

Everyday life and Yugoslav cinema in late socialism

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Abstract

The thesis examines portraying everyday life of Yugoslav society in the 1980s. The examination is based on film *In the Jaws of Life* by Rajko Grlić from 1984. Therefore, it approaches the issues such as connection between history and film and the ways in which film can portray everyday life. It also reveals the political institutional history in Yugoslavia in the decade of the 1970s and particularly 1980s – known as dying decade of the state whereas a depressive atmosphere of the time could be noted. Apart from those issues occurred in the society as reflected in the film itself, the other issues are literary criticism and gender concerns. However, hidden inside love stories, film depicts many contemporary aspects in order to “play “with the reality.

To those who feel in any way “Yugonostalgist, “especially, to those who are film enthusiasts

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Introduction

“The Yugoslav cinema was created in a period of revolution and has developed in our socialist community, which financially helped this art as much as it could. The film is one of the most influenced sources for modern communication. Therefore, its social and educational role has absolutely important value. If film is artistically produced into properly orientated ideas, film can bring significant contribution to our socialist self-management community.

...from film makers, like from any other artistic makers, I expect new valuable products about social contemporary topics. That doesn't mean that films about National Liberation Movements or from history in general can not bring contemporary message. Thus, whatever topic that it depicts, it is important to create good films, which will be strong artistic experiences, and every time one step forward for our society”

(Josip Broz Tito, 29 of July, 1977)¹

The history of former Yugoslavia is marked by four decades existence as a state with a unique social system independent from the Soviet Union, but with a self-management system and social market mechanisms. Yugoslavia was a country of so much diversity and complexity in a very small territory. Looking back in its history, one would claim that during Tito's years Yugoslavia enjoyed prosperity, stability and respectability. From the Western point of view Yugoslavia was a country „with so much freedom“ and „so little democracy“ due to the fact that it was a communist or socialist country balanced between East and West.²

Tito's message to filmmakers carries a clear purpose for the film to represent contemporary reality, in order to follow the rules in which socialist society was built. As a leader of the State, he appreciated the film by following its production and often sponsoring Pula film festival.³ Moreover, his name was many times present in film, whether through his character in the film or whether as a part of documentaries whereas his meetings with workers, youth and pioneers could be seen. Tito as unique charismatic leader embodied Yugoslavia between West and East. Basically, his greatest virtues were maintaining Yugoslavia as an independent state and having the political courage to succeed in it.

¹ Mira Boglic, *Tito i film*, [Tito and film], Filmska kultura: Zagreb, No. 124, 1980. p. 4-5.

² Crnobrnja, Mihailo, *The Yugoslav drama*, London, 1994 p.76.

³ Boglić, Ibid.

The fact that Yugoslavia enjoyed independent socialism refers primarily due to the self-management system introduced by Edvard Kardelj in 1976, who was politically closest to Tito. Edvard Kardelj states, “*The happiness of man does not depend on the state, neither system, neither political party, but depends on man himself Not himself independently but within equal relations towards others.*”⁴ Self-management system also affected field of film and its production, in the way that it gave a film a kind independence in which films were made. Nevertheless, in the 1980s, this act led to “assumptions that self-management was being endangered and discredited as an institution.”⁵

Yugoslavia was a country that followed Western model in many aspects, including conditions to develop into consumer state society. Such conditions primarily refer to international loans that gained Yugoslavia a high standard of living, as well as opportunity for its citizens to travel and work abroad. Even though Yugoslavia was seen by Bilandžić as a backward state, by the late 1970s Yugoslavia was placed among consumer societies and offered its citizens work as well as leisure time. While work meant production, earning money, gaining labor rights and paid vacation, leisure time meant time exempt from work and for spending its rewards.⁶ This situation is specific to Yugoslavia, in the sense that as long people were not criticizing or attacking political authorities, the system allowed them to enjoy leisure time in many areas of culture. This included the development of tourism.⁷ Therefore, as Igor Duda states: “*Tourism played crucial role in creating everyday life on Adriatic coast.*”⁸ Along with tourism, the development of media, especially television, music and

⁴ Igor Duda, *Svakodnevní život i potražna kultura u Hrvatskoj 1970-tih i 1980-tih, Doktorska dizertacija, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 2009* [Everyday life and consumer society in Croatia in the 1970s and 1980s, PhD dissertation, University in Zagreb, 2009] soon to be published p.20.

⁵ Ibid., p.22.

⁶ Ibid., p.33.

⁷ Already in 1961 Yugoslavia established the first nature camp, the first in Europe to contribute to that Western trend. Ibid., p.326.

⁸ Ibid., p.299.

films, contributed to the way in which Yugoslavia could experience Western influence on everyday life activities.

This thesis will examine the decade of the 1980s following Tito's death, which stands for a certain period of 'expiry', or the slow death of the socialist state. The death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980 inaugurated a decade of political and economic crisis, problems on the national level, ethnic disagreements and clashes among republican centers that had gained power during Tito's reign.⁹ Nevertheless, the prosperity of the 1980s remains debatable. On one hand, as mentioned above, Yugoslavia's citizens enjoyed social security, high employee protection, easy long-term sick-leave, free health care, and illegal supplementary work. Not paying bills, stealing state property and tolerating an underground economy were some solutions to relieve falling standards of living and social turmoil.¹⁰ However, events created a "crisis of confidence" among the nationalities in Yugoslavia about the "superiority" of autonomous socialism. It was a sign that the supranational state that had consisted of the South Slav nations was about to vanish. But the official propaganda never stopped repeating – Even after Tito – Tito again!

In the area of film production, the filmmakers were said to enjoy an "unlimited freedom." In decade of the 1980s, Yugoslav film directors began a revitalization of the Yugoslav film industry, inspired by the work of the Prague School. The relevant filmmakers consisted of a group of young directors who were actually colleagues at FAMU in Prague. The group includes names like Rajko Grlić, Goran Paskaljević, Lordan Zafranović and latterly, today the well-known Emir Kusturica. They shared a common interest in making films that introduced meaningful complexities and contradictions in contemporary life.¹¹

⁹ For more information See: Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*[Croatian history] Novi liber, Zagreb, 2003.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.31.

¹¹ Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated cinema, The Yugoslav experience, 1945-2001* Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2002, p.146.

This period was paradoxically named the period of the “New Yugoslav film” and was the most glorious period for Yugoslav film and filmmakers when movies of both artistic and social value were produced. These movies portrayed scenes of persecution by the Yugoslavian government, political clashes aptly hidden inside of a love story, the famous student demonstrations in 1968, or simply stories that mocked the governing system in general. The government had strongly disapproved of these themes, which could only be shown after Tito's death.

This thesis aims to investigate the subject of everyday life using film as contribution to historical studies of Yugoslavia. The first chapter of the thesis will introduce the role of cinema in society, approaches to film and its relation to history in order to argue that film can be used as a contemporary picture of society. The second chapter will review the cinema industry in Yugoslavia and the realities of film censorship. I have included an interview with one of the experts in the film studies in order to investigate this issue. The third chapter will introduce the film by Rajko Grlić *In the Jaws of Life*, based on novella by Dubravka Ugrešić as a case study. I argue that movie is an excellent example of everyday Yugoslav society in the 1980s. This chapter will examine the connection between the film and novella. The film will also be analyzed as an historical document, on the subject of feminist issues, and as evidencing everyday life through fashion, design, gossip and consumer products. The goals of this thesis are to understand the limits and possibilities for film representation through understanding the system in which they were produced, and to use the production circumstances and realization of a film from the early 1980s to talk about film's potential to present a picture of everyday contemporary society.

Chapter 1 Theoretical approaches to Yugoslav cinema

In Yugoslavia as elsewhere in Eastern Europe during the four decades of Communist control, cinema was one of the most important visual arts. Each country in Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia, had its own film-making school and some degree of independence, even though they have developed in a similar way. The film industry in the Eastern Europe developed in special social and political context. Most often the films fulfilled the political purpose and shared a common interest like depicting the problems of socialist society. Although East European cinema at first was influenced by the Soviet model, when “the rigidity of the Stalinist system, the schematics and vulgarity of Zhdanov “aesthetics” was imposed on the film industries, from time to time in almost all East European countries there were trends towards liberalization.¹² Moreover, East European filmmakers attempted to criticize Communist regimes. In this chapter I will introduce film industry in Yugoslavia including censorship issue. The chapter also discusses the relationship between film and everyday life, as well as relevant literature and methodology that have been used.

1.1. The Yugoslav film industry

The Yugoslav film industry developed within the context of unique socialist-determined market incentives and a complex overlapping self-management organizational structure, as a way of prescribing broad social roles for the “collective responsibilities” of film artists.¹³ Yugoslav filmmakers were confronted with the ideological limitations of the system on one hand, and restrictions on artistic expression on the other hand. However, Yugoslav cinema

¹² Stoil, *Cinema beyond the Danube, the camera and the politics*, New York, 1974 p.127.

¹³ Goulding, X.

managed to create a system that could exhibit the best and the worst cinema features from the West and the East.¹⁴

Cinema production in Eastern bloc established a film industry that was compatible within the goals of the Communist propaganda. Shared experiences and trends all across Central Europe as well as in Yugoslavia formed a diverse range of nationally specific forms of cinematic expressions under state socialism.¹⁵ According to Iordanova, the periodization of film making is determined by socio-political criteria. In the period after the Second World War to the collapse of communism, film production in the region experienced different stages of the state socialism.

In the first period after the war, the film production was characterized by Communist control of all aspects of life, including cultural life and media. Even though Yugoslavia broke relations within the USSR in 1948, Yugoslavia adopted the Soviet model of party control. Films produced in that period primarily served for propagandistic purposes -- that is, a moderate variant of the Stalinist-Zhdanov narrowly conceived socialist realist dogma.¹⁶ According to Goulding, thematically the films were often glorifying the revolutionary past like the War of Liberation and idealized as the charismatic leader while showing the tendency for the construction of new socialist state.¹⁷ Films produced in this period primarily served propagandistic purposes, whereas those movies among broad audience are known as so called *Partisan's films*. But even then, some films produced pressed against the boundaries of

¹⁴ Ibid..

¹⁵ Iordanova, *Cinema in other Europe, The Industry and Artistry of East Central European film*, London, 2003 p. 8.

¹⁶ Goulding, p.XI.

¹⁷ Ibid.

socialist realism and introduced new innovations and thematic perspectives.¹⁸ Therefore, it is important to emphasize the specificity of Yugoslav cinema.

The film in the 1960s was marked by “new waves” both in Central Europe and Yugoslavia as film was influenced by Western experience. The decade was marked by a generation of film makers with liberally minded ideas that gained international recognition. It was a period of decentralization of the Yugoslav industry when Yugoslavia achieved the highest film production as well as export due to the intense productivity and experimentation.

The 1960s were time of dramatic increase of television and film as the most important media for both information and entertainment. The Yugoslav film industry had found ways to cooperate with television in order to gain creative and financial collaboration. This period is known as time of “new film.” The evaluation of the new film can be divided into three phases. First, the early 1960s with modernist thematic perspectives; second, the middle and late 1960s, when new film artist and critics emerged as an increasingly influential vanguard of Yugoslav feature film production; and third, the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s when new film tendencies resulted as the unofficially banner of black film.¹⁹

However, the fall from power in 1966 of Aleksandar Ranković, the chief of the State Security Service of the League of Communist of Yugoslavia, and a close member of Tito's circle allowed a progressive liberalization of Yugoslav economic, political and cultural life. This further liberalized the situation for new film production, allowing filmmakers the opportunity to critique contemporary conditions in the Yugoslav society. The following decade of the 1970s led toward the cinema of moral concern and committed political filmmaking, while the late 1980s can be seen as dying years of state socialism.²⁰ The new

¹⁸ Goulding, p. XI.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

Yugoslav film of the late 1970s and 1980s could be described as representing the liberaty of film makers to criticize Yugoslav past and present.²¹

1.2. Film and everyday life

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the ways in which Yugoslav film portrays everyday life under socialism, how its production fits into the institutional history of Yugoslav cinema, and its relationship to the contemporary politics and society. In approaching the topic, the general questions remain what is the relationship between film and history and in what ways can film portray everyday life under state socialism. Film studies would include films as narratives for understanding how a socialist society defines its own past and how it contributes into history itself. According to Joshua Feinstein, in general terms there is the similarity between filmmaking and study of history whereas both include description of “cinematography.”²² Thus the construction of Yugoslav identity can also be considered within a dominant relationship between the art and the politics in former Yugoslavia, as represented in film. In other words, cinema like historical writing can be considered with relation to historical events.

In approaching the films it is very important to distinguish two types of the films -- films that present everyday life of the contemporary and the films that present everyday life of the past. Feinstein examined East German cinema and pointed to the violent break up of Germany which was the building of the Berlin Wall as distinguishing the patterns between East and Western Germany. He identified *Der geteilte Himmel* as a film based on novella which

²¹ Ibid.,p.148-149.

