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BEING-FOR-SPECTATOR: CINEMATIC SPECTACLE AS THE DOMINANT IN *SHADOWS OF OUR FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS*

The concept of the diegetic dominant, which I introduce¹, is inspired by the Russian Formalists' notion of the "dominant". It defines the principal trait of the film's fiction, i.e. the overriding structure of what is in film represented. The majority of fiction films have **narrative** as their dominant, but some films (or certain parts of a single film) have one of the four other dominants: 1) **diegetic effect** (connected with the non-narrative impression of reality of the film's world, and corresponding, in some sense, to the literary category of description); 2) **argument** (connected with some abstract meanings, like certain "ideas" or general notions, and with rhetorical argumentation; these meanings and this rhetoric are built over "literal" meanings - i.e. the material and referential ones; famous examples of this dominant in almost pure state are Griffith's *Intolerance* or Eisenstein's *October*); 3) **spectacle** (in film having the dominant of spectacle the fictional world does not pretend to be an autonomous universe, "being-in-itself", but openly is constituted as "being-for-spectator", as in musicals or comedies of theatrical provenance); 4) **reflexive intention** (in films having this dominant the aprioric structural components of work, i.e. the textual means of expression and the narrative instance, become one more level of what is

¹ In more details I present this concept in my book *Film fikcji i jego dominanty*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, Warszawa 1999. The outline of that concept, and also of typology of diegetic dominants, I presented in English in the article "Diegetic Dominants in the Fiction Film", „Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich” 1994, vol. XXXVII, no. 1-2 (73-74), pp. 137-155.

presented in film; by establishing this meta-level, meta-diegesis, they bracket the diegesis of lower levels and cause destruction of narrative, argument, diegetic effect or spectacle as dominants).

The Ukrainian film *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors*, made in 1964 by Sergei Paradzhanov, exemplifies one way in which spectacle can operate as the dominant in the narrative film. Here, as in musicals or in comedies of stage provenance, the fictional world either does not pretend to be an autonomous universe, "being-in-itself"; but this spectacle is not theatrical in its style – rather, it is in great part created by the specifically cinematic means of expression.

The pretext for making the film was the centenary of the birth of Mykhaylo Kotsyubynsky, the Ukrainian writer (we are informed about it by the introductory title). As the adaptation of this author's written story it is, of course, the narrative film. The outline of its narrative may be even roughly summarized without great problems. However, not the narrative is the film's dominant and viewer certainly has the sense of futility of reporting the film's story for delivering to somebody the film's essence.

Both – i.e. the possibility and the futility of reporting the film's "content" – is well expressed in the following fragment from essay devoted to the Paradzhanov's work: "The story about the vicissitudes of young Huzul, Ivanko, who since his childhood has had the experience of death, about his boundless love for beautiful Marichka who got drowned trying to save the stray lamb, about his thrilling loneliness and longing for his beloved, about the way in which he tried to suppress his love impossible to fulfil by marrying another woman, Palagna, about his despair and his death – changes into the cycle of infinitely beautiful poetic images. Every frame, every shot fascinates us with its richness and diversity, and also with the consequence of the plastic art. Here the narrative events constitute merely background for the art of poetic imagery, frantic and enclosed within the frames of geometric compositions"².

Despite the primacy of cinematic spectacle over the story, the last one cannot be regarded as only a pretext, at least because it is just the story that serves as a basis of the film's segmentation, and not only dramatic, but just the formal. The plot, or in the formalists' terminology, the *syuzhet*, is parcelled out into rather closed and relatively autonomous segments, what is typical of many films with the dominant of spectacle.

² J. Gazda, „O Paradżanowie”, „Kultura Filmowa” 1973, no. 11-12 (183-184), p. 47.

For convenience, these segments can be called "episodes", although they are not "episodes" in the sense of rather coherent scenes as dramatic units; such a character have segments 5-12, whereas segments 2-4 are rather what is called "montage sequences". Autonomy and distinctness of episodes is brought into prominence by providing them with the titles. Segments 2-12 begin with the plates presenting the episode's title (to the episode 10 inclusive the titles are written in the Cyrillic, with the red letters on the black background). There are some exceptions: the title plate of episode 11, presenting the black Cyrillic letters on the red background, and of episode 12 (the metaphorical, Latin title of the last episode, is inscribed in the Latin alphabet, with the white letters on the black background). The colouristic inversion of the title plate of episode 11 may be motivated as well diegetically as in purely aesthetic way (I shall return to this last point).

Episode 1 has not its own title, but since it is divided into two parts (the short prologue and the principal portion) by the credit titles, it is just the whole film's title - presented on the same black plate, inscribed with the letters having the same shape and colour as the titles of the other episodes - that can be assigned to the episode 1. The more so as this segment is very extended, introducing us into the film's world both in the narrative and stylistic aspects, and as for its events - unusually "suitable" for this title.

Below I am presenting the record of the film's syuzhet. After the titles of episodes I am giving not exactly their "summaries" (with respect to certain episodes, particularly 1-4 and 11-12, trying to report their events seems in advance to be condemned to unsuccessfulness), but simply some principal "points" of their narrative content. The titles between the segments or in the beginning of certain episodes I am quoting in extenso (but only in English translation, since I am not able to under-take the Latin transcription of the Ukrainian alphabet).

Syuzhet of Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors

Introductory titles:

1. "This film is a poetic drama about the great love of Ivan and Marichka. The film introduces us into the folk tales, customs and life of the Carpathian region".

2. Dovzhenko Film Studios, 1964.
3. "On the centenary of the birth of Mykhaylo Kotsyubinsky."

Episode 1 - prologue:

The death of a woodcutter, Olexa Palichuk, under the tree falling down. Olexa saved his brother, little Ivanko, who came to him with meal.

The credit titles, dividing episode 1 into two parts:

1. SHADOWS OF OUR FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS
2. MYKHAYLO KOTSYUBYNSKY
3. 18/1964
4. "Carpathian region... - a God-forsaken and people-forsaken land of Huzuls..."

