

DOI: 10.31866/2617-2674.6.1.2023.279265

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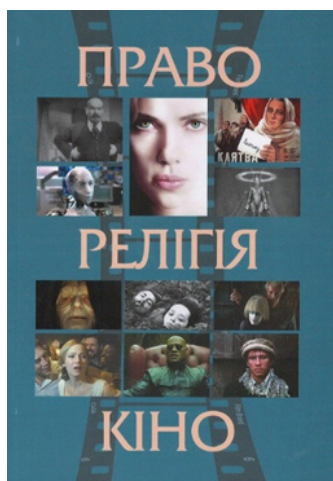
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Religious and legal aspects in world cinema

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Релігійно-правові аспекти у світовому кінематографі



Вовк Д., Євсєєв О., Смородинський В., Биля-Сабадаш І., Харитоновна А., Горобець К., Кисельов О., Радутний О., Ганжа О. *Право, релігія, кіно*. Харків : Права людини, 2018. 184 с.

Вовк, Д., Євсєєв, О., Смородинський, В., Биля-Сабадаш, І., Харитоновна, А., Горобець, К., Кисельов, О., Радутний, О. та Ганжа, О., 2018. *Право, релігія, кіно*. Харків: Права людини.

Vovk, D., Yevsieiev, O., Smorodynskiy, V., Bylia-Sabadash, I., Kharytonova, A., Horobets, K., Kyselov, O., Radutnyi, O. and Hanzha, O., 2018. *Pravo, relihiia, kino* [Law, religion, movie]. Kharkiv: Prava liudyny.

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According to the authors, the book "Law, religion, cinema" is a project of the Center for the Study of the Supremacy of Law and Religion of the Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University in cooperation with the Kharkiv Legal Cinema Club. The authors touch on various paradigms and aspects of the interaction of legal, political and religious both in the material and symbolic worlds. Political religion, religious freedom, tolerance for others, the role of law in forgiveness, law and love, the (un)future of law and religion, the relativization of the legal and political order, the mythology of law, law, religion and scientific and technological progress – an endless list of issues that are considered in the context of cinematic art (Vovk et al., 2018, p.2).

The book includes articles: "Culture wars in real life and on the screen" (Vovk et al., 2018, p.10), "'Holy Scripture' of Soviet propaganda cinema art" (Vovk et al., 2018, p.20), *Mom!* (Vovk et al., 2018, p.34), "Two in the Book of Genesis (based on the movie *The Reader*)" (Vovk et al., 2018, p.49), "Long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away': law, power and religion in *Star*

Wars" (Vovk et al., 2018, p.57), "Foreigner in a homogenous community: an orthodox Muslim among formal Orthodoxes. Reflections on the film *The Muslim* (Vovk et al., 2018, p.80), "Religions and the law of the digital world of our future in everyday life and cinematography" (Vovk et al., 2018, p.93), "Robot as a subject of law and a sexual partner (legal, religious and cinematographic aspects)" (Vovk et al., 2018, p.129). Let's dwell on some of them.

K. Horobets in the work "Long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away': law, power and religion in *Star Wars*" talks about the mythological nature of law. He draws parallels between the world of *Star Wars* and various stages of the political history of the Western world, emphasizing the problem of democracy weakness, which is often exploited by autocrats. (Interestingly here is another transition of cinema religion into legal reality. The Jedi Order depicted in *Star Wars*, its beliefs, philosophy, and practices led to the appearance of Jediism – a religion that already exists in this world. Yes, Jediism is recognized as a religion in the United Kingdom,

which gives rise to a series of state obligations regarding the religious freedom of the Jedi).

As the author rightly points out, the influence of *Star Wars* as a cultural phenomenon is difficult to overestimate. Therefore, it is not surprising that in American and generally English-speaking jurisprudence there are often calls for legal reflection on popular culture, an integral part of which is *Star Wars* (Vovk et al., 2018, p.58).

The *Star Wars* saga goes beyond the cinema medium and consciously becomes a platform for various kinds of philosophical thinking. The persuasive mechanisms of the film are not an analytical philosophy, which largely relies on the logic of argumentation, that is, reasonable and teleological. Although religious imagery plays an important role in *Star Wars*. Alec Guinness, as an elderly Obi-Wan Kenobi, wore the robe of a monk; Luke Skywalker, becoming a Jedi, dresses as a young priest. Darth Vader's helmet is a stylized mitre, revealing the corrupt lord he has become. The Jedi's "temple" resembles a mosque with minarets. The longstanding popularity of *Star Wars* is also explained by the fact that they reproduce primary mythological structures, and classical religious images are transferred to the world of high technologies. *Star Wars* has already become a new religious classic, and Luke Skywalker is a clear reference to the Messiah, the truth is that this saga recreates classic mythological, ethical and religious images in a spectacular new form. It's impressive for a saga filled with violence that Luke Skywalker survives through mercy and suffering. The son's suffering inspires the father's appeal, and Vader turns against the Emperor and destroys him at the cost of his own life. Deprived of any mercy, the rule of the tyrant is finally defeated only

by the healing power of mercy and the power of the son's suffering that touches the father's heart.

