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### **Aleksandr Vampilov’s Drama *Duck Hunting* and the (In)different Character in the Different Theatre: A Phenomenological Analysis of Viktor Zilov’s Revolution**

While comparing views of literary critics around the world concerning Aleksandr Vampilov’s revolutionary drama *Duck Hunting* (1967), I discovered that its main character Viktor Zilov evoked the most contradictory responses. The play is presented as a chain of Zilov’s memories which are triggered by a malicious joke: the protagonist’s friends send him a funeral wreath as if he died. The main character’s story is given now in two perspectives. The first one is his memories, where he constantly lies to his family, his boss or his friends although being absolutely tired of his life full of masquerade. Exhausted from it, Zilov strives for harmony, which he sees in nature. The masquerade surrounds him in his memories. As he recalls, very seldom had his friends shown their true faces, but mostly adjusted their behavior for the situation. The other perspective is Zilov’s present: he is sitting in his room, recalling the past before the sent wreath and wishing for the rain to stop, as he longs to go duck hunting. He needs this trip to nature to get rid of falsehood. The memories reduce Zilov to despair. Finally, he decides to kill himself and calls his friends to his own wake. However, when the

friends come and indirectly show their vivid interest in the things they could get in case of Zilov's death (e.g., the boat, the apartment), revealing the real price of their friendship, the protagonist changes his mind and drives his guests away with the rifle in his hands. The playwright leaves Zilov alone in his room, crying or laughing (stage directions indicate that it is unclear) and ready to go duck hunting, as the rain finally stops.

Few critics assert that the central protagonist, a thirty year old hypocrite who is searching for his real self, manages to find it in the end<sup>1</sup>; they also see his outstanding nature and giftedness.<sup>2</sup> The overwhelming majority suggests<sup>3</sup> that the character's self-evaluation ultimately becomes his self-destruction.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the question of the play's finale is still open to interpretation. *Duck Hunting*, a double revolution of the author and the protagonist, needs a holistic approach. Thus, the goal of this paper is to consider the problem of Viktor Zilov, the protagonist of Aleksandr Vampilov's play, from the phenomenological point of view. Phenomenological analysis will make it possible to prove that Viktor Zilov accomplishes not a *re-evaluation*, but a *revolution*, that he revolts against his former self and emerges victorious.

The main advantage of the phenomenological approach, which has come to the study of literature from philosophy, is that it provides a holistic vision of a work of art, i.e., it permits to see the close connection between all the expressive means of it, even if they are very far from each other throughout the text. These means can be certain thoughts' repetitions, artistic details (gestures or significant digressions from the plot) or stylistic devices, such as metaphors, metonymies, etc. Together they constitute the communicative form of the central literary image's manifestations. The

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1 See Antipiev 8-56, for the perspicacious comments on Zilov and *Duck Hunting*.

2 More on Vampilov and his characters, see Turovskaya 102-15.

3 See, e.g., Rudnitsky 162-76.

4 On Zilov and his unhappy finale, see Tenditnik 181.

central image or the image of the entire work (e.g., of a play) comprises a conflict, usually expressed in the work's title, and is unseen, but perceived thanks to its manifestations. It can be compared to the phenomenon of archetype, described in the same way in the 1950s by Karl Gustav Jung.<sup>5</sup> Another important moment about the phenomenological analysis is that it is “intentionally oriented”<sup>6</sup> to the work of art. In other words, this type of analysis is applied to the images of certain literary work, but not to its social context or to the author's biography. All these, undoubtedly, significant parts of any creation process, are considered in this case through the work itself and as aesthetic phenomena.

A phenomenological approach to *Duck Hunting* seems to be an evident solution to the problem of its paradoxical character. Zilov is not a real person; he is the literary image of a person who is perceived only by the personage's communication or stage cues. The dramatic nature of Aleksandr Vampilov's work is a substantial argument of its characters' communicative existence: drama presupposes talking. Thanks to his communicative peculiarities, Viktor Zilov is seen to be an incarnation of the main image conflict of the play: sincerity and masquerade, which is also reflected in the drama's title. The word combination "Duck Hunting" first of all, means “the act of hunting in the nature,” a real action where no one can hide his instincts of killing the prey. The title, thus, is one of the image manifestations: here a kind of naturalness and sincerity is felt, especially if one recalls that our ancestors used to kill the beasts to get food and clothes. At the same time, “duck hunting” means “killing which is socially acceptable,” something unnatural, like a masquerade: both, a killing and a game. Vampilov's drama proves evident that image conflict is included in the title. Changes, which happen to the protagonist's communication characteristics throughout the play, reflect his

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5 About the notion of archetype, see, e.g., Jung 77-78.