Episode 1 - continuation:

The snowy hill, setting the cross on someone's (Olexa's?) grave. Ivanko runs down from the hill with the grave, stares at the fair near the church. Her mother calls him, together they go to Mass. In the church Ivanko's father, Piotr Palichuk, insults the village rich man, Onuphriy Guteniuk, with his scoffing laughter. Both couples, Guteniuks and Palichuks, leave the church. Guteniuk kills Palichuk with his mountaineer axe. Ivanko slappes Guteniuk's daughter, Marichka, chases her on the bank of the river, takes her shawl away and throws it into the water. The girl is crying. Some time later: the funeral of Piotr Palichuk - the procession goes at the top of the snowy hill, the widow despairs. Ivanko runs down from the hill to talk to Marichka; a moment later he comes back up the hill to join the funeral procession.

Intertitle between episodes 1 and 2 (1/2):

"But in Ivan's memory the father's death has not remained as long as his encounter with girl..."

Episode 2 - IVAN AND MARICHKA:

The montage sequence, depicting love between Ivan Palichuk and Marichka Guteniuk as children, teenagers and adult young people. During the public dances in the village the girl faints. Ivan's mother takes leave of him when he goes to the mountain pasture to earn money as the hired shepherd. Mother curses Guteniuk family, blesses Ivan for his way. Malicious laughter of village women when Marichka crosses the bridge to say Ivan goodbye. The farewell between young

couple in the rain. In the village the old malicious witch catches Marichka's belly and laughs scoffingly (this laughter, women's jeers and the previous faint suggest that Marichka is pregnant).

Episode 3 - THE MOUNTAIN PASTURE:

Ivan among the shepherds in the mountains; he is musing over his love, looking at the star shining in the night sky. Marichka, called by the glitter of the star, sets out in the night to the mountains. Trying to save the stray lamb, the girl fell from the rocky precipice into the rushing river and kills herself. Her parents and inhabitants of her village search the river and its banks for the body. Ivan drifts on the raft with the river's current until he finds on the bank the dead body of his beloved.

Intertitle 3/4:

"People said that he pined away because of his great grief, and girls made up songs about their love..."

Episode 4 - LONELINESS:

Six scenes (in black and white) depicting Ivan's despair, his untidiness, poverty, avoiding people and silence after Marichka's death: 1) Ivan in the shed at the mountain pasture takes leave of shepherds coming home; 2) The neglected farmstead of Ivan who sells the remnants of his belongings; 3) The winter, Ivan frantically is digging the grave; 4) Ivan washes his shirt in the river; 5) Ivan rejects the treat from woman who hired him to built the hut; 6) The winter - Ivan does some work at the church's roof, is neglected and in ragged clothes.

Ivan's vision (in colour): Christ on the cross takes off the crown of thorns - over the burning crown Ivan warms his hands.

Again the image in black and white: Christmas, in the open Ivan with his only sheep. Women among the merry group offer him meal and vodka. Next follow the colourful pictures: someones' wedding suite. Ivan shoes horse of seductive Palagna; later he takes her in his arms...

Intertitle 4/5:

"At last Ivan married, for he had to set up a house."

Episode 5 - IVAN AND PALAGNA:

The wedding ceremonies of the couple, mentioned in the episode's title.

Episode 6 - WORKDAYS:

The picture from the haymayking at which Ivan and Palagna work together. Ivan refuses to give his wife the longed-for caresses.

Episode 7 - CHRISTMAS:

The pageant of carollers, among them Ivan disguised as Death.

The carollers (without Ivan) in the Palichuks' farmyard. One of them returns, throws himself on Palagna (this is Yura, the sorcerer). Christmas Eve at Ivan's and Palagna's home - the ceremonial supper of the couple is interrupted by Ivan's attack of longing for Marichka. Ivan calls the soul of his beloved by meal and beverage in the window. Marichka comes - in reality, or only in Ivan's imagination?

Intertitle 7/8:

"Life went on... Workdays for work, and holidays for sorcery".

Episode 8 - THE EVE OF SPRING:

"Saint Yura, send her children - Palagna tried witchcraft". Palagna in the night goes outdoors, naked, to ask God for a child and for being loved by Ivan. She arises desire in Yura the sorcerer who has spied her. She runs away from him and comes back home. During her absence one sheep died - Ivan is grieving the loss. The couple is visited by the malicious old witch who laughs scoffingly alluding to Palichuks' childlessness.

Episode 9 - THE SORCERER:

"People said that he was like god... He was feared but needed by all". Yura the sorcerer drives the sudden tempest off. Palagna gives herself to him, the delayed thunder strikes the tree at the top of the hill, the tree bursts into flames.

Episode 10 - THE TAVERN:

In the tavern, full of guests, songs, dances and drinking, Yura solitarily occupies the whole corner with the long table. Ivan and Palagna come inside, sit down at Yura's table. Ivan is drawn back to another table where people sing folk songs; in the meantime Palagna snuggles up to Yura, smoking his pipe. The dumb Mykola is drawing Palagna back from Yura, but is struck by the sorcerer. Angry Ivan

rounds the tavern searching for a mountaineer axe; at last he finds his own which he left at Yura's table. But it is he who first gets struck by the sorcerer. Ivan reels, staggers around the room...

Episode 11 - IVAN'S DEATH:

The night, reeling Ivan leans against the wall of his own house. He overhears how Yura explains Palagna magic acts which may cause someone's death. He runs across the field of burnt and smoking stumps. In the water near his own reflection he sees the reflection of Marichka. He runs - towards Marichka? - across the forest. Marichka stretches out her hand to him, their hands clasp one another. The images of red bushes and rocks.

Episode 12 - PIETA:

The ceremonies of Ivan's funeral - washing the corpse, exposing the body in his house, Palagna's lamentation, villagers' farewell to the deceased. The funeral banquet in the room adjoining that where Ivan's body lies, converts into revelry.

