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## **Philip Rieff's Typology of Culture and Its Applicability to the Literary Hybridization of the Theological Ideas of Humanity and Spiritual Progress (A Bulgarian Case Study)<sup>1</sup>**

This paper focuses on Teodora Dimova's novel *Влакът за Емаус* (2013/2014), an example of a Christian-themed novel not often found in modern Bulgarian literature, which deals with divine revelation and the experience of *metanoia* in modern life. The narrative paraphrases the story of the two disciples who meet the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus. In the evangelical account Jesus joins the disciples but remains unrecognized. As they walk together he outlines his Messianic interpretation of Jewish prophetic writings. When the disciples recognize him, Jesus disappears.

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And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. One *of them*, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:13–32; 'Bible Hub', n.d.).

In Dimova's "poem-novel", the meeting of Jesus and his dazed disciples is a pivotal point for the novel's various plotlines happening in a realistic modern Bulgarian setting. *Влакът за Емаус* tells the story of three people, pilgrims on the paths of life, who are subtly connected by the filaments of religious revelation. The characters experience revelation at the lowest point of anguished isolation, paving the way for a profound transformation of their personality. Dimova's book is firmly anchored in the Christian paradigm, which portrays Jesus as God Incarnate and the ultimate ideal of humanity, leaving no room for any other interpretation. Dimova (who talks openly about her recent conversion to Christianity) aims to create a narrative that evokes a modern religious sensibility but retains the Christian concept of *μετανοια*. *Влакът за Емаус*

is an interesting text, both in its careful descriptions of the characters' religious experiences (such as the meeting between Jesus and an atheist, the Eucharist or the mystical dimension of the church), and in its painstakingly crafted style (notably the use of prose rhythms that imitate the sound of train wheels on the track). For reasons of space, those and many other interesting angles of approach have to remain unexplored here.

Luke's description of the encounter on the road to Emmaus, which forms the basis for Dimova's extended paraphrase in the novel, is a foundational text of Christianity on a par with the writings of St Paul (transvalued in modern times by the European intellectual left) (see, among others, Agamben, 2000; Badiou, 2007; Žižek, 2006). When accepted as revealed truth, the passage provides the basis for an interpretation of Jesus' teachings and death as a culmination of the messianic hopes of Judaism. Probably written down after the destruction of the Temple,<sup>2</sup> Luke's text demonstrates how overwhelming messianic enthusiasm was affecting human lives and nascent religions in that period, as all the non-gnostic Christian churches were placing Christological interpretations at the heart of their exegetic traditions of the Old Testament. I emphasize this particular aspect even though at first sight it appears to have no bearing on Dimova's novel, whose narrative centers squarely on human spiritual formation (progress), based on a personal relationship with God. The novel's motto, from the Serbian priest Radovan Bigović,<sup>3</sup> is a condensed interpretation of orthodox Christian anthropology:

Orthodox Christians should testify to their faith in the living biblical God, to their faith in the holy Trinity, to their faith in God whose other half is human, and to their faith in man whose other half is God (Димова, 2014, p. 4).

In this interpretation, people are incomplete until and unless they share a personal relationship with God, meaning the Holy Trinity. When that happens, a personal spiritual struggle ensues in every pilgrim on this earth (Kasimow & Sherwin, 2005, p. 43)<sup>4</sup> a struggle which according to orthodox

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<sup>2</sup> Although some 20<sup>th</sup>-century scholars had claimed that it is historically not justified to treat Christianity as a separate religion prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (70 CE), the lack of unanimous agreement on the dating of Luke's Gospel does not significantly change the meaning of its message.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Радован Биговић' (2015).

<sup>4</sup> One's faith is made real through one's pilgrimage.

Christian anthropology culminates in theopoiesis: an unearned gift of God's loving grace (Evdokimov, 1964, pp. 53–136). In the context of Dimova's novel, this humbling anthropology puts meaning in characters' lives despite their anguish and suffering. And so, a character named Mina (we will revisit the semantic aspects of his name shortly) experiences loneliness, bereavement following his daughter's sudden death, and ultimately an abrupt mystical experience which violently invades his psychological and physical world to result in a thoroughgoing reevaluation of his paradigm. This happens as Mina is taking a walk in the back alleys of a European city and glimpses a cross, the sight of which triggers an avalanche of thoughts and emotions leading to profound personal change: from this moment on, Mina will live solely to serve God and other people.