²² Feinstein, *The triumph of the ordinary, depictions of daily life in the East German cinema 1949-1989*, London, 2002 p.11.

acknowledges the division of Germany in the ways of dealing with a topic of a shock of the Wall's construction without its offending existing authority.²³

In similar way in Yugoslav cinema of the 1980s there are the movies that represent one of the most significant periods in Yugoslav history, the year of 1948, a year that divided Yugoslavia from other socialist countries. The Yugoslav film industry more often made movies that include everyday life of the past. The two most significant movies of this type from the 1980s are *Balkanski špijun* directed by Dušan Kovačević and Božidar Nikolić, in 1984 by Union Film, Serbia/Yugoslavia and *Otac na službenom putu* directed by Emir Kusturica, in 1985 by Union Film, Bosnia/Yugoslavia. Both movies show a particular theme in Yugoslav history -- the year 1948 when Tito successfully broke all relations with Stalin. This year is particularly important for Yugoslav history which is well presented through the movies in one distinctive way -- openly talking about the conflict between the individual and the present system in Tito's Yugoslavia.

Nevertheless, Yugoslav cinema has produced films that portray everyday life of the contemporary, like *Kako je propao Rokenrol* and *Oktoberfest*. The first one, directed by Goran Gajić and Zoran Peso in 1989, shows three different stories. It criticizes in cynical way the youth in Serbia that are concentrated on music making, acting often against the rules and struggling with the system in everyday life. The second one, directed by Dragan Kresoja in 1987, follows the destiny of young man who was arrested at the border on a drug charge, for which authorities took his passport. His only dream is to get back his passport in order to visit the famous German Oktoberfest.

However, for the thesis it is important to emphasize why cinema can speak about everyday life. First, film production has special role in state socialism and second film is an historical

²³ Ibid., p.136.

source. According to Sergei Dobrynin, the use of films as an historical source has always been complicated task due to several reasons: presenting the “historical truth” and interpretations that measure film by standard of historical writing. Moreover, the situation gets even more complicated when film do not intend to present history.²⁴ Actually, films that critically portray state socialism are an important source for presenting history. Therefore, movies that present everyday life whether they speak about contemporary or about everyday life in the past can be used as an historical source for historical writing.

In order to understand conditions under which filmmakers could make films, one needs to understand the film industry. Therefore, the most relevant fact about movies under state socialism is no doubt the censorship or “market decisions” made by film studios. It seems that whether through unofficial or official Board of Film censors every country retains the right to ban whole films or some deleted scenes from them.²⁵ However, movies under state socialism were confronted by state censorship to preserve their political view. Moreover, censorship often did not cease to exist not even in Soviet film production. As Ginatre Kurtinaityte explains, most often the filmmakers were allowed to seek the ways of portraying “true” reality in the atmosphere of “liberated freedom” and that led the filmmakers to search for compromise with the Soviet censorship system.²⁶

The Yugoslav film industry under state socialism passed through years of nationalization within a single State Film Enterprise, which was afterwards replaced by studios for each of the six federal republics and the autonomous region of Kosovo. Therefore, there was the Croatian studio Jadran film, the Serbian studio Avala film and Vardar film in Macedonia. Each Republic maintained a governmental Committee for Cinematography that supervised

²⁴ Dobrynin, *Soviet cinema, soviet spaces: Everyday life in Soviet film (1965-1985)*, CEU, 2006 PHD dissertation, p. 1.

²⁵ Bell, *Governments and films*, Cambridge University Press, \www.jstor.org\stable\754904 p.43.

²⁶ Kurtinaityte, Ginatre, *Constructing “unofficial” history: Lithuanian filmmakers and the Soviet censorship, 1956-1970*, CEU, 2005, MA thesis, p.2-3.

production and distribution activities, while the film industry as a whole was supervised on the national level by the State Committee for Cinematography.²⁷ The Committees exercised censorship as well as selected scenarios for the films to be produced. At a later stage the filmmaking was governed by the Artistic Council and Film Board. The Film Board had the role of deciding which production has sufficient financing to be completed, which meant that the Film Board controlled financial distribution in the film industry. The selected films would be exported by permission of the State Commission for Cinematography in Belgrade. In the 1960s the studios became more differentiated. For example, Serbia established its own Film Institute to train filmmakers, Slovenia created "art film theaters" and the Croatian Film Board enjoyed reputation of being progressive.²⁸

Censorship in Yugoslav filmmaking was maintained through Party discipline and investigation. For instance, in 1972 despite approval from Film Board, one of the film directors Dušan Makavajev, was forced into self-imposed exile from Yugoslavia for his movie *WR-Mysteries of the Organism*.²⁹ However, such cases were quite rare. After the death of Tito, during the period of "new Yugoslav cinema" film was supposedly free of political dogmatism. Nevertheless, in the thesis, I will attempt to elaborate on the ways in which censorship practices in the 1980s could influence "market decisions" made by film studios in order to gain popularity among the prospective audience.

The thesis will examine the role of the cinema in the Yugoslav society of the 1980s. As Goulding states: "It was partially in response to multiple social and cultural crisis of the 1980s that leading filmmakers found their voice and joined in critical revisioning of Yugoslavia's revolutionary past and in imaginatively reflecting the subtle, complex, and

²⁷ Stoil, Michael J. *Balkan cinema, Evolution after the Revolution*, Michigan, 1982 p.48.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.50.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.51.

rapidly changing contours of her evolving present."³⁰ Similarly, Feinstein presents East German filmmakers who criticized their society by dramatizing everyday existence which may appear to be an antidote to Communism's self-legitimizing use of history.³¹ However, using historical events to criticize reality is a common ground for the cinema in most of the socialist states.

Yugoslav New Wave filmmakers persisted in reflecting tensions and unresolved contradictions that overtook Yugoslavia throughout the 1980s. In fact, by the late 1980s activities concerning film were introduced through relatively weak cooperation among the Republics as well as organizing film festivals and co-production.³² However, the movies that are filmed in the 1980s actually indirectly criticized Yugoslav reality. One of the most significant movies that portray everyday socialism is film *In the Jaws of Life* directed by Rajko Grlić. The film became significant film not only for Grlić's filmmaking but for overall Yugoslav cinema. The reasons are multiple. First, the movie depicts a character that is understood as the personification of Yugoslavia in the 1980s. Second, the movie created a "balanced" Yugoslav character by including actors from different parts of the country. Third, the film presumably tells the story of an ordinary woman and therefore, depicts women's issues in the contemporary Yugoslavia. On that account, the thesis will use this film as historical document for contemporary picture of socialism.

1.3. Literature review and methodology

The literature about Yugoslav cinema includes a few important secondary sources, such as Dina Iordanova's, two books-- *Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media*

³⁰ Goulding,, p.145.

³¹ Feinstein, p.255.

³² Goulding, p.13.

and *The Cinema of the Balkans* -- and Pavle Levi's work *Disintegration in Frames*, which explains aesthetics and ideology in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cinema. Both books assisted me in getting the broader picture of Yugoslav culture and media. Also helpful were Daniel J. Goulding, *The Yugoslav experience, 1945-2001*, Ivo Škrabalo, *101 godina hrvatskog filma* [101 years of the movie in Croatia] and Petar Volk, *Istorija jugoslavenskog filma* [History of the Yugoslav film], which provided an insight into Yugoslav cinema, its industry and role in the society. Moreover, the thesis research includes previous investigations of socialist cinema by Gintare Kurtinaitye, *Constructing "unofficial" history: Litvanian filmmakers and the Soviet censorship, 1956-1970* as well as book from Joshua Feinstein, *The triumph of the ordinary: Films of Daily Life in East Germany, 1945-1989*. These works use archival documents to address problems related to socialist film and representation and assisted me in using archival documents to investigate the Yugoslav films.

For a broader picture of film industry and the censorship, I examined Dina Iordanova's *Cinema in other Europe: The industry and artistry of East central European Film*, Michael J. Stoil's *Balkan cinema: Evolution after the revolution* and *Cinema beyond the Danube, The Camera and Politics*, and Bogdan Tirnanić, *Crni talas [Black film]*. Since documents that are less than 30 years old are unavailable in the archives, I used oral history as a supplement for acquiring the information relevant to this historical period. I interviewed prof. Hrvoje Turković, a professor at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb and one of the experts in films in Croatia, as well as the director, Rajko Grlić.

For Yugoslav everyday life under state socialism, especially from the consumer's view, I had access to a manuscript to be published in fall 2009, *Svakodnevni život i potrošačka kultura u Hrvatskoj 1970-tih i 1980-tih*, [Everyday life and consumer society in Croatia in the 1970s and 1980s] by Igor Duda. As the film I am going to analyze depicts several issues such as women issues in Yugoslavia, the literature examined includes works from the Center for

Women's studies, *Women's memories about life during socialism*, as well as Sabrina P. Ramet's *Gender politics in Western Balkans: women and society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav successor states*. To support my case study I used book by Jakob Lothe, *Narrative in Fiction and Film, an introduction*, which discussed adapting a novella into film.

Most of the research was based on primary sources, including film magazines and daily newspapers. From the film archives in Zagreb and Belgrade, I used documents related to the film scenario, the scenario itself and correspondence of the filmmakers. I also used personal interviews with a film expert and a director to gain perspective on film practices. The combination and analysis of these sources were used to explain the context of movie making and provide the basis for movie analysis in the next two chapters.

Chapter 2 The Story behind the camera

In order to analyze the Yugoslav cinema, it is important to emphasize the development of Yugoslav cinematography in four basic aspects: 1) as part of cinema 2) as part of socialist cinema with up and downs 3) as a part of independent national cinema in a self-management system 4) as a part of multinational cinema, which could be characterized as the most creative time of Yugoslav film.³³ After 1960 the periodization of cinema of Yugoslav differs by republic, when each had established its own institutions for film financing and development. At the same time the 1970s and 1980s as a whole contain public debates over production, so-called *black film* and the creation of a new film system. In this chapter, I will also examine the censorship issue as an important part of the film industry in order to understand condition under which films were made.

2.1. Political and social censorship – who will finance the film?

In the 1970s the main issue confronting Yugoslav cinema was economic instability, which is usually the case in restricted markets like Yugoslavia. Moreover, new life styles, the emergence and popularity of the TV as well as access to cheaper foreign movies, caused the Yugoslav film to be less attractive for its audience. While in previous decades the state actively financed film development and production, in following decades, the situation significantly changed. In fact, already from the middle 1950s to the end of the 1960s, state financing for film began to decrease. However, the domestic and international success of film *Bitka na Neretvi* directed by Veljko Bulajić in 1969,³⁴ impressed Tito himself and

³³ Slobodan Novaković, *Film i savremenost* [Film and modernity] Filmograf, 7, no. 22 March 1982 p.14.

³⁴ The movie *Bitka na Neretvi* [*The battle on Neretva*], was most probably one of the most expensive movies made in Yugoslavia. Even though, the expenses were never calculated completely, during official denunciation the costs were counted up to 4, 5 million dollars, including financial part from Yugoslavia and foreign distributor. See: Ivo, Škrabalo, *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj* [One and hundred years of the film in Croatia] Globus, Zagreb, 1998. p.360.

subsequently many film projects celebrating *National Liberation Movements*³⁵ were supported. The film, which recreated the battle of Neretvi with the best visual art, was used by the state to “teach youth about Yugoslav history,” being shown to school children and soldiers throughout the country. The film was also sold in 84 countries and was nominated for the *Oscar*, a first for Yugoslav film, and many similar projects were proposed to gain financial support from the state.

With such proposals, film producers were trying to directly involve the state in film production. In return, the producers attempted to create impressive films which could be used for propagandistic and political impact.³⁶ Although in the end, not many such spectacular movies were made, the state did participate in their production and they seldom received negative reactions.³⁷ For instance, *Sutjeska* appeared filmed in 1973, and *Partizani* and *Užička republika* from Serbian production; those were the movies that not only celebrated NOB, but also presented Tito as a character. Moreover, the influence of politics on the film created the crucial role in the emergence of obsession with historical events and the Second World War.³⁸ Eventually, though, the films caused questioning about the role of the authorities in financing and “cooperation” while contemporary critiques saw the films as lacking esthetical qualities, which eventually led “Croatian cinematography to stand by.”³⁹

In a political sense the 1970s was conditioned by the Croatian nationalist crisis in 1971,⁴⁰ when Croatian Party leaders like Savka Dabčević- Kučar, Miko Tripalo and other politicians attempted to reform The Alliance of Communists of Croatia. Leaders from each sector, in economy, in educational institutions like the universities and in the army, lobbied for the

³⁵ Known in Yugoslav history as NOB (Narodno-oslobodilačka borba)[National Liberation Movement] See: Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest [Croatian history]*, Novi liber, Zagreb, 2003 p. 292.

³⁶ Škrabalo,p.367.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Petar Volk, *Istorija jugoslavenskog filma [History of the Yugoslav film]*, Institut za film, Beograd, 1986 p.531-532.

³⁹ Ibid., p.368-369.