The last two shots of the film - images of children looking through the window towards camera (in the soundtrack something like the noise of the nailing the coffin).

To the kind of viewing, suitable for this film, we are already directed by the introductory titles. The first of them underlines that film will be "about the great love of Ivan and Marichka" (and so, it will be a tale of times past, a narrative), and at the same time that it is "a poetic drama", what suggests both certain "theatricality" and "non-classicality" in the way of presenting this story. What follows, states more precisely the principal aim of the film: introduction "into the folk tales, customs and life of the Carpathian region". In context of this information the title which follows directly after the credit titles ("Carpathian region... - a God-forsaken and people-forsaken land of Huzuls...") gains a broader sense than simply informing viewers about the place of action. It directs spectator's attention to the fact that presentation of the forgotten region and its folklore is the autotelic aim of narration, what is, after all, confirmed by the knowledge of the extratextual facts connected with this film - for instance, that all sets, props and costumes in the film are

authentic³, or that the director, against the demands of authorities, refused to dub the film into Russian⁴. And as for the title of the work – *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors*, it gains a peculiar significance very consciously directed at: the task of the film is to save the remnants of culture being in danger of extermination and oblivion, culture which – fortunately – still exists against all the adversities and difficulties. In context of the forced denationalization and the assumed unification of the socialist society in the Soviet Union, such a task, such a topic and such a title, and also stubbornness of the filmmaker as to the authenticity of location and language, were, of course, clear political declaration⁵. This extratextual significance in the slightest degree does not disturb the fact that both the film's title and the texts of the intertitles refer also to the fictional narrative events: the action takes place in the Carpathian mountains, in the land of Huzuls, and the "forgotten ancestors" whose "shadows" fall on young's love are their parents – each couple hating one another (as "shadows of ancestors", mentioned in the title, can be regarded especially killing of Piotr Palichuk by Marichka's father, and the curses thrown by Ivan's mother at Guteniuk's family, which, maybe,

³ This information may be found in: J. Gazda, op. cit. Author also writes: "All the things and costumes, which we saw in *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors*, weren't made for the needs of the film; they were borrowed or bought from Huzuls. Love of beautiful things lies at the origin of Paradzhanov's art. He manages to reveal and show their beauty, and also their deeper sense, additional meanings defined by myth, by tradition. He is conscious that in things is hidden not only a wonderful shape, a form, but also the history of a nation, the fortune of a man, his experience and dreams, his sufferings and joys, his story and drama. The shadows of ancestors that cannot be forgotten" (op. cit., p. 51, 53).

⁴ This information may be found in the entry "Paradzhanov Sergei" in *The Virgin International Encyclopedia of Film*, ed. J. Monaco and the editors of Baseline, Baseline II, Inc., London 1992, p. 414.

⁵ This was obvious also for the authorities; therefore, despite the fact of enthusiastic reception of Paradzhanov's work by viewers and critics all over the world (over dozen international awards!) and of its role as prestigious exportable product of the "Soviet cinema", the director was not allowed to go abroad in order to promote his own work. Moreover, later Paradzhanov openly expressed his opposition to the politics of the state what resulted in persecutions: twice arrested and sentenced for camp and prison, he was twice released due to the international campaigns in his defence. For many years he was prevented from filmmaking. The ready work, *Sayat Nova*, was reedited by Sergei Yutkevitch and its title was changed into the *The Color of Pomegranates*. When making *The Legend of Suram Fortress*, he had to accept the imposed co-director, Dodo Abashidze. Cf. *The Virgin International Encyclopaedia of Film*, p. 414-415.

cause somehow Marichka's death; we should remember that double reference of the title is more obvious in the Ukrainian due to the absence of pronoun "our" in the original title).

Since the film is "a poetic drama about the great love" and at the same time to introduce us into the folklore of the region, the optimum solution to reconcile both tasks is to place folk customs and rites **intradiegetically**. Their screen presentation is **motivated realistically** - they are components of the world represented and the characters participate in them or are their witnesses; finally, however, **the aesthetic motivation** undoubtedly predominates over the realistic one and the presentation of rites becomes an autonomous and autotelic aim of narration. The apogee of this autonomy are the images of someone's wedding suite near the end of episode 4 - we do not know whose the wedding is (marriage ceremonies of Ivan and Palagna take place not before episode 5). The lack of narrative pretext seems to be, however, insignificant, when the admirable travelling of camera along the wedding procession shot from behind a colourful foliage, with the moments of fantastically quick pans changing the frame into certain kind of abstraction, spinning at a terrific speed and delightful as a play of light and colours, contrasts very impressively - both in formal and emotional aspects - with the black-and-white, static tableaux of the same episode which depict Ivan's poverty and loneliness.

To rites and ceremonies, exposed in a very attractive way by narration, belong: in episode 1 - the fair, the Mass and the funeral procession of Piotr Palichuk; in episode 2 - the divine worship with songs in praise of the Holy Virgin and public dances in the village; both attended by Ivan and Marichka; in episode 4 - someone's wedding suite; in episode 5 - the marriage ceremonies of Ivan and Palagna; in episode 7 - the pageant of carollers and Christmas Eve at Palichuks' home; in episode 8 - the "witchcraft" and Palagna's prayer; in episode 10 - public amusements in the tavern (dances, songs, drinking); in episode 12 - the mourning ceremonies and the funeral banquet of Ivan. Strongly ritualized are also work and everyday activities, presented by camera with the similar intention to fascinate a viewer by them to the same extent as holiday ceremonies. These are: farm and housekeeping work (in episodes 2 and 4); shepherd's activities - the sheep pasturage in the mountains, production of cheese, bonfire, tales in the shed, hunting the bear, preparing the bear skin (in episode 3); laundering (in episodes 2 and 4); haymaking (in episode 6).

