

Research Paper Citations

**THE REFLECTIVE HERO  
IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE AND SOVIET CINEMA  
(FROM ONEGIN AND OBLOMOV TO ZILOV)**

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**Abstract**

*This paper analyzes the reflective character in the play "Duck Hunt" by A. Vampilov. The author proceeds from the literary type of "superfluous man", that was discovered in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by A.S. Pushkin's novel "Eugene Onegin" and that continued its existence in such heroes of Russian literature as Pechorin, Belto, Rudin, Oblomov. The author highlights the distinctive features of the studied literary type in the play "Duck Hunt" and in the movie "Holiday in September", and stops at the plot-forming function of "replacement" in the play.*

**Keywords:** hero, image, type, character, "superfluous person", Eugene Onegin, Ilya Oblomov, Viktor Zilov, Alexander Pushkin, Ivan Goncharov, Alexander Vampilov, Nikita Mikhalkov, Oleg Dal, Vitaly Melnikov

**Rezumat**

*În articol, se analizează personajul reflectiv din piesa „Vânătoarea de rațe” de A. Vampilov. Autorul pornește de la chipul „omului inutil”, prezentat, pentru prima dată, la începutul secolului al XIX-lea în romanul lui A. Pușkin „Evgheni Oneghin” și care și-a continuat existența în astfel de eroi ai literaturii ruse ca Peciorin, Belto, Rudin, Oblomov. Autorul descrie trăsăturile distinctive ale tipului literar studiat în piesa „Vânătoarea de rațe” și în filmul „Vacanță în septembrie” și se oprește la „înlocuire” ca funcțiune de apogeu în piesă.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** erou, imagine, tip, personaj, „om inutil”, Evgheni Oneghin, Ilia Oblomov, Viktor Zilov, Alexandr Pușkin, Ivan Gonciarov, Alexandr Vampilov, Nikita Mihalkov, Oleg Dal, Vitali Melnikov

Russian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which created a complex image of Man and the World, paid special attention to people with contradictory and suffering consciousness; people who were "superfluous", "unnecessary" in the society that worships money, career, entertainment, mundane success. Hence a special type of hero in Russian literature, who is ascribed the definition of an "unnecessary person". Usually this term is used in Russian literary criticism in relation to the heroes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although "there was not and could not be any special period of 'superfluous people' in history. The "superfluous man" is a tragic figure, and his tragedy, on the one hand, is in his break with the vulgar environment, and, on the

other, in his inability to enter into active struggle with it" (Бурсов/Bursov, 1960, p. 27).

Many readers and some critics highlight in the "superfluous man" such traits as bourgeoisness, laziness, idleness. In our opinion, this is only one aspect of this literary type. We will try to show that the dissenting hero is destined to remain all his life in a state of spiritual loneliness, which is caused by his "woe from the mind," his suffering heart, his reflective consciousness and his position of an active "non-doer".

The following words may also be synonymous with the established definition of "superfluous man" in Russian literary criticism: reflective, contradictory, dissenting.

The first vivid embodiment of the "superfluous man" was Onegin ("Eugene Onegin" by Alexander Pushkin, 1823-1831); he was succeeded by Pechorin ("A Hero of Our Time" by Mikhail Lermontov, 1839-1840), then by Belto ("Who is to blame?" by A. I. Herzen, 1841-1846); Ivan S. Turgenev's heroes: Chulkaturin ("Diary of an Extra Man", 1850), Rudin ("Rudin", 1856), and Lavretsky ("Gentlemen's Nest", 1859); and, finally, Oblomov ("Oblomov" by I. A. Goncharov, 1849-1859). In our opinion, the list might be continued, but the 19<sup>th</sup>-century revolutionary-democratic critics still maintain that the gallery of "superfluous people" is supposed to be opened by Onegin and closed by Oblomov. Here it is possible to agree only with one thing: it is true that the portrayal of this type in Russian literature begins with Onegin, which does not, however, speak of the impossibility of the existence of "the superfluous man" in pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century culture (the type of man with a reflective sense of consciousness has been known since antiquity). However, we cannot agree with the statement that everything ends with Oblomov, since we find enough examples of literary heroes who think differently than everyone else and are opposed to society. In other words, the heroes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also exhibit features that are characteristic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century "superfluous man".

The term "superfluous man" only became widespread after I. S. Turgenev's "Diary of a Superfluous Man" (1850), but the formation of this type in Russian literature, as we noted above, begins with Onegin, followed by Pechorin, Belto, Rudin, Oblomov. Researcher Yuri Mann singles out the following features peculiar to this literary type: "...alienation from the official life of Russia, from his native social environment (usually noble), in relation to which the hero is aware of his intellectual and moral superiority and at the same time - mental weariness, deep skepticism, discord between word and deed and, as a rule, social passivity" (МАНН/Mann, 1967, p. 400).

Each of the above-mentioned heroes of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature overcame boredom, blues, melancholy in his own way, only their departure from society was common (they are "superfluous" because there is no place

for them in the society that surrounds them, since in it one must play by the rules of accepted norms, while the "superfluous hero" thinks and feels differently, not like everyone; this phenomenon is designated in philosophical ethics as nonconformism). Some chose the solitude of the countryside or long journeys as a "cure" for boredom and melancholy; others sought a bullet in the Caucasus, Persia, the revolutionary barricades of France; some "treated" themselves with a soft couch, wrapped in a large bathrobe. But the relief did not come, the longing did not recede.

Researcher V. A. Koshelev in his article "Onegin's airy bulk" writes: "Pushkin's hero (Onegin) is by no means devoid of laziness and idleness – but Pushkin always accompanies these concepts with meaningful epithets: "yearning laziness", "brooding laziness", "idleness of leisure", etc." (Кошелев/Košelev, 1999, p. 7). That is, these metaphorical epithets show the constant inner work of the mind and heart by external inactivity, it is not just thinking and experiencing, it is always a painful reflexive introspection.

Further, V. Koshelev notes that confessions of boredom, melancholy, moping are found in Pushkin's letters: "*Boredom is one of the belongings of a thinking being*. Moping and boredom were inherent to many of Pushkin's contemporaries – precisely those contemporaries who did not look like ordinary mediocre people. Poet K. N. Batiushkov in the essays "Walks around Moscow" depicted himself as some of his "good buddy" who "everywhere yawned smoothly," that is, behaved quite "in the manner of Onegin". In his village K. Batiushkov also lived in a state of "brooding laziness," which he described in detail in his letters to N.I. Gnedich. The diary of the Decembrist N. I. Turgenev, well known to Pushkin, was titled "My Boredom". The same feelings were expressed in their intimate notebooks by other Pushkin's friends: M.P. Scherbinin, V.F. Odoevsky, P.A. Vyazemsky, A.S. Griboedov (Кошелев/Košelev, 1999, p. 10).