In the conclusion of the article, K. Horobets addresses the problem of relativization of law (as well as religion) in the modern world. And on the example of the world of *Star Wars*, he indicates the questions that arise in connection with this for the philosophy of law, primarily its non-positivist part, the legal system, humans, the state, and society in general. *Star Wars* poses a Hegelian question: Is reality primarily the relationship between lords and slaves? Does man have to choose between the position of dominant and subordinate, in which case the goal of life and the engine of history is the struggle between lords and slaves?

The authors of the study "Robot as a subject of law and a sexual partner (legal, religious and cinematographic aspects)" (Vovk et al., 2018, pp.129-158) O. Radutnyi and O. Hanzha discuss the development of artificial intelligence in terms of the impact this development will potentially have on religion, politics, law. It is about the legal status of the digital personality, the possible sacralization of a perfect artificial superintelligence, the relationship between robots with artificial intelligence and people, the issue of the transformation of the legal regulation of sexual relations due to the development of robotics and other devices for sexual pleasure. At the same time, as the authors demonstrate, futuristic or science fiction cinema serves as a vivid, albeit sometimes greatly simplified, illustration of various options for the development of scientific and technical progress, which can have, in particular, negative scenarios for society.

In their study, the authors analyse a wide range of films, both well-known

ones (A. I. *Artificial Intelligence*, *Weird Science*, *Bladerunner*), as well as films and series of recent years (*Erobot*, *The World of the Wild West*, *The Perfect Guy*, *Bicentennial Man*, *Black Mirror*). But unfortunately, perhaps one of the main films on this topic, 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1964) directed by Stanley Kubrick, was outside the scope of the study. In this film, Kubrick shows that the onboard computer of a spaceship named HAL 9000 is created in the image and likeness of a human being, with its fear complexes and instincts. It is also worth noting that the motif of artificial intelligence rebelling against its creator has been realized in cinema before (in Pavel Klushantsev's *Planet of Storms* (1961), the American humanoid robot John rebelled). In this film, Kubrick shows that the spaceship's onboard computer, named HAL 9000, is made in the image and likeness of a human being, with its fear complexes and instincts. It would also be worth mentioning Paul Verhoeven's film *Robocop* (1987), in which a robot with human intelligence and machine capabilities was shown for the first time.

A few more clarifications. According to the authors, the term "robot" was proposed for the first time in 1920 by the Czech playwright Karel Čapek in the play *R.U.R.* (p.135). But at the same time, the authors mentioned that two films were made based on this work – *The Robots of Ripley* (1935) in the USSR and *R.U.R.* (1938) in Great Britain. The authors also erroneously claim that Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) was the first to show the interaction between a human and a robot (p.135). In fact, the first human-robot relationship was shown in the Italian film *The Mechanical Man* (1921), about the

inventor of the giant human-shaped machine that can walk, run, and also smash, burn, and destroy everything with terrifying force. However, these inaccuracies in no way affect the integrity and conceptuality of this study.

We consider very interesting, the opinion of the authors that the continuous development of robotics in the sex industry, combined with the rapid progress of artificial intelligence, raises many cultural, religious, moral and legal issues not only due to a certain assessment of individual sexual practices with robots but also in general, regarding the possibility of their production for sexual needs (Vovk et al., 2018, p.145). The authors also note that the form of sexual union in a "human-robot" duo will gradually change taking into account the capabilities of artificial intelligence. Thus, due to the ability of self-development, artificial intelligence is predicted to transform into a superintelligence, which may have its needs and goals, its vision of a certain situation and its independent assessment. A property of artificial intelligence will be the ability to be aware of itself, take care of self-preservation and obtain the necessary resources. In addition, it will be endowed with the ability for self-improvement, will have the ability to be creative and, most importantly, will make independent decisions (Vovk et al., 2018, p.150).

In fact, this book is a rather interesting study of teachers and students of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University. We also would like to join in the gratitude of the compilers of this collection to the theoretician and practitioner of constitutional law – Oleksandr Yevsieiev, thanks to whom this book came out.