Certain rites – because of their solemnity or ceremonial celebrating – are shown in tableau-style pictures, rather static, very carefully composed and framed in a tasteful way (e.g., preparations to the Piotr Palichuk's funeral, the worship in praise of Madonna, marriage ceremony of Ivan and Palagna, the first images of the tavern and of the Ivan's funeral ceremonies). The others instead create the fascinating purely cinematic spectacle with the frantic camera which makes different kinds of movements – nervous, quaking, or impressing by fluency and penetration of large space, travellings; or pans at terrific speed which changes images into unreadable, although beautiful, abstractions (in such a way are filmed: the fair in front of the church, wedding procession, the second part of the tavern sequence, dances at the funeral banquet). In this way narration alternates the perspective of a contemplative viewer who delights in ceremony, keeping the aesthetic distance to it, with the perspective of a participant who is so totally drawn into the whirl of events that, in a frenzy, is able to notice not too much – rather, he feels the sensations of speed, rotating, dizziness, being dazed by the colours, music and rapidity. Sometimes for such feelings we are “anchored” in the experience of diegetic character (e.g., little Ivanko running around the fair or wounded Ivan staggering around the tavern), either assuming character's point of view, or – in the same frantic long take – seeing the person who is the subject of such sensations as one more object in the frame. Sometimes, however, narration can dispense with such an anchoring – for example, showing in episode 4 mentioned above someone's wedding suite; or when very quickly rotating camera shows from the very low angle (from the set-up on the floor) how participants of the funeral banquet dance, stamp and applause.

Through this alternation of viewer's perceptual identification and emotional engagement with his perceptual distance in an aesthetic contemplation, is created the fascinating variability of tone in this film: from euphoric, almost orgiastic, to the quiet, elegiac and gloomy. This variability is expressed both on the narrative (story) level and on the formal one.

On the level of story events drama follows joy and play – or reversely. In episode 1 there is a following sequence of occurrences and situations: setting the cross on Olexa's(?) grave – the fair – Guteniuk is insulted by Palichuk during the Mass – the crime. In the tavern episode, songs, dances and drinking are followed by drama: Ivan is struck by Yura with the mountaineer axe. In the last episode the funeral banquet

initiated by Palagna's lamentation and villagers' farewell to the deceased, finishes with revelry.

In the formal aspect this variability is expressed on the level of general structure of each among twelve autonomous episodes, on the level of scenes in each particular episode, and within the one given shot as well. For example, in episode 1, after the long take made in splendid hand travelling which in rapidly changing images shows the fair, follows the series of twelve rather static shots which present the occurrences inside the church. These are medium close-ups of faces or shots when camera penetrates the space by slow, contemplative travelling. The thirteenth shot again is a "frantic travelling" (similar in its style to that which presented the fair), and from the perspective of "objective narration" we go within this shot - with no cuts! - to the point of view perspective, expressing the visual experience of Piotr Palichuk, hit in the head by Guteniuk's mountaineer axe: "camera streams with blood" and the screen colours red. It serves besides as a transition to the next shot which shows us ("associational narration"⁶) agonal vision of Ivan's father dying: a blood red jumping horse which assumes almost abstract shape, resembling the stream of blood which flooded the lens in the previous shot.

Very interesting is the sequence of Piotr Palichuk's funeral ceremonies at the end of episode 1 - pictures which begin it, in style of static tableaux, follow completely unsignalled temporal ellipsis and the extremely dynamic shot in long take (finishing the "fair crime day" scene), which presented Ivanko and Marichka chase and quarrel on the river's bank. The number of these static tableaux is seven and they successively show - in medium close-ups - what follows: 1) the mourning banners being thrown onto the ground; 2) a man in black, black banner and cross; 3) a woman in black with a fruit bowl; 4) a man blowing on the glowing frankincense; 5) an old man pouring vodka into the tube made up of the birch wood (he probably pours out vodka onto the coffin); 6) a man in a sheepskin cap wearing the birch-wood cross; 7) Ivanko, who is looking (from the background) at two mountaineer axes (in the

⁶ Terms "objective narration", "aperceptional narration" and "associational narration" are forged by Eugeniusz Biały in his article „Narracja a rama modalna dzieła filmowego - uwagi analityczne”, in: *Z zagadnień stylu i kompozycji w filmie współczesnym*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 1982, pp. 7-16. The first category concerns narration presenting the world as if with no mediation, "objectively", the second - names narration presenting someone's physical point of view, "aperception", the third - defines narration presenting things seen in someone's "mind's eye", i.e. his "associations".

foreground) alternately driving a nail in the coffin. The eighth shot in turn is still in a medium close-up (zooming in), but opposite to the previous seven it is powerfully dynamic: camera pans along with the movement of Palichuk's widow who is running in a circle and loudly crying in despair, and at last leaves her outside the frame focusing for the moment on the waving fringes of the black banners. The ninth shot presents the funeral procession at the top of the snowy hill. The camera in the splendid hand travelling reveals us broader and broader picture of landscape and procession and at last leaves the mourners following Ivanko who is running down the slope in order to talk to Marichka; the camera accompanies the children's talk in the bush down the hill. Ivanko, as if reminding himself of the father's funeral, looks up, and this his glance serves as a pretext for the rapid panning up which is so quick that in the normal viewing conditions in cinema it prevents us from ascertaining if the picture of black banners from the funeral procession following immediately after is really the next shot (I got sure that this picture is actually preceded by the cut only after the analysis of videotape in slow motion). The shot of the black banners (probably POV of Ivanko "looking up") is followed by the last take of the episode - the long shot of the hill at a great distance; Ivanko is climbing up its slope in order to join the funeral procession.