The loneliness of Russian cultural and freedom-loving people of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was extraordinary. The image of Chatsky in "Woe from Wit" illustrates the loneliness of the best intelligent and finely sensitive people of the time, and he is also the forerunner of a whole string of dissenters in Russian literature. Such people, as we know, were often called insane by the society and authorities for the reason that they thought differently, otherwise, i.e. they were the only ones who really thought (woe to the mind), and also because a dissident always undermines established social norms and rules and encroaches upon the stability of state institutions by his denial. P.Y. Chaadayev was once called insane for his "Philosophical Letters". O. Kuchkina's article about him is entitled: "A Dissenter", that is, a person who thinks differently, and suffers from it. "The culturally refined Chaadayev could not reconcile himself to the fact that he was doomed to live in an uncultured society, in a despotic state..." (Кучкина/Kučkina, 1989,

p. 4). Society and state, confirming their uncultured and despotic nature, declared Chaadayev insane and subjected him to a medical examination. Chaadayev was depressed by this and became silent for a long time. Later, he would write "The Apology of a Madman", but would never finish it. Note the iconic nature of the title of Chaadayev's work.

Naturally, the Russian romantic idealists of the 40s fled from social reality, from the uncultured society, from the oppressive state into the world of thought, fantasy, literature, into the reflected world of ideas. "They suffered from the ugliness and untruth of reality, but were powerless to remake it. The discord with reality made Russian people inactive, developed the type of "superfluous people" (Бердяев/Berdâev, 1990, p. 23).

At first, the revolutionary-democratic critics of the nineteenth century took a benevolent view of the type of "superfluous man". They sympathized with the "superfluous people" and attributed their inactivity to external circumstances – upbringing and environment. V. G. Belinsky was the first to say that Onegin was a suffering egoist, and of Pechorin, that "...he bitterly accuses himself of his errors. His inner questions are continually ringing out in him, disturbing him, tormenting him, and he seeks their resolution in reflection: he peeks at every movement of his heart, examines every thought of his own. He has made himself the most curious subject of his observations..." (БЕЛИНСКИЙ/Belinskij, 1954, p. 43).

But in the second half of the 40s Belinsky's criticism of the romantic view of the world merges with a resolute condemnation of "superfluous people", who were included by him among the "romantics of life" who were not capable of socially useful activity. He sees the cause of the passivity of "superfluous people" in their very nature, weakened by their romantic and bourgeois upbringing, that is, even later the critic did not deny the dependence of character on the environment and "social life". But he no longer justified the inertness of "superfluous people" by the circumstances of Russian life, under which the forces of personality remain unused. Belinsky explained the idleness of "superfluous people" by their belonging to the nobility class.

Belinsky's ideas were supported and developed in their works by N. G. Chernyshevsky and N. A. Dobrolyubov.

N. A. Dobrolyubov's article "What is Oblomovshchina?" (1859) is an important stage in the critical understanding of I. Goncharov's novel "Oblomov". During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries readers perceived and continue to perceive the novel according to N. A. Dobrolyubov, who saw in the novel a depiction of the collapse of serfdom in Russia, and in the main character – "our indigenous people's type" (Добролюбов/Dobrolyubov, 1984, p. 41), who personifies laziness, inaction and stagnation of the serfdom system. N.A. Dobrolyubov is primarily

interested in "Oblomovshchina", so the critic focuses not on the individual, but on the typical features of the hero; the social is more important here than the personal. Oblomov is first of all a "gentleman", and it is precisely this "gentlemanliness", that is, the life at the expense of others, which leads the hero to the existence of weak will, inactivity, helplessness, and apathy. This brings Oblomov closer to the "superfluous" characters of Russian literature: Onegin, Pechorin, Belto, Rudin, who "see no purpose in life and find no fitting activity" (Добролюбов/Dobrolubov, 1984, p. 47). "Oblomovshchina", i.e. barbaric inactivity and dreaminess, according to N.A. Dobrolyubov, "puts an indelible stamp of idleness, freeloading and perfect uselessness in the world" (Добролюбов/Dobrolubov, 1984, p. 61) on Onegin, Pechorin, Belto, Rudin, Oblomov. Therefore the critic calls for a "merciless judgment", for the removal of the "halo of exclusiveness" from the "superfluous people" and for the establishment of the "active hero type" as an ideal.

N.A. Dobrolyubov, who brings together all the "Oblomovs" by their external features – laziness, idleness, apathy – does not speak about the inner world of the hero, which distinguishes Oblomov from others and makes him one of the few. This is what the critic A.V. Druzhinin, who sharply disagreed with N.A. Dobrolyubov and wrote in the same 1859 article "Oblomov, a novel by I.A. Goncharov", points out, where, in particular, he pointed out that "it is impossible to know Oblomov and not to love him deeply..." (Дружинин/Druzhinin, 1991, p. 112). A.V. Druzhinin saw the "bad" Oblomov, "almost ugly", lying on the sofa, arguing with Zakhar – in the first part of the novel, and the "good" Oblomov, "touching", "deep", "sympathetic", "in love", crying "over the ruins of his happiness" – in the second part. It is not the social essence of Oblomovshchina that is important to A. V. Druzhinin, but rather the true living poetry and the life of the people connected together in the novel. In Oblomovshchina the critic singles out both the negative and the poetic, the comic and the sad. N.A. Dobrolyubov categorically refused to notice anything in Oblomov except his "resolute trashiness"; for N.A. Dobrolyubov Ilya Ilyich is "*repulsive in his nothingness*" [Добролюбов/Dobrolubov, 1984, p. 58]. A. V. Druzhinin holds Oblomov dear as a "weirdo" and a "child" unprepared for practical adult life: "...It is not good in a land where there are no good and incapable of evil weirdos like Oblomov! Such people are sometimes harmful, but very often sympathetic and even reasonable..." [Дружинин/Druzhinin, 1991, p. 122]. Oblomov "...is dear to us as a man of his land and his time, as a kind and gentle child, ...he is dear to us as a crank, who in our era of self-love, subterfuge and untruth peacefully ended his life without offending any man, without deceiving any man, without teaching any man anything untoward" [Дружинин/Druzhinin, 1991, p. 125]. A. V. Druzhinin's point of view on the novel and the protagonist was not as popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

as N. A. Dobrolyubov's interpretation of the novel (for more on the problem of interpreting Oblomov's image, see Бражук/Brajuk, 2014, pp. 8–24).