⁴⁰ In Croatian history 1971 is known as Hrvatsko proljeće[Croatian Spring] See: Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest [Croatian history]*, Novi liber, Zagreb, 2003 p.337.

equality of the Croatian language and saw tourism as a Croatian industry whose profits belonged to Croatia.⁴¹ The year 1971 is remembered as the time, after which Croatia fell into political apathy for almost two decades, even as it demonstrated the cracks in the atmosphere of “brotherhood and unity” created in Yugoslavia as whole.⁴²

In the Croatian film industry this period saw the advent of so-called *party activists* that controlled each section of culture, including the film itself.⁴³ So many movies were judged “undesirable” that they were named *bunker movies*, for the place they are stored. In Croatia some who attempted to shoot one or two movies also eventually ended their careers in *bunker*. Such names in Croatian cinematography are Petar Krelja, Nikola Babić and Marijan Arhanić. Most could not produce films or chose an alternative way to continue their working outside of the state. For instance, producer Antun Vrdoljak filmed a TV serial *Prošnjaci i sinovi* showing the backwardness of Imotski from Dalmatian hinterland and which was interpreted politically; the producer together with the scriptwriter Ivan Raos ended on the *bunker list*, both marked as being Croatian nationalists.⁴⁴

A similar situation was created in Serbia, though identified with the term *black film*,⁴⁵ which emerged in the late 1960s, but continued through the early 1970s. The term is connected to the Belgrade group, especially Dušan Makavejev, Aleksandar Petrović and Živojin Pavlović. Their movies were attacked by the authorities for their nihilistic and pessimistic view of Yugoslav social development. These Serbian producers were expelled

⁴¹By the end of the year, after Tito's meeting with the *Presidency of the Alliance of Communists of Yugoslavia* in Karadorđevo, political repression in the country got to the stage that around 400 people had to resign or were replaced; many intellectuals and writers were arrested and convicted to prison. The Croatian nationalist crisis was marked as “straightening nationalism, chauvinism and class enemy”. See: Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest [Croatian history]*, Novi liber, Zagreb, p.343.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Škrabalo, p.370.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.387.

⁴⁵ The term has its origins in Polish documentary series, Czech *dark wave* films and French films of black pessimism. Often foreign critics picked the term and picked up the blacklist one of the year -with the palm of blackness usually awarded to Pavlović. See: D. J. Goulding, *Liberated cinema, The Yugoslav Experience, 1945-2001*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2002, p.79.

from the Party and were forced to leave Yugoslavia with the alternative to continue working abroad.

By 1973 socialist Yugoslavia had produced around 400 featured films. Officially, only one - *Grad*, directed by Kokan Rakonjac, Marko Babac and Živojin Pavlović - was banned by a court decision. Around 30 films were banned without any written document; they were “strangely lost” somewhere between producers, distributors and theaters and never reached the audience before the 1980s.⁴⁶ However, the authorities organized exceptional public screening of banned film for police officers.⁴⁷ In fact, according to Živojin Pavlović, the police would often take a print on the request of the producers. Such a statement creates a paradox by which could be argued the possibility for a producer to ban his own film.⁴⁸

One of the best known cases of a black *film* is Dušan Makavejev's *WR- Misterije Organizma* [WR- Mysteries of the Organism]. The 1971 film represents the strangest paradox in Yugoslav cinematography and had a double life for the next sixteen years: the film was banned for public screening at home while being featured abroad. The most interesting fact about this film is that the authorities considered the film as harmful for Yugoslav reputation. Although the film was analyzed in many books, it was never shown in domestic cinemas.⁴⁹ A flyer promoting the film carries the text: *The true aim of this film is fun. Relax and enjoy the film. We love you.*⁵⁰ Apparently, this purpose of the film was never realized.

According to Makavejev, the problem began during the film shooting. In 1971 *Fleš*, an illustrated magazine edited by Interpress from Belgrade, was banned for publishing two stills from the film that actually were never included in the film itself. In the sentence it was written: *“In one of the photos shown is a naked woman in front a wall, holding Lenin's*

⁴⁶ The film *Zabranjeni bez zabrane* [Banned without a ban] by Milan Nikodiejvić, Dinko Tucaković and Miša Mogorović, Art and Popcorn, Belgrade, 2006.

⁴⁷ The policeman Miloš Miletić: *“Usually like recreation in early afternoon hours officers have shown to us those so-called banned films, bunkered, black wave movies which have entertained us and has took all our attention.”* See: Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bogdan Tirnanić, *Crni talas [Black film]* Filmski centar Srbije, Beograd, 2008 p.107.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.121.

picture, while on promoting material there is another women without a clothes having Hitler's picture."⁵¹ The Court considered this as insinuation and banned the magazine. The subsequent polemic in Serbia included these protestations. Meanwhile, as the film passed through the long censorship process at home, the movie was shown at the Cannes film festival to great reviews. However, in Yugoslavia Makavejev was accused of undermining communist morale and leaning towards American "prophets of antisocialism."⁵² Finally, the film passed the selection process for the Pula film festival in 1971, though the district attorney's office protested against it. Then the producers collected 100 names including producers, film reviewers, and writers, on a petition of support, which the Film festival in Pula proclaimed as invalid.⁵³ The whole story occurred "as a movie based on an event" while Dušan Makavejev flew to Paris. *WR-Mysteries of the Organism* was shown for the first time in 1987 in Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade, but only as part of film seminars.⁵⁴ Therefore, the film affectively died, while its director escaped abroad.

According to the director:

The film was not forbidden by the state, but thanks to some people, like *Savez boraca* [The Committee of the fighters] marked as Stalinists. The system varied, this self-management that Yugoslavia had, which meant that a film could be forbidden in Belgrade, while it could be shown in Ljubljana. *WR- Mysteries of the Organism* was also seen by Tito, though Tito claimed that he was not interested in film. Tito never touched the film, but allowed the system to punish me. That was the system Yugoslavia had...Yugoslav cinematography was rich with movies that talk about its society. Yugoslavia was a modern state, while its destruction was caused by specific parts of the ex apparatus.⁵⁵

The cinematography in the 1970s, especially those films dealing with "social issues," can be described in one word - censorship. Bunker movies or black films were banned for public screening while being presented to the West at international festivals. This could be seen as

⁵¹ Ibid., p.121.

⁵² Ibid., p.131.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Milan Nikodijević, *Zabranjeni bez zabrane* [Banned without ban], *Jugoslovenska kinoteka*, [Yugoslav film archive] Belgrade, 1995 p.49.

Yugoslavia's demonstrating its liberal view by allowing such movies to be filmed even as domestic screenings were at the same time prohibited by the state. As Makavejev noted, a particularity of the Yugoslav system meant that it was possible to show a film in Zagreb or Ljubljana that was banned in Belgrade. This difference at the republic level was not only the circumstance with film but also with other aspects of culture.

The most important aspect of film in this decade remains the relationship between *the audience and the state*. A small cinema industry like that in Yugoslavia could not survive without financial support from the state.⁵⁶ However, the state was often faced with difficulties in deciding upon the value of a particular film project, especially if the audience was not interested in particular types of films and therefore income from ticket sales did not repay the state's investment. Therefore, a slogan that places the film between the audience and the state is too simple,⁵⁷ and some type of new solution for financing film had to be found. This led to the creation of a new institution in 1974 of the decade known through the expression "*Sizovska kinematografija*."⁵⁸ The institution aimed to relate the filmmakers and the audience in order to create some kind of agreement what type of films would be made and attended.⁵⁹ The period of popularly called SIZ-cinematography stretched into the 1980s.

Croatia was the first Republic in Yugoslavia that established *SIZ* [Self-administration of Community's welfare for the film] in 1976. Its activities consisted of ascertaining politics towards cinematography, creating a program for the development of cinematography, and logically collecting and allocating financial sources for the production of the films as regulated by the Act of cinematography. The system adopted was trying to divide income for film production from three groups: 35% of ticket sales, 10% of the distributors' income from

⁵⁶ Šrabalo, p.371.

⁵⁷ Ibid.p.372.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Such an agreement could be explained through expression "slobodna razmjena dobara" [*Free movement of assets*] as common not only in cultural sphere but in every other aspects of life in Yugoslavia, See: Ibid.

imported movies, and 1.5% from Radio-Television Zagreb subscription fees were plowed back into the film industry to pay for new films.⁶⁰

However, certain difficulties occurred when trying to organize the collection of funds from these three groups. Theoretically the reorganization worked fine, while in practice it failed due to the system of collecting funds first from the communal SIZ and then the Republic's SIZ. Also, even though the *Council delegation of the cultural services for users* and *Council delegation of services providers* was created to represent the interest of film goers and film producers, in practice, these were discrepancies and resignations, even court disagreements. Finally, after five years the Act was canceled in 1982. The new solution created a new section for cinematography in each republic's *Self-administration of community's welfare*. The income from ticket sales was counted separately and the money was allocated only to cinematography.⁶¹

Another aspect that characterized Croatian cinema is the coming of an active Minister of Culture with an interest in cinema - Dr. Stipe Šušvar. As a Party ideologist, active from 1974-1982, Šušvar was controversial and, due to his strict control over all aspects of Croatian culture, these years are known as *Šušvar's time*.⁶² He had great impact on decentralization of Yugoslav cinematography, as well as establishing the Cinematography of Croatia in 1979. In Croatian film history he is remembered as the one who had eliminated the film *Živa istina* by Tomislav Radić from the competition in the *Pula film festival*. Luckily, or maybe under pressure, he gave the award for the best actress to Božidarka Frait from that film.⁶³

Croatian directors that deserve to be remembered are Veljko Bulajić, Lordan Zafranović, Vatroslav Mimica and Krsto Papić. Bulajić's films gained many golden, silver and bronze awards in the Pula film festival, as well as international prizes. He was also a member of

⁶⁰ Ibid.,373.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.374.

⁶² Ibid., p.

⁶³ Ibid., p.375.

committee in the Moscow and Cannes festivals. Even though Lordan Zafranović attracted the audience by his film *Okupacija u 26 slika*, he was often criticized by magazines such as *Polet*. Eventually, due to such critiques, the *Polet* editors were changed. In another case, negative reviews published in the film magazine *Film*, according to Ivo Skrabalo, led to the magazine's extinction.⁶⁴ This film was particularly criticized for the spooky scene including the Ustaše's massacre. Nevertheless, this 'horror movie' became the most viewed film in Yugoslavia in 1978, especially in Belgrade, and the director won all prizes at the Pula film festivals. However, despite its participation in Cannes it did not achieved critical favor abroad.⁶⁵

2.2. *After Tito –Tito again*

After Tito's death, the decade of the 1980s was considered more politically liberal. Even though Tito had died, the official propaganda slogan "Even after Tito-Tito again" was propagated in order to promote a continuation of that atmosphere in Yugoslavia as keeping the same atmosphere would help maintain the country. In cinema, too, even after the end of the SIZ cinematography system in 1982 the censorship in this period was never formally canceled, but gradually dissipated along with the state.

Most of the movies filmed in Croatia during the 1980s were realized as co-productions with more than one studio, usually with partners from Serbia and other Yugoslav republics for practical reasons like dividing the expense. Therefore, Croatian cinematography followed the Western model in gathering more countries' support to help overcome language barriers and import duties. The director Rajko Grlić explains the reason why his film *U raljama života* [*In the Jaws of Life*] was made with the help of a few Croatian and Serbian studios.⁶⁶ Naturally,

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.380.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 of May 2009.

he said, if the country is small and language less well known, it is harder for that country's cinema to succeed independently. Often, the partner was Czechoslovakia, while film partnerships were also made with Germany, England and the USA.⁶⁷

From 1965 each Republic's committee still "censored" each film, while later formal censorship was canceled and replaced by a Law in which film producers and distributors were "advised" through a special program. Nevertheless, informal censorship was always present through the Party authority that ensured the "purity" on the ideology of self-management socialism. These party organizations included organizations such as the *Boračke organizacije*⁶⁸[Fighters from National Liberation Movement].

Nevertheless, Grlić states after his successful 1981 film *When melody haunts my memory*, he could not apply to do a new film for a couple of years, since at the time Zagreb had censorship while Belgrade did not. Therefore, his next film *U raljama života* was not financed from the state. He thought that this film was maybe the first one that was not directly financed by the state, and which did not pass any Committee for approval.⁶⁹ However, self-censorship still operated for importers and distributors who risked accusations in their selections although Party ideology was less crucial for these decisions.⁷⁰

According to prof. Hrvoje Turković film in the 1980s could be understood as an amorphous situation in that it was mostly documentary and pornographic movies that came under censorship. However, such documentary movies were usually shown only at Festivals in Belgrade and Zagreb, and therefore most of the potential audience was not especially affected by such acts. As Prof. Turković said in his interview, "due to the stubborn acts of

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.435.

⁶⁸ This is the popular term that Škrabalo uses often See: Ivo Škrabalo, 101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj [101 years of the movie in Croatia,] Globus, Zagreb, 1998.

⁶⁹ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 of May 2009.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.445.

directors towards the censors, the situation was described as sensitive.”⁷¹ Basically, political games continued to be present though not in the same way as in the 1970s.

Similarly, Škrabalo introduces one case in the mid 1980s, as the most well-known *political correction* when Party leaders halted the co-production between the Jadran film and Trian productions from Los Angeles for NBC of the TV serial *Dictator*, on Benito Mussolini. The case is particularly interesting because of the people it involved.⁷² For example, Stevo Ostojić, the Zagreb news correspondent for the Belgrade magazine *Politika* was known as the top representative of Yugoslav revolutionary ideology on many cultural boards in Croatian culture.⁷³ According to Škrabalo, Ostojić was obsessed with fighting against Croatian nationalism and wrote an article about the project to provoke the representatives of SUBNOR [Socialist Association of Fighters in National Liberation Movements] and SSOH [The League of socialist youth of Croatia]. The result was that both organizations voted against the project, saying it was pro-fascist. Afterwards many political magazines alluded to the incorrect nature of the whole project. The case ended in front of *the section for culture and art*, although *Advice for the studio* took full responsibility and continued the shooting.⁷⁴

The decade of 1980s was also marked by the period of the *White Book*, the so called-working material of the Committee of CKSKH [Central committee of Alliance of Communists of Croatia] about cultural ideas. This book was particularly supported by Dr. Stipe Šušvar, who was trying to become one of the top authorities in the Yugoslav Party by actively attacking liberal intellectuals in Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia.⁷⁵

During this period there were several magazines both devoted to films and that published film reviews, such as *Filmska kultura* [Film culture],⁷⁶ *Sineast*, *Politika*, *NIN*, *Polet*, *Vjesnik*,

⁷¹ Hrvoje Turković, personal interview, Zagreb, 22 of April 2009.

