

## ABSTRACTS:

### **I. Monographs:**

**1. Doncheva, Gergana** (2021) *Thessaloniki Film Festival: History, Challenges and Transformations*, Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology, ISBN: 978-619-7179-19-4.

The Thessaloniki International Film Festival is a cultural event that in terms of its significance and influence seriously transcends the borders of the ordinary film community comprising the professionals and the educated audience. The impetuous history of the film festival is closely intertwined with the contemporary political and social history of Greece and the authentic understanding of many specific processes and facts is impossible without the historical national context.

First Chapter *The Film Festival as a research object* describes the basic characteristics of the film festival phenomenon and defines its typology, participants and functions. It is followed by a short historical survey about the genesis and the development of the film festival phenomenon (on the examples of Venice, Cannes, Berlin and etc.). It is necessary in order to be emphasized the place and the role of TIFF within the fast-changing but strictly hierarchized global film festival network.

Second Chapter *Historical development of TIFF* provides a detailed factual narrative about the appearance, the specific stages of transformation and the current TIFF status. The Thessaloniki Film Festival experienced substantial hardships during the different periods of its existence. The profound exploration of its cultural and institutional context reveals an overall history of Greek Cinema as well as the leading aesthetic achievements and their authors who, thanks to the festival practices, were legitimized as key figures within the national film canon.

Third Chapter *Bulgarian participation in the Thessaloniki Film Festival (1963-2020)* is the most contributing and key from the standpoint of the Bulgarian Film Studies. The emblematic 1989 is the chosen temporal marker that structures the narrative about two totally antagonistic models promoting Bulgarian Cinema abroad on the background of two opposite social and political epochs. In the course of these epochs the concept concerning the essence and the functions of cinema in Bulgaria has been radically changed and from a tool for ideological indoctrination it turned into a cultural industry's product.

**2. Doncheva, Gergana** (2010) *The Image of the Balkans in Balkan and Western Films: Representation Strategies*, Veliko Turnovo: Faber, ISBN: 978-954-400-306-7.

The monograph is the first research in the domain of Bulgarian Film and Cultural Studies devoted to the reception of the Balkans in the regional and in the Western film industries. The book structure includes two parts. The First one is entitled *The Narrative about the epoch after the end of the Cold War* and comprises three chapters. The idea is on the basis of the corpus of film stories to be reconstructed the story concerning the so-called transition period in the way in which filmmakers have caught it.

First Chapter *The collapse of the previous society* scrutinizes the tremendous social cataclysms as a result of the new political and economic situation; marginalization of different social strata, the ascendant of the criminal elite, the mafia' state misappropriation, the lack of any perspective for the young people, the everyday struggle for survival. Another important

aspect in the focus of my attention is the emergence of the *Other* – those minority groups in the society whose specific identity was carefully hidden before. Today their problems are explicitly depicted in Balkan Cinema.

Second Chapter *The radical scenario: the Yugoslav conflict* puts a strong accent on the representation of the events in the former Yugoslavia not only because it was the most painful version of social-political transformation but also because of its sinister symbolic function that this war had incorrectly interpreted as ‘the next Balkan war’.

In the Third Chapter *Go West* I discuss – within the frameworks of the revised concept about citizenship in the era of globalization – the phenomenon of emigration understood as a tool for overcoming of the Balkan stigma and simultaneously as a form for realizing of the personal uniqueness.

The Second Part of the book *In searching of the Balkan identity* explores the constructed cinematic concept in terms of the Balkan Peninsula. Establishing of the controversial opposition between the Balkans and Western Europe is the topic in the Fourth Chapter *Renewed orientalization: the dichotomy the Balkans-Europe* in which I illustrate how the most talented directors from the region interiorize the sustainable Western stereotypes resurrecting them for a new life.

Fifth Chapter *The Balkans: the dreamed closeness* identifies the role of the Balkan Peninsula as an attractive magnetic location. If the previous chapter to great extent deals with the problem of self-exoticism, this one analyzes the outside exoticism of the region that gains a specific status. In the positive version: the Balkans are perceived as a vital world full of warmth, spontaneity and magic, in the negative – as a terrible, cursed place inhabited by Gothic monsters.

The last (Sixth) Chapter *Homo Balkanicus: Who is he?* is the biggest challenge discussing the question: is it possible to be spoken about the appearing ‘common Balkan imaginary’ on the basis of the movies? I explore if *Homo Balkanicus* really exists; what is the connection between the recently emerged in the most of the Balkan countries counterculture and the cinematic construction of the Balkans, and ‘under what circumstances an individual is prone to distinguish and define him(her)self as belonging to the Balkans’. In case there is Balkan identity what is its essence, dynamics of development and characteristic manifestations.