6 The notion of intentionality is among the key ones in Husserl's phenomenology. Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl is a founding father of phenomenological method in philosophy. For the analysis of intentionality in communication, see Husserl 40-43.

revolution the most, and that is why the suggested approach is irreplaceable here. Phenomenological analysis of Zilov's image gives a possibility to get distracted from its social or historical basis, usually underlined by critics, and to look at this image as at the aesthetic essence within the framework of the play.

My focus will be on Zilov's stage cues, which favor the display of his main traits to a considerable extent, as well as on the communicative strategies of some other characters and stage directions or the implicit author's communication from the drama. To achieve this goal, I have organized my paper into three sections. In the first section, I pay attention to the historical context of Vampilov's creation of *Duck Hunting* and consider peculiar features of this drama and its lead character, both absolutely new for their time. In the second section, I make a detailed description of Viktor Zilov's behavior and his relationships with the other characters in the play, and I argue that phenomenological analysis can be very useful for the demonstration of his ability to change. Developing the suggested idea, in the same section I explain what the literary phenomenological analysis is and examine the personages and implicit author's communicative strategies from a phenomenological point of view. I conclude my paper with the third section that points out the role and perspective of the type of analysis discussed during my investigation. Before I give a phenomenological proof of Viktor Zilov's revolution, I want to discuss where Vampilov's drama belongs in the history of the Soviet theatre, at first visiting the more traditional, historical criticism as opposed to the subsequent point of view.

*DUCK HUNTING IN HISTORY AND HISTORY IN DUCK HUNTING*

Written in 1967, Aleksandr Vampilov's *Duck Hunting* is a revolutionary drama which initiated the new Soviet theatre and the new post-Soviet theatre later on. Vreneli Farber underlines the wealth of the author's dramaturgic techniques: "Vampilov in 'Duck Hunting' conveys his ideas in a variety of ways: a play-within-a-play, symbolism ..., character contrasts ..., farce and tragedy, and an inconclusive ending. This play reflects... his moving away from mainstream Socialist Realism" (83). Indeed, Vampilov's drama stood out against the background of the works which were rather homogeneous and were created in the spirit of the Socialist Realism of the 1950s-60s, seeking to elaborate the topics of equality of opportunities, great achievements, and struggle for communism. The writer, "the engineer of human souls," as Stalin once put it, was to popularize the idea of everyone's "equivalent labor" for the common welfare. No wonder the protagonists engendered by this genre were conferred with quite specific and one-color personalities: it was important to show the struggle between "the good" and "the evil" (e.g., the conflicts between the communists and the capitalists as well as the formers' unconditional victory). At first sight there are labor, "homo workiens" and some kind of "external" reference to the symbol of "the radiant future" in the play *Duck Hunting*. These are the aspects which have probably influenced the opinion of Vreneli Farber, the Director of Russian Studies at Oregon State University; she, having investigated the playwright's works and peculiarities of his theatre in detail, nevertheless, mentioned the likeness between the symbol of "duck hunting" and one of "the utopian socialist dream of communism" (94, qtd. in Farber and Sverbilova 163).

However, Vampilov raises an issue not of a Soviet individual in a certain historical period, but of a man of this world, an eternal man, an old acquaintance. Historicism might have been important for Vampilov in its philosophical perspective. Thanks to Sergey Rostislavovich Smirnov's

investigations, the following playwright's words are known: "to learn life... It's better not to learn it to be a poet" (Smirnov 40, qtd. in Vampilov *Избранное* 635). If we recall the plot of the play, which I briefly retold in the introduction, we will see that the labor is doubtful, the working person is not very positive, while the radiant future fades away and is on its way to disappear. Trying to create not a history *in* a man, but a history *of* a man with all his wishes, problems and contradictions, Aleksandr Vampilov finds a many-sided character, which is not so easy to explain or appraise. This character and his communicative peculiarities are what I am now going to analyze as the image and its manifestations. The phenomenological approach to the protagonist will help me to find the key to Zilov given by the play itself without referring to the play's social context.