⁷² Škrabalo, p. 445.

⁷³ Ibid., p.446.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Škrabalo, p. 446.

⁷⁶ *Filmska kultura* [Film culture] was Croatian magazine from Zagreb that started with edition in 1957 to 1989.

etc. In prof. Turković's opinion many of the film critiques were stylistically weak, although the magazines did compete with each other through their film reviews.⁷⁷ For instance, the magazine *Film* from the late 1980s was run by a relatively young generation of film reviewers, which was very critical of Croatian film. Nevertheless, there was kind of peaceful act from the side of *Filmska kultura* in order to reconcile sides among the film critiques.⁷⁸ Ivo Škrabalo' explained: "After the violent extinction of the magazine *Film* promoted by the young generation of critics in Croatia was active for about 10 years in the state magazine *Filmska kultur*, (finished in 1990,) the void was replaced in the beginning of 1989 with the interesting substantial magazine *Kinoteka* edited by Dario Marković."⁷⁹ These remarks suggest that the Yugoslav state was not uninvolved in the film world nor were film critiques necessarily all independent.

As Prof. Turković noted, Yugoslav films were not as popular in either the 1970s or 1980s due to popularity of the TV and more attractive international films. For instance, Nenad Polimac made a statistical analysis of who watches what in order to question the popularity of Yugoslav films, and after the results a new slogan was made -- "*watch yourself with domestic film.*"⁸⁰ Although not so popular with the audience, Yugoslav cinema at that time was refreshed by the so-called Prague school generation, a group of talented directors that started their work in the 1970s, but enjoyed their full creativity in the 1980s, like Goran Paskaljević, Srđan Karanović, Goran Marković, Rajko Grlić, Lordan Zafranović and Emir Kusturica. According to prof. Turković, the group was artistically marked as a shaded variation of the *black wave* filmmakers.⁸¹ Historical studies of Yugoslav film marked this group as an

⁷⁷ Hrvoje Turković, personal interview, Zagreb, 22 of April 2009.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Škrabalo, p. 447.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Hrvoje Turković, personal interview, Zagreb, 22 of April 2009.

innovative elite, while prof. Turković and the director Grlić himself explain their films through their shared experience and their cooperative relations.

They thought that everything is aloud, all the resources to become important director in the field. At least, most of them. They were more calculating, thinking what could pass as a good film, what would people and the system like. For instance, Karanović and Grlić. Zafranović later turns off the group completely. He “sucked” the money from the Party. His film was really viewed. They were creating kind of special atmosphere around what they were doing. Their calculation made them in a way special. I can’t see anything new in their approach to the film. They just took care for their own “brand.” Grlić and Karanović made a serial that was really enjoyable. That was not bad. That was kind new thing...this nostalgic film. Anyway that came from Western influence.⁸²

While director Rajko Grlić saw the Prague school as a very rich institution, he accepted with famous Czech actors and professional equipment as everyday fact. For him, studying in FAMU in Prague was combination of lucky circumstances in many ways, for example, experiencing Prague Spring and having Milan Kundera as a teacher. Nevertheless, he doesn’t consider the Prague School group as something special, but just as a myth. He saw his cooperation with Karanović as something usual among the group, and a private and professional friendship still exists among them.⁸³

2.3 Where is the contemporary in film?

In approaching Yugoslav film as a medium that portrays everyday life, one needs to define everyday life and how film is able to portray it. In the early 1980s these matters were confronted in an article entitled “*Yugoslav film and contemporary Yugoslav society*” which concluded that films of the period focused more on marginalized subjects than on authentically portraying contemporary life.⁸⁴ Film reviewers and journalists also debated the effect of the self-management style of socialism on Yugoslav film, as well as the international

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 of May, 2009.

⁸⁴ Božidar Zečević, *Film i savremeno jugoslavensko društvo*[*Yugoslav film and contemporary Yugoslav society*] Filmograf, 7, no. 22 March 1982 p.13.

influence.⁸⁵ As stated in the introduction, Western influence was clearly present in Yugoslavia, especially by the 1980s. Nevertheless, an open debate about such influence was possible, not only for film, but for other aspects of culture.

According to Petar Volk, writing on Yugoslav cinema in the mid-1980s, the basic issue lies in recognizing that contemporary cinematography should not depict existing social problems while their solution is still under discussion. Therefore, creating a movie about conflict between the individual and the system should not be the object of the film. Volk sees Yugoslav films as rich productions that reflect Yugoslav reality primarily through the influence of literature and its cooperative relation. Literature was filled with social problems, conflicts and the sense of life, whereas contemporary understanding of reality could be reflected by film. Nevertheless, since some writers were writing under political censorship, not all literature could be presented on film. Therefore, film directors and writers had to cooperate rather than confront unwanted interpretations.⁸⁶

According to Volk, while film from earlier decades was able to deal more autonomously with contemporary reality, in the 1980s producers took the lead in Yugoslav cinema.

For film producers being modern meant being aware of their own freedom as authors. At the same time that freedom contains an obligation not to become servants of the state. In this sense the interesting movies are: *Samo jednom se ljubi* by Rajko Grlić, *Petrijin vijenac* by Srđan Karanović, *Ritam zločina* by Zoran Tadić, *Sezona mira u Parizu* by Predrag Golubović, *Sjećaš li se Dolly bell* by Emir Kusturica and *Živeti kao sav normalni svijet* by Miloš Radivojević⁸⁷

Most of the films that Volk listed can not be classified as *contemporary films*, though some are genre films like *Ritam zločina* by Zoran Tadić, or portray an historical context such as *Samo jednom se ljubi* by Rajko Grlić and *Sezona mira u Parizu* by Predrag Golubović. Therefore, the films that depict the past as contemporary could be regarded as one phenomenon within Yugoslav cinema in the 1980s. As prof. Turković explains, the movies

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Volk, p.534.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

produced in this period criticized the socialist state by using the past, but were not politically provocative.⁸⁸

The existing films depicted the Yugoslav contemporary as a topic, whether contextualizing the problem or not. For instance almost all Grlić's films were affected by the contemporary. *U raljama života* or Bogdan Žižić comes to my mind, which developed the problem of different generations in family relations and *gastarbiters* in the 1984 film, *Rani snijeg u Munchenu*. Then for instance, Zoran Tadić began working genre film that reflected the spirit of the time...I think *San o ruži*.. It shows the worker in everyday life who got into situations where he had received money from gangsters. Who else was there...at the end of the 1980 the new generation started Puhlovski, Gamulin etc⁸⁹

While researching *contemporary* themes in Yugoslav cinema, Prof. Turković could not recall quickly the most representative films. However, as a film reviewer, he emphasized the directors and not the film as a study of *the contemporary*.⁹⁰ In his opinion, the films that represented the socialist state as a world of marginalized people were directly criticizing the malfunctioning of the system, whereas they never direct attacked the system itself as a “shit system.”⁹¹ In his opinion, films that were politically provocative had more value, but none of those were produced in the 1980s. Still there were films reflecting the contemporary Yugoslav society in the 1980s. The most significant ones are *Dečko koji obećava* [*Promising boy*] by Miša Radivojević and Nebojša Pajkić in 1981 and *U raljama života* by Rajko Grlić and Dubravka Ugrešić in 1984, which will be examined in next chapter as a case study.

Dečko koji obećava is a story about young student with a respectable family background and prospective career who decides to adopt a new lifestyle without any obligations, or in other words, he has decided to become as a troublemaker. The movie prompted many debates, although great interest from the audience itself. In Belgrade the film reached about 150, 000 viewers.⁹² The daily magazines marked the movie as against aesthetics, ethics and logic, although not against the truth, since it portrays youth gathered in rock bands that are

⁸⁸ Hrvoje Turković, personal interview, Zagreb, 22 of April 2009.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Mira Boglić, *Obećanja bez pokrića* [*Prommisng without the security*] Vjesnik, 20.V.1981.

struggling against living under any rules. Some of the Yugoslav youth lived the same life as film character Slobodan Milošević, though without the “bump on the head” that the character received.⁹³ Rock music plays a crucial role in the film, especially taking into account that the main protagonist in the film is the singer from Idoli and Šarlo Akrobata, contemporary groups from *Yugoslav new wave music*.

The crucial role in the film is the issue of the Rock 'n' roll in Yugoslavia. Abroad Rock and Roll is the fact of popular culture. In the West, first every young boy wants to see if he can play rock, and then he will work in gas station or study, while here rock 'n 'roll belongs to elite; small group of people which in 1960s had their Radio Luxemburg. Today the circle is spreading, though still around elite.⁹⁴

The movie was controversial in film critiques and daily newspapers due to explicit sexual scenes of homosexuality and group sex. Apparently, those issues were never reflected before in Yugoslav film. According to a published interview with Nebojša Pajkić, the first version of the scenario had more intense scenes of homosexuality, though the final scenario was a softer version, for many reasons. However, in this 1984 interview the scriptwriter did not specify those reasons, though he was surprised by the strong visualization of the whole scene.⁹⁵ Other contemporary critics saw the film as having realistic characters, situations and ambience presented.⁹⁶ While on the other hand, Mira Boglić as one of the most known names in film criticism, characterized the main actor reflected in character Slobodan Milošević as unrealistic because he was too old to play the role of a twenty-year-old boy.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the movie was seen as one that corresponded to Western cinema with popular music, a gay population and ethic issues.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ The statment is taken from interview given by Nebojša Pajkić, the scriptwriter of the film, See:Vladimir Cvitan *Što to dečko obećava [What the boy is prommsising]*, Start 14. III.1981 p. 61.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.60.

⁹⁷ Boglić, Ibid.

This movie succeeds in a commercial sense, but totally non creative one by Miša Radivojević. And that we should take in bad part of. Finally after all the tricks and sexual scenes, Radivojević has found the open doors of foreign film that came long time ago in our society.⁹⁸

As these statements suggest, the influence of Western culture in Yugoslav society is arguable. Certainly Yugoslav rock was an important topic that gives specific meaning to the Radivojević's film and may also represent Yugoslavia's "*many times repeated*" independence from the Eastern bloc, representing some kind of reality. At the same time this film recalls the critique of Yugoslav cinema where the *contemporary* is produced using marginalized topics. However, the film still can be seen as a product of or an historical source for this period in Yugoslavia, whether it was projected as a commercialized movie or not.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 3 In the Jaws of life

This chapter will examine the film *U raljama života* [In the Jaws of Life] made by director Rajko Grlić⁹⁹ in 1984. The film is based on the novella *Štefica Cvek u raljama života* [Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life] by Dubravka Ugrešić¹⁰⁰ written in 1981. Both the book and film received international acknowledgments, such as prizes, and popularity among the audience in the region and abroad. However, it is particularly important to note that both Ugrešić and Grlić created the script for the film which was released in 1984. Parties, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, left the country and continued working abroad. Even though at first, Dubravka Ugrešić did not want to participate in making the script,¹⁰¹ she eventually agreed to sign the script for the film that at the end, received international success while Rajko Grlić as scriptwriter and director won the *Golden arena* for directing in the Pula Film festival in 1984.¹⁰² As a writer, Ugrešić also co-authored the screenplay, as she did with screenplays for two other movies and one TV drama.¹⁰³

Approaching my sources on the film, emphasis should be placed on the two interviews made with the director at two different times. One is found in the film magazine *Sineast*,¹⁰⁴ where Blagoja Kunovski interviewed Rajko Grlić in 1985. The other was made in 2009 by

⁹⁹ Croatian director and scriptwriter, born in 1947 in Zagreb, he studied and graduated at FAMU [Prague Academy of the Arts and Muses] in 1971. He directed and wrote number of TV documentary series and shot feature films, such as *Whichever way the cake crumbles*, *Bravo maestro*, *The melody haunts my Memory* and *Jaws of life* and author of many other films. Also co-operated with Prague school fellow Srđan Karanović on many films. He won many awards and recognitions in Yugoslavia and abroad. See: *Filmska enciklopedija* [Encyclopedia of the film] Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, Zagreb, 1986

¹⁰⁰ Croatian writer and literary scholar, born in 1949 in Croatia. She earned her degrees in Comparative Literature and Russian Language and Literature at the University of Zagreb, and worked for twenty years at the Institute for Theory of Literature at Zagreb University. Dubravka Ugrešić was best known in the former Yugoslavia for her fiction, novels and short stories See: Dubravka Ugrešić, *In the Jaws of life and other stories*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1993.

¹⁰¹ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹⁰² See: *Filmska enciklopedija* [Encyclopedia of the film] Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, Zagreb, 1986.

¹⁰³ Short bio from the official web-site See: <http://www.dubravkaugresic.com/>.

