

# HYPERKINO



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# ÎN LOC DE EDITORIAL

Marian Țuțui

**H**yperkino este revista Departamentului Cinematografie, fotografie, media (Regie de film și TV, Imagine de film și TV) a Facultății de Arte a Universității Hyperion din București. Am optat (cel puțin deocamdată) pentru editarea ei în engleză și română pentru a fi deopotrivă accesibilă cât mai multor doritori de a scrie articole științifice iar pe de altă parte pentru a face revista accesibilă inclusiv peste hotare.

De ce *Hyperkino*? În primul rând numele conține o parte din numele universității, *Hyperion*, care la rândul său era numele unui titan și numele protagonistului poemului epic *Luceafărul*. A doua parte, *kino*, este o referire

evidentă la cinema. Pe de altă parte, din perspectivă etimologică *Hyperkino* conține o referire la o noțiune precum metacinema, adică mai mult de cât cinematografia, incluzând și domenii conexe precum fotografia, așa