Бях в Будапеща (...) изведнъж на едно кръстовище попаднах в малка градинка, в центъра ѝ се беше издигнало разпятие, пред него дървена пейка, не откъсвах очи от мраморния кръст, от Исус, разпънат на него, като че ли го видях така неочаквано, изневиделица с някакви нови, не мои очи...разплаках се (...) случи се нещо, което инак би ме подразнило, ако го чуя от друг (...) но аз го изпитах, изпитах го върху себе си...въздухът се промени, стана прозрачен, чист, озарен...тишината се промени, беше напоена с любов...листата на дърветата се превърнаха в любов,,всичко стана прекрасно, вълшебно, родно...(...) и изведнъж разбрах, че съм бил доведен до това разпятие от Него, че Той ме е извикал тук...и аз за първи път, откакто съм се родил, се почувствах у дома... (...) бях зашеметен, започнах да чувам някакво далечно пееие или по-скоро думи, или по-скоро молитва (...) хем близко, хем далечна (...) свлякох се на колене, започнах да изричам, да повтарям наум думите на Исусовата молитва, за която дотогава изобщо не бях чувал (...) (Димова, 2014, pp. 97–99).

The adult life of Liya, a beautiful and popular woman, has been filled with resentment since her discovery that she was abandoned as a child by her biological mother, and was raised by an adoptive family. Frustrated in her longing to discover the truth – to find her biological mother and her own “authentic” identity – Liya is a restless and alienated individual experiencing hostility towards the world, especially towards her adoptive parents and an old friend, Katalina. Burned out, she ultimately develops an incurable illness. Faced with the prospect of death, she finds God after making an early half-realized step towards conversion. One sweltering afternoon she walks into an Orthodox church to find some shade, and meets Mina, who engages her in conversation and sets in motion a long process of discovery whereby she will find peace and hope in the saving grace of Jesus.

А къде да търсим Христос, промълви тя. В църквата, рязко ѝ отговорих аз, няма Христос извън църквата, Христос е единствено в църквата, повторих ѝ аз, в Евхаристията, в Литургията, в своето Тяло и Кръв, в молитвите ни заедно, в общия ни живот, в общото ни живеене заедно. Във връзка на всеки човек с Христос, в това, че всичко става различно, че се претворява в чудо през Христос. Във възторга и трепета на вярата. Тогава Лия съвсем замълча, очевидно смътно знаеше какво е Евхаристия. Всъщност не знаеше. Не смееше да попита, очите ѝ отново се насълзиха, но този път от срам заради своето незнание. Дълго време мълча и после, с впит в земята поглед каза, че от години много мисли за Христос и за съдбата Му, и за живота Му, но винаги се е смятала за недостойна да се приближи към Него, а и не знаела как, но била сигурна, че само той е най-близо до нея (Димова, 2014, pp. 116–117).

The third character, Katalina, is a troubled individual plagued by psychological problems caused by a toxic mother. Katalina cannot shake free of her “significant others”, who include her mother, her peers, and her friend. Her suffering is caused by the immaturity of her parents, who are unable to terms with the death of their son, and cannot muster any love or acceptance for the surviving daughter. Raised to believe that she had usurped the place of her deceased brother, Katalina is unloved and unable to love. Her transformation begins with her relationship with the dying Liya, followed by her encounters with Mina.

(...) вие виждате всичките ми рани и белези, Минá, в вие просто ги виждате (...) и аз съм като Лия, и аз съм изоставено дете, а с родители, обгрижвано дете, а необичано, възпитавано дете, а израсло като дивак – самотно в стаята си, страхувам се, че всеки, който се докосне до мен, ще ме изостави, затова не искам да се привързвам към никого, за да не получа отново разсичаща болка не необичано, на нелюбимо същество, на грозно, трътлесто и досадно дете, което предизвиква само отегчение и недоволство у своите родители (...) някъде тогава Филип дойде при мен, братчето ми, Минá, на чието място живея и което до този миг съвсем бях забравила, което е живяло два дни и е умряло, и е останало безименно и неопято, Минá, и което аз нарекох Филип, Филип ме обичаше безмерно, всеотдайно (...) бях забравила за него напълно до мига, в който ви видях, Минá, в веднага се сетих за Филип, защото само детската любов не отпада, затова Исус ни учи да бъдем като децата, затова Филип е предпочел своята смърт пред моята, затова е умрял два дена след като се е родил, беше казала Каталина и така парадоксално беше свързала влизането на Исус в Йерусалим със смъртта на братчето си, което тя нарекла Филип (...) (Димова, 2014, pp. 89–90).