#### VAMPILOV'S DRAMA AND ITS PROTAGONIST FROM THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

First of all, let us see what Zilov's paradoxical nature is judging only by the play, for it is the very play that I have just chosen as my guideline. Over the course of few days, the thirty-year-old engineer lives a small life, full of hypocrisy, disillusion; and searches for his real self, and experiences a small death in "a series of 'recollections'" (Farber 83). The trouble is that the hero himself is an extraordinary hypocrite standing before the spectator as a part of a lying and dead world. Following his deeds (we see them as Zilov's recollections) one can think that the hero is indifferent in the extreme to his life and its values. Zilov betrays his wife Galina with his mistress. When he is bored with the latter, he passes her to his boss, and then intends her to be his friend's wife. He easily forges his report, does not visit his father for years, has a love affair with a young female student, does not care about his wife's pregnancy, and emotionally wakes up only after the news about his father's death and his wife's abortion. There is a complete indifference to everything:

home, job, love and family. It is expressed clearly in the following situations. Zilov must give a report to his boss, but nothing is done by the time he needs to do it, so he persuades his colleague, Sayapin, to forge it:

ZILOV. It's just a trifle ... . Nobody will notice. Who needs this?.. Sign it.

(Vampilov *Утиная охота* 219)

Another example of indifference occurs when Zilov's wife Galina tells him on the phone that she is finally pregnant. Here is the answer she hears from her husband, who, besides, has just fallen for a young girl:

ZILOV. What?.. A baby?.. Are you sure?.. Well, it's great then. Congratulations... It's a son, I'm sure ... . Well, yes, I'm glad.. I told you, I'm glad. What do you want me to do – to sing, to dance, maybe? ... (226)

In the last example, the protagonist receives a letter from his dying father, who asks him to come to farewell for good and to comfort his mother:

ZILOV. ... Let's see, what this old fool is writing. (*Reads*). Well, well... O my God! He's dying again. (*Distracted from the letter*). Imagine, once or twice a year, as a rule, my old man's lying to die ... (220)

According to Nikolay Sergeevich Konoplyov, the only “moral outlet” for him is hunting where, as it is defined by Zilov himself, “a person can feel like a real human being” (63, Vampilov *The Major Plays* 191). Unlike the previous stage cues, this definition of nature by Zilov characterizes him as a thoughtful person, a real philosopher. Quite an ambiguous type seems to come into sight. Who is this personage: a hero or a villain?

Zilov's tendency for an eternal acting and changing mask causes scholars perceive him as one of his strange and masked friends. People surrounding Zilov also make an impression of playing

their lives. Vera, a young woman disappointed in love, plays with her men; the boss changes his mask as a strict director and as a doubting, good-for-nothing lover; student Irina, having fallen in love with Viktor and learning that he is married, agrees to play the role of his mistress. The Sayapins, a husband and a wife, flatter the boss to get an apartment. Zilov's position to all these artistic personalities seems to be indifferent; he is interested in them from time to time, but not for a long time. Using here the term "artistic personality," I mean "a personality which is engendered and defined by its speech".<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, absolutely unexpectedly this hero cannot cope with the pressure of an all-absorbing "masquerade" and rebels against everybody. In order to cope, he then wants to go duck hunting, which could allow him to enact socially acceptable killing. Does it make him a positive or a negative character? It is not so easy to judge in Vampilov's plays.

Few critics assert that the central protagonist manages to find his way back to himself.<sup>8</sup> In particular, Nikolay Petrovich Antipiev wrote about it, underlining Zilov's outstanding nature, his ability to change, his apparent difference from his figuratively dead friends in the period of hard relationships between the Russian critique and the personage. In his works devoted to this Vampilov's protagonist<sup>9</sup>, Antipiev proceeds from the aesthetics of the play itself to prove Viktor Zilov's waking up for the better future. The overwhelming majority of critics<sup>10</sup> accuse Zilov of being a twin-brother to all his "friends" who eternally play the life, but not live it, and these critics suggest that the character's self-evaluation ultimately becomes his self-destruction. Among them is

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7 I gave this characteristic of artistic personality following Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's comments on the "personality in dialogue", see, e.g., Bakhtin 159-206.