I have mentioned above about the autonomy and autotelism in syuzhet of the rites scenes, although they are somehow (even if not too strongly) narratively motivated; this applies even to the wedding procession in episode 4 - nobody knows whose the wedding is, when and where it takes place, but it somehow foretells the marriage ceremonies of Ivan and Palagna. In Paradzhanov's film there are, however, images devoid of even such a weak motivation, creating for a viewer pure cinematic spectacle with no dramatic or folklore pretexts. Let us consider the beginning of episode 3: "The Mountain Pasture". It starts with the series of six static shots presenting in close-ups the rocks overgrown with moss and lichens. After that there is cut-in: shot of the dumb Mykola who goes in the mountain pasture with the bunch of twigs on his back. There follows the second sequence of six "tableaux", presenting in turn the details of timber - also moss-grown, with numerous veins and damp patches. The second cut-in depicting Mykola with his faggot. The third sequence of details is more varied. This time it consists of seven static "tableaux" and they present as follows: 1) a horseshoe in the mud; 2) moss and lichens; 3) moss-grown stones; 4) a moss (in great

close-up); 5) a horn stuck in the sand; 6) a moss; 7) a smoker's pipe plunged in the flowing water. This sequence is followed by the third shot of Mykola who comes to the wayside cross, coughs, and tired lies down.

It is difficult to point out any dramatic function fulfilled by these three series of static tableaux in relation to the Mykola's wandering shown in three shots ending each of the series. These static images neither are the establishing shots nor present narratively important details. Indefinite are spatiotemporal relations between themselves as well as their place in respect to Mykola or other story line (e.g., Ivan or Marichka). Neither they seem to have any particularly important symbolic function. Therefore, they should be regarded as an autonomous, autotelic cinematic spectacle in which even the sequence of static details has certain essential role, creating the specific restful rhythm (especially important after the previous camera madness) and providing an aesthetic satisfaction from the enigmatic beauty of almost abstract mysterious pictures.

Similarly autonomous and autotelic character seems to be possessed by five beautiful, aesthetically fascinating shots, ending the episode 11: "Ivan's Death". The first of them is a frantic pan of rotating camera, the next four - are static shots of details. They present intensively red leafless bushes and the red rock (in shot 5). These are probably the fantastic objects, rather not existing in the "real" (if only this ontological status may be defined with certainty!) diegetic space of the film. They probably belong to the vision of dying Ivan and as such, they are in some respect "realistically" motivated (although taking into account the narrative obscurity of Ivan's death circumstances, this motivation is rather faint).

The space of tableaux, conceived pictorially or theatrically (or in both ways simultaneously), alternates in Paradzhanov's film with the space penetrated by camera travellings and space transformed into the flickering abstractions by the terrific speed of pans, what in result creates the space of cinematic spectacle, possible to get existed only in film. This space is constituted by:

1) the camera movements - unusually quick pans; very impressive trackings, both "solemn", slow ones, like, e.g., inside the church, and nervous travellings from hand (for example - the fair, Palichuk's killing). Very interesting is confronting the speed as well as movement's direction of the camera in episode 2, in the scene when the camera set up in front of the row of dancers pans slowly left; there unexpectedly follows

hardly perceptible zip pan, blurring the picture and masking the cut after which follows – in the shot taken at a bit shorter distance to characters – the camera's pan right along the row of dancers. This pan is also followed by the zip pan masking the cut, after which once again we have the pan along the row of dancers, left; this time the characters are shot quite closely, from the waist up. In the row of dancers the camera reveals Ivan and Marichka, finally focusing on the pair of lovers.

2) the unusual set-ups of the camera – in Paradzhanov's film the camera positions sometimes dumbfound a viewer bringing him to consider the technical feasibility of the shot. These positions are the more admirable that they are connected with the extremely impressive camera movements which begin or end with them. In the fourth shot of the whole film the camera seems to be mounted at the top of the tree which is falling down on Olexa and Ivanko standing at its feet; the camera's tilt down (combined with a zoom) from the great height onto the close up of Olexa looking up in fear and stretching his hands out, is one of the most exciting shots I have ever seen in the fiction films. Maybe not so impressive, but also aesthetically and technically intriguing, are the set-ups of the camera over the raft drifting down the rapid river (episode 3), or over the Ivan's farmyard (episodes 2, 4, 7, 11) – the more so that from the set-up at the height showing in long shot the general landscape of the scene, camera goes down onto the ground in order to show closely a character;

3) zooms – combined with very fast travellings or pans, they additionally cause increasing the speed of images;

4) effects of colour – the whole Paradzhanov's work dazzles us by the gamut of colours of "pro-filmic"⁷ objects: national costumes, landscape, architecture, details of nature and of interior decoration. Some pictures, however, are particularly distinguished by their colouristic expression: camera "streams with blood" (POV of Piotr Palichuk, struck by the mountaineer axe; the image of jumping horse, resembling this flow of blood, is toned red). We deal with similar device when in the tavern Yura hits Ivan. Although this time the camera does not express in the strict way the character's optical point of view, the spinning picture showing wounded Ivan staggering around the room, is also toned red.

⁷ The term introduced by Etienne Souriau to name the objects placed in front of the camera and intended to be shot by it. Cf. E. Souriau, "La Structure de l'univers filmique et le vocabulaire de la filmologie", "Revue Internationale de Filmologie" 1951, no. 7-8, pp. 231-240.