## **II. Articles in collections of papers and journals:**

**3. Doncheva, Gergana** (2021) Development and Trends in the Contemporary Bulgarian and Croatian Cinema, In: *Bulgarian-Croatian Scientific, Cultural and Spiritual Relations*, (Svetlozar Eldurov, Antoaneta Balcheva, Irina Ognyanova, Lyudmila Mindova, eds.), Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology, pp.418-444, ISBN: 978-619-7179-18-7.

The article traces back in a comparative aspect the development and the dominant tendencies in Bulgarian and Croatian Cinema during the last thirty years. Describing the political context in both states in the 90-ies of 20<sup>th</sup> century the text focuses on the authors defined within the common label *Young Croatian Cinema* who depict in quite different way the topic of the war already reproduced in the films which Franjo Tuđman’s regime promoted. In Bulgarian Cinema the intensive interest towards the near past (the epoch of communism) is observed, however, the movies have the characteristics of a black-and-white interpretation and radical negation. The decade 2000-2010 was marked from the ambition of both states to join the European Union and this process exercised influence over the domain of cinema.

Since 2000 Bulgarian and Croatian filmmakers have sought new themes and personages. Croatian directors deliberately rejected the so-called ‘Kusturica’ model of representation of the Balkans that dominated in the regional production during the 90-ies. Their Bulgarian colleagues have been provoked to explore their own national identity in the frames of the globalized world as well as gifted filmmakers made their débuts. The period 2010–2020 was exceptionally successful for the film industries in Bulgaria and Croatia: their movies became visible thanks to the international film festivals and many of their authors were awarded prestigious prizes.

**4. Doncheva, Gergana** (2020) *The Season of Witch: Film Mythology of Magic*, In: *Mirabilia: Miraculous and Magical (=Studia Balcanica 33)* (Vanya Lozanova-Stancheva, Valeria Fol, eds.), Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology, pp.457-467, ISBN: 978-619-7179-05-7.

The article explores the emblematic figure of the witch whose captivating power fires the Western imagination even these days. Depicted in her historical context – the dark epoch of the Middle Ages when the Inquisition organized trials against many women accused of dealing with witchcraft, the image of the witch gradually occupied the territory of the literature. Some of the greatest literature masterpieces such as *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare successfully constructed a vivid cultural trope that turned out to be extremely sustainable and it easily conquered the global popular culture.

Cinema but above all Hollywood contributed mostly to this process creating two opposite visual stereotypes: 1) the old ugly and malicious witch and 2) the young beautiful and good fairy. Various examples illustrated the multiple contemporary discursive usages of the witch in both movies and TV productions and what is more interesting: in the PR strategies aimed to discredit female politicians (Hilary Clinton, Theresa May). The text outlined the differences between American and Scandinavian model in terms of the representations connected to the witch.

**5. Doncheva, Gergana** (2020) *Bulgaria: Reframing Contemporary Arthouse and Mainstream Cinema*, In: *Contemporary Balkan Cinema: Transnational Exchange and Global Circuits* (Lydia Papadimitriou and Ana Grgić, eds.), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp.50-68, ISBN: 978-1-4744-5843-6.

The years 2008-2018 proved to be a dynamic and turbulent period for the development of contemporary Bulgarian cinema in terms of the international visibility of local film productions and the growing numbers in movie theatre attendance at home. This prompted Bulgarian scholars and journalists to start speaking enthusiastically of a fragile revival of the national film industry following the bleak years of the so-called transition period. This auspicious development is not a happy accident; it is rather a consequence of a number of different factors.

The accession of Bulgaria to the European Union on 1 January 2007 deeply affected all facets of social and cultural life within the country, including cinema. The effects of the EU integration process can be examined from both a *discursive* and a *practical* perspective. The former refers to the redefinition and renegotiation of national identity in the context of European values, and the latter to the adaptation and compliance with processes of a supranational entity with stringent rules and a unique model of functioning. This move towards the European cultural space was a long-standing process, which in terms of the film industry began in 1993, when Bulgaria joined *Eurimages*, the Council of Europe’s European

Cinema Support Fund, and was therefore able to formally collaborate in production and distribution with other European partners.

This text argues that the rejuvenation of Bulgarian cinema experienced in the last decade or so has emerged from several necessary premises: Bulgaria's EU orientation and membership; the updated legislation concerning all aspects of the film industry; the emergence of a new generation of filmmakers who are ready to work in transnational competitive environment; the gradual business-orientated professionalization of producers who were forced to seek alternative funding due to the scarce state support; and last but not least the appearance of a heterogeneous cinephile audience.

**6. Doncheva, Gergana** (2019) *The International Thessaloniki Film Festival: History, Policies, Bulgarian Participation*, In: *Thessaloniki and Bulgarians: History, Memory, Present* (Yura Konstantinova, Nadia Danova, Yordan Zhelev, eds.), Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology, pp.545-575, ISBN: 978-619-7179-10-1.