8 See, e.g., Antipiev, Nikolay Petrovich "Парадокс Виктора Зилова («Утиная охота» Александра Вампилова)." 8-56; Turovskaya, Maya Iosifovna "Вампилов и его критики." 102-15.

9 See, e.g., Antipiev, Nikolay Petrovich "Виктор Зиллов как литературный архетип." 259-81.

10 See, e.g., Rudnitsky, Konstantin Lazarevich "По ту сторону вымысла." 162-76; Tenditnik, Nadezhda Stepanovna "Истины старые, но вечные." 181.

Konstantin Lazarevich Rudnitsky, who once wrote that “all that is left after Zilov — ... [is] a dead shell of disappeared intentions” (169). Analyzing Zilov, the scholar is sure that the character's death, the signs of which are seen throughout the play, becomes definitive in the finale.

I would like now to consider the problem of the protagonist of play from the phenomenological point of view for the first time, as uncommon literary works require uncommon approaches from their researchers. The phenomenological method, introduced to philosophy in the first half of the 20th century by Edmund Husserl, is based on the principle of “immanent contemplation”<sup>11</sup> of all the surrounding objects. Originally, phenomenology was born as a science which studies the means of cognition, as knowledge of getting knowledge. Further on Husserl's ideas had a great influence on the philosophers and theorists of literature, among which the names of Roman Ingarden, Wolfgang Iser and Jacques Derrida are very important to mention in my paper. Husserl's phenomenology led a polish philosopher Roman Ingarden, as it was formulated by Illya Petrovich Illyin, “to the understanding of multidimensionality ... of an intentional object, which for the reader is a fiction work” (Dranov, Illyin et al. 49). Proceeding likely from initial aims of phenomenological science which I have mentioned, Ingarden is primarily interested in “perceptual consciousness” (Mitscherling 101). The scholar introduces the notion of “communicative uncertainty” and argues that “*concretization* of literary images by a perceptual consciousness consists in filling in “the spots of uncertainty” (in Bohdan Dziemidok's translation 293), which “surround the backbone of the artistic structure” (italicized by Illyin in Dranov, Illyin et al. 49). “The spots of uncertainty,” as they are characterized by the philosopher, “are the space which stimulates the recipient's ... imagination” (Ibidem). For one of his followers and founding fathers of *receptive*

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11 More about phenomenological method, see in Edmund Husserl's *Собрание сочинений. Т. 3 (1). Логические исследования. Т. II (1)*. 320-409.

*aesthetics*, Wolfgang Iser, it is this filling in the “empty spots” (Dranov, Illyin et al. 50) by the reader that is a fundamental principle of the *work of literature/recipient* interaction. Besides Iser underlines that “*aesthetic experience* ... is formed ... thanks to “empty spots,”

“spots of uncertainty” which permit the reader to “connect” the other’s experience, “the text’s experience,” to his own one” (Dranov, Illyin et al. p. 50). Thus, both philosophers’ communicative approach to the work of literature, based on the phenomenological method of intentional perception and, along with it, perception’s perception, seems quite evident.

Jacque Derrida’s opinion is also important for me in this methodological discussion. The French scholar considered “every text interpretation, which admits the idea of critic/text separation, as a groundless one” and emphasized that “Study is led in dialogue between the critic and the text ... It’s not only that the critic has an influence on the text, the text also influences the critic” (Rudnev 75). Following the philosophers’ ideas, I can now outline in general terms some special features of phenomenological approach in literary criticism. It presupposes a special type of text perception, during which the scholar starts a dialogue with the text. This dialogue permits one to perceive a work of art as a whole, in its integrity, thanks to one’s re-creating imagination. The text leaves open meaningful places to fill in giving the reader the rules of *how* to perceive and at the same time *what* to perceive in a literary work. Phenomenological analysis oriented to the image structure of *Duck Hunting* will, I hope, reveal those facets of Zilov’s character which could demonstrate his real readiness to change. To begin with, in a few words I want to talk about the possibilities of the approach suggested in its application to literary images.