It should be pointed out that the meaning of this transformation in the novel manifests itself solely through a personal relationship with the God

of paradoxes, a transcendent being who never stops talking to people. In this sense, Christianity arguably remains a kind of replica of its parent religion.<sup>5</sup>

To look at the problem from the perspective of Judaism, the American sociologist Philip Rieff described this kind of opening up to the sacred dimension of reality as “culture of faith”, an attitude which produces life-oriented works (Lubańska, 2008, pp. 365–387)<sup>6</sup> Rieff’s controversial book *My Life Among the Deathworks* (2006), despite the serious objections it raises against Christianity (which Rieff blames for the transgressive iconicity of the Western civilization), finds a significant common denominator which the Christian and the Mosaic paradigms share;<sup>7</sup> on that basis Rieff develops a distinctive sociological and historical concept of Western culture. Based on an analysis of various works of European art, literature and philosophy, Rieff proposes a set of criteria forming an original typology of cultures that is diachronic and synchronic at the same time. The distinction is between cultures predicated on belief in fate (pagan culture), faith (the worlds of Judaism and Christianity), or death (the self-referential world of fiction). Rieff identifies the underlying anthropological assumptions in each of those cultural practices which view the human being, respectively, as a subject in a deterministic reality (culture of fate), a self in a relationship with its Creator (culture of faith), and a “psychological man”, a patient in a “therapeutic” society (culture of fiction). In historical terms, Rieff concluded that a therapeutic society, identifiable with (post-)modernity, focuses on death, unlike faith culture, which focuses on the sacred and which he identified as being life-oriented.<sup>8</sup> However, Rieff’s apparently clear-cut taxonomy also has some nonlinear characteristics in that cultural processes shift and change over time. Cultures of faith may lose their

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<sup>5</sup> I borrow this concept from R. Brague, *Prawo Boga. Filozoficzna historia Przymierza* (2014).

<sup>6</sup> The recent decades have seen a revival of the opposition between the classical Greek and the Jewish/Christian heritage in European culture; however this is not the same as the opposition of Judaism / Christianity.

<sup>7</sup> One interesting viewpoint concerning the secondary or imitative nature of Christianity relative to Judaism is represented by Brague (1992), where he describes as heroic the resistance of the Church Fathers to the exclusion of the Old Testament from the Christian scriptural canon (an idea first promoted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century by Marcion). According to Brague, comparable heroism was displayed by Franz Rosenzweig in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in his related advice to the Church in *The Star of Redemption* (1921).

<sup>8</sup> For all its shortcomings, Rieff’s approach (even though it is sometimes based on simplification that usually suggests a violation of hermeneutic loyalty to the cultural text under study), deserves closer attention.

attributes when hijacked for political purposes, and cultures of fiction (more precisely, their users) may change direction when moving along the vector of the sacred (*via*). Those options are available to subjects who, one way or another, remain immersed in an objectively existing sacred order. A subject may move further away from, or closer to, the centre (Rieff, 2006, p. 12); in other words, subjects may experience life-inducing growth or death-inducing transgression.

Rieff takes an ethical view of this experience of loss of human purpose, blaming Christianity (among other things) for rejecting the Law and embracing transgressive iconicity, a move that paved the way for a *third culture*:

Christianity's rejection of the Law in favor of the idea of personal union between the self and Christ (Gal 2:20; 3:24), a state supposed to be itself an incarnation of the Law, was to Rieff a 'Christological utopia' which paved the way for a *de facto* anti-Christian and anti-Jewish divestment of the sacred I by the *third culture* (Lubańska, 2008, p. 376).

