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OLEKSANDR DOVZHENKO'S CINEMATIC NOVELS WITHIN THE DRAMATIZATION OF PROSE IN THE 20th CENTURY

Анотація / Abstract

Виникнення кіноповісті, створеної О. Довженком, стало одним з провідних надбань української культури XX ст. Потреба у такій новачці була зумовлена особливим місцем кінематографу як альтернативи театру, оскільки минувшина подавалася на екрані подібно до епічної, а не драматичної літератури. Органічна єдність ознак сценарію та повісті демонструвала нові властивості та можливості оповіді. Насамперед, кіноповість належить до загальної літературної течії струменя свідомості, що сягає театральної солілоквиї та становить паралель до сучасної їй монодрами. Зокрема, сюжет як визначник подій поступається місцем силам уяви суб'єктивного світу. Ця обставина обґрунтовує порівняльне дослідження спадщини О. Довженка та В. Вульф. По-друге, саме телеграфний стиль позначає як сценарії, так і кіноповісті, водночас сягаючи риторичних знарядь парцеляції тексту. Автономне існування окремих речей в кінематографічному контексті передбачається ефектом відчуження, що виводиться з фантомів уяви. Розклад тексту в ряд видінь окремих речей має наслідком перетворення лінійної часової послідовності подій на просторові образи, позначені багатомірністю. По-третє, композиція кіноповістей, так само як зразків літератури струменя свідомості, позначена властивостями так званої спіральної оповіді. Нові чинники мотивації подій, відкриті кінематографом, надавали нові можливості для традиційної театральної проблематики фаталізму. Виникнення кіноповісті висвітлює нові взаємини поміж екраном та сценою і накреслило нові перспективи їхньої взаємодії.

Ключові слова: струмінь свідомості, телеграфний стиль, монодрама, спіральна композиція, парцеляція, відчуження.

The emergence of cinematic novel created by O. Dovzhenko has become one of the chief achievements of Ukrainian culture in the 20th century. The demand for such innovation has been conditioned with the particular place of cinema as an alternative to theatre where the past could be represented at screen in the manner of epic and not dramatic literature. The organic unity of the features of a script and a novel has demonstrated new peculiarities and opportunities of narration. First of all, cinematic novel belongs to the general literary trend of the stream of consciousness that comes back to theatrical soliloquy and builds up a parallel to monodrama. In particular, plot as the determination of events yields to imaginary forces of subjective nature. The comparative research of O. Dovzhenko's heritage with that of V. Woolf is substantiated with this circumstance. Secondly, it is the so called telegraph style that marks both scripts and cinematic novels coming back still to rhetoric devices of parcellation. The autonomous existence of separate things within cinematic context is presupposed with the effect of alienation ensuing from the phantoms of imagination. Textual dissociation into a series of visions of separate things results in the transformation of linear temporal succession of events into spatial corporeal images marked with multidimensionality. Third, the composition of cinematic novels as well as of other specimens of the stream of consciousness is marked with the traits of spiral narration. The new motivational forces discovered in cinema procured new opportunities for the traditional dramatic problem of fatal predetermination. The formation of cinematic novel has elucidated new interrelation between screen and scene and outlined new perspectives in their interaction.

Keywords: stream of consciousness, telegraph style, monodrama, spiral composition, parcellation, alienation.

The invention and creative development of the principally new branch of prosaic literature marked as the cinematic novel is considered to be one of the most essential contributions of the culture of Ukraine to the global cultural treasury. The formation of this branch of prose is indebted to the genius of O. Dovzhenko who has persuasively proved its vitality with his proper cinematic achievements. This newly born phenomenon of verbal art was the retort to the new demands and the incarnation of the shifts that have taken place in the old problems of the interrelations of theatre and literature, dramatic and epic arts.

It has already been shown that the transition from the so called actor's theatre to the producer's theatre that had taken place at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries entailed essential shifts in prosaic literature [7]. In particular, the dramatization of prosaic text gains actuality in the works of V. Vynnychenko so that the researcher points to «the transition to dramatic manner in proper sense» [1, p. 63] just in narration. This interaction between theatre and prose as the general trend is to be traced especially with the mentioned formation of the producer's theatre replacing earlier actor's stage. Such situation is still to be complicated when the interaction of the simultaneously arising cinema with literature comes into question.