As was already mentioned, a phenomenological approach, when an instrument of philosophy, is always oriented to a certain entity that is unseen, but given only in its manifestations. In the study of literature, the entity, to which the reader’s cognition is oriented, is the image structure of a piece of

art, and the means of its manifestation are communication in its linguistic sense. The phenomenological approach can help follow the image's life, its movement in its communicative manifestations, to see all its facets visualizing during the entire reading time. The image is seen as a "fruitful moment" characterized by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing as the one "which allows the imagination free scope," and, together with the "point from which this moment is viewed," this fruitful moment provides us with the situation when "the longer we gaze, the more must our imagination add" (17). It was already mentioned that Zilov as a personage is also a part of an image structure; he is a recreated artistic personality or an image of an out-aesthetic personality whose character is manifested in the very personage's communication. Based on the possibilities of phenomenological analysis, we can investigate the image of Viktor Zilov and its connection with the image structure of *Duck Hunting*.

In this play, more exactly, in its paper variant, we see only Zilov's and heroes' stage cues, i.e. external manifestations of their character traits. Zilov's so-called friends and his boss very often pretend to be someone depending on the situation. Viktor's mistress Vera, disappointed in love and thus believing that all the men are the same, flatters them and plays with them, having turned her naïve coquetry into the mask, which has become for her a mode of existence. Pretense, forced smiles and laugh, forced respect to the authorities, characteristic, e.g., of the Sayapins, often determine the personages' communicative strategies or individual types of verbal interaction with the others. Constant dependence of the protagonist's friends on environment (the boss) or, vice versa, their indifference to life (Vera) make the phrases uttered by them repetitive, clichéd, and sometimes reduced to aphorisms: "Now, now... I'm far from being a saint" (the boss, Kushak) and "Alik" (Vera during all the play) (Vampilov *The Major Plays* 198). These stage cues incarnate the image of masquerade, acting and artificiality.

Kushak often repeats the presented phrase. Every time he says it, as if hidden behind a mask of a sincere man, he then does something dishonorable. “It looks like you’ve... m-m... seduced me” — he can say after the previous phrase, and then, accusing others of his own wrong deeds, continues pleasing his wishes (Vampilov *Утиная охота* 201). After these self-justifications, he drinks at work or amuses himself with Zilov’s ex-mistress Vera in the protagonist’s apartment, both offered to him by Viktor for that purpose. The word “Alik” invented by Vera for calling all her men becomes a symbol of depersonalizing: all her male friends are artificial ones, without any faces, and as for her a real love, it is almost impossible to find. Speaking about the names, I cannot but mention their significant role in the play. The names can be additional image manifestations here. Thus, Vera in Russian means “belief”; this name makes the reader see Vera’s everlasting hope from the beginning, and in fact, it wins: in the finale she finds a true support in one of her men. “Alik” meant “alcoholic” in Soviet Russia. This nickname does not only re-create the soviet reality perceived only through the drama’s aesthetics, as I meant to show, but also contributes to the reader’s perception of drunkards’ images and, which is more important, of formless, equal and as if masked male images.

As for Zilov, he speaks ironically about almost everything and laughs at the clichés in speech and at the monotony of life:

GALINA: I don’t like telephones. I always feel when you’re talking on the phone that you’re lying.

ZILOV. Well, you shouldn’t. You shouldn’t be so suspicious of technology. Like it or not, the future belongs to it. (Farber 98 qtd. in Vampilov *Избранное* 166)

In this dialogue with her husband, Galina means the broken marriage based on falsehood from his side; she tries to find his support and sincerity. Instead of discussion of a serious family problems, “the light-minded husband” answers with a soviet cliché about “the future of technology”

(Vampilov *Утиная охота* 203, Farber *Ibidem*), concentrating attention on the telephone advantages.

A slogan-like phrase on his lips seems ironic because of its irrelevance to the situation. Besides, Zilov himself does not seem to believe what he's talking about. At least, his actions do not correspond with his words. The protagonist's communication makes the manifestation of masquerade image clearer here. It can also be seen in his stage cues addressed to his wife and pronounced after his long-day dating with a young girl:

GALINA. I don't believe any word you're saying.