Alexander Herzen, who was deeply sympathetic to the "superfluous people," was somewhat puzzled when N. Chernyshevsky and N. Dobrolyubov criticized the "superfluous man". His critical remarks on this subject are well known.

Ivan Turgenev, who recognized the importance of the environment in the development of personality, unlike V. Belinsky, N. Chernyshevsky, and N. Dobrolyubov, focused not on the social conditions of Russian reality, but on the psychological nature of man ("Rudin", "The Noble's Nest"), for which he was criticized by revolutionary democrats.

Due to revolutionary-democratic criticism (Dobrolyubov, Chernyshevsky, Pisarev), the image of the "superfluous man" was fixed only for the characters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, since it was believed that the cause of moping and melancholy was serfdom, "Oblomovshchina".

In the theme of the "superfluous man" it is important to highlight the affirmation of the value of the individual person, the personality, the disclosure of the inner world of the hero, his psychology, the interest in the "history of the human soul", which creates the ground for a fruitful psychological analysis. This is why the hero with a reflective consciousness remains an interesting topic for research today, despite the changed social conditions of life.

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The type of the "unnecessary man," the dissenting hero did not degenerate, did not end with Oblomov, did not disappear after the abolition of serfdom and the ruin of the nobility's nest. The Onegin-type hero became a significant social and artistic phenomenon in Russian culture. The traits typical of the dissenting hero of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (mental fatigue, deep skepticism, discord between word and deed, social passivity), can be found in the hero of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well. In the works of A. Chekhov, A. Bitov, Yu. Trifonov; in the plays of A. Vampilov, A. Volodin; in the films of directors O. Iosseliani, R. Balayan, G. Daneliya, N. Mikhalkov, I. Heifits, A. Efros, V. Melnikov. The man who is not like the rest, looking, thinking, suffering, checking whether the modern world is habitable, whether it is possible to find one's place in it – this man, and thus the hero with a reflective consciousness, remains a subject of research in Russian culture of the twentieth century.

Let's turn to Vampilov's play "Duck Hunt" and its protagonist V. Zilov. If the critics of the seventies paid attention to the social problems of the play, the critics of the nineties (E. Gushanskaya, B. Sushkov and others) say that "...it is time to look at Zilov through the prism of classical tradition. Without this, the author's thought might get lost in shallow topical analysis"

[Сушков/Suškov, 1986, p. 25). Paradoxically, Zilov is on a par with Onegin, Pechorin, Oblomov. He is characterized by the same inability to find himself in the world around him.

"The collision taken by the playwright is as old as the world – it touches on the problems of the social and moral existence of man. Each time has interpreted it in its own way, bringing to the forefront its own set of moral tasks and hero type. This is the kind of collision in which Zilov appears. ...We are faced with a dramatic collision in which he represents a hero of exactly this type – a reflective hero. ...The roots of this image go back to the Russian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century... Behind all these heroes there is a compromise and a moral right of superfluous people" [Гушанская/Guşanskaâ, 1990, p. 229, p. 234).

"Duck Hunt" is a play of a special genre, a play-remembrance, so the past tense occupies the main place in the play, the memories of the events of the last two months. The present tense in the play is not rich in events and is a framing of Zilov's memories. The dramatic nature of the memories is one of the reasons why the character tries to end his life by suicide.

Researcher E. M. Gushanskaya notes: "*The Duck Hunt* is first of all a play-confession, based not on dramatic, but on lyrical conflict, not on dramatic clashes, but on a plot of lyrical self-awareness, ... the conflict here is not external, but internal – lyrical, moral. Drama offers judgment from the outside, lyricism offers awareness from within. It is a strange and complex play, in which the main drama falls on what, in fact, cannot be played, – on the process of self-consciousness" [Гушанская/Guşanskaâ, 1990, p. 206).

Victor Zilov's inner tragedy arises from the absence of friends, from the discord with his conscience, from the unfulfilled son's duty, from the impossibility to love, from unrealized desires, from the fact that the hero is mired with everyone in vulgar and impure reality, that he is thirty, and life passes somehow meaninglessly, and there are no answers to the questions posed to himself, and only the dream of a clean and honest life on the other side remains.

Why do Onegin, Pechorin, and Oblomov flee from society? Because everything that surrounds them is not real, but false or played out: everyone around them is playing love, friendship, being busy with business, socializing. In Zilov's case the same is even more complicated: life turns into a kind of mundane ritual, with half-love, half-friendship, half-doing, in this formula the prefix "SEMI" easily turns into the prefix "NOT".

"Duck Hunt" is a play that is built on the principle of "substitution," in which the living turns into the inanimate, is replaced by it. Phenomena, people, things, concepts are substituted. Thus, the substitution function becomes plot-forming.

As a result, the image of Home (a symbol of warmth, coziness, and family) is replaced by the image of a typical apartment. Moreover, such a house is not some exception to the rule, it is the way many people live: Vampilov emphasizes that the hero receives an apartment in a new typical house, from the windows of which the roof of another typical house is visible. The house itself contains nothing domestic: the furniture is replaced by a garden bench, a live cat, which newcomers take into the house by a custom, is replaced by a plush cat. Then, however, a table and telephone appear (and, moreover, the telephone is not installed as usual, but "arranged": "And we will arrange the telephone here" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 142)), and a couch, and other furniture. The author's remark will emphasize: "ordinary furniture", i.e. the house is typical, the apartments are the same, the furniture is ordinary – this is an image of a Dormitory rather than a House; there are no domestic, personal features that distinguish the Vampilov hero's dwelling from other dwellings. And the one who does not yet have a home dreams of just such an apartment: "Sayapin: Here will be a TV set, here a couch, next to a refrigerator" (Вампилов/Vampoliv, 1984, p. 143). – In all this there is an indication of the impersonal, standard character of the dwelling. The characters assess this as the norm: Valeria remarks: "Now you will have a normal life" (Вампилов/Vampoliv, 1984, p. 144). The normality of life is determined not by the fullness of life, but by the absence of life in life, by the predominance of things, and the more lifeless, the "more normal life" is. Beauty is when there is elementary domesticity: "Cold? Hot?... Beauty!.. Gas?... Beauty... Eighteen squares? Beautiful! Balcony? Beautiful!"