Because immediately after this shot follows the title plate of episode II: "Ivan's Death", no wonder that the colours of it are inverted: this time the black letters appear on the red background. This inversion may be motivated diegetically as, in a way, expression of "aperception" of Ivan, dazed and streaming with blood, what to some extent makes such an extradiegetic element as the title plate – an extension of the diegesis. It may be motivated also formally (the red of the title background is the continuation of the red from the previous shot) as well as the textual cue suggesting the different ontological status of the whole episode II (perhaps the occurrences presented in this segment "actually" do not take place and all its content is the agonal vision of Ivan struck by Yura's mountaineer axe in the tavern). It is also worth to notice that in the whole film fades out at the end of each episode are not "towards the black" (as usually is), but "towards the red". In general, this last colour seems to be the colouristic dominant of the film – perhaps because of the darkness of "bloody" narrative in which characters being viewer's intimates (Olexa, Piotr Palichuk, Marichka, Ivan) die violently. Above I have already mentioned the splendid images of unrealistically red bushes and rocks which conclude the episode II;

5) **effects of black-and-white picture (in colour film)** – black-and-white tableaux of episode 4 brilliantly express Ivan's grief, poverty and sadness of his existence after Marichka's death. They also splendidly contrast with the colour fragments of the episode: Ivan's vision in which Jesus gives him the crown of thorns; the wedding procession sequence; the particularly rich in their colours tableaux which show the successful coquetry of Palagna;

6) **freeze-frames combined with the light effects** – in the scene of the tempest which is "driven off" (although it is equally possible to get an impression that "provoked") by Yura the sorcerer, the thunderbolts are expressed by the claps of thunders in the soundtrack and the freeze-frames: lasting for some moment, overexposed and coloured (in yellow, green or red). In description it may be seemed naive and technically very simple, but such a device very suggestively and just "in a cinematic way" expresses both "the tempest" and "the sorcery";

7) **slow-motion pictures** – the slowdown of movement, combined with the image toned red, expresses Ivan's daze after Yura's blow;

8) **superimpositions and dissolves** – slow-motion pictures, superimposing on one another the phases of movement of staggering Ivan, are the culmination of the scene in the tavern when the hero is "dazed

by the blow". In episode 4, the images superimposed and dissolved from one to another (the church frescoes, sculptures of the Crucified Christ, Christ played by the actor, portraits of Ivans as a child and adult) can be regarded as belonging to the Ivan's vision just due to these superimpositions and dissolves. Such devices signal their different ontological status as "associational narration" which describes "the inner world" of the hero;

9) **acting** - based rather on the expressive choreography which by the telling gestures and spatial relationship symbolically presents complex inner states and processes, than on "psychological" playing. This illustrativeness of such performance (being more choreography than acting) is particularly visible in the montage sequence depicting love of Ivan and Marichka "through the years" (episode 2), in the tableaux presenting Ivan's loneliness (episode 4), in the scene of Ivan's seduction by Palagna (at the end of episode 4), in the tavern (episode 10);

10) **editing** - it creates the rhythm of suddenly changing images in the scenes whose unity is assured by music or songs (episodes 2 and 4), or by voice-off verbal narration of diegetic characters (particularly in episode 4, but also in 12). The editing is also factor additionally increasing the expressivity of camera movements, e.g. due to the impossibility (in the normal viewing conditions) of ascertaining, if the sudden zip pan does not mask the cut (especially in episodes 1 and 4 - the wedding procession). This is intriguing all the more because sometimes cuts actually take place, and sometimes the take is continuous.

In the classical cinema the editing creates the "total", cognitively complemented in viewer's mind, physical space of the diegetic world, in a consistent and coherent way; the possible inconsistencies or incoherence of the physical aspect of diegesis (i.e. of its space and time) are usually regarded as unintentional filmmaker's mistake or ineptness (however, they can be accepted by convention). In *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* the total diegetic reality implied by editing is not at all homogeneous in its physical aspects - quite the reverse, it is so constructed as to prevent viewers from any unequivocal its unification as for its space and time, and even to state what "in fact" happened on the level of story events. Anyway, it is interesting that we realize this incoherence only during meticulous analysis or on cool reflection after seeing the whole film, whereas when viewing this film (particularly in the theatre) we almost do not notice it and do not think about it at all. It so happens because we are ravished by the spectacle.

Let us consider, for example, how far from Marichka was Ivan when he stayed among shepherds in the mountains (episode 3)? The farewell scene at the end of episode 2 seems to suggest that the very long distance will separate the lovers; however, the same night Marichka died Ivan learns about her death (on the other hand – is it certain that during one and the same night Ivan was musing over his beloved, looking at the shining star, and found out her death, and that Marichka died the same night her lover was thinking about her, when also “called by the glittering star” she set out into the mountains?). The editing and narrative cues are very obscure as to these questions. Besides, there is a precedent of the episode 2 in which the montage sequence “Love of Ivanko and Marichka” extremely condensed not only different moments but many years, what shows the possibility of similar condensation in the episode “The Mountain Pasture”. The editing and narrative cues simultaneously suggest viewer possibilities excluding one another: the long distance between lovers / their spatial proximity; the montage condensation of longer state of affairs (“lover’s nights full of longing”) / occurrences of one particular night.

Actually, how did Ivan die? What, in fact, caused his death – the blow of Yura’s mountaineer axe in the tavern (episode 10), or the magic acts which the sorcerer demonstrated to Palagna in episode 11? On what ontological plane – in the diegetical “reality” or only in the inner vision of dying Ivan – does the hero’s run across the forest and the field of burnt stumps take place? What is the ontological status of the images showing red bushes and rocks which impress a viewer by their gloomy beauty? Does the physical and supranatural world penetrate one another in such a way that Marichka “really” comes to Ivan’s home at the Christmas Eve, and Ivan “really” runs with her across the forest – or are these the projections of his desires only? Does the Olexa Palichuk’s funeral take place on Sunday, just before the Mass (what seems to be suggested by setting the cross at the grave, although it seems to be illogical), or this is the image of the scene having the different ontological status (say, depicting the moment prior to the Sunday fair and the Mass)? This second possibility may be inferred from the fact that the image which presents setting the cross at the grave, is accompanied by the off-screen mother’s voice. As is demonstrated by the short scenes in episode 4 (showing Ivan digging the grave, building the hut for a woman, repairing the church roof and regaled with vodka by the merry group) the pictures having the status of “past” (“anteriority”) may be accompanied by the voice-off verbal narration with the status of “pres-

ence" ("posteriority" with respect to the image). The retroactive projecting of this possibility onto the scene with the grave would explain satisfactorily its status (on the other hand, however, Ivanko seems directly run down from the grave to the fair). But besides - is it at all Olexa's grave?