ZILOV. (*calmly*). In vein. A wife must believe her husband. Why not? Confidence is the main thing in family life (Vampilov *Утиная охота* 228).

In the protagonist's speech, one can often hear the general rule, a commonplace he is bothered with. Vampilov's stage directions indicate Zilov's "negligence and boredom" (Vampilov *Утиная охота* 189); the character seems tired of everything throughout the play. He seems to be tired even of different roles he is constantly playing: a husband, a lover, a worker, etc. His indifference to everything attracts misfortunes and collisions that, however, influence his following revolution. After reading about three deaths in a row: Zilov's father's, Zilov's unborn child's and his wife's (when Galina leaves him for good), we hear a sincere despair in the protagonist's speech, and then, absolutely unexpectedly, the will to live. This will is heard in the famous monologue behind the closed door, the first try for the revelation of Zilov's true face. The monologue follows Galina's departure and is interesting because it is addressed to her, but another woman really listens to it; it is his sweetheart Irina. Zilov does not know about this love substitution, and this situation makes his monologue, a monologue into the "emptiness":

We'll have to get up early, you know, before sunrise even. You'll see what the mist is like there — we shall float along as if in a dream, not knowing where we are going ... You

wouldn't believe how quiet it is! It's as though you're not there, do you understand? Not there! You haven't been born. And nothing else is there either. And there never has been and there never will be. (Farber 93 qtd. in Vampilov *Избранное* 216)

Let us pay attention to this speech about the hunting and more precisely — to the phrase: “You haven't been born. And nothing else is there either. And there never has been and there never will be” (Farber 93). Here Zilov is different. For the first time he speaks openly, coming back to his real self; that is the first signal of his revolution. He is not wearing a mask anymore; he is sincere. Nevertheless, when Zilov sees Irina and not Galina behind the door, he does not dissuade his real listener from her thought, that this monologue was addressed to her. Zilov is now closed again; he is ready to play the role of a lover. The first try to become himself seems to fail.

The second time, Zilov is honest and unmasked in the café scene, when he gathers his friends and Irina (Galina has already left him). It is the last day of his work before the vacation which the protagonist wishes to spend hunting. By this time, he already hates the masquerade of life and everyone around. He has lost everything and sees no one as his friend. Getting drunk, he presents Irina as his fiancée to his friends and acquaints a female student with them without ceremony: “ZILOV. My boss. Director, then. A big liberal. ... Sayapin. Also a big figure” (Vampilov *Утиная охота* 264). Kushak's liberal views concern only his way of entertainment, while “big figure” Sayapin easily betrays Zilov, saying to the boss that it was Zilov who forged the report. Thus, the reader again hears the irony in Zilov's words, but here it underlines his courage to mock these figuratively dead people. The next day the protagonist hardly remembers all he had said. The reader, following his contradictory behavior, is still unsure of the success of his revolution: maybe, it was just the alcohol speaking in him? Sincerity and masquerade always co-exist in Zilov, incarnating the main conflict of the play.

These conflict facets are manifested both in stage cues and in one of the most important of Zilov's deeds: the violation of laws of death, the trespassing of the line, and his appearance on the different side, far from the world where the notions of life and death exist. I mean here hanging a funeral wreath on the neck, which triggers Zilov's recollections and was mentioned in the beginning of this paper. Zilov's friends send a wreath with the inscription "To the unforgettable Zilov, Viktor Aleksandrovich, who worked himself to an untimely death, from his grief-stricken friends" (Farber 85, qtd. in Vampilov *Избранное* 152). Zilov hangs it on his neck, crying out: "Vitya Zilov, U.S.S.R.," as if he is a winner of some kind of race, and trespasses the line in this moment, the line between existence and nonexistence, reality and dream, truth and falsehood (Vampilov *Утиная охота* 192).