The man is depersonalized in the world of things, which is depicted by Vampilov in this detail: Vera uses the same name for all men, "alík". The name "Alik" in the play is spelled with a small letter, it becomes a nickname. When asked by Sayapin why Vera calls everyone "alík": "Maybe it's your first love, Alik?" – she replies: "You guessed it. The first one is alík. And the second alík. And the third. All alíks" (Вампилов/Vampoliv, 1984, p. 137). As the play nears its end, the name "alík" becomes common, addressing each other, the characters use the impersonal word "alík" rather than their own names. The stuffed cat, the thing, is also given the name "alík." In this way, Vampilov not only gives the absurdity of the substitution function, but also raises it to the square degree: the living turns into the inanimate, the human being is replaced by the thing.

At the end of the housewarming party, Zilov ironically says: "That's fine. Everyone is well, everyone is happy. A pleasant evening" (Вампилов/Vampoliv, 1984, p. 151). But all the pleasantness lies in the fact that they drank and ate. Nobody knows how to celebrate a housewarming party. Customs, traditions are forgotten. People have been turned into things, replaced by things, and



people have forgotten how to speak. This is how their toasts sound: "Salute! Well, well! Let's go! Let's go!" (Вампилов/Vampoliv, 1984, p. 150). There is no sense of a celebration of communication, an ordinary ritual in a series of the same rituals.

For Zilov, work is a boring pastime with absolutely no creativity or satisfaction. When the bosses demanded the results of the work, Zilov, without thinking twice, handed in a fake report: "Nonsense. It will pass. No one will pay attention. Who needs it?" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 154). Thus, work is replaced by a game of work, deceit, lies.

The culmination of the substitutionary function in the world of things, "aliks", lies and masks, in the impersonal and dead world, is the absence of sanctuaries and God. This is why the planetarium takes the place of the church, and the place of God is taken by the bosses, on whom it depends whether the new apartment will or will not be given. The bosses are prayed to, they are stronger than God in the world of things:

*"Valeria (theatrically): Oh, Vadim Andreyevich! I'm ready...*

*Zilov: What for?*

*Valerie: I'm ready to pray for you. Honestly!*

*Zilov: Pray, my daughter..."* (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 145).

If there were any occasions to go to church, it was only once, and that was because he was drunk. Zilov tries to remind his wife of their first meeting. That time he came to her with snowdrops. Now instead of snowdrops there is a copper ashtray:

*Galina: Stop it, for God's sake.*

*Zilov: No, there was no God, but there was a church across the street, remember, remember? Yes, the planetarium. Inside it was the planetarium, but outside it was a church...* (Вампилов/Vampoliv, 1984, p. 164).

*Galina: ...Vitya, have you ever been to church?*

*Zilov: Yeah. I went in with the guys once. On a drinking binge* (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 185).

The world of hunting, the world of living nature, where everything is natural and where the hero strives, is opposed to the everyday, mundane, dead life of things in the play. To go hunting for Zilov is like returning home from the war, in other words, one must stay alive, resist, be able to endure the surrounding vulgarity that kills everything alive in man!

*Zilov (with despair): Another month and a half! Just think...*

*Waiter (grinned): Will you live?*

*Zilov: I don't know, Dima. How to live – I have no idea* (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 135).

For Zilov, hunting is "a world of transcendent freedom and spirituality, inconceivable, incomprehensible poetry, existential solitude, divine purity, it

is ecstasy, rapture, moral purification, a form of existence and manifestation of higher spirituality, which the hero lacks in everyday life so much... It is a moment of truth" (Гушанская/Gušanskaâ, 1990, p. 224).

When the guests ask Zilov, "Guess what we're getting you?" he replies: "I don't know. Give me an island. If you don't mind" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 147). The island for the hero is a symbol of seclusion from the living reality. It is similar to Oblomov's dream of a lost paradise, of Oblomovka, far away from civilization, in the world of nature and naturalness.

The two word-images constantly repeated in the play, rain and window, are not coincidental. The rain outside the window is the only hint of life in the inanimate world, a symbol of nature. The window is the boundary between that, natural, life and this, artificial life. Zilov is constantly drawn to the window. The window and the window sill are polysemantic for the hero.

It is also interesting that when asked by the waiter where Zilov got his new apartment, the hero answers that near the bridge and only afterwards adds: "Mayakovsky thirty-seven, apartment twenty" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 136) (Mayakovsky died at the age of 37, and here the street name and house number are symbolic). The bridge divides one bank from the other and separates one life from another. Telling about the hunt, Zilov tells his wife: "I'll take you to the other side, do you want to?" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 184). On this side of the bridge, where Zilov lives, on this shore there are typical houses, planetarium churches, people-things, homelessness, "godlessness" and sacrilege, death. On the other side of the bridge "...there is nothing, was not and will not be," there is only God and the primordial nature: "Zilov: But be warned, we're going up early, before dawn. You'll see what fog there is - we'll float, as in a dream, unknown where. And when the sun comes up? Oh! It's like a church and even cleaner than a church... And the night? My God! Do you know what silence is like? You're not there, do you understand? No! You haven't been born yet. And there's nothing. And there wasn't. And there won't be... And you'll see the ducks. I will. Of course, I'm not a very good shot, but is that the point?" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 184).

In the society of people-beings, where there is no God, people are acrimonious, and one can allow oneself to joke maliciously, to be cruel to an ex or a new beloved, to forget about parents (filial feeling is replaced by cynicism and mockery), to do nothing, to turn into a dead man, into a thing, into an "alik". In the hunt, the opposite process takes place: the spiritual dead man comes to life and becomes a man.

Hunting is an ambivalent image. On the one hand, hunting is the initiation into nature, it is something sacred, pristine, pure. On the other hand, hunting is a symbol of murder. Zilov cannot kill living beings. For him, hunting is purification, above all, and people around him do not

understand this. They laugh at him, at the fact that he has never killed even a small bird. Zilov replies to the laughter: "What do you know about it?" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 148). For Zilov the flying ducks are alive, so he cannot kill them. However, he is not sure that the people around him are alive in the true, spiritual sense of the word, and so Zilov allows himself to be cruel to them: "Go to hell! I do not want to know you anymore! Bastards! Aliks!... I want to be alone... I don't believe you, do you hear?..." (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 195).