The contribution is thematically divided into three parts: in the first one I problematize the phenomenon of film festivals as an object of research, the domination of the textual approach in Film Studies and the related scholarly methods, as well as the obviously radical change in the 1990-ies when prominent film historians and theorists altered the established paradigm by applying new methodological tools borrowed from the arsenal of sociology and anthropology. As a result of their deliberate efforts for reconceptualization, new research fields have emerged within the broader domain of Film Studies linking movies with socio-political environment, the models of economic production, geopolitics, and etc. One of the vivid and fruitful fields is that of film festivals explored from different perspectives.

The specific stages in the historical development of the International Film Festival in Thessaloniki are outlined in the second part of the paper. Strong emphasis is laid on the significance of the event before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dynamic processes in Greece and their direct political effect on the festival and the roles of the important intellectuals such as Paulos Zannas, Theo Angelopoulos and Michalis (Michel) Demopoulos in creating of a prestigious event of regional and international reputation.

The last part is devoted to the participation of the Bulgarian Cinema in the festival and its diversity: feature, documentary, animated movies and short films in the decades before and after 1989.

**7. Doncheva, Gergana** (2019) *The International Thessaloniki Film Festival: History and Policies*, In: *The Art in Europe: Models and Identities (Art Readings 2018)*, Sofia: Institute of Art Studies, BAS, pp.482-494, ISBN 978-956-8594-78-3.

The Thessaloniki International Film Festival draws the attention of scholars not only because of its curious history: it was transformed from an event of national significance in a festival with international prominence and important market in the field of the film industry but also for its strong focus on promoting Balkan cinema through introducing of a special section *Balkan Survey* – policy that has influenced seriously on the structure and the development of the rest regional festivals in Sarajevo, Sofia, Tirana and etc. In the deliberately European context in which frameworks the Greek film festival has been put, the ‘small’ cinemas from the Balkan Peninsula gain specific visibility and distinctness.

**8. Doncheva, Gergana** (2019) *In Searching for Ceylan*, *Cinema Magazine*, №2-3, pp.28-32, ISSN: 0861-4393.

The text is a multifaceted portrait of the great Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan who made his *début* relatively late in cinema thanks of the new digital technology that has democratized the film production process. At the same time, Ceylan prefers the ‘old-fashioned’ *auteur* cinema and shoots law-budgeted independent works.

The director is the brightest star of the so-called *New Turkish Cinema* whose representatives built up a recognisable aesthetics, narrative approaches and production model. The European coproduction hybrid model provided opportunity for the appearance in Turkey of filmmakers making films with original style and addressed to a global educated audience.

**9. Doncheva, Gergana** (2016) *The Phenomenon Twilight: On the Evolution of the Vampire’s Representation in the World Cinema*, In: *Mirabilia: Miracles and Monsters (=Studia Balcanica 31)*, (Vanya Lozanova-Stancheva, Valeria Fol, eds.), Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology, pp.422-436, ISBN: 978-954-8536-14-1.

The article is focused on the symptomatic development of the vampire’s representations in the cult saga *Twilight* based on the novels written by the American author Stephanie Meyer who promoted the Cullen family. The members of this clan are depicted as beautiful sexy vampires ‘vegetarians’. Later, this model was elaborated and multiplied in different feature films and TV series as *Moonlight*, *True Blood* and etc. The latest generation of vampires does not kill human beings but instead of it drinks synthetic or animal blood. Moreover, the new personages have been gradually transformed into ‘good guys’ and filmmakers prefer to treat them in extremely romantic manner.

In a historical perspective is traced out the conceptual evolution of the vampire in cinema: from the first appearance on the silver screen as a cruel ugly monster to his transformation into a complicated metaphor of modernity.

**10. Doncheva, Gergana** (2015) *The ‘small’ Cinemas in Europe: The Slovenian Cinema Case*, In: *Bulgarian-Croatian Political and Cultural Relations during the Centuries (Collection in Honour of Roumyana Bozhilova)*, Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology, Paradigma, pp.478-487, ISBN: 978-954-326-260-1.

The text is devoted to Slovenian Cinema about which Bulgarian spectators do not know almost anything. Only within the annual editions of Sofia Film Fest or within special rubrics and retrospectives it is possible for the audience to watch the movies made by the leading authors from Slovenia.

In the first part of the article I have made a short review concerning the development of Slovenian Cinema in the epoch of the former Yugoslavia and in the second one I discuss the period in which the country has received its national independence and started building up its new film industry in a new European context.