One of the paradoxes of the screen as opposed to stage is that in spite of the culture

of the so called stars it doesn't tolerate the habits of artist's theatre, moreover, due to the fixation of each movement cinema builds up an alternative to drama, so that Sebastiano Arturo Luciani still in 1928 year had grounds to mark wittily cinema as «anti-theatre» [11]. In reality one deals here with epic and not dramatic attitude as far as it goes about the presentation of the past and reproduced events with genuine epic plenitude that screen enables. Similar situation was to be observed in the so called epic theatre developed by B. Brecht, but the conditions of screen presupposed the opportunities that stage didn't possess. Any film represents a series of recollections and acts as a revelation of memory in opposite to dramatic work to be played on stage immediately in present moment. This mnemonic nature of film results in the production of illusions essentially different from those of stage: if theatre implies scenic conventions of interpersonal relations it is screen where dream-like state is generated so that the action is presumed to develop within the inner world of a single subject in the manner of commemorations.

This preliminary remark permits to clarify the impact exerted upon prose with cinematic scripts. The fiber of film as a visionary art can be said to build up a dream-like vision to be put down in a script as an account with verbal devices. It is in the make up of such script that the collision of temporal and spatial images

arises as far as the corporeality of space becomes contrasted with the linearity of temporal order of narration that presupposes constant transitions between presence and non-existence in the past. It is this temporal fluency being fixed within film and represented with corporeal shapes that entailed numerous consequences for the structure of cinematic novel engendered with transformation of linear order of time and the multidimensionality of space. There are the following three peculiarities of O. Dovzhenko's prose that mark their inimitable dignity.

First, it is the so called stream of consciousness that unites O. Dovzhenko's innovations with the contemporary literature. Moreover, there are grounds for the statement that the Ukrainian has become the forerunner of the analogous approaches used by his contemporaries, in particular by V. Woolf [15]: for instance, *The Waves* as the paragon of experimental narration with separately alternated episodes is dated with 1931 whereas *Zvenyhora* with the similar alternations comes back still to 1927; *To the Lighthouse* (that is regarded as the manifestation of the stream of consciousness within the respective literary trend) was written in 1927 and *The Earth* as a script appeared in 1930. O. Dovzhenko's innovations could be said to appear step by step simultaneously with the respective achievements of European literature.

The possibilities of the stream of consciousness that comes back still to St. Augustine's *Confession* and reproduces typical theatrical form of soliloquy were obvious still for V. Vynnychenko who referred to the experience of P. Calderon in his dramatic experiments [6]. Their importance is attached to the demands of building up scripts that would be void of plot in the first decades of cinematic art. The use of soliloquy and representation of inner subjective world impart lyrical verve to prose with the ensuing revision of a plot's functions. Respectively, the lack of plot's determination doesn't mean the absence of plot as a kind of macroscopic predication. The sequence of events always represents the succession of respective goals and tasks but they aren't taken in the way of

priorities' subordination: there are no hierarchy of a field structure with centre and periphery. Meanwhile the succession of situations is predestined with the film's draft, therefore one says of the sequence of visual scenes that don't reveal explicit conflicts and problems (as in the verbal art) and refer to them implicitly as to the action's moving force. Such approach to plot promotes attaching meaning to such episodes that seem to be secondary. O. Dovzhenko in *The Earth* and *The Poem of the Sea* stresses funeral episodes as the final resolutions so that it could be taken for something making contrast to action's development. While suggesting an apt definition for such phenomena one would pay tribute for monodrama that has appeared just in the years of cinematic art and was marked with the prevalence of subjective world over objective flow of events.

Such functional recession of plot within narrative composition meant first of all the penetration of lyrical approach (proper for monodrama) towards epic matter. The flow of events is now transported into the subjective space of imagination and memory appertaining to a partial private viewpoint. In particular, a row of recollections or imaginary phenomena replaces the objective account on events (proper for epics) with their perceived vestiges. It is worth reminding V. Woolf's meaningful remarks where Mrs. Bast (the heroine) «unwound her ball of memories» [12, p. 105], and other samples of the kind to be found quite frequently. Noteworthy the similar utterance marks the final lines in O. Dovzhenko's *The Enchanted Desna*: «Тільки було це так давно, що майже все вже розтануло в далекому морі часу, як сон, і потонуло» (Only all it took place so long time ago that it had thawed in the distant haze of time, as a dream, and drowned there) [2, p. 80]. Still more overt outlook has one of the final statements of *The Poem of the Sea*: «Цей сон переходить у дійсність майже непомітно» (This dream passes to reality almost imperceptibly) [5, p. 97]. Such statements point to the generic features of monodrama that builds up the fusion of events due to subjective activity.