Such irreducible reservations about Christianity notwithstanding, Rieff categorized the Christian and Judaic paradigms as culture of faith, and viewed the postulated revival of the Christian-Jewish way as a desirable outcome in the ongoing psychomachy between the expiring culture of faith (notably, in the case of Judaism, as a result of the experience of the Holocaust), and the invasive and parasitical culture of fiction. Rieff's concerns relate to the fact that humans can easily get lost among the blandishments of consumerism offered within the culture of fiction, as affirmed by therapeutic society. People, who are called to have a relationship with the sacred, may turn out to be the losing party in that struggle. Rieff's dystopian picture is not completely devoid of hope: a change of direction on *via*'s axis is not impossible, as the ultimate decision lies with the individual subject who, whether he or she accepts it or not, ultimately operates within the inescapable (objective) sacred order, freely moving towards its center or periphery, "up, down, or sideways" (Rieff, 2006, p. 12). In other words, one either experiences life-giving growth, or thanatic transgression. Implied in this outlook is a tacit assumption that the Christian and Jewish paradigms can at some level be regarded as indistinguishable from each other, apparently because both religions are ultimately optimistic about the Creation and the human condition.

In this context, it is difficult not to agree with a critic who pointed out that Rieff simply restates or *transliterates* the religious language of the Torah into the sociological language of cultural theory (Lubańska, 2008 p. 368; Zondervan,

2005, p. 127). Rieff's argument puts him in the same camp as those scholars who trace Jewish thought in Western philosophy and humanities to the Torah rather than the gnostic or cabbalistic variants of the Jewish tradition (Gershom Scholem, Harold Bloom, Walter Benjamin, Kafka, Jábés, etc.) To Rieff, a person of faith is seeking salvation but remains an integral being endowed with the unity of the living soul of the Hebrew tradition, an indivisible thing which can accept God's *Ruah* but remains unaffected by the dualistic split of Platonism with all that it entails. According to Claude Tresmontant, Hebrew anthropology did not presuppose a duality of body and soul, and recognized a dimension of *ruah*/pneuma ignored by subsequent philosophers:

(...) L'anthropologie hébraïque, d'une manière analogue, est caractérisée par: 1) par l'absence du dualisme âme-corps. (...) 2) la présence d'une dimension originale, absolument ignorée dans les philosophies, et spécifique de l'apport biblique: la *ruah*, que les Septante traduisirent par *pneuma*, et qui est repris sous ce terme par le Nouveau Testament, en particulier avec beaucoup de précision par saint Paul. Cette dimension nouvelle introduit une dialectique irréductible à l'antinomie platonicienne âme-corps, dialectique qui régit les relations entre l'homme et cette part surnaturelle en lui qui le travaille et l'appelle à une destinée naturellement imprévisible et inespérée, et que les prophètes signalent par la distinction entre l'homme, qui est une 'âme vivante', ou, ce qui est synonyme, 'chair', - et 'l'esprit'; entre ce que Paul appelle le 'psychique', ou 'charnel', et le 'spirituel' (Tresmontant, 1953, p. 87)<sup>9</sup>.

Can Philip Rieff's analytical categories prove useful for analyzing Christ-centric works of literature, such as Dimova's novel? It certainly appears to be the case. When viewed in those terms, Dimova's characters seem to corroborate Rieff's insight that a culture that moves away from the *via*, and leads a parasitical existence living off its religious promise of salvation, is ultimately futile. Mina, Lia and Katalina spend most of their lives torn between a sense of powerlessness in the face of vagaries of life (culture of fate) and a naïve belief in the effectiveness of popular therapeutic strategies (culture of fiction). The characters are drowning in a world filled with self-destruction, projections and self-deceptions, lies, pretenses and ineffective therapies, where the offerings of culture of fiction ultimately prove hollow. Mina painfully experiences the hollowness when he loses his daughter. Lia collides with the void head-on when she discovers that she has been adopted, a fact she regards as an indelible stigma. Katalina is likewise shrouded by emptiness as she despises her own body and despairs at her inauthentic life.

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<sup>9</sup> An English translation of the essay, by Michael Francis Gibson, appeared in 1960.



In Dimova's novel, the characters' personalities are made whole again, and their relationships are healed or established when they open up to the sacred, i.e. the mystical dimension of salvation. In Rieff's terms, the subject changes direction in its movement along the axis of the *via*. The male character plays a special role: Mina becomes a good messenger whose life's pilgrimage credibly testifies to the sacred mysteries:

(...) защото сега вече не ме е страх, Минá, защото се чувствам изпълнена с благодарност и жалост, защото сега сълзите ме пречистват и разпалват, ако човек дори за малко зърне истината, той става спокоен, нали, Минá, какво направихте с мен, с какво заслужих вашата любов, Минá, всеки ли, който умира в ръцете ви, го обичате толкова много, или само мен обикнахте така, или това е заради Причастието, което ме научихте да приемам, вие облекчавате самотата ми, когато си тръгвате изпадам в неописуема паника, не мога да си представя как ще дочакам следващия ден, за да ви видя отново, за ми говорите за Христос (...) (Димова, 2014, pp. 127–128).

