

## MURINA: PLATONISM IN CROATIAN FILM

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**M**urina, directors: Antonete Alamat Kusijanović, 2021, Antitalent with Spiritus movens and Skielia Productions (America), Viba Film (Slovenia), and Brazil. Alexa Mini (ratio 2. 35), digitally distributed (1h 32min). The film was screened at Cinestar (2K projection, DCI-P3 gamut) in September 2021. *The film follows the philosophical and physical growth of a girl who thinks “outside the framework” of the environment in which she finds herself and her attempts to become what she thinks she should be through various “rituals of transition.”*



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The winner of the prestigious Cannes in the cinematography category has finally arrived at Home. One seemingly “clean” (not to say simple) concept is an extremely elegantly executed camera that, like a brush (elegant and precise), “paints” each frame with thinner or wider lines (faster or slower movement). From the first frame, it is clear that we are looking at something unusual because the first frame really lasts long - it seems to me that it should have been shortened by a few pictures or made more interesting in some way. But this is a shot that captures the sky from the water and with which we literally and metaphorically have this relationship of the Two Worlds (ideological and sensory/visible). The film primarily relies on Plato’s allegory of the cave, which he depicts through various phenomena, constantly dancing from one ontological category to another. The influence of the American producer is most visible in Structure, but Europe Lives in the shots, more precisely the cutting and release, of the same, and the Editing. The concept of Plato’s cave is presented both metaphorically and explicitly through the window motif; *it was the window in Renaissance Dubrovnik that was one of the main insights into the World - so many writers write the most beautiful verses just looking at the girls through the window.*<sup>2</sup> That Window in the case of Murina is represented by the Youth Yacht that found itself (illegally) next to the House of Our main protagonist; Julije (Gracija Filipović), as a literal but also metaphorical reminder of the World of Ideas (which he longs for), which “disassembles” the character of Cliff Curtis. We, when we have a comparison (as a procedure) that this film often uses, then we are able to see things that were not clear to us before, nor visible - so Julia (with all romantic connotations) with these Anchorings gets a much clearer insight into it what he wants from his life, and what she doesn’t. An interesting contrast to that romanticism is stylized, realistic photography. We have no radical stylizations here - except perhaps the End, but everything

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<sup>2</sup> Since I could not remember the *terminus*, I contacted Assoc. dr. sc. Victoria Franić Tomić, who told me that it was about *kampanelizam*; “(...) Is used figuratively for people to whom the world is reduced to that which is visible from their window, ie their view reaches to the local bell tower (...)”.

is somehow “naturally beautiful,” which should not surprise us given the color of the Adriatic. But precisely this “natural beauty” is a powerful motif in the film itself that is the opposite of the truth; Heaven actually conceals the hell we really live in - which we don’t experience a priori. Those Two Worlds which from the beginning represent the Sea and the Land, are a plastic depiction of Truth and Lies, and metaphorically Plato’s Caves; where all we see is a shadow, and we only know the sun when we see it when we leave the cave at all, but then by returning - we risk our lives. One moment in the film perfectly illustrates the relationship between the Two Worlds, appearing in Act 3. The structure of the film is classical dramaturgy, and each act plays its part - this is not to be blamed for Aristotelianism, but the lack of “game” in the script, elegantly and sufficiently complements the Game of Cameras. We don’t have a lot of Faces there; but the Faces we have, we do have - Actors do not give us too much, but they give enough; quite enough to get an impression of



who these People are, but not enough to over-empathize with them - Beware, the modern portrayal of Man as a puppet, who, in an interesting, ethical, and somehow “warm” way justifies hatred of the same by those who do not understand him is very effective because it gives layers to the film, the Soul. There is a great deal of attention to how much the audience will be told and how much - will not be told, and he is extremely successful in the end. Faces are, therefore, with silence, Julia in particular, Drawn with intensity and the Pace of silence and noise. We should definitely emphasize the montage of sound, which significantly contributes to the creation of such an atmosphere (efficiently), which was visible to us in the past works of the Director. The road to the Sun (Platonic) is not easy, but it is still worth trying; it is undoubtedly one of the most potent messages of the film, which is presented in various ways. So, behind that romanticism and latent romantic intentions and narratives, a metaphorical, philosophical thread should definitely be mentioned. Be careful; nothing in the movie is accidental. More precisely, even if it is, as soon as it is recorded (or rather remains in the same), it ceases to be. The fact that the Foreign Friend stays for a few days also speaks volumes about Curtis’ character, which we actually get to know more through the Others than through Himself, and through the only, honest, voyeuristic scene witnessed by Julia’s character; the character of Julia lives through episodes - when she can really speak for herself; There are not many of them, but when they come they are always valuable and powerful, they are in fact a philosophical figure who synthesizes Platonic idealism and Aristotelian empiricism; for though Julia thinks things over, she also acts. But we also notice that her agency is not planned, but intuitive, and that is why the character of Leon Lučev is her ideal opposite; it is about a Man for whom reality is theater, and every moment of the play on which everything depends, in the end, he is the character, and