Of importance is that in such cases the past events are taken for belonging to the given present moment so that epic attitude turns into dramatic one. It could be said of apparitions haunting the screen. Such is the episode of unexpected encounter of the pair of the former sweet-hearts from O. Dovzhenko's *The Poem of the Sea* where the remark concerns the brim of reality: «Але се було так давно, сього майже не було. Се як сон» (But it was so long ago, it hasn't almost been at all. It's as if a dream) [5, p. 21]. To compare it would be apt to cite V. Woolf who inserts the eloquent enunciation in her heroine's lips: «*Past and present became jumbled together*» [13, p. 188]. One deals here with the interplay of illusions, and it entails the latent effect of irony. As the researcher of this phenomenon puts it, «*le poete hesite et cherche un espace situe entre nulle part et ailleurs*» (the poet hesitates and seeks for the space situated between the nowhere and everywhere) [9, p. 72]. Thus the irony of illusions becomes the inseparable satellite of narration constantly oscillating between non-existence of the past and explicit reality. One deals with a series of commemorations so that narration acquires the outlook of mnemonic process. Meanwhile the interplay of illusions with the ensuing irony implies the effect of alienation when the phantoms created with the imagination behave as a kind of fetishes, and it leads to the next peculiarity of cinematic novel.

This second peculiarity, it is the so called telegraph style that dominates in cinematic novels and entails textual fragmentation. This style as the device for the reproduction of colloquial speech was introduced in the prose of the realistic epoch of the 19th century: for instance, one can point to collocations of the so called jingloism and wellerism named after the personages (Jingle and Weller) of Ch. Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*. Meanwhile in reality it comes back to old rhetorical device of parcellation and can be regarded as the inevitable consequence of the stream of consciousness that entails the alienation of severed elements of narration and the division of the flow of thoughts. One deals

indeed with the phantoms of imagination and commemoration that get their own existence.

The effect of alienation and of the ensuing fetishism has been scrutinized in B. Brecht's heritage as a particular property of dramatic art with its scenic phantoms. As to the screen, here the linear temporal order being fixed up and incarnated in a film, so that the spatial multidimensionality arises, therefore the corporeality of imagination contributes essentially to the separation and autonomous life of details. This corporeality as the counterpart to temporal linear succession of events entails the separation of the arising phantoms. Script always dissociates into relatively independent components beaming rays which reach far beyond the temporal line of successive events. Such is the case in O. Dovzhenko's *The Poem of the Sea* where a unique episode of the life of the late Catherine post mortem is depicted with stars taken as her satellites: «*Катерина стоїть коло Дніпра. Незліченні зірки сяють у воді. Непомітно вона входить у воду кроків на чотири. Захитались найближчі зірки*» (Catherine stands at the Dnieper. Innumerable stars are gleaming in the water. She comes into water imperceptibly for circa four steps. The nearest stars have been getting to swing) [5, p. 82]. It's worth to remind that one encounters here the retrospective view upon the former existence so the stars acquire particular meaningfulness. Therefore, the whole episode focuses upon the essence of life. For the comparison let's take a passage from V. Woolf's last story (*Between the Acts*, 1941) where the recollections of a Mrs. Swithin are mingled with her reflections: «*Sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves – all are one. If discordant, producing harmony – if not to us, to a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head*» [13, p. 388]. Things become here the fetishes in the same way as the stars do in the preceding quotation.

Such separation of corporeal objects is also to be shown with another pair of passages. In *The Enchanted Desna* the author describes the flood taken place on the Easter that gives pretext for references to the mythology of water:

«Вода, хмари, плав – все пливало, все безупинно неслося вперед» (Water, clouds, rafts – all were swimming, all were irresistibly rushing forward) [2, p. 58]. Another approach to the mythology of water is to encounter in V. Woolf's *The Waves* where liquid substance is represented with drops that leads to the conclusion: «*Our separate drops are dissolved; we are extinct, lost in the abysses of time, in the darkness*» [14, p. 127]. Thus alienated things become autonomous fetishes considered as mythological substance. One of the ways of semantic transitions associated with such reflections upon mere things is to be found in O. Dovzhenko's short story *The Will to Life* where the wounded agonizing soldier finds in himself the powers to overcome the illness while conceiving the word 'bandage' as the means for life. Due to abstractedness with the respective metonymic transition a habitual medical term becomes the concept of 'salvation'. Alienation becomes the source for abstraction and gives impetus for reconsidering separate things.