The second most important image of the play is that of the Waiter. The Waiter is Zilov's double, an antipodean double. They are both 30 years old. They go hunting together. Zilov on the phone says to the Waiter: "You are the closest person to me", but in fact – the Waiter is the exact opposite of Zilov, it is the most lifeless phenomenon, born of the world of things, the world where there is no God: "Dima (the Waiter) is a genius of the spiritless environment, its offspring and its idol" (Сушков/Suškov, 1986, p. 33). At school, he was "a shy kid," but he set himself a goal: to break through, to assert himself, to look decent – and he succeeds. The waiter is a good worker, he is always collected, accurate, businesslike, punctual, he does not drink at the job, he is calm, confident, he knows how to hold himself with others. He knows and can do absolutely everything, but he is like a robot, a machine, which is inaccessible to the human perception of the world, emotional and spiritual: "The waiter is absolutely flawless and just as absolutely inhuman" (Гушанская/Gușanskaâ, 1990, p. 246). Ducks are a target for him and nothing more, so he teaches Zilov to be calm and to kill neatly:

*"Zilov: ... I have a feeling that this time I will be lucky.*

*Waiter: Forefeeling doesn't matter. If you can't shoot, a hunch won't help. You'll always miss.*

*Zilov: Dima, how many times can I miss? Could it be this time, too?*

*Waiter: Vitya, I've explained it to you a hundred times: you will miss until you calm down. ...After all, how do you do it all? Calmly, smoothly, gently, slowly... complete indifference... How can I say... Well, it's not like they're flying in nature, but in a picture.*

*Zilov: But they're not in the picture. They are, after all, alive.*

*Waiter. They are alive for those who miss. And for those who hit, they're dead. Do you understand?"* (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 189).

When Zilov fails in his suicide attempt, the waiter, examining the shotgun cartridge, says: "And your cartridges are unreliable. Replace them with simple ones, they are reliable" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 202). In other words, to be sure next time.

Zilov envies the waiter, wants to learn not to suffer, to be calm and balanced, understanding that life is simpler and easier for such people. But at the same time, Zilov has no doubt that the waiter is a scoundrel. He says so: "You're a beastly guy, Dima...", and in the cafe, during a drinking binge

he gives him the exact definition: "The lackey," for which he gets a punch in the jaw from Dima. That Dima is a lackey is also the author's point of view, since when listing the characters, each of the characters has the first or last name, only the waiter is named *waiter*, which also emphasizes the typicality of such people, their multiplicity.

The most tragic thing in the play is that the Waiter is Zilov's companion and guide to the world of the hunt, that is, to the world of the dream, ideal, uncompromised by anything. It turns out that Zilov's dream is utopia. In hunting one must kill, one must know how to shoot a living thing, and in hunting there is the waiter, Dima, who does this flawlessly. Zilov understands perfectly well that it is difficult to find a place on the Earth which is not defiled by human banality. That is why he says: "Give me an island". That is why the main thing for him is the "gatherings and conversations" preceding the hunt, that is a dream, not reality, a dream utopia of the world, where you can break away from everyday life, vanity, lies, laziness, where you can be different, better and cleaner.

Zilov's reflective consciousness makes him particularly defenseless and vulnerable, which is why he needs spiritual intellectual apologetics. There are many things about Zilov that are repulsive: lies, deceit, drunkenness, and his relationships with women and his parents. But Zilov is tormented by the fact that he does not live as he would like to, whereas the other characters in the play are not at all bothered by their lifeless, material state. Zilov is able to suffer, and this attracts to the character:

"Zilov (to his wife): ...*I want to talk to you frankly. We haven't spoken frankly for a long time – that's the trouble. (Sincerely and passionately) I am to blame myself, I know. I brought you to this... I've tormented you, but I swear to you, I'm disgusted with my own life... You're right, I don't care about anything, about anything. What's happening to me, I don't know... I don't know... Don't I have a heart? Yes, yes, I have nothing but you, today I understand it, do you hear? What have I got but you? Friends? I have no friends. Women? Yes, I had them, but what for? I don't need them, believe me... What else? My job! My God! You should understand me, how can you take it all to heart! I'm alone, alone, I have nothing in my life but you. Help me! Without you I'm dead... Let's go away somewhere! Let's start all over again, we're not so old...*" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 134).

Even when Zilov is cruel to those around him, it can hardly be called cruelty. Is it possible to speak of cruelty to a carpet that is being dusted off? Zilov is surrounded by people-things who are used to the fact that "Vitya is joking," the main thing for them is that in the cafe, in the "public place" where Zilov made a scandal, decency should be kept. And the next day, everyone forgets everything, no one is offended by Zilov for his taunts to them, they decide that Vitya made a joke and, therefore, you can joke with him and send him a funeral wreath, not even suspecting that a jolly guy

Vitya Zilov can shoot himself. They do not understand how a man who has everything can have no desire to live:

"Kuzakov: *What's the matter? What's the matter...? What are you dissatisfied with? What do you lack? You're young, healthy, you have a job, an apartment, women love you. Live and be happy. What more do you want?*

Zilov: *I want you to leave*" (Вампилов/Vampilov, 1984, p. 200).

But they won't leave, they have nowhere to go, they live in this world common to them and to Zilov, in the world of things, and Vampilov's character won't go anywhere from this world, because there simply is no other, there is no island on which a new, clean and honest life could be built, all this is just a dream, and in reality if there were such an island, sooner or later Dima the waiter would appear there and begin to kill ducks.

The tragedy is that the hero does not kill himself. The gun that appeared in the first act, and which by all the rules of the genre should have fired, does not fire at all. If the hero had killed himself after he had seen the filthiness he was living in; or after the suicide attempt had failed, everyone had gone, and he had been left alone, flinging himself onto his bed, the curtain would have closed – both of these endings would have meant a way out of the situation, it would have been a victory for Viktor Zilov, his protest against the world of things. But being the bearer of the name Victor, which means victory, winning, Zilov did not become the victor. The hero is crowned not with laurels, but with a mournful wreath. The play ends where it began: with Zilov's call to Dima the waiter. The circle has closed, there is no way out. Everything has returned to its normal course. This finale, above all, reads tragic, the impossibility of escaping from the world of things, and also emphasizes the timelessness of the theme of the "superfluous man."

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The reflexive, dissenting, redundant man from literature comes to the theater and cinematography of the twentieth century: "There Lived a Singing Blackbird" (directed by O. Iosseliani), "Flights in Dreams and in Reality" (directed by R. Balayan), "Autumn Marathon" (directed by G. Daneliya), "Several Days in Oblomov's Life" (directed by N. Mikhalkov), "The Bad Good Man" (directed by M. Heifits), "On Thursday and Never Again" (directed by A. Efros), "Vacation in September" (directed by V. Melnikov).