**11. Doncheva, Gergana** (2015) *The Figures of the Communist Power in (post-)Yugoslav and in New Bulgarian Cinema*, In: *Looking West, Feeling East. In Search of Identities in Southeastern Europe, Études Balkaniques*, (guest editor Roumiana Preshlenova), Special issue No.3, 2015, pp.281-297, ISSN: 0324-1654 = **Doncheva, Gergana**. *The Figures of the Communist Power in (post-)Yugoslav and in New Bulgarian Cinema*, In: *Looking West, Feeling East. In Search of Identities in Southeastern Europe*, (Roumiana Preshlenova, ed.), Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies, Veliko Tarnovo: Faber, 2015, pp.281-297, ISBN: 978-619-7179-03-3.

This article explores in a comparative perspective the discursive models of imagining of the near past – the so-called communist/socialist epoch constructed in the films produced

after 1989 in Bulgaria and in the previous Yugoslav republics. In the text the topic on communism legacy in cinema is discussed in its two forms: 1) movies made during the historical period 1944-1990 and 2) movies resurrecting the near past in the course of the latest decades. It is precisely outlined the pattern of representations before 1989 in Bulgarian and Yugoslav Cinema and the significant ideological tropes launched by the political regime in order to establish its power and values: mythologization of the Resistance – emergence of the partizan film ‘genre’, glorification of the political leader – Tito, Georgi Dimitrov and Todor Zhivkov. I point to the differences in building up of the cinematic cult in Bulgarian and in Yugoslav context.

Further, the discursive shift in depicting the political leaders is traced emphasizing that in the Bulgarian version the figure of the communist power was multiplied via the images of Georgi Dimitrov, Todor Zhivkov and Lyudmila Zhivkova.

**12. Doncheva, Gergana** (2015) *The Cinematic Macedonia Between Exoticism And Propaganda*, *Études Balkaniques*, (guest editor Yura Konstantinova), No.1, 2015, pp.273-287, ISSN: 0324-1654 = **Doncheva, Gergana**. *The Cinematic Macedonia Between Exoticism And Propaganda, Greece, Bulgaria and European Challenges in the Balkans*, (Yura Konstantinova, ed.), Sofia: Institute of Balkan Studies with Centre of Thracology, Veliko Turnovo: Faber, 2015, pp.273-287, ISBN: 978-619-7179-02-6.

The article is focused on the movies connected with the film industry of the current Macedonian state – Republic Northern Macedonia (in the past – the so-called Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in order to explore in which way filmmakers conceptualize their national identity, anxieties about history, what sort of iconic repertoire they prefer and why. In other words, this paper analyzes the fluctuating policies of representation manifested in the cinematic works shot by two very popular in their native country directors – Milcho Manchevski and Darko Mitrevski.

The general hypothesis is that the amazing variety of even mutually exclusive representations stemmed from the highly problematic historical continuity between the history of the Macedonian state and its deliberately constructed past. The vision for this extremely mythologized past was promoted through the medium of the educational system, film super-productions. The state institutional efforts for creating a new national identity attained their symbolic apogee in the implementation of the *Skopje 2014 Project*. I discuss on shifting models in imagining Macedonia in movies from the early 90<sup>-ies</sup> till now (2010-2014) when the official authorities formulated a clear strategy on national history and identity. Cinema occupies an important place in the overall process of the visual rewriting of the past.

**13. Doncheva, Gergana** (2014) *To What Extent the Images of Self-Representation within the Cinema of the Balkans are Balkan?* *Bulgarian Ethnology*, №2/2014, pp.176-189, ISSN:1310-5213.

The paper examines the issue about the distinctive iconic repertoire traditionally associated with the Balkans and closely linked to the Western European discourse on the region, the so-called *Balkanism*. The research problem is posed in the context of the provocative hypothesis launched by Karl Kaser that the influence of the images concerning the Peninsula exerted a stronger effect in terms of Balkan stereotypical perception in comparison with the texts produced by foreign travellers. The Austrian scholar alleged that there was a long tradition of the Western European iconic domination on the Balkans – from the end of XIX and the beginning of XX century – as a result of a belated *visual revolution* and further, Kaser discovered ‘*establishment of asymmetrical visual power relations between the West and the Balkans*’.

The emergence and development of the concept about *Balkan Cinema/the Cinema of the Balkans* and the authors covering this topic are briefly presented. The article discusses the process of consciously internalization of Western clichés and self-exoticism from the part of different local filmmakers who exploit in their works the tropes of barbarism and exceptional vitality. In the same time, even in the most 'exotic' Balkan 'ethno' movies there is a quite interesting layer: a high aspiration towards rearranging of the meanings; demolishing of the hierarchies created and ironically transforming of important Western cultural markers, for example – the usage of cult films – through their inclusion in the frames of the Balkan cultural context.