¹⁰⁴ Film magazine from Sarajevo, started with edition in 1967 to 1987, editor Nikola Stojanović.

me, where the director could give a different reflection than in previous one.¹⁰⁵ Most of the primary sources, whether film reviews or daily critiques, generally marked the film as a *kitsch* or *trivial* which will be debated in this chapter as well. Among the other primary sources that are used for the analysis are the film script¹⁰⁶ and the film itself.¹⁰⁷

Considering the question of censorship, it has to be noted that according to director Grlić, the film was created as a co-production by a few studios in Belgrade and Zagreb, namely, Art Film and Union Film from Belgrade, Croatia film, Jadran film and Kinematografi from Zagreb. Thus the film was made using funds from different sources, but not from the state. Therefore, the film was not approved by the Committee for Censorship, although such approval was not officially necessary by that time. However, among the documents found on the film in the archive, there was a decision made approving the film for public screening at the Film festival in Belgrade in 1984. Apparently, the film passed through the Program advisors Committee signed by Njegovan Kljajić.¹⁰⁸

Through this analysis of the creation of the film and creating two plot lines - film and book - this chapter will depict some issues of everyday life in Yugoslavia in the 1980s. *In the Jaws of Life* portrays the economic and political situation at the time, feminist issues and *small things* that create everyday life. As stated in the Festival approval document: “ *This is a sentimental film, a comedy about young and mature girls, about women and their love and sexual life, about funny men, about the not so funny time in which we live, and about many, many more.* ”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Copy of film script *U raljama života* founded in *Hrvatski državni arhiv, kinoteka* [Film archive]Zagreb.

¹⁰⁷ Film, personal copy.

¹⁰⁸ Official document from *Program savet RO Slavija film OOUR* Union film Beograd [Program advisory board Slavija Union film Belgrade] 4. IV1984.

¹⁰⁹ Description of the film as a part of Festival approval document, Ibid.

3.1. *Two plot lines -book and film*

In order to analyze the film, it is important to connect the *two plot lines*, one of the film, and the other of the book, due to the particular care that the authors used to create a “new version of the scenario.” Both authors participated in creating something that was first fiction, and latterly seen as everyday life. However, I won't examine the novel from literary perspective. My analysis is based on interaction between several sources. The accent in this chapter is on the film itself. Basically, Grlić's story uses the same plot from Ugrešić, though he added the character Dunja who is a TV writer that created the serial “*Štefica Cvek in the Jaws of life*.” Such a game in the film is explained through the fact that Ugrešić's novella was too short for a film.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, Rajko Grlić explains the way Ugrešić and he agreed to treat the book as a story that they had heard from someone, and not as a fiction.

When I read the book, its spirit just delighted me. For the first time in my life I have decided to write a book based on literature. All my previous scenarios were created from my head or from life. I needed to have deeper and firm reasons to create a film to realization. Therefore, I agreed with Dubravka Ugrešić that we will treat a book as if it really happened, basically as a real story. And not as literature. That was great from her, that she accepted to start a game, whereas we had absolute freedom to expand or cut the story.¹¹¹

This fact is crucial, due to both authors agreeing to transform the novella into film on the basis of a “real story.” In such a case, it is important to approach the issue of adapting a novella in the film as part of both film and fiction theories.

According to Jakob Lothe, the issue of adapting a novella as a film is based on narration, whereas the film narrator is very different from the literary narrator. While in literature the narrator is something done by an individual, film has a complex production - the author of the

¹¹⁰ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹¹¹ Blagoja Kunovski, *Razgovor s Rajkom Grlićem* [Conversation with Rajko Grlić]. Sarajevo: *Sineast*, No. 65-66, 1985/1986. p.129.

script, the producer, actors, actresses, etc.¹¹² In this case both Dubravka Ugrešić and Rajko Grlić are authors of the screenplay.

Ugrešić created a basic story of an insecure young woman Štefica Cvek, whose life is “passing her by” while she dreams about “the right one.” Grlić's film created two plot lines; one is the basic story of the insecure character Štefica and the other about the TV writer Dunja. Ugrešić's book is created upon a patchwork story presented through sewing patterns, or “cut the text along the line as desired,” which could be seen in women's magazines. The episodes of the novella are structured, with an epigraph heading each chapter in the form of advice about health, beauty, cooking and household hints.¹¹³ For example:

If you spend a few minutes every day standing on your head, you will have a far better complexion and improved circulation. To start with, try propping your self against the wall for two or three minutes. Do these exercise whenever you feel tired or out of sorts. Keep your make-up pencils in the fridge and they will be easier to sharpen.¹¹⁴

Grlić similarly used the device with TV commercials:

TV speaker: We came to an important fact of the present, like having good, healthy body, because to have a corpulent body, or being overweight is completely out. If you want to be attractive, to be sexy, to be observed, you have to be fit. But in the style of Twiggy, but body with good proportions, and being in condition is in. Therefore, you need an active body, ready to jump!¹¹⁵

According to Jakob Lothe, the film narrator illustrates elements of narrative theory that has a literary basis relevant to the film - narrative distance and narrative perspective - which is in this case remarkable. The narrative distance refers particularly to the relationship between the narrator and the events/characters in the text, within many types -- temporal, attitudinal, irony and dramatic irony -- while the narrative perspective implies that the author relates the events in a special way as well as judges the characters in the same way.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Jakob Lothe, *Narrative in Fiction and Film, an introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2000. p. 31.

¹¹³ Jasmina Lukić, *Witches fly high; The sweeping broom of Dubravka Ugrešić* Central Eastern European Online Library (Relations), issue: 12 / 2004, pages: 210-219, p. 210 www.ceeol.com.

¹¹⁴ Dubravka Ugrešić, *In the Jaws of life and other stories*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1993 p.13.

¹¹⁵ Film script *U raljama života*, p.2-3.

¹¹⁶ Jakob Lothe, *Narrative in Fiction and Film, an introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2000. pp.34-39.

In the film the emphasis is on both the ironic and narrative perspective. Unlike the novella, Grlić divided the characters in the film by nationality. In the film, men that pass through Štefica's apartment -- The Driver, the Hulk and the Intellectual -- play macho men divided by nationality as Croat and Serb. The effect of such division was that the audience knew which actor came from where, but it is 'added' in order to bring ironic play in film. These macho men play ineffective roles in completing the assignment, which is to satisfy emotionally and sexually the main character Štefica. By such an act, the characters are a caricature of a national typology of Balkan men; often richer in words than in fact.¹¹⁷ While in the novella, the Aunt is present through repetition of items of women's lore and anecdotes,¹¹⁸ in the film, she is an older lady from Bosanska Krupa with funny stories from her hometown. The emancipated characters, Ella and Annie, as Štefica's friends-advisers, from a novella are transformed through Marianna as Štefica's friend, while Nena and Sonja present Dunja's advisors. Ugrešić's approach could be read as ironic, in which she plays and experiments within patterns. As Kalafatović explains, in a similar way, Grlić was playing with plot lines in the film as it is his basic principle of directing.¹¹⁹

Literary critics marked the novella as a highly artistic and complex play with a trivial genre or in Yugoslav case as 'pastiche' of trivial romances. In the same way the film elaborated "kitsch." According to Jasmina Lukić, Ugrešić skillfully uses stereotypes of trivial romance in the sense that her character Štefica is portrayed as an average reader of trivial romances searching for love.¹²⁰ For instance, as Štefica Cvek reads *Madame Bovary* the text underlines the pointlessness of her daily life as parallel with Flaubert's protagonist.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Bogdan Kalafatović, *Godina odluke* [The year of the decision] Zagreb: Filmska kultura XXVIII, No. 151-152, 1984 p.17.

¹¹⁸ Celia Hawkesworth, *Dubravka Ugrešić: The Insider's story*, The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Jul, 1990), pp.441 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4210361>

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.18.

¹²⁰ Lukić, p.210.

¹²¹ Tatjana Alekić, review *Dubravka Ugrešić, Lend me your character*, Dalkey Archive Press, London 2005. *Balkanica* 20 (Spring 2007) pp.185-187 p.185 See: official web-site <http://www.dubravkaugresic.com/>.

Similarly, according to Mira Boglić, Grlić extended the story in ironically playing with “kitsch,” as is most obvious in the scenery.¹²²

Film reviews in daily newspapers called the film “kitsch,” but the term is debatable primarily due to the fact that often both “trivial” and “kitsch” are used as synonyms, while there is a difference in their meanings. While “kitsch” measures something done in the way that some people find attractive, funny or silly, trivial refers to not very interesting, serious or valuable.¹²³ The trivial that is marked in a novella comes from the trivial story of Štefica. As Jasmina Lukić explains;

She tries some of the usual ways to solve the problem dating different kinds of men, disappointed and depressed. To get away from the problem, she goes on a diet (taken from a women’s magazine, tries reading (Madam Bovary) or goes to theater (of course), to watch Hamlet, but only until the moment in which Ophelia is dead, and finally, she tries learning foreign languages. And there, quite unexpected, her prince- charming appears ...to take her for...a coffee.¹²⁴

In the film, Grlić added and elaborated the character of Dunja as an emancipated woman with a successful career as a TV producer who is also struggling to choose the right man. She has an unsuccessful relationship with the writer Sale, the best friend Pipo and the “roomer” Mik. Therefore, in the film the trivial is transformed through the “kitsch.” According to Kalafatović, the “kitsch” is more visible throughout in Štefica's suburban flat design and fashion style.¹²⁵

As Kalafatović noted, Grlić portrayed “trivial” surroundings from the novella in an ironic way, whereas narration is visible through mixing a parody of a love story and humoristic scenes.¹²⁶ Therefore, the film, maybe even more than the novella, has a charm, specific for the talented Grlić.¹²⁷ In such an atmosphere, in the parallel destiny of both Štefica and Dunja, Kalafatović explains that Grlić’s allusions are sometimes seen as directly constructed

¹²² Mira Boglić, *O ambasadorima, špijunima, anđelima, daviteljima, pokojnicima...*[About ambassadors, spiers angels, straglers, defunct], Zagreb: Filmska kultura, XXVIII. No.151-152, 1984 p.27.

¹²³ English Dictionry for advanced learners, Macmillan, London, 2002.

¹²⁴ Lukić, p.210.

¹²⁵ Kalafatović, p.16.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.17.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

routes.¹²⁸ Despite the elaboration of the “patchwork story” on which the novella is based, it carries marginalized aspects: women’s magazines, trivial literature, sentimental films, fairy tales, gossip, as triviality and banality. These define a world of women as a world of marginalization.¹²⁹

The film addresses problems of gender, like the well-educated women who are trapped in a system dominated by men, while at the deeper level the film sends a message about females that took their equal place in society.¹³⁰ Therefore, whether the story of a novella is trivial or whether the story of the film is “kitsch,” one could understand them as underlining women’s issues in society.

To resolve the problem of communication between characters from two parallel stories, Grlić created interplay among the characters through interferences and coincidence.¹³¹ By creating a model “story within a story”, precisely existence of two parallel stories, he was effective in the way that he succeed to portray the problems of “actual reality.”¹³² As such, the film *U raljama života* was marked as balanced between levels of tastes.¹³³

When Dubravka Ugrešić accepted to play a game with the film, we have started our play, by taking the most important thing from the book. And that’s the spirit of the book. That is very important due to it has connotations in many spheres in our life, and that’s the spirit of a slow ironic view of life. In the film *In the jaws of life* I have tried to create the sphere of everyday life, but within working with Ugrešić, I got the chance to play with character's lives, but not to paint or to criticize that life. Maybe that is the upbringing of our life¹³⁴.

In an interview from 1985, Grlić explained the connection of the book and the film itself as “playing a game with people’s life in order to play the reality, but as something that

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Hawkesworth, p.443 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4210361>.

¹³⁰ Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated cinema, The Yugoslav experience 1945-2001*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2002 p.174.

¹³¹ Kalafatović, p.17.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., p.18.

¹³⁴ Kunovski, p.130.

exists.”¹³⁵ According to his words, “we are surrounded by those Šteficas everyday.”¹³⁶ His intention was not to present the spheres of life separately as social, material, political, but to connect all these together in one; whereas the two plots as separate stories in parallel lines, they were slowly transformed as one happy ending.¹³⁷

Another level of the connection between the plots of the novella and film is seen due to finding a happy end. The novella consists of epilogues in which Ugrešić dramatizes herself and enters into discussion about her own work¹³⁸ The novella closes with a discussion by the author-narrator with her mother, neighbors and relatives in such a way that the story of Štefica Cvek, should be continued. As Jasmina Lukić states:

Forgetting the realities of their own lives, all the gathered women happily turn to fairy tales for grownups and sink into an old album of Hollywood heart-throbs, inventing their own, personal romances instead of a plot for Steffie Cveck’s fictional life. Leaving them enchanted in their own stories, the author-narrator thinks about „the effect that everything has cliché, including life itself, and that “the kitsch microbes are the most vigorous organisms of the emotions.”¹³⁹

Their advice in creating another cliché, such as stories which could be read in typical novels did not satisfy the author and therefore she left Štefica as a happy woman with her perfect man, Mr. Fiddler. In the same way, after being questioned by her friends about the ending of the TV serial *Štefica Cvek u raljama života* and affected by Sale's suggestion of a happy end considering the economic situation in the country, Dunja decides to give her heroine a happy end, while at the same time, she grabs the happiness for her own life too.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 131.

¹³⁸ Hawkesworth, pp.441. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4210361>

¹³⁹ Lukić, p.211.

¹⁴⁰ Goulding, p.174.

Ugrešić created a novella in an interrelationship of fiction and reality as a tendency to present human beings trapped within fiction,¹⁴¹ while, according to Klafatović, Grlić in many ways succeeded in creating the imaginary Ugrešić's novella in an effective film form.