Against this background, the eponymous train to Emmaus takes on a metaphorical meaning to denote a special kind of wandering. This kind of wandering differs from the experience of being called out of one's place (like Abraham), whereby one is moving away from the location of one's original encounter of the sacred (in a way, this idea is also found in the exodus from Egypt). Many modern scholars believe that given the course of its historical development, Jewish tradition is facing the threat of severing of its ties to that foundational Event, however it continues to draw life-giving energy from its faith-based vitalism.<sup>10</sup> Christianity (informed as it is by the concept of God's incarnation and mystical presence in the tangible world in the Eucharist, among others), does not suffer from the same problem, however, it faces a different difficulty: it has trouble understanding itself because it is ignorant of its own Jewish roots. This is in fact an ancient realization, shared already by those early Christians who were proponents of retaining the Old Testament in the Christian scriptural canon.

In Luke's gospel, the road to Emmaus is a journey to the hot spring of faith (*emmaus* is the Hebrew for "hot springs"). In this case, faith springs from the encounter with the risen Jesus and his reinterpretation of Jewish prophetic scriptures. Dimova reproduces this paradigm. In her novel, the faith

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<sup>10</sup> For more information on the subject see, among others, (Quinzio, 2005). In the Polish literature see: Bielik-Robson (2012).

of the wandering pilgrims lost in culture of fiction (psychotherapy, parapsychology, esoteric practices, astrology) springs from sudden experience: Mina experiences the presence of Jesus, Katalina experiences the beauty of Creation, and Lia experiences a trusting encounter with another person sent by God.

Колко недостъпно е за разума ни, че Бог има нужда от нас. Като че ли всеки, който ви види, Мина, се чувства длъжен да ви разкаже за себе си, **във ваше лице хората усещат** Бог и имат нужда от окуражаване и подкрепа, от прегръдка, от потвърждаване на Божието присъствие в своя живот, затова сигурно всеки има нужда да **ви разказва за вярата си, избутана по ъглите на душата му, а вие като ловец я напипвате и изваждате и човекът се чувства като новопосветен, като окъпан, както Лия тогава, когато била влязла за първи път в двора на църквата...** (...) Мина (...) знаеше, че отсега нататък ще разговаря с нея винаги, до края на дните си, **че срещата им повече няма да свърши докато не поемат света в себе си, докато не го претворят, докато не се принесат един другиму в жертва, защото там, където любовта не свършва, е едното, едничкото, единственото разпалено сърце на пътниците за Емаус** (Димова, 2014, p. 150).

In this context, how should we interpret the words in the novel's apparently banal closing scene, where two of the characters share a kiss? Some clues can be found in the etymology of their names. The characters who embrace at a train stop on their way to Emmaus are Mina (a variation of Michael, a name whose Hebrew origin means "Who is like God")<sup>11</sup> and Katalina (derived from the Greek word *katharos*, "pure" or "flawless"). Katalina's name brings to mind the medieval Cathars (and hence the neo-gnostic myth of Bogomilism), a religious group who yearned for the Good God and were mistrustful of the world of creation (importantly, Katalina despises the human body and her relationships with people are marked by fear and anxiety). Mina/Michael shares his name with an angel, an emissary of God, and as such he helps Katalina to change her attitude towards the world. When unlocked with this etymological key, the love of those two characters is a metonymic portrayal of the love between God and people, as expressed in human terms by doxology; notably, doxology is rooted in the Jewish tradition, a fact made apparent by the psalmist tradition. In the Hebrew tradition, doxology was a product of the habitus; gratitude could only be expressed by praising the God of the Covenant, whose presence the psalmist experienced in the course of his life (Suski, 1974, p. 9):

<sup>11</sup> Though it may also be a variant of the word *Amen* ("let it be so").