Nikita Mikhalkov presented a sentimental interpretation of the central image of I.A. Goncharov's novel in the 1970s in the film "A Few Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov". Already in the very title of the movie, specifying the initials of the hero, the director focuses on the fact that Oblomov has the name, that he is a personality, thereby destroying the established perception: "Oblomov – Oblomovshchina". And we are surprised to recall that Oblomov's name is Ilya Ilyich. The name and patronymic sound so musical and poetic, so unusual for our ears, gradually accustomed to the dry critical

word "Oblomovshchina", that the film irresistibly attracts us from the very first shots and sounds. The viewer has the desire to know who Ilya Ilyich Oblomov is and why only a few days of his life turned out to be so important in his fate.

There are no scenes of guests coming to Oblomov's house, nor is the hero's line of life with Agafia Pshenitsyna. For N.S. Mikhalkov it was important to show the pure, honest, kind soul of the Russian man, whose breadth corresponds to the vast expanses of patriarchal Russia, which does not keep up with the world of fashion, progress, civilization, but which preserves the moral laws of life in the traditions and culture of the people.

Oblomov played by O. Tabakov is charming, gentle, cordial, kind, pleasant, he attracts sympathy, the viewer forgets that he is a serf-master. Tabakov-Oblomov merged so successfully that it is difficult to imagine Oblomov as someone else.

When in the bath scene the hero speaks important words about society, about the essence of human life, about the helplessness to change anything in himself and cries at the same time, the soul opens before us, and we see how thin and sensitive it is. At the moment of Oblomov's monologue, the camera focuses on the butterfly in the glass, symbolically emphasizing, on the one hand, the hidden spiritual beauty of the hero, but, on the other hand, the butterfly is still dried in the glass, and this is a hint by director and cameraman to Oblomov's tragic end, a detail telling us that with his wings spread open it is impossible to escape from the glass, from the circle of fate that the hero is destined for.

Eduard Artemyev's amazing music, blending with the music of nature, soothes and bewitches the viewer who, enchanted by it, sees the rays of sunlight streaming through the trees into the open windows of Oblomov's house, sees little Ilyusha waking up and being told that his mother has arrived, and he, forgetting everything in the world, runs away from home, running through the vast green expanses towards the sun and shouting "Mama's here...!" – there is so much love in his voice for his mother, for the world around him, for the fairy tale. At the end of the film Oblomov's son will be running among the vast fields with the same cry: "Mother has come...!"

In the hero's dreams, the viewer sees a patriarchal, fairy-tale world of the Russian village, where everyone lives happily and comfortably, we see Oblomov's kind and affectionate parents and other inhabitants of Oblomovka, who from morning discuss with the Master how to fix the creaking, old stairs on the porch ready to collapse; after a hearty dinner everything sinks into slumber, and only the little Oblomov and his friend Shtoltz walk through the rooms and around the yard and explore the world of sleep and peace; and in the evening all dwellers gather in the house and

tell fairy tales and fable and people joke to each other, until it's time for dinner and night's sleep.

The film's portrayal of Oblomov's love leaves a strong impression. The skillful editing of several close-up shots in which, as in a painting, the viewer sees Olga's thin neck, strands of her blond hair ruffling in the light breeze, and shots of Oblomov's enchanted face give a visual sense of how pure his love is. The episode of a night rendezvous in the garden house, when Olga kisses his hands and confesses her love, and Oblomov's state of mind is utterly tense, is accompanied by images of disturbed nature: lightning, thunder, rain.

The proponents of N.A. Dobrolyubov's point of view accused N.S. Mikhalkov of poetizing the serf-master Oblomov and noted that the film is dominated by an unmotivated admiration for the hero, decorative and untrue, embellishment that opposes real beauty. The Soviet ideological critics also rejected the film because Oblomov's monologues about society and man were not from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the modern life, in which the individual was forgotten behind slogans and posters, only vanity, "perpetual running around, knocking each other down, gossiping and chitchatting and snapping at each other" remained. An "unnecessary person" cannot live where there are lies (and there were plenty of lies in the Soviet times), it is difficult for him to adapt, to become like everyone else and not notice the falsity, but at the same time it is necessary to adapt – hence the tragedy of double life and life unfulfilled.

After the romantic sixties came the sobering seventies and eighties, the theme of the dissident becomes a major theme in literature, theater, and cinema. We have already given a list of the films that were released during these years, although some of them were to be seen only in the nineties because they were forbidden by the censorship authorities at the time. It is interesting that films based on classic works and referring to the theme of an "unnecessary person" in one way or another were censored. Among them were "A Few Days in the Life of I. I. Oblomov", "The Bad Good Man" (based on Chekhov's story "The Duel"), and "By the Pages of Pechorin's Journal". Apparently, the censors thought it was about the past and did not notice the subtext of modernity. Films with a dissident character from the '70s-'80s would be shelved, and the arguments would be that "this is not about us" or "we don't have this kind of stuff".

In the Soviet "luminous" society of developed socialism, a tormented hero cannot exist. And if N. Mikhalkov was accused of "poetizing a serf master," A. Vampilov was declared a gloomy, heroless playwright who promoted pessimism. They used to say about Zilov that we do not have such types, it's all the author's fantasy. But today it is already obvious that everything turned out to be true: "We'll go back to this nextdoor retro, we'll go right

back to understanding not history, but ourselves today," A. Bitov noted and specified, "And then there will be no writer more expressive of the tragedy of the lack of faith than Vampilov" (Гушанская/Gušanskaâ, 1990, p. 187).

And although today there is already a good and detailed work by E. M. Gushanskaya about A. Vampilov with a competent and provable analysis of his plays, still in school textbooks and in some articles there are such interpretations of Zilov's image with which it is difficult to agree. Thus, in the 11<sup>th</sup>-grade textbook "Russian Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" in his review of contemporary prose V. Chalmaev writes about Zilov that he is a man "without a moral core, a cynic hero who burns his life like a candle at both ends" (Чалмаев/Čalmaev, 1994, p. 354).

For literary scholar L. Kolobaeva, Zilov is a "phenomenon of uncertainty of personality", that is, it is impossible to define his personality, because "... In the image of Zilov we see a man-plasma, flowing, malleable, taking the properties and color of everything he touches" (Колобаева/Kolobaeva, 1999, p. 7). A logical question arises: if Zilov is a plasma, adapting to everything, then who is the Waiter? The tragedy of Zilov is precisely in the fact that he cannot adapt and be like everyone else. Behind Zilov's outwardly flamboyant behavior one does not see his inner tragedy.