3.2. The film as a historical document?

How then can this film, drawing upon a contemporary novella, be used as a historical source to represent everyday life in Yugoslavia in the 1980s. As Sergey Dobrynin states: "It can be argued that film itself is a historical document, and any omissions or distortions therein do not diminish its value as long as we do not mistake its social, political and economic conditions for 'the real thing.'"¹⁴² To analyze a film includes studying texts, directing, acting, and photography from the present, which eventually turned into the past and therefore created a historical source for the reader. In order to establish the connection of film and life, the historian has to go beyond what he actually sees, to a wider cultural and political context of the time.¹⁴³ Film as a media has a kind of ability to capture "reality" or as director Rajko Grlić says: "no other object has left such a trace of evidence as film."¹⁴⁴ Therefore, this is the value of film for a historian seeking to understand everyday life.

In this section, the movie *U raljama života* as an example of portraying everyday life will be examined in three aspects. The first aspect is based on the economic situation, the second on contemporary literary criticism, and the third on nationality of the characters. The film is located in the city of Zagreb, near the Cathedral and the main square. Grlić explains that he located the film in his hometown Zagreb where he could play with the mentality that he

¹⁴¹ Hawkesworth, pp.439. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4210361>.

¹⁴² Sergei Dobrynin, *Soviet cinema, soviet spaces: Everyday life in Soviet film (1965-1985)*, CEU, 2006 PHD dissertation, p. 3.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁴⁴ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

himself knows well.¹⁴⁵ He also used local slang, which was criticized in the sense that no one would understand the film. According to Grlić, those critiques were mistaken, due to the fact that this movie was the best subtitled product that he had made, though it is the hardest to translate comedy, especially jokes made by the aunt from Bosanska Krupa.¹⁴⁶

I was trying to talk about things that are painful and happy at the same time. By this I mean that we live in a country whereas the language we talk and the way we think is funny. That's the only way not to lie. That's the only way to admit that we come from different cultures, but it doesn't disturb us. Because that is the enrichment of this culture; on every five kilometers in this country lives different nation.¹⁴⁷

However, Grlić does not speak here of the nationality here, but about the status and film identities of some of the actors of former Yugoslav scene. The division of the actors in Grlić's film had a balanced Yugoslav character, divided between Zagreb and Belgrade. The Zagreb group includes main actress Vitomira Lončar, Mira Furlan, Enes Kišević, Zdenka Heršćak, Mladen Raukar while the Belgrade group includes Rade Šerbedžija, Bata Živojinović, Miki Manojlović, Bogdan Diklić etc. Also included were actors from Slovenia and Bosnia, like Semka Sokolović-Bertok and Ratko Polič.¹⁴⁸ Grlić also noted that although most of the actors were talented and famous names in Yugoslav cinema, they agreed to work on the movie for quite “small money” and were very enthusiastic during the shooting.¹⁴⁹ Selecting exactly these particular actors had its purpose, in the sense that director wanted to accent their roles. For instance, Bata Živojinović was exactly a perfect example for the role of the Hulk. His film character is a big caricature; at the same time, in real life Bata passed through the Pula film festival as a great actor.¹⁵⁰

According to the director:

I made this secretly. I was trying to take from him, his spirit as an actor. That I made to Miki Manojlović and Rade Šerbedžija, and all the actors who accepted this. This was not actually

¹⁴⁵ Kunovski, p.132.

¹⁴⁶ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹⁴⁷ Kunovski, p.132.

¹⁴⁸ Ivo Škrabalo, *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj* [101 years of the movie in Croatia,] Zagreb, 1998, p.405.

¹⁴⁹ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹⁵⁰ Kunovski, p.132.

stealing, because they all agreed with it. That was our game. Therefore, they acted themselves in a game, while at the same time they enjoyed themselves.¹⁵¹

On the other hand, the national division of the roles in the film is constantly present. Not only was Bata playing a big actor from festivals, but in the film he plays a Serb. The hulk: “*I will screw you non stop for two hours. No, I will screw you all night, till your aunt comes back from Krupa. I know femininity. You have to beg me not to stop. That’s us Serbs.*”¹⁵² As the film was created in a kind relaxed atmosphere, with lots of laughs, most of the dialogue was created spontaneously. For instance, the dialogue with Rade Šerbedžija was created “on the road” as Grlić says: “*One night during the shooting of the film, I met Rade and I asked him if I could use him as a Serb in the film. He completely agreed with [the idea].*”¹⁵³

Not only did Serbs appear in the film, but so did almost all nationalities from the former Yugoslavia. While he used Rade Šerbedžija for dialogue, in the film Rade Šerbedžija himself as actor- acted a Croat, an intellectual very sensitive on Croatian language and culture. The scene includes the Intellectual and Štefica, when he is trying to correct her expression about particular words:

Štefica: *My aunt went to Bosanska Krupa in order to get a špenadla [needle].*

The Intellectual: *Honey, in Croatian in which we Croats are speaking and writing for more than a thousand years, in Croatian we say zabadača, pripadača, medjenka, čioda, [Safety pin or needle] All that, just not špenadla, especially like that one from Bosanska krupa.*¹⁵⁴

Grlić carefully depicted nationality through characters, such as Semka Sokolović Bertok as the aunt from Bosanska Krupa who plays very functional jokes which are supposed to reflect Bosnian mentality, or the Slovenian Janez, carrying the typical Slovenian name, known in the film as the one who climbed a famous mountain, Triglav, in Slovenia, 57 times. According to his words, he thought he has the right to use all the space from Vardar to Triglav.¹⁵⁵ As his

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Film script *U raljama života*, p.25.

¹⁵³ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹⁵⁴ Film script *U raljama života*, p.29

¹⁵⁵ Kunovski, p.132.

characters Štefica and Mr. Findler say to each other during their introduction; “*I am a Croat from Yugoslavia.*”¹⁵⁶ Grlić says; “*I was born in a country which is called Yugoslavia – I am a Croat from Yugoslavia. According to that, I want to “play” with these things.*”¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, playing games with the nationality issue was considered to create an ironic level in the film, due to the fact that the director looked at the issue as something that should be seen as humorous.

In the novella, characters don’t play national divisions, but in the movie the characters got it. Because I thought that at that moment in Yugoslavia you could see “nationalism as a solution for its dissolution.” Therefore, I started to play games with it. At that moment, when we shot the film, that was seen as something funny. But a couple of years later we didn’t laugh anymore.¹⁵⁸

Afterwards many newspaper critics asked “*Who is who in the film*” in order to attack it. However, the film was very successful, in the way that Grlić explains; “Salečić, the contemporary TV face who was very strict in the sphere of culture, never appeared on TV again.”¹⁵⁹ He was reflected in the character of Sale, as Dunja’s boyfriend, a Marxist and literary reviewer; doing his job in proper manners for the authorities.

Sale’s speech on TV: *I am not supporting the book to be banned. Even though there should be democratic debates about it. Anyway, despite its popularity the book written by Branko Puljić Boli me otok [Goli otok] will be soon forgotten. Shortly: the book belongs to trivial, semi-artistic and political work in commercial purposes from our closer history because our intellectuals, those on the right and those on the left side, are constantly talking about a lack of democracy in our society. But no one of them, including this book, answers the question if they would be in power, would they allow us a democratic dialog.*

Dunja: *Have you thought that your speech could harm this man?*

Sale: *Tell me, who was destroyed in our country because of such things before? Rather look at yourself. While we are in this economic and political shit, in this universal social depression, you are writing trivial TV serial, while avoiding real problems*¹⁶⁰

Even though Sale has not read the whole book, during the dinner with the doctor and his young mistress, he openly attacked the book as something that presents reality without basic material. It should be banned, but “it advocated self-withdrawal from the idea of self-

¹⁵⁶ Film script *U raljama života*, p.52.

¹⁵⁷ Kunovski, Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Film script *U raljama života* p.4-7.

management.”¹⁶¹ Therefore, his character describes the political games of Yugoslav society in the 1980s.

As the director Grlić claims,

The film was not a dramatic structure, but it was based on everyday small stories. In 1984, the period after Tito's death, it was clear that the project called Yugoslavia will soon break up. Everything was going that way. Economically, the state was bad, while on the other hand, there was presumably unlimited freedom, which is a contradictory moment because it was the hardest time than even before. That's why I decided to make a comedy. Because I thought it is a really difficult moment for Yugoslavia¹⁶²

The state of economic and political depression in a country is not only reflected through Sale, but in many other aspects of the film. For instance, in one scene Dunja, as a producer of TV serial *Štefica Cvek u raljama života*, decided to throw out part of dialogue to that the authorities would not misinterpret it. The first version of the scenario during Marijana and Štefica's dialogue stated:

Marijana: Depression? Damn it, everybody is in depression. The whole country is in a depression.

Dunja: For this part of the text, in the editorial board they have told me that I have to throw it out.

Nena: End this? Why?

*Dunja: Because someone malevolent could understand that Štefica is symbolizing Yugoslavia.*¹⁶³

Therefore, Dunja decides upon a softer version of it.

In this way the character Štefica was actually a personification of Yugoslavia. The effect that Grlić made in the film was exactly what the film was talking about, about a depressed country through its characters; Štefica, Pipo and Dunja herself at the end. Pipo, as Dunja's best friend in the film, plays the role of a lonely young man who is dissatisfied within his earnings, constantly complaining about women. Disappointed with the “state” of the country, this protagonist considers moving abroad, to the “promised land - America.” Although Pipo lives with his mother, his dialogue with Dunja many times reflects his wish to live somewhere where it is better, in this case America.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.20-21.

¹⁶² Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

¹⁶³ Film script *U raljama života* p. 12-13.

Pipo: We are so obsessed with Dostoevsky, Kafka, Krleža and Bergman...that we feel so frustrated for years. I was waiting for an award for years. And I haven't got anything. Do you know how much I earn? A fucking expert for Ionic guiding gets 198 dollars and 20 cents. And in America 10,000 dollars, 50 times more. And this young generation of kids realizes that...and now they want their tickets to America to be paid. What was I doing all these years...I would like to know. Formulas fucked my life. Well, I won't wait anymore.

Dunja. When are you going to "your" America?¹⁶⁴

Another aspect shown in the film is the fact that Dunja as a producer writes a TV serial according to her own reality. For instance, in the serial, Štefica, after being disappointed with the men, the Driver, the Hulk and the Intellectual as well as not having the ability to lose weight, she tries to commit suicide. At the same time, Pipo also tries to commit suicide, in the same way as Štefica, with pills. After he tries, his dialogue with Dunja reflects one of the most important parts of the film:

Pipo: I wish I could be gay like Cico. I can't be with a man, woman, old, new. I lied when I said I want only nice women. I can't with anyone. I don't even know if I will go to America. I am too old to go, too young to stay. I can't even kill myself. I am completely lonely and fucked up, Dunja!¹⁶⁵

Dunja: Have you made up your mind? Are you going to America?

Pipo: How could I leave her alone [his mum]. Do you know how many people already left? [tu bu grdo]¹⁶⁶ Here, Dunja, will not be good, seriously.

Dunja: I know

Pipo: And I know, we all know!!! That's why I am concentrating on everyday life....I have elaborated everything now...¹⁶⁷

In his 2009 interview, Grlić emphasized this part of the scene as being shot in 1984. Everyone could 'feel in the air' that something would go wrong. Therefore, he decided to reflect it in the film.¹⁶⁸

He also reflected Dunja's reality, as mostly seen through Sonja. Sonja is Dunja's friend, who is reflected in the character of Marijana, who plays Mira Furlan in the serial.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.27-28

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.36-37

¹⁶⁶ This comment is written in Kajkavian dialect as part of particular Zagreb slang. Interesting fact about it is that Bogdan Diklić as Pipo in the film, is part of a Belgrade group of actors, who adopted perfectly Zagreb slang. See: Blagoja Kunovski, *Razgovor s Rajkom Grlićem* [Conversation with Rajko Grlić] *Sineast*, Sarajevo, no. 65-66, 1985/1986 p 133.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.48.

¹⁶⁸ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

Sonja: Dear Dunja, your serial is really fantastic. You have really exaggerated with Mira Furlan. I had two husbands, but not three.

Dunja: Dismissing reality for artistic purposes.

Sonja: That's why your serial is just "fantastic."

Dunja: From friends I hear that serial is fantastic, commercial. They telephone me that the serial sucks. I am so lonely, unhappy, melancholic person. I am in deep depression. I just don't understand why anyone noticed that?¹⁶⁹

Moreover, not only her characters are used to present the depression in the society, but also the character of Dunja herself is portrayed as depressive. Such a scenario stresses the atmosphere in the film; living surrounded by people who are depressed because of the everyday problems such as seeking love, earning money, looking good, and that is exactly what makes everyday life issues.

