

KINDFILES

THE FILM COMPANION



REPENTANCE

JOSEPHINE WOLL &
DENISE J. YOUNGBLOOD

I.B. TAURIS

Repentance

KINOfiles Film Companions

General Editor: Richard Taylor

Written for cineastes and students alike, KINOfiles are readable, authoritative, illustrated companion handbooks to the most important and interesting films to emerge from Russian cinema from its beginnings to the present. Each KINOfile investigates the production, context and reception of the film and the people who made it, and analyses the film itself and its place in Russian and World cinema. KINOfiles will also include films of the other countries that once formed part of the Soviet Union, as well as works by émigré filmmakers working in the Russian tradition.

KINOfiles form a part of KINO: The Russian Cinema Series.

The Battleship Potemkin

Richard Taylor

Bed and Sofa

Julian Graffy

Burnt by the Sun

Birgit Beumers

The Cranes are Flying

Josephine Woll

Ivan the Terrible

Joan Neuberger

Little Vera

Frank Beardow

The Man with the Movie Camera

Graham Roberts

Mirror

Natasha Synessios

Repentance

Josephine Woll and Denise Youngblood

The Sacrifice

Christine Åkesson

REPENTANCE

JOSEPHINE WOLL AND
DENISE J. YOUNGBLOOD

KINOfile Film Companion 4

I.B.Tauris *Publishers*
LONDON • NEW YORK

Published in 2001 by I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd
6 Salem Road, London W2 4BU
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010
www.ibtauris.com

In the United States of America and in Canada distributed by
St Martins Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010

Copyright © Josephine Woll & Denise J. Youngblood, 2001

The right of Josephine Woll & Denise Youngblood to be identified as the authors of this work has been asserted by the authors in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in a review, this book, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ISBN 1 86064 395 7

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library
A full CIP record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress catalog card: available

Typeset in Monotype Calisto by the Midlands Book Typesetting Company,
Loughborough, Leicestershire
Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall

Contents

Illustrations	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Note on Transliteration	ix
Credits	xi
Introduction: 'The First Swallow of <i>Perestroika</i> '	1
1 'The Content of the Form': Plot and Structure	6
The First Framing Story	6
The Second Framing Story	6
The Flashback	8
Return to the Second Framing Story	9
The First Framing Story Revisited	11
2 <i>Repentance</i> : Frame Analysis	12
3 Signs and Symbols: <i>Repentance</i> 's Stylistic Devices	75
Anachronism	75
Fantasy and Reverie	77
Music	79
Literary and Linguistic Quotation	81
Filmic Techniques	85
4 The History That Is History	88
<i>Repentance</i> in the Career of Tengiz Abuladze	88
<i>Repentance</i> in the Context of the Times	91
<i>Repentance</i> and Georgian History	99
<i>Repentance</i> and Soviet History	103
<i>Repentance</i> as 'History'	106

Conclusion: 'The Dead Hand of the Past'	112
Further Reading	114
Further Viewing	116

List of Illustrations

1	Opening scene, Ketí at the bakery	13
2	Abel discovers Varlam's corpse	17
3	Ketí drags Varlam's corpse from its grave	20
4	The knights lead Ketí to her trial	22
5	Ketí proclaims her defiance	23
6	Varlam, in the conservatory garden, listens to Sandro, Moise and Miriam	27
7	The Baratelis, <i>en famille</i>	31
8	Varlam at the Barateli flat, with Sandro	32
9	Varlam admires Sandro's paintings	35
10	(L to R): Doksopoulo, Nino, Sandro, Elena Korisheli and Riktafelov listen to Varlam recite Shakespeare	37
11	Varlam prepares to exit the Barateli flat, as young Ketí watches	38
12	Abel sings an aria from his car, in Nino's dream	41
13	Nino and Sandro are buried alive, in Nino's dream	42
14	Woman strokes log carved by prisoner	46
15	The 'groom' <i>cum</i> interrogator with his 'bride'	48
16	Mikhail Korisheli confesses	50
17	The knights watch Sandro's sentencing	52
18	Sandro prepares for his execution	54
19	Doksopoulo informs Varlam of his arrest of the Darbaiselis	56
20	Tornike daydreams about Grandpa Varlam	61
21	Tornike in shock in the courtroom after Ketí's tale	63
22	Ketí in jail	70
23	Tornike visits Ketí in jail	71

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Birgit Beumers, Julian Graffy, and Graham Roberts for their comments on an earlier version—and especially Richard Taylor, who has been both helpful and patient.

We are grateful for permission to reproduce the following stills: Figs. 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23 courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York. Figs. 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 20, 22 courtesy Cannon Film Group. Figs. 9, 12 courtesy Richard Taylor.

All translations are our own unless otherwise noted.

Note on Transliteration

Transliteration from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet is a perennial problem for writers on Russian subjects. We have opted for a dual system: in the text we have used the Library of Congress system (without diacritics), but we have broken from this system (a) when a Russian name has a clear English version (e.g. Maria instead of Mariia, Alexander instead of Aleksandr); (b) when a Russian name has an accepted English spelling, or when Russian names are of Germanic origin (e.g. Yeltsin instead of Eltsin; Eisenstein instead of Eizenshtein); (c) when a Russian surname ends in -ii or -yi this is replaced by a single -y (e.g. Dostoevsky instead of Dostoevskii), and all Christian names end in a single -i; (d) when 'ia' or 'iu' are voiced (at the beginning of a word and when preceded by a vowel) they are rendered as 'ya' or 'yu' (e.g. *Daneliya*, *Yuri*)—with the sole addition of the name Asya to avoid confusion with the continent, Asia. In the scholarly apparatus we have adhered to the Library of Congress system (with diacritics) for the specialist.

And art made tongue-tied by authority
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity
And captive good attending captain ill,

William Shakespeare
Sonnet 66

Credits

English Title: REPENTANCE

Georgian Title: MONANIEBA

Russian Title: POKAIANIE

Release: 1986, color, 151 minutes, Georgian with English subtitles

Director: Tengiz Abuladze

Producer: Gruziafilm

Cast

Avtandil Makharadze	Varlam Aravidze and Abel Aravidze
Zeinab Botsvadze	Keti Barateli
Ia Ninidze	Guliko Aravidze
Merab Ninidze	Tornike Aravidze
Ketevan Abuladze	Nino Barateli
Edisher Giorgiobani	Sandro Barateli
Kakhi Kavsadze	Mikhail Korisheli
Nino Zakariadze	Elena Korisheli
Veriko Anzhaparidze	Old Woman

Scenarists: Nana Djanelidze, Tengiz Abuladze, Rezo Kveselava

Cinematographer: Mikhail Agranovich

Production Designer: Georgi Mikeladze

Music Coordinator: Nana Djanelidze

UK Distributors: Cannon Film Distribution

US Distributors: The Cannon Group; Media Home Entertainment (video)