This wreath has a finality to it, as he could not cope with the masquerade anymore; it gave him an opportunity to begin this difficult journey to his true ego. Going through the recollections, without any omissions, Zilov accomplishes the real and definitive revolution: he cannot go out the same from these memories. After this long way to himself, he is ready to die first and calls his friends to his wake, but then finally opposes himself to them, who try clumsily and insincerely to save him from the suicide:

ZILOV. (*suddenly in anger*). I'm still alive, but you are all here already? Have already flocked together? Yours is not enough for you? The Earth is not enough for you?.. Penny pinchers! (*Rushes at them.*) (Vampilov *Утиная охота* 278)

Thanks to the funeral wreath, the protagonist could look at himself from the side, get lifted over himself — is not it a revolution in which many scholars pass over in silence?

As we may see, this character was to blame for many things. But how does a reader or a spectator *learn* about it? It is from the character himself, and that is the paradox. He *himself* sees his bad self. We follow his “autocommunication” expressed in visions/recollections (Lotman 163). According to Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman, when a person is addressed to her/himself, “in the channel “I – Me,” a qualitative transformation of information happens leading, as a result, to the “I”’s consciousness transformation” (Rudnev 14). Here one can observe this example of Zilov’s ego transformation. The other characters do not seem to exist; they are alive only in Viktor Zilov’s recollections. In this semi-reality/semi-fantasy, they exist only in the way they are connected with him. Zilov’s communicative strategy absorbs other personalities’ characteristics and makes more active the image contradiction of masquerade and sincerity and their facets *death* and *life* in the reader’s imagination. Both things follow Zilov in the past, present, and future. The future is left unknown as it is virtually always happens in Vampilov’s plays, but one cannot help noticing the traces, which the implicit author leaves to show: Zilov changes. The protagonist’s inconsistency confuses, but let us hold on to the play’s communication.

Olga Nikolaevna Zyryanova suggests that the image structure of play *Duck Hunting* develops the theme of “striving for non-existence and death,” giving the monologue behind the closed door as a proof (94). I think that Zilov’s sincere monologue says something about another form of the non-existence — a primordial one. Being in “the situation of re-evaluation of all the life values,” (Farber and Sverbilova 161) Zilov does not die from despair, but lives to see a catharsis and a rebirth, which are shown thanks, *inter alia*, to the stage directions of the implicit author in the last scene. Here the image of the sun re-appears with stage directions given by Vampilov:

By this time the rain has stopped. The *band* of *sky* is *blue now*, and the roof of the neighboring apartment is illuminated by a weak, late afternoon sun. (Vampilov *The Major Plays* 206)

It is quite logical that this facet of the image conflict also provokes hot discussions. For example, the author of a few articles on Vampilov, Nataliya Vassilievna Tsybalistenko wrote in 1980 that “the stopped rain and the appearance of the band of blue sky mean Zilov’s complete spiritual death” (146). However, with the help of phenomenological analysis of the image structure of the play, we can come to quite another conclusion. The image of the sun in the play is associated with the image of the paradise, the image of the high, the clear and the bright, while the sunset gives the artistic world of the drama a sense of a last (it is difficult to say if Zilov changes forever), but still a lucid moment. In the earlier variant of the play, Irina is astonished and scared because of the sun’s disappearance (Vampilov *Драматургическое наследие* 743). Awakened in the present, Zilov is looking forward to the sun, the sunlight, and the end of this eternal rain. In the finale of *Duck Hunting*, the sun appears after the catharsis of the main character, so, I can conclude that the image of the sun, by the dynamics of its presence or absence, is closer to the image facets of nature and purity than it is to image manifestations of death and moral falling. Thus, having come to a clear idea of Zilov’s very possible changing with the help of holistic approach to the drama’s image structure, I can now make a conclusion about the role of phenomenological analysis in my investigation.

## CONCLUSION

Being oriented to the image of Viktor Zilov in its communicative manifestations, a phenomenological approach discovers the protagonist’s true colors, his readiness for a self-

knowledge and subsequent revolution. It also shows that this character personifies, through his behavior, the main image conflict of sincerity and masquerade. The applied type of analysis points out the close connection between some personages (Kushak, Vera), visible as artistic personalities only in their communicative strategies, and the image of masquerade. At the same time, it considers them as a part of Zilov, whose autocommunication absorbs their communicative types. The implicit author's communication or stage directions, evoking at certain moments the image of the sun in the reader's imagination, gives additional signs of the main character's changing, where previous critics thought there was none.

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