironizes himself.

Antonia Milcheva's thesis makes a correct attempt to trace the development of one of the main features in Rangel Valchanov's films – authenticism.

As early as the introduction, the PhD student adequately formulates the term "authenticity" (which, perhaps when talking about art, is better defined as “authenticism”?) The subject matter and the subject of the study are correctly laid out, as well as the tasks and methodology of the research.

The first chapter examines the authenticity in the first phase of Bulgarian Communist Regime in the conditions of the so-called Socialist Realism. Rangel Valchanov's three films made during the period 1958-1963 are definitely an major event, not only in the biography of the author, but also in the history of Bulgarian cinema after the Second World War.

The second chapter reviews the stage before and after the Prague Spring of 1968 and the influence of the political events at the time. The director's three subsequent films, analyzed in

the dissertation, determine the nature of a dramatic phase in the life and works of the director, which inevitably shows in his works.

For me, the third chapter of the study is particularly important. This is where the author of the dissertation text in detail and very successfully analyses the aesthetic and philosophical phenomenon, for which the conditionality in the cinematographer almost paradoxically "cements" the authenticity of the film artifact. Although she has analyzed Valchanov's next three films with equal attention to detail, the analysis of *The Unknown Soldier's Patent Shoes* very well reflects the evolution of authenticity in his art.

In the fourth chapter, the reader is given the opportunity to trace the development of the authenticity in Valchanov's directorial style through the analysis of another "threesome" of titles, where authenticity is achieved through relying solely on fiction. Here, the PhD student fairly points out the contradictory nature of the films analyzed as well as their questionable persuasiveness.

After reading the dissertation for the first time, I wondered why the work dealt with this director's work only until 1990. However, later, I came to the realization that such an approach is fair and adequate not only in terms of the subject of the study, but also in terms of the course of national history.

In conclusion, I can say, that what we have in front of us is a successful and justifiable dissertation text, which provides all aesthetic, philosophical and cinematic motives to award Antonia Milcheva with the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

I vote YES.

Prof. Stanimir Trifonov, PhD