Then the question arises, whether such textual parcellation can be compatible with the demands of textual cohesion. In particular, the risk of representing text as a kind of a phrase-book becomes quite evident so that the names of such alienated objects behave in the manner of *loci communi* of old rhetorical tradition. Meanwhile things can't be taken as absolutely isolated, therefore parcellation always presupposes the existence of some absent complement for the mentioned phenomena. Any partial name (the so called meronym) as leaf or grass in floral word presupposes the existence of other parts as trunks or roots, and it concerns all relations existent among objects. An example of such «gravitational forces» that attract things is to be shown in O. Dovzhenko's *Chronicle of Flaming Years* where the girl at the military service visits her native home. «*Материне шлюбне вбрання – біла сорочка, вишита великими червоними квітами, вишнева шовкова спідниця <...> все так хороше пахло домом <...> Потім, вже зовсім вдягнена, вона глянула зненацька на свою сіреньку шинельку і заплакала*» (The maternal wedding attire – white shirt, embroidered

with great red flowers, cherry silk skirt, also with flowers <...> all it smelled so good with home <...> Then, already in garment, she got suddenly a glimpse to her grayish military piece of overcoat and began to weep) [4, p. 152]. Here attire and overcoat as the parts of dress acquire antonymous meanings and become counterpoised. These names build up a pair of situational antonyms analogous to the rhetoric figure of hendiadys. Therefore, parcellation of alienated things is always restricted with the inner powers represented with lexical attraction. It is this attraction that provides prerequisites for textual cohesion and it permits us to pass to the following aspect of cinematic novel.

This third aspect, it is the problem of the motivational forces of events that marks the compositional structure of cinematic novels. The already mentioned traits of monodrama and the textual parcellation (that are inherent for cinematic script and inherited with the novel) delineate preconditions for such problem. It lacks plot's determination of events that look like spontaneous revelations of latent motifs. As far as there lacks explicit determination the question arises about the fatalistic verve present both in cinematic novels and in the literary trend of the stream of consciousness. Thus the old and eternal theme of dramatic art comes into play, that of the predestination of *dramatis personae*, of their fortune and fate. The constant presence of fatalistic problem has obtained particular resolution in the structure of film where, as a rule, episodes of different lines of action intersect mutually and are given alternatively. Such alternation of episodes belonging to different lines presupposes imaginary continuation of one line while being interrupted with the insertion of another line's episode so that the predestination can be said to implement subjective attitude. Thus the whole gets an outlook of a pendulum where the events oscillate from one line of action to another line. As a rule, both lines meet together in the final episode. Such composition appertains to the old tradition of literature inherited with cinema and is known as spiral narration.

The concept of spiral narration has been introduced as a counterpart to that of linear or cumulative type as well as to cyclic composition. Being applicable to classical prose this concept has been recently revitalized as the widely used compositional device [8]. The features of spiral composition are traceable in such paragon of mental experimentation as J. W. Goethe's *The Elective Affinities* (Germ. *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*): the two couples are collided and crossed in their relations so that the sequence of narrowing communicative cycles arises terminated with the death of the first couple's child [10]. Of importance is that the partnership of the dramatis personae suffers essential changes with the transition from the previous cycle to the next one where new portrayals are introduced unknown earlier.

Such is the script of O. Dovzhenko's *Zvenyhora* (1928) where the conflict between the brothers Tymish and Pavlo builds up only the episode in much wider tissue of events. The thorough action runs through the alternation of episodes from contemporary and ancient epochs to become together where Tymish's cue unites the names of his girl Oksana with the legendary Roxana. The traits of spiral composition are

to be found also in *The Poem of the Sea* where the motivational background predetermines the moment of Catherine's death as the point of convergence for different lines of action. The same concerns V. Woolf's works. Especially demonstrable specimens of spiral composition are to be found in *Orlando* where the hero lives through different epochs with different outlooks, as a man and a woman alternatively. Another example of alternation *The Waves* shows that is built up as an alternation of monologues by old friends.

Thus one can see that while delivering new resources for the revelation of the inner world of a person the newly created cinema has exerted its feedback upon the structure of verbal sources. It was the literary trend of the stream of consciousness addressed to this inner world that enabled the searches for implementing this feedback which was incarnated in the genial creation of O. Dovzhenko. The very existence of cinema paradoxically rejuvenates the old problem concerning opposition of epics and drama as far as the screen always represents the past given in recollections as if in the moment of the present time on a stage. Screen enlivens these recollections of memory and suggests new approaches to the solution of this problem.

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