The relations between the different tableaux in the episode 4: "Loneliness", are also very complex and full of tension. Although the tableaux mentioned in the previous paragraph have the status of "anterior" with respect to the voice-off accompanying them, the other two (the first - showing the Ivan's farmyard and two old women in black talking nearby, the second - presenting Ivan washing his shirt in the river), seem to be "present" in relation to the verbal commentary (however, either this point is not certain). And these two tableaux are placed in the same montage sequence as the aforementioned other four.

I have presented above only the exemplary narrative obscurities (because there are more) of this film, seemingly so obvious and "simple" in its story.

Paradzhanov's film makes use of strongly symbolical "representation" of long or complex states or processes (e.g., episode titled "Workdays" consists of merely one short scene which presents Ivan and Palagna working at the haymaking). In accordance with its title, episode 4 depicts in few black-and-white tableaux hero's "loneliness" - the state of affairs which had to last for certain longer time, what can be inferred from different seasons in the particular scenes of this episode. The "antenuptial romance" of Ivan and Palagna practically reduces itself to one scene at the end of episode 4, while the history of Palagna's seduction by Yura is presented in the four brief scenes, scattered along the syuzhet and having rather surprising progression: "caroller's" throwing on Palagna on Christmas Eve at the Palichuks' farmyard - the night escape of naked Palagna from Yura who was peeping her in the field - Palagna's giving herself to the sorcerer after his "driving" the tempest "off" - the shameless behaviour of both in the tavern in Ivan's presence).

Film also makes extensive use of the surprising time ellipses. And once again episodes 2-4 are the most suggestive examples (and particularly the montage sequence in episode 2 which shows the love of Ivan and Marichka, since their childhood to the adult age, on the background of folk songs and music).

It is interesting, however, that this same narration - so chopping up the space and time by editing, leaving the narrative relations and

physical aspects of the diegesis so indefinite and vague – sometimes can be extremely pedantic as for the authentication of physical continuum, creating the homogeneous space of the cinematic spectacle on the “pro-filmic” level. The examples of this “integrating narration” are, of course, numerous travellings, although in this regard the most respectful seems to be episode 10. Different corners of the tavern from the beginning of this segment are being shown in the different, separated by cuts, static shots in tableau-like style, beautifully composed and frontally shot. In the splendid panning shot, when angry Ivan returns from the singing company’s table to that table where he left Palagna with Yura, all the tavern’s places previously shown in separate shots, get united into the **one total pro-filmic space**, and what we till now have regarded as merely result of the classical analytical cutting with its rules (e.g. linking the shots by the eyelines or screen movement direction), suddenly appears a truth in its material aspect. “Bazinian” continuum of this shot (and the next, in red, when wounded Ivan is staggering around the tavern) is the more respectful that Paradzhanov could perfectly dispense with it. Similarly integrated into the reliable continuum by frantically rotating camera is the room where the funeral banquet gets more and more ecstatic.

Why, despite all the aforementioned obscurities, *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* cannot be regarded as a “difficult” film?⁸ This is because, as in the early Passion films or other primitive narrative films from the “cinema of attractions” period, comprehending the Paradzhanov’s film is facilitated by the **external narrative instance**, making the spectacle intelligible (after all, very attractive in itself).

This instance is manifested by: 1) the titles of episodes and short recapitulations of story between some episodes (or in their beginnings); they in advance announce what a viewer will see in a moment; 2) **folk songs**, whose texts accompanying the image, at the same time comment it – sometimes directly, when they deal with love of Ivan and Marichka, sometimes indirectly, but in obvious reference to the story (e.g., when the words of mother, whose only daughter, Nastechka, is to be married, accompany the wedding ceremonies of Ivan and Palagna); 3) **folk legends and beliefs** – as, for example, the old shepherd’s story about the

⁸ I have not met any viewer, who if only decided to watch this film (and in Poland the “Soviet” production disposed viewers to film rather distrustfully), would not be enchanted by it. On the other hand, though, I have always watched it in the company of rather “refined” spectators.

Black Mountain (Čornohora) and the Green Pasture (Zelenaja Polonina), who cannot get married for ages; or the magic or supranatural forces, believed in by the characters, which, perhaps, somehow explain the course of story events (the ominous invisible axe, persecuting Ivan and Marichka; Himka the witch; Yura's sorcery); 4) **dialogues** – it may seem strange that here I am pointing out dialogues (after all, sparing in this film) rather as an indication of external instance than as an intradiegetical element; the reason for such a treatment is that in the film's dialogues psychological motivation is relatively weak, but, instead, they are characterized by the high degree of "communicativeness" and "symbolical condensation"; 5) **universal religious symbols** – the lamb, the only piece of property not sold by impoverished Ivan, and warming hands over the burning crown of thorns, offered to hero by Jesus, in context of the Christian culture are very telling images; they directly precede the scenes of Ivan's return to life; 6) commonly known and present in different cultures **schemata of tragic story** – the unfortunate love of youngs from two families hating one another; lover's despair after the loss of beloved; impossibility of finding happiness with other person than the true and only love; desperation of a woman yearning for a child and her pact with the forces of evil; the revenge of a rejected woman; the call of dead beloved. Such schemata, naturally, facilitate the story comprehension, and, moreover, impose on the fictional events sense which otherwise would not be so obvious on the base of what is "actually" seen on the screen.

In the year 2000 this film seems more obvious than 36 years earlier, when it was made, the more so that spectators all around the world are accustomed to the particular aesthetics of such audiovisual spectacle as videoclip. In any case I would not like to depreciate Paradzhanov's work nor splendid folk songs, since I am great admirer of both, whereas generally I do not watch videoclips and regard them as the sign of rather "lowbrow" culture. Nevertheless, it seems to me that in Paradzhanov's film illustrating the story by folk songs (or reversely, the songs – by narrative; it is difficult to point out here the overriding structure, since the image and music are reciprocally functional elements of spectacle) does not stray much from the nowadays "principle" of videoclips.