Another important aspect that the movie touches on is contemporary literary criticism, which is not only reflected in Sale, but in Dunja as well, in the way that her friends constantly use the opportunity to comment on her successful TV serial. Pipo was suspicious about the serial due to the feminist issues it reflects, just as Sale, who used every chance to attack her for dealing with trivial stories while the country has economic and political issues. From each side, Dunja could hear different opinions:

Sonja: If I would be you I would do a different serial....black serial. A black political serial about woman stuff. Because this issue about women is illegal to write. No one talks about it, it is rude to talk about it, get it? A serial about a woman who gets up early, works all day, about abortions, about their stupid husbands...And that would be political movie. A black thing is Lilie's case who had to sign that she won't have kids in order to get a job and now she is afraid of losing it.¹⁷⁰

Doctor: Dunja, your serial, is great. All my female patients just love it. But please, make a happy ending. It will sound much better with a happy ending.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, Dunja and Nena as her co-producers were constantly concerned about reflecting tension in the serial. Such an argument could be seen through the dialog between them in this scene:

Nena: Listen, we should not let the Intellectual mention Bosanska Krupa all the time. Because we don't need someone from Bosanska Krupa, from the local community to accuse us for offending their traditions of revolution or write a letter to the TV and serial goes to hell.

Dunja: Sale's syndrome. Throw that out from the serial, later if you want.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Film script *U raljama života*, p.39.

¹⁷⁰ Film script *U raljama života*, p.8.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.24.

Nevertheless, the ending of two plot lines for the film and TV serial involves an irony which sends a message that life among the “sophisticated” is not far from “kitsch” as it is assumed.¹⁷³ Therefore, the movie does not resolve the issue that it raises, an issue which will be examined in the next section.

3.3. On the subject of feminist issues in the film

As part of depicting everyday life, the film also dramatizes some feminist issues in former Yugoslavia. Given the extensive research and theory on this topic, in this section I will address those aspects of the film from the perspective of the production. The women in the film are presented through the lens of well educated, independent women who are building their careers and fighting for their equal place in a society dominated by men. Such a character is presented through Marijana and Dunja herself. Marijana, as Štefica’s colleague at work, often gives advice on how to “catch a man,” putting the accent on the purpose of women’s life.

Marijana: I have one principle. For a woman it is important that she works and lives life, and that men are not the only thing in the world.

Štefica: But you told me that ...

Marijana: You fall for each guy as soon as he asks you what the time is. I sent you the driver, the hulk. The intellectual you have found by yourself. And still nothing. Live, for God’s sake. Go to the theatre! Read! Take a language course. Life is so interesting!¹⁷⁴

Sabrina Ramet presents in her book, *Gender politics in Western Balkans*, the following extract which depicts the typical issues of writing in the Titoist era:

In the course of the socialist revolution, significant results were admired in advancing the socioeconomic position and role of women in our society. This is indicated by data concerning the number of educated and employed women, analysis of their successful pursuit of professional leadership and socially responsible careers, everyday actions for the resolutions of problems

¹⁷² Ibid., p.29.

¹⁷³ Goulding, p.174.

¹⁷⁴ Film script *U raljama života*, p.32.

traditionally concerned with women...etc. But the battle for the complete emancipation is not yet over.¹⁷⁵

Ramet emphasizes gender equality in such terms as women in politics being equal with men.

Although political propaganda encouraged women to contribute to politics, the process was rather slow, as suggested by Šušvar's statement in the 1980s:

Our ideal is that women should be an architect of society on an equal basis with the men. Women's contribution to the development of society is much greater than indicated by the female presence in decision making positions.¹⁷⁶

Nevertheless, while Šušvar insisted on feminism as a form of conservative social consciousness, feminists brought the question of gender equality to the so-called class question. Women's strategies to escape their patriarchal position were different from those needed to emancipate them in an industrial, urban society.¹⁷⁷ However, Jancen emphasizes that women issues should not be concerned with a particular class. Socialism afforded a woman the right to vote, the right to employment and to earn money, a right to education and legal equality. Socialism raises an assumption that women who belong to the working class have more in common as working women than just as women.¹⁷⁸ Women's experience in a modern society like Yugoslavia is a complicated one.

Women experience in Yugoslavia was often compared with women's experience in the West. According to Barbara Jancen, this was best illustrated in Drakulić-Ilić's book, *The deadly sins of feminism*.¹⁷⁹ The book reflects the pressure experienced by all women in adjusting to the marketplace and the unstructured situation between the sexes as a universal problem existing in both Zagreb and Belgrade. She mentioned the problem of young, educated and intelligent women who end up living alone, due to men preferring less

¹⁷⁵ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Gender politics in Western Balkans: women and society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav successor states*, afterword Branka Magaš, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999 p. 89-90

¹⁷⁶ For more details See: Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Barbara Jancar, *New feminism in Yugoslavia* See: Pedro Ramet, *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, Westview Press Colorado, 1985 p.214.

¹⁷⁸ D. Dijanić ., M. Merunko Golubić. I., Niemčić, D., Stanić, *Ženski biografski leksikon, Centar za ženske studije [Institut for gender studies], Sjećanje žena na život u socijalizmu [Women's memories about life during socialism] Historijski zbornik, LIX. Zagreb, 2004 . p.196.*

¹⁷⁹ Jancen, p.215.

intelligent women. In Yugoslavia the issue is placed in the impact of industrialization and technology on society. In other words, economic development brought the break up of the protective family.¹⁸⁰

Similarly, the film depicts the problem of gender issues in the form of well-educated women who are trapped in a society dominated by men. For instance, the film presents Dunja as a talented TV producer who is trapped in a bad relation with Sale. Their relation is constantly reflecting verbal fights between men and women who are professionally in an equal position.

Sale: Your friend Miki is obviously a hippy veteran. How old is he?

Dunja: He is older than me.

Sale: People will laugh at us because it looks like we got the child that is camping on our terrace?

Dunja: What child?

Sale: Instead that we have a child, we are behaving like the silly West by raising your future fuck buddy, if he is already your ex. Don't you think we are torturing ourselves?

Dunja: What do you suggest?

Sale: To marry me

Dunja: Why?¹⁸¹

Dunja and Sale share a common profession and apartment, which is actually Dunja's flat. Nevertheless, Dunja decided that she can not continue the relationship with a man who constantly criticizes her life and her work for the safety of the system. Therefore, one night after dinner which Sale organized for his own benefit, Dunja "explodes" and decides to "kick him out "of the apartment, while he attacked her for abuse.

Sale: If that is the reason, you are crazy!

Dunja: You know, that's not the reason. I just can't anymore.

Sale: I understand. You are tired. When you finish the TV serial we will see each other, again.

Dunja: No, we won't.

Sale: Give me my suitcase. Will you please give me my suitcase?!? You are the same as this jerk. Screw him as much as you want. When you need to get the TV serial, I was good for you. You, female chicken!

Dunja: Chicken, Cow, hooker....¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.217.

¹⁸¹ Film script *U raljama života* p. 10.

¹⁸² Ibid.,p. 23-24.

However, Drakulić-Ilić argues that modern women's attraction to cheap novels, sensational literature and TV serials, which may give women a sense of contact with reality, also provides an illusion that their problems could be solved. In other words, cheap novels and TV serials imitate TV commercials as depicting stereotypes for women.¹⁸³ This is exactly what is reflected in the film. Štefica Cvek, as an insecure woman watches TV commercials about beauty, cooking as well as reading cheap magazines for women.

TV speaker: I am Abarić Nebojša, the chef in the hotel. I will prepare filled chicken in wine sauce. We add spices on the chicken; salt, pepper, wine and brandy and leave it in the fridge for a few minutes. Then it is important to follow the next preparation steps...¹⁸⁴

Apart from Dunja as an emancipated woman, the film portrays two other female characters, Nena and Sonja, as two other types of women. The film presents Nena as the modern busy woman in her forties who has a family; husband, child and a mother who is “babysitting,” while Nena works late hours in the studio. During the film, she is constantly frustrated, followed either by a telephone conversation with her mother, or in a conversation with Dunja complaining about women's problems. Nena, in her forties, is “trapped” into becoming pregnant again, while she is already struggling with issues, such as giving instructions to her mother about what she is supposed to do with the child when it is about basic human needs.

Nena: Dear, do you know what's new? You would never guess. I am pregnant again.

Dunja: What will you do?

Nena: Nothing, I will give birth. I convinced Damir. (Her husband)

Dunja: I am really glad.

Nena: I would like to be constantly pregnant. Most women don't like it, but I am fucked up. If we women would not be so biologically fucked up, I would give a birth in sixties. I know that is shit for me. We have thought that it will be different. Then you realize that it cannot be different. Do you understand me? I am forty and pregnant.

Dunja: I envy you.

Nena: Bullshit!¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.218.

¹⁸⁴ Film script *U raljama života* p.44.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.,p.45.

The film also reflects tensions between women as well as relations between female and male. For instance, Nena and Sonja do not particularly like each other. While Nena is a busy wife and mother, Sonja is a handsome young woman without any obligations, who still likes to party and date different men. Her attitudes toward men are the same as Marijana's. Sonja is actually reflected in the character of Marijana. Marijana was married three times, while Sonja two times. While Marijana's attitude towards men is depicted in the words: "*For centuries men consummated us. Now it is time that we consummate them.*"¹⁸⁶ In Sonja's words:

Sonja: Do we love men? Those human monkey creatures??
Dunja: No.¹⁸⁷

The character of Sonja is not elaborated in the same sense as Nena and, throughout the film information about her comes mostly in the course of either gossip from Nena or Dunja's best friend Pipo. Therefore, except for intimate details about Sonja, the film does not provide information about her occupation or any other aspect of her life.

Nena: She is such a bother. Does she really date all those men, like she says?
Dunja: Huh...just imagine, same as me.¹⁸⁸

Marijana, as an expert in the field of men, advises Štefica how to treat a man:

Marijana: When you get tired of men you have to get rid of him, no matter what was going on between you two. Patching does not help in such cases. But having a man is an important thing. That's a truth. Maybe I am a primitive. But for a real guy you have to lay yourself out. For a real guy you have to fulfill some requirements. Get it, honey? I will tell you honestly. But don't get offended. First, you don't have sex appeal. Luckily, I can take care of that. Second, you are somehow too serious, too honest. Look, the most important for you is to be happy!¹⁸⁹

Štefica as an insecure and passive character does not bring much action to the film. Apart from reading trashy women's magazines about beauty and watching TV commercials about food and romantic films, she passively listens to Marijana and admires her skills in succeeding to get married. In the film, during Marijana's wedding, Štefica tries to catch the bouquet of flowers, which is considered as a sign of who will be the next one to marry.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.6.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p.40.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.35.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p.6.

Apart from women's issues and their dissatisfaction with men, the film also portrays the male's side of the story. This is mostly visible through the character of Pipo. Pipo is Dunja's friend and a young insecure man living in an apartment with his mother. He is struggling to look better by regularly exercising and swimming and usually has conversations with Dunja about women.

Pipo: I wish someone would be kind to me, cuddle me. Get it? Someone to cuddle me while being quite all the time. Someone who would not demand her orgasm ... someone who would not move into my apartment, who would not use my electricity, someone who would not touch my fridge....who would not wear my clothes...I kill for it. Someone who don't have any demands, but to be here, get it?¹⁹⁰

An especially interesting dialogue includes his gossip about Sonja, due to his affair with Sonja, which ended badly. Pipo is actually afraid of those strong women who believe in their equality with men, especially when it comes to sexual behavior. Returning to Drakulić-Ilić's argument that men fear of women's dominance, the film illustrates this issue through Pipo, when he openly criticizes Sonja.

Pipo: Cow, chicken...I won't let her use me anymore. Do you know what she is...a vulgar wolf. I am not a sexual object. She has such a sexual appetite!! What a jaws among the legs. That's not a woman, that's a shark.¹⁹¹

Pipo is not only afraid of women's dominance, but he is dominated by his mother. As he shares his apartment with his mother who is an opera star, he is not strong enough to leave her alone in order to fulfill his desire for moving to America. As Nena, by consulting with Dunja to get rid of Pipo's mother, explains that the women's issue lies exactly in "that opera star."¹⁹² Another aspect of gender relations present in the Pipo-Dunja relationship is friendship, which starts to develop into something more. For instance, this becomes visible in the moment when Pipo decides to spend night in Dunja's apartment because his opera star mother went business traveling.

Pipo: I can't get horny with you. No defense, right? What do you think why we never slept together, I mean why we never had sex?

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p.36.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.,p.16.

¹⁹² Ibid., p.28.

Dunja: Maybe we never thought about it.

Pipo: Right, we never thought about it. Where is the Marxist?

Dunja: He left.

Pipo: Good. I never liked that guy. That butcher from TV. And a hippy veteran? Have you ever had something with him?

Dunja: He left too.

Pipo: See, none is screwing. This we are doing or not doing is a universal phenomenon. I mean if we look at it as a cultural issue. I feel frustrated as an individual. Not even individual, but as a result. Do you get it what I want to say? Do you sleep?? You sleep. You are the same as my mum, like all women. The system of an identical particle.¹⁹³

Gender relations are reflected not only through the relationships of Pipo-Dunja or Sale-Dunja, but also through the quasi-Intellectual. While being in a delusional shape caused by alcohol, in Štefica's apartment he relieves his sore soul with the words:

The intellectual: Why are you looking at me? I am drunk...I am. I have a good and above all original reason for it. My wife left me because of the....one...what do you call those that can fix your tap?

Štefica: Plumber.

The intellectual: Yes....with one electrician, one plumber, a Serb. They all run one day.

Štefica. And what happened then?

The intellectual: That one has left her. I and that plumber have left my wife. I rent a flat, and ticket man returned to his wife. You get it, Štef? Do you get it, Štef? Someone will always suck your love. Like they sucked my wife and Paris....Fucking Paris...Štef, what do you think, should I call her now? Her? A plumber woman?¹⁹⁴

Although the film depicts many facets of gender issues, through women obsessed within trashy things in life or who are struggling for equality with men, the film does not provide a solution. Nevertheless, the purpose of the film was not to solve the problem of gender, but to ironically portray everyday stories that portray those problems.