if he plays everything properly, he will survive - if not, he will not. His whole life is theater because everyone around him is a Mask. The character of Julia's mother (Danica Curčić) is the source of Julia's philosophy, so unlike Julia, she plans everything but also thinks about everything. She also serves as a reminder to Julia and Us of what she will look like if she stays where she is now. The idea of Paradise as a prison is best presented through the infinite openness that the Sea, in itself, provides to photography. Symbolically, diving is an important aspect of Julia's Life and Family, and in an interesting way illustrates Their dynamics; in addition, it illustrates to us what this "Visible World" really is, it is full of danger and beauty; but it is always looking for a kind of "surfacing." And the idea one, he is an imagination. Only through Paradise he will reveal himself. It is utterly ironic that Julia only really enjoys the Sea, which is ultimately exaggerated to the absolute.



On the other hand, Father and Mother consider it a job. For them, the sea is a mere way to sell land, nothing more. But for Julia, it is materialized Freedom. As long as we are at Sea, the Sun plays a significant role. This is the truth that is missing from the House, in which he plays a “side”. Murina asks for only one thing, to be Watched and Listened to - that’s all; and that is why that first frame tells us what it says, and tells us: “Surrender!”. There is no excessive drama here; everything, even the cruelest, is so peaceful that it becomes frightening. Even when Julia manages to get to the World of Ideas, something always pulls her down!<sup>3</sup> But perhaps the scariest aspect of the film is what is implied, no, what it is shown, and that is that if we do not know how much we are worth, we can remain trapped in valuing Others. Thus All Our characters, including Julia, find their value in the judgments of others, not themselves. That is why there is silence, not communication. The very lack of Language between the Daughter and the Father is truly a terrible phe-



<sup>3</sup> “Julia is Murina, an animal that will bite off a part of itself in order to get free. I see this strength in young women in Croatia, it is getting stronger. It is a strength that lies in **wisdom and knowledge**, in faith in one’s abilities (...)” (Antoneta Alamat Kusijanović).

nomenon, and all things related to the Two of them come down to the Body. Language, if it exists, is false (formal). There is a moment when he is not, but it happens that the characters do not understand him as such because everything else - was. The very depiction of this Family Tragedy (*the destruction of the modern family by classical values*<sup>4</sup>) is extremely harmoniously performed; there is no violence of the body, as much as there is, of violence of the Mind. Here, violence lives in looks, pauses - not in yelling and fighting. And that Violence happens mostly towards the Father for whom everyone thinks is naive, and in fact, he is one of the smartest characters; interestingly, He and Julia want the same thing - to escape from Paradise (Estological motif), only in different ways; and this is where all Their drama, and the central conflict of the film, is born; does Labor bring happiness, or are they, thoughts? This Golden middle that the film cultivates in order not to exaggerate in its moderation brings such an effect that every crossing of the same is dramatic. For in a picture without movement, a mere gentle wind is still a movement. Where do ideals lead us !? Where does dealing with the past take us ?! Is it better to think or act !? These are all complex philosophical questions that Murina explains, and with his moderate tone, colors, he paints a watercolor of a hunter and a hunter. These shots do not try to be anything they are not, they are just what they are - often acting documentary and rude, but in fact, they are extremely aestheticized. The relationship of Thought and Body, modern Man, and finally the letter of a story of freedom and imagination; of what it is and will be. European image, in the American framework.

### *Photography:*

Murina – Press Kit; Mario Topić.

<sup>3</sup> “Julia lives in paradise, on a Croatian island, in a society obsessed with wealth acquired quickly and easily. It is a society that sells its land and ancestry, a society without the desire to work and improve, a society that capitalizes on what generations before it have acquired - so dreams die and heritage is eroded. The strength of the daughter is interpreted as the father’s weakness, and the inherited land is sold for profit” (Antoneta Alamat Kusijanović).