We have already quoted E. Gushanskaya's view that the main drama in the play falls on what is impossible to act: on the process of comprehending what is happening, on the process of self-awareness. The reader or spectator must feel the inner conflict of the hero. But precisely because the external, tangible, visible is always faster perceived and comprehended than the inner, hidden, that is why Zilov is called either plasma or a cynic hero.

It can be assumed that this was the reason why the play could not be produced on stage. "A certain stamp of producing of "Duck Hunt" has already been developed," – A. Efros wrote. – It could be called "conditional naturalism". Some untidy young men with faces as if they were the same as in "Duck Hunt" play the roles. They are talking something quickly, naturally, hugging, drinking, fighting... To get to real naturalism in such a play, you have to break your heart, and here everything is easily and superficially portrayed. Everything is similar and everyone is alike. Where the viewer should have cried out in horror, he/she at best becomes only slightly more serious. And he/she leaves with a certain squeamishness toward the world of drunks and idlers, but not with the shock of realizing what this world is like and that it is not a joke" (Эфрос/Èfros, 1983, p. 212). Another great director, G. Tovstonogov, as if continuing A. Efros's thought, noted: "There is certain mystery in Duck Hunt, a certain secret that has not yet been solved. Neither have I. If you stage a play about alcoholics, the theme disappears. A dead end – that's what has to be played" (Сушков/Suškov, 1986, p. 44).



It is a pity that neither A. Efros nor G. Tovstonogov, for all their understanding of the essence of the play, ever staged *Duck Hunt*. The play had no luck in theatrical productions, but there were exceptions. Thus, in 1979 at the Moscow Art Theater, Oleg Efremov staged the play and acted the role of Zilov. He did with the play what no theater dared: he deprived the play of temporal biplane, that is, there were no memories, it was a direct course of events: drunkenness was followed by hangover, hangover – by desperation, desperation pulled its hand to the gun. "Oleg Efremov translated Zilov's drama into some powerful, but abstract inner tragedy, unrelated to the course of action, almost not conditioned by events, which carried within them the sound of love, the sound of discord with friends; the sound of discord with conscience, the sound of unfulfilled son's duty. It became obvious that Zilov is not only vice, but also suffering, that a part of Zilov belongs to every man, if he is a man..." (Гушанская/Gušanskaâ, 1990, 259).

"*Duck Hunt*", written in 1967; first appeared on the professional stage in 1976; the film, "*Vacation in September*", based on the play in 1979, was shelved; it appeared on the screens eight years after it was filmed, that is, in 1987. As M.I. Gromova writes: "The prohibitors, apparently, intuitively felt in the dramaturgical material the tragedy of 'a hero of our time', the lost life of a man gifted, but not seeing a purpose in the world of legalized moral falsities" (Громова/Gromova, 1994, p. 78).

Even before "*Vacation in September*" appeared, in 1979, Chekhov's "*Duel*" directed by I. Heifits (1973) was not just well-timed, it was a paraphrase of the tormenting theme of the decade. It was no coincidence that "*Thursday and Never Again*" (1978), "*Vacation in September*" (1979) and the cult film of the end of the Soviet era "*Flights in Dreams and Reality*" (1980) appeared later. The protagonists of these motion pictures have their roots in the Russian literature and culture of the nineteenth century, all of them dissenters and therefore superfluous.

"All these characters are created by a small portion of lies, clownery, compromises, laziness, blended, if not with giftedness, then at least with the ability to feel subtly, to be dissatisfied with themselves, to be ashamed and despise themselves – all the things so well played by Oleg Dahl, who created cardinal images for the seventies in the films of A. Efros and A. Bitov "*Thursday and Never Again*", I. Heifits: "*Bad Good Man*" ("*Duel*"), V. Melnikov: "*Vacation in September*" (Гушанская/Gušanskaâ, 1990, p. 103).

Oleg Dahl's play is always the subject of special analytical examination. He like no one else managed to portray on the screen the dissenting man, probably because in real life he was just such a person. A. Efros said about him that it is a "separate" person. Dahl avoided noise, all the fuss of fellow actors. Friends and acquaintances were few. Feeling falsehoods where it was not yet assumed by others, he became angry, cruel, uncontrollable. He

wanted "...to protect himself and his art from extraneous interferences, not to succumb to the general flow" (Галаджаева/Galadjaeva, 1989, p. 14). He refused many film roles, moved from theater to theater, was constantly dissatisfied with himself. People around him said: "it is megalomania", "what does he need – theaters invite him, give him roles, and he is still dissatisfied". And it was important for him to protect himself. Here is a note from the diary of O. Dahl: "Fight with these bastards will be TERRIBLE. Can he be alone? Maybe. But oneself! Keep ONESELF! It is IMPORTANT. Not to adapt. Not to depersonalize. To turn inside – there is my power, my promised land" (*idem*, p. 23). He was able both on stage and on screen to turn inside himself and convey the inner tragedy of the "superfluous people". It is not by chance that Dahl said about himself: "I, in every role, am me".

There were only five of them, these heroes who made up a peculiar portrait of the "unnecessary man" of the seventies, and more broadly, the heroes of our time. They formed the author's cinematography of Oleg Dahl. These are: "Horn Blow" (1969) – was twice shown on TV and then wiped off videotape; "Bad Good Man" (1973); TV play "By the Pages of Pechorin's Journal" (1974); "Thursday and Never Again" (1978) – the film wasn't at the box office, in Moscow it was shown only two days: to the irritation of critics Dahl replied that such films make the world more talented, that they are rare and that he did not care about the opinions of mudslingers. Finally, the film "September Vacation" (1979) – was shown eight years after its production and six years after the artist's death, O. Dahl received the award for "Best Actor" for this film posthumously.

In the 70s, Dahl's heroes were referred to in the same way: the anti-hero. The superficial and habitual perception of the literary image sometimes dictates a certain cliché, consisting in the fact that the hero is an honest, decent, courageous, and so on person, that is, a positive one. Then the anti-hero should be negative. However, it is impossible to call Dahl's heroes "negative". His hero was strong in his weakness. Playing Pechorin in the duel scene, Dahl shot with his left hand. He was told that this was wrong. To which Dahl replied that Lermontov did not say which hand Pechorin shot with. He killed, but he didn't want to kill; that's why Pechorin-Dahl's eyes are moist in the episode of Grushnitsky's murder. "The encounter with death – one's own or someone else's – is important to Dahl as one of the possible revivals of his characters. The feeling of the finality of existence makes one sum up, look back at one's life – whether one wants it or not" (*idem*, p. 32). That is why Sergei-Dal's stopped gaze at the dying animal in "On Thursday and Never Again", and the hoarse moan when his mother dies, and the lonely wail on the shore, and the lonely figure of the pensive Sergei.

Dahl's characters were often called "reflective intellectuals, whiners. And just as with Dahl's life, his characters were asked what they lacked, to live

like everyone else. And if it is not possible to live like everyone else? And if one can't live like everyone else?

"Restlessness is the basic state of Dahl's characters. Trouble of soul. The inability to find oneself in the world around, and most importantly, to find oneself in oneself. ...The hero. Dahl's image is a suffering one. Suffering from the fact that he does not feel his necessity in this life, in this society. He is unfulfilled. He turned out to be superfluous, unnecessary with all his qualities and talents. Yes – all of them, Laevsky, Pechorin, Sergei, and Zilov are potentially talented. They are individuals. The actor gave them his own personality..." (*idem*, p. 28).

When Vitaly Melnikov was preparing to shoot the film "Vacation in September" based on Vampilov's play "Duck Hunt", Dahl knew about it and was waiting for an invitation to play the main role, Zilov. But he was not invited for a long time, as the director later explained, he was afraid to go to Oleg, because he (Oleg) hit the role so accurately that it became scary.

Today it is difficult to imagine another actor in the role of Zilov. It is Dahl who succeeded in revealing that inner world of Zilov, without which the play loses its significance. Dahl, like a mirror, reflects his time and the tragedy of a thinking man's personal unfulfillment in this time. Thanks to Dahl, the film lives on to this day. We would like to dwell on some significant and successful moments of the film.

The problems raised by Vampilov in "Duck Hunt," particularly keenly manifested and came to light in the early 80's, which is why the director V. Melnikov sharpens and reveals some points that are felt in the play only at the level of subtext.

Thus, in the scene where Zilov, Sayapin, Kushak and Vera are sitting in a cafe, Kushak slightly turns to the side and immediately the waiter's head from above, it is unclear where he appeared from, but apparently watching everything alertly and ready to serve the boss at any time.

A live kitten appears in the film instead of a plush cat, but it is thrown like a thing from hand to hand, especially by Zilov from the chair to the couch.

Whereas in the play Zilov simply says, "Give me an island," in the film Zilov-Dahl says, "Give me a desert island".

In the play, Valeria, talking to Kushak, says flatteringly that she is willing to pray to him for an apartment. In the film, however, Valeria openly declares: "I pray to you as to God". After which, to the music of a "gypsy dance," Kushak takes off his jacket and dances, and Zilov's guests, as well as he and his wife themselves, stand around the boss, clapping him like a little god. This is not included in the play.

Another well found detail is in the episode with the coin, it is tossed to lots, deciding whether or not to sign the fake report. The point is that

Sayapin keeps the coin in a box with velvet inside. Such detail indicates that the coin is always needed here, that with the help of the coin people "make" their job. It becomes clear what this "work" is: no one needs it and it is of no use.

In the film, apparently for reasons of censorship, a very important line about planetary churches is absent. Godlessness, the loss of faith is also one of the reasons for Zilov's metamorphosis, so the absence of this episode, in our view, breaks the ideological integrity of Zilov's image.

Trying to remind his wife of their first date, in the play, Zilov holds an ashtray instead of snowdrops, but in the film he grabs the alarm clock, as if going back in time, trying to turn back time, to change something, to put it right, but he fails, it is impossible to return time, life is lost.

Zilov's house stands among the same newly built houses. On the side where the boxes-houses are put up, there are no trees, everything seems empty, bare. On the other side, Zilov sees it through the window, next to the new house under construction you can see the forest and a strip of sky. Zilov's gaze is fixed on there, on the other side, but he's here. The excavator is working below: people, equipment and new houses are encroaching on the forest, destroying it, the mechanical is killing the living, it is frightening to realize that soon there will be no forest at all, the entire space will be occupied by the same type of houses. When the titles at the end of the first episode and the entire movie are running, there is no music, only the sound of rain and the sound of the tractor moving: the real, natural on the one hand and the mechanical, artificial on the other hand sound independently of each other. The tractor is not hindered by the rain in destroying the forest. Farther and farther away from Zilov is the natural, pristine, real, pure and honest.

The particular interest of the cinema of the 70s-80s to the theme of "the superfluous man" indicates that even in this period thinking people were close to the type of "clever needlessness", they felt and thought like Zilov, Dahl, the heroes of "Autumn Marathon", "Flights in Dream and Reality" and so on, they tried to encourage the audience to make sense of their lives, they passionately wanted to change something in the false world around them and in themselves.

To understand the character we are investigating, such a feature as his/her duality is important. Duality is the combination in one character of such opposite principles as evil and good, sincerity and falsehood, sarcasm and sympathy, vice and suffering (shame), laughter and tears, life and death, inaction (laziness) and, simultaneously, giftedness. This duality is indicative of all nineteenth- and twentieth-century heroes who are referred to the type of "superfluous man". This duality is particularly evident in the character of Vampilov's hero Zilov. At the end of the play the author explains in a remark: "He (Zilov) cried or laughed – we will never understand from his face," – in this final remark the entire Zilov is embodied, and even more in

general the type of "superfluous man". These are two facets of the same character. The critic M. Turovskaya sees in Zilov gifted, uncommon, human charm, while K. Rudnitsky notes that he is a man without a son's sense, father's pride, respect for women, and friendly affection. These two opinions are valid. Zilov is shown in the play as both bad and good at the same time. Hence the constant change of melodies in the play, emphasizing the dual state and behavior of the hero, the mournful melody alternates with its frivolous and vulgar version. As E. Gushanskaya notes, Vampilov makes the antithesis and the duality of the hero a subject of research, "the writer offers the character of a man, in whose behavior enthusiasm and cynicism, sincerity and falsehood, highness of impulse and baseness of action are merged together" (Гушанская/Gušanskaâ, 1990, p. 22).

The collision of antithetical character traits leads a thinking person to reflection, to self-digestion, to self-torture, to brooding; such a person becomes a bearer of reflective consciousness. Reflexion in the philosophical dictionary has several meanings. Among them is "thinking, full of doubts and hesitations". It is the reflexive consciousness, the eternal doubt in the rightness of life, that is the main, basic feature of the type of the literary hero we study.

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