3.4. Fashion, design, everyday gossip and products

Considering that the film portrays everyday life in many aspects, this section will examine small things in life such as clothes, the interiors, the products and gossip that reflects contemporary society in Yugoslavia in the 1980s. One of the most visible objects that characterize the society in the 1980s is definitely fashion style. Throughout the film, one can see many different styles specific for the decade of the 1980s.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p.41-41.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 29-31.

As it has been noted, the “kitsch” reflected in the film primarily refers to the costumes and scenery. Such an adjective is particularly seen for Štefica. Štefica, when it comes to fashion, could be described as a purely tasteless character. She constantly wears a colorful dresses, skirts and blouses that reflect the fashion characteristic for the 1980s, though she looks like a baby doll in them. Although Marijana is trying to fix her looks, apparently Štefica has not learned to improve her looks until the last scene, when she meets her charming Mr. Findler. Here her looks slightly improved with a nice red dress and make-up that she does not usually use.

On the other hand, Marijana in the film always wears a blue and red combination with skirt, a blouse and a big belt. Marijana, during work time, gossips while fixing her make up and nails. She is aware of her attractiveness and good taste which is presented especially in her attitude towards the unattractive Štefica. The other females in the film - Dunja, Nena and Sonja - are not particularly concerned with their style. In particular, Dunja always wears something casual and comfortable in a white combination. The one who always criticizes Dunja's hair is the opera star, always dressed carefully, paying attention to each detail, as if she goes for some important meeting. Sonja has a modern style and is the most recognizable by wearing different kinds of sun hats.

Considering the male characters, all of Štefica's men have bad taste, including the Intellectual who wears an old suit and tie. He is unshaved with thick glasses and constantly drinks alcohol and smokes. The driver, a non-talkative person, wears a leather jacket with jeans and sports shoes. He is also unshaved and only concerned about smoking a cigarette after he did not please Štefica. The hulk, as the biggest hairy macho man who enters Štefica's apartment, has a checked suit and briefcase with funny details, such as a golden chain around his neck and “tiger underwear.” After he enters hilariously in the apartment:

The hulk: Where is your aunt?

Štefica: In Bosanka krupa.

The hulk: Good, I don't want people to disturb me while I am working. Are you a student?

Štefica: No

The hulk: Good. I don't like women who are studying.¹⁹⁵

In Dunja's circle of male protagonists Mik has the most interesting style. A hippy veteran who participated in the 1968 "revolution" with Dunja, Mik files through Dunja's terrace usually half naked with only a leather bolero above, persistently asking her for money. In the film he is known as the soloist of the ex Yugoslav band *Bijele strijele*.¹⁹⁶ The most interesting scene is the night where he gathers his hippy friends on Dunja's terrace in order to celebrate the year of Lenin's death. Sale and Pipo have no particular taste. Sale is into the casual look, the same as Dunja, while Pipo prefers sports style due to his exercising. The doctor and his young mistress wear elegant clothes, though they are having dinner in Dunja's apartment.

Dunja: First you said they just are coming for a drink. Now it is already dinner. Do they have to come?

Sale: Listen. It turned out this way. I met a man and said if they could sometime come for dinner. He said they are free tonight. What could I do? Don't you get that only through him we can get a car.

Dunja: Isn't he a doctor?

Sale: Yes, but man who could get us a car has hemorrhoids and is his patient. Listen, it won't take long this dinner. Everything will be OK. Give me a kiss...Dunjica...give me a kiss...Dunjica.¹⁹⁷

The Aunt from Bosanska Krupa usually wears the national costume with golden jewelry. She is a seamstress who owns a wedding dress shop in the centre of Zagreb. Her character is frequently creating humor in the film by people's stories. When Štefica is watching TV, and is intrigued by the commercial promoting a school for foreign languages, she asks her aunt:

Štefica: Aunt, how do you say in English (krvna grupa)?

Aunt: blood type. Why you ask? The blood type is very important. I have B and I never forget that. Everybody should know his Blood type in native and in foreign language. Many died because they did not know their blood type. And later they were frustrated. But it was too late then.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.24.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.19.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.50.

Considering the scenery of the film, Grlić in his 1985 interview explains its authentic character, where Štefica's flat contained too many kitsch objects. Therefore, the film team had to make a selection.¹⁹⁹ In the film, Štefica's apartment is full of old tapestry, unnecessary books and photographs, dolls and material from the Aunt's wedding dress shop with old fashionable furniture. This could also be seen in Marijana's flat, which looks like an overcrowded one room space, where the ceiling could crumble. Dunja's apartment includes a modern studio flat with big terrace as an existing interior in the center of Zagreb.

The apartment was improvised, because we had problems finding a flat with such a terrace in the centre. We checked around five hundred apartments with terraces, and all of them had a kind of inferiority for the shooting. Therefore, we decided to build the studio flat on one of those terraces in the centre of Zagreb. We also wanted to add the Cathedral in the film in order to link it with Štefica's life, in one quite and invisible sense.²⁰⁰

Other locations of Zagreb are seen in the scene when Dunja and Pipo are walking through Zrinjevac, which is the central park in Zagreb, as well as the ending scene of Štefica and Mr. Findler, in a street with a tram station including one of the main squares in Zagreb. However, it has to be noted that during the film some commercial products are also promoted, such as TV commercials with *Sirela cheese* from Bjelovar, or women's fashion magazine *Burda* as part of Marijana's advice for Štefica.

Pipo: Do you know that we have *Paris* cookies? We have *Medo*, too. Do you want? Take it?
Dunja: Leave it now.²⁰¹

The film concludes with the last scene of two happy endings with a song performed by Đimi Stanić, one of the popular contemporary singers from the former Yugoslavia: "*All the time our blest is night, Love and sweet delay. I've met a gaze divine. In the Jaws of Life. My love, kiss me please. In the jaws of life.*"²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Kunovski, p. 133.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.48.

²⁰² Goulding, p.173.

Conclusion

Film as a visual art is not only field of the filmmakers and its audience, but it is a medium that has potential use for many professions including historians. However, taking a film as a historical document has always been difficult task for any historian. The reasons are multiple. As Rosenstone explains, the nature of historians is to trust written history rather than a filmic one: “You need more than words on a page to understand how film presents the world of the past.”²⁰³ Whether the film depicts the contemporary of the past or the contemporary of the present that latterly reflects the past, it includes many aspects, including studies including of the film industry within institutional politics. This thesis was an attempt to provide contemporary picture of Yugoslav socialist society in the 1980s on the basis of one particular film that best captures the spirit and the mentality of the society about the country that disappeared.

In this thesis I provided an aspect of everyday life on the basis of the film, bringing in the connection between film and history. Defining everyday life generally creates several issues. It can mean consumer society or it can mean depicting contemporary issues in the society, like the film I have examined in the thesis. In particular this film reflects gender issues in Yugoslav society of the time. Second, the film portrayed the national questions through characters representing multinational Yugoslav state. Third, the film also made fun of members of contemporary Yugoslav society, such as intellectuals and provincials. Lastly, the film as a visual art portrayed fashion and interior in the 1980s style, as well as everyday gossips and commercial products. In sum, the aim of the thesis was an attempt to show how film as a historical document could be understood as portraying everyday life of Yugoslav society.

²⁰³ Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on film/films on history*, Longman/Pearson, New York, 2006 p.1

The thesis confronts many issues, such as entering into world of film including the *story behind the camera*, where censorship and existing authorities play crucial role for approving the *life of the film*. By combining various primary documents and secondary sources, in my thesis I elaborate the way in which films were depicting everyday life, including conditions under which they were made. As such I had to portray the issue of censorship as specific in the Yugoslav case, as Goulding states in the title of his book "*Liberated cinema.*" The chapter on *political and social censorship* reveals the story of how banned film produced in 1970s lived double life. Films banned for public screening in the country, while being shown famous European film festivals demonstrated Yugoslavia's liberal of the system in comparison to other Communist countries. Specific of Yugoslav cinema, SIZ cinematography, as part of the self-management system, turned out to be a "fake" system that did not succeed in soliciting sufficient financial support in part because the audience lacked interest in domestic cinema for multiple reasons - TV, new life styles and the attractiveness of foreign film. However, there were so called cult films that were seen by a broad audience and did portray controversial subjects within contemporary issues or envisioned the Yugoslav past in humorous sense.

The decades of the 1970s and 1980s are hard to distinguish for many reasons, particularly because the directors who started their career in the 1970s revitalized film in the 1980s. Nevertheless, cinema production in 1980s is described as *survival era*. As films produced in the period were not politically provocative, but indirectly criticized the socialist state, one would argue about the liberal time of those years of the *dying state*. Such a paradox was common for Yugoslav cinema industry. The emphasis was on official propaganda created after death of Tito, in order "not to let the boat to sink."

As Rosenstone notes, “film is not history in traditional sense, but it is kind history of nonetheless.”²⁰⁴ He emphasizes that film may change the way historian see and describe the past. Therefore, historians try to look at film with historical judgment to see how it fits into “rules and conventions” in order to construct the past.²⁰⁵ According to him, accepting film makers as historians is equal accepting new sort of history.²⁰⁶ However, in my opinion Grlić's film best captured the spirit of the 1980s in any sense. Therefore, the main protagonist of the thesis was film *In the jaws of life*, which emerged from a fiction book, in order to portray contemporary reality. The director Grlić followed two plot-lines, two parallel stories of both Štefica and Dunja, and transformed Dunja's reality into Štefica's reality. His “play” alludes to exactly contemporary reality. Therefore, I analyzed the film including many aspects that it reflects. One theme is a stereotype reflected this as main preoccupation of a modern woman. In my opinion, life is patchwork of “small meaningful things,”²⁰⁷ such as relationships, gossips, trashy magazines, TV commercials, fashion, contemporary books attacked by the authorities, believing in hippy culture, nationalism, jokes, and at the end popular trashy TV serial. That is pretty well presented in the film.

Duda depicted everyday preoccupations of the ordinary man, which primarily refers to affording a car, decorating apartment with all new technology appeared in the society including TV and computers, as well as leisure activities such as tourism and shopping abroad. As such, it reveals living standard in Croatia as part of consumer society. As Duda states: “historiography of the twentieth century did not enlarge the boundaries into new scientific fields such as everyday history and its incomprehensible meaning, which in Croatia unfortunately, are not unfamiliar.”²⁰⁸ Therefore, I would like to use his quote in order to add that this was first attempt to elaborate a film as a part of historical studies of Yugoslavia.

²⁰⁴ Rosenstone, p.158.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 159.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p.160.

²⁰⁷ Rajko Grlić, personal interview, Zagreb, 4 May 2009.

²⁰⁸ Duda, p.6

Although I have depicted only one film, the rich and specific Yugoslav cinema demands further exploration by the historian, a field that was thus received too little attention. On that account, this thesis offers a way to tackle everyday history in former Yugoslavia as field of both interest and research.

Filmography

- Balkanski špijun* [Balkan spy] by Dušan Kovačević and Božidar Nikolić, 1984
- Bitka na Neretvi* [*The Battle on Neretva*] by Veljko Bulajić, 1969
- Dečko koji obećava* [*Promising boy*] by Miša Radivojević and Nebojša Pajkić, 1981
- Grad* [The City], by Kokan Rakonjac, Marko Babac and Živojin Pavlović, 1963
- Kako je propao Rokenrol* [The breakdown of Rock' n' Roll], by Goran Gajiz and Zoran Peso, 1989.
- Oktoberfest* [Octoberfest], by Dragan Kresoja, by 1987
- Okupacija u 26 slika* [Occupation in 26 pictures], by Lordan Zafranović, 1978
- Partizani* [Partisans] by Stole Janković, 1974
- Petrijin vijenac* [Petra's wreath], by Srđan Karanović, 1980
- Prosjaci i sinovi* [*The Paupers and the Sons*] TV serial, by Antun Vrdoljak, 1972
- Rani snijeg u Munchenu* [Early snow in Munchen] by Bogdan Žižić, 1984
- Ritam zločina* [Rhythm of the crime] by Zoran Tadić, 1981
- San o ruži* [*The dream about the rose*] by ZoranTadić, 1986
- Samo jednom se ljubi* [The melody Haunts My Revari], by Rajko Grlić, 1981
- Sezona mira u Parizu* [Peaceful season in Paris] by Predrag Golubović, 1981
- Sjećaš li se Dolly bell* [Do you remember Dolly Bell] by Emir Kusturica, 1981
- Sutjeska* [Sutjeska] by Stipe Delić, 1973
- U raljama života* [In the Jaws of Life] by Rajko Grlić, 1984
- Užička republika* [Republic of Užice] by Žika Mitrović, 1974
- Zabranjeni bez zabrane* [Banned without a ban] by Milan Nikodijević, Dinko Tucaković, Miša Mogorović, 2006
- Živa istina* [True fact] by Tomislav Radić, 1972
- Živeti kao sav normalni svijet* [To live as normal world does], by Miloš Radivojević, 1982
- WR-Misterije Organizma* [WR- Mysteries of the Organism] by Dušan Makavejev, 1971

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Ibid, *Tito i film*, [Tito and film], Filmska kultura: Zagreb, No. 124, 1980

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