I will listen to what God the Lord says;  
 he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—  
 but let them not turn to folly.  
 Surely his salvation *is* nigh them that fear him;  
 that glory may dwell in our land.  
 Mercy and truth are met together;  
 righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

(AKJV: Psalm 85:8–10)

In Dimova's narrative culture of faith emerges victorious from its psychomachy with the culture of fiction. The novel appears to share this paradigm. It offers a message of hope in a change of mind (*metanoia*) that brings salvation, quite distinct from the concept of change of mind shaped by the Kantian line of evolution from innocent human immaturity to self-aware maturity of the autonomous subject, as popularized by post-enlightenment philosophy. In terms of social dynamics, this can be an insuperable barrier. In terms of the enlightenment superstitions about the "spiritual progress of humanity", Rieff's "transliteration" of the Torah into the language of sociology of culture may seem like an anachronistic call for retrogression.<sup>12</sup> In this, it is reminiscent of the journey to Emmaus made by Dimova's characters. When faced with an interpretive tradition devoid of a sense of the sacred, Rieff's concept of modern-day psychomachy seems irrelevant and insignificant. In a culture which finds aesthetic satisfaction in contemplating "works of death", doxology can offer no alternative to fiction. In this system of coordinates, the Jewish and Christian paradigms remain indistinguishable, and Rieff's typology can share the fate of what he described as God's messengers lost in culture of fiction (such as the famous Klee painting *Angelus Novus*, or the Angel of History in Benjamin's essay): the fate of thanatic transgression.

*Translated by Piotr Szymczak*

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<sup>12</sup> E.g. Lewis(2006); Manning (2008): "In *Deathworks*, Rieff reunites sociology and theology in a desperate effort to turn back the clock. And yet there is something dissatisfying about his presentation. Despite Rieff's dislike of ambivalence, his own beliefs and faith are not apparent to me. In this regard he is quite different from the man with whom he is often compared, Alasdair MacIntyre. Perhaps Rieff cannot escape the fictional third world himself". A more conciliatory tone was struck by Robert Reno (2007) and Gerald Howard (2007).

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## O przydatności typologii Philipa Rieffa w badaniach nad literackimi hybrydyzacjami teologicznych idei człowieczeństwa i duchowego postępu (na jednym przykładzie bułgarskim)

Wiek dwudziesty w szczególny sposób stał się czasem refleksji nad teologicznymi korzeniami ludzkiego myślenia, w tym myślenia w kategoriach politycznych; dość wspomnieć choćby nazwiska tak różnych myślicieli jak Walter Benjamin, Carl Schmitt, Erich Voegelin. Jednym z badaczy, który włączył się w toczące się dysputy był Philip Rieff, który w książce *My Life Among the Deathworks* (2006) podjął trud dyskusyjnej (zdaniem wielu) rewitalizacji paradygmatu judeochrześcijańskiego. Snując rozważania na temat dzieł sztuki na przestrzeni kilku wieków, wyabstrahował kryteria typologiczne, pozwalające budować dychotomiczny model sztuki jako dedykowanej śmierci (wariant antyjudeochrześcijański) lub życiu (wariant judeochrześcijański). Jego sposób rozumowania autorka poddaje próbie weryfikacji w refleksji nad teologicznym modelem człowieczeństwa i duchowego postępu w powieści Teodory Dimowej *Влакът за Емаус* (2014).

**Słowa kluczowe:** literatura bułgarska, literatura współczesna, Teodora Dimowa, Philip Rieff, paradygmat judeochrześcijański

## Philip Rieff's Typology of Culture and its Applicability to the Literary Hybridization of the Theological Ideas of Humanity and Spiritual Progress (a Bulgarian Case Study)

The twentieth century has become in a special way a time of reflection on the theological roots of human thinking, including thinking in political terms; suffice it to mention such names as Walter Benjamin, Carl Schmitt and Erich Voegelin. One of the thinkers who joined the ongoing disputes was Philip Rieff, who in his book *My Life Among the Deathworks* (2006), took on the task of a controversial (according to many) revitalization of the Judeo-Christian paradigm. Reflecting on the subject of art works over several centuries, he abstracted typological criteria allowing him to build a dichotomous model of art, as dedicated either to death

(the non-Judeo-Christian variety) or to life (the Judeo-Christian variety). The paper attempts to verify his reasoning by reflecting on the theological models of humanity and spiritual progress in Teodora Dimova's novel *The Train to Emmaus* (*Vlakat za Emaus*, 2014).

**Keywords:** Bulgarian literature, contemporary literature, Teodora Dimova, Philip Rieff, Judeo-Christian paradigm

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