The influence of *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* can be certainly seen in the another beautiful (although not so much beautiful) Ukrainian film *White Bird with a Black Mark* (*Belaja ptitsa s čornoy otmetinoy*) [1971], directed by Yuri Ilienکو, nb cameraman in the

Paradzhanov's film. It seems to me, however, that its aesthetics the most strongly influenced the masterpiece made by Polish director, Piotr Szulkin – the short ethnographic film *The Girl and the Devil* (*Dziewcę z ciortem*) [1976]. This is as if another one “episode”, unknown to the Armenian director, illustrating the folk story about the child-murderess, who for her crimes is punished in the hell. The folk woman artist is singing (voice-over) the old ballad, and the image in impressively composed “tableaux”, situated in “Breughel-like” style on many planes of one shot, in rather symbolic and schematic (but readable) way, visualizes this narrative. Szulkin's film contains also the “Paradzhanov-style” dynamic travelling during the horse ride of the devil with the girl and also, serving as a leitmotive shot, the insert of the folk musicians group, what may evoke the similar shots from *Shadows...*, which show different persons (villagers, shepherds, Palagna) playing various instruments. Acting here is much more clearly only the choreography, although it is no wonder, since Szulkin's film stylistically similar to the Paradzhanov's as the short produced in WFO (Educational Film Company) was not intended to be “fiction” and from the beginning got the status of “documentary”, “educational” or “ethnographic” film. Regardless of this “institutional” classification, in fact both films are the narrative films with the dominant of cinematic spectacle.

Two later Paradzhanov's films I have seen – *The Color of Pomegranates* (*Sayat Nova*) and *The Legend of Suram Fortress* – are works, for whose artistic form the director cannot be fully responsible⁹. However, reediting made by Yutkevich did not change radically the original aesthetic design of Paradzhanov for film *Sayat Nova*, what may be testified by reading the script and seeing the stills published with this text¹⁰, which present the “tableaux” of ready film. In both these films (like *Shadows...*, broken up onto episodes) we do not meet so various as in the *Huzul* film, the signs of external instance informing a viewer (from the titles through the songs to the culturally universal narrative schemata). Therefore, their stories are hardly readable and comprehensible for unprepared viewers. Their images are very beautiful but full of rather hermetic (Armenian, Georgian) symbolism, and when a puzzled viewer reflects on their meaning, their beauty escapes his attention.

⁹ Cf. note 5.

¹⁰ Cf. S. Paradžanow, “Sajat Nowa”, transl. Ł. Matulewicz, „Kultura Filmowa” 1973, no. 11-12 (183–184), pp. 64–101.

Both these films are also unusually tiring – they are perceptually overloaded and the static tableau-like style is not in them counter-balanced, as was in *Shadows...*, by the dynamic camera movements, rapid editing in montage sequences, effects of light and colour, richness and diversity of the soundtrack. Therefore, no wonder that both seem to be monotonous, difficult in viewing and – despite their beauty – do not ravish spectator as does till today the most famous Paradzhanov's film.

The tragic life of Paradzhanov in the communist empire is certainly one of the reason that he never repeated the great success of his *Huzul* film. Nevertheless, the fact is unquestionable: *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* – the fascinating cinematic spectacle – appeared to be a masterpiece whose excellence was never to be equalled also by its maker.

BYT-DLA-WIDZA: KINEMATOGRAFICZNY SPEKTAKL JAKO DOMINANTA W CIENIACH ZAPOMNIANYCH PRZODKÓW

Streszczenie

Pojęcie „dominanty diegetycznej”, wywodzące się z zaproponowanego przez rosyjskich formalistów konceptu „dominanty”, określa zasadniczy rys filmowej fikcji, tj. tego, co w filmie przedstawione. Zdecydowana większość filmów fikcji posiada jako swą dominantę *fabułę*; jednak niektóre filmy (albo przynajmniej pewne ich partie) może charakteryzować jedna z czterech innych dominant: *efekt diegetyczny* (odpowiadający literackiej kategorii opisu), *dyskurs*, *spektakl* lub *intencja zwrotna*. Zamiarem niniejszego tekstu jest zademonstrowanie w analizie, jak jedna z niefabularnych dominant – *spektakl* – zostaje ustanowiona przez czysto filmowe środki wyrazu.

Ukraiński film *Cienie zapomnianych przodków* (*Tini zabutych predkiw*) [reż. Siergiej Paradzanow, 1964] egzemplifikuje jeden ze sposobów, w jaki spektakl może stać się w filmie fikcji dominantą. W filmach z dominantą spektaklu świat przedstawiony (zwany diegesis) nie udaje pewnego autonomicznego uniwersum, „bytu-w-sobie”, lecz otwarcie skonstruowany jest jako „byt-dla-widza”.

Przedstawiona analiza unaocznia, jak dominantę spektaklu kreują rozmaite aspekty formy filmowej: epizodyczna struktura fabularna; przewaga motywacji estetycznej nad

innymi typami motywacji; konstrukcja „niemożliwej” czasoprzestrzeni przez niezwykle ruchy i ustawienia kamery, montaż i mise-en-scene. Spektakl jest zatem ustanawiany za cenę niespójności w czasie, przestrzeni i logice fabularnej, co mogłoby czynić film „trudnym” dla odbiorcy. Nie dzieje się tak jednak, przynajmniej w tym stopniu, w którym zewnętrzna instancja narracyjna umożliwia widzowi uczynienie świata filmu jako tako spójnym i zrozumiałym. A przejawy tej instancji (tytuły epizodów i streszczenia akcji; ludowe pieśni, legendy i wierzenia; uniwersalne symbole religijne; powszechnie znane schematy opowieści tragicznej) same stanowią niezmiernie istotny składnik spektaklu stworzonego w arcydziele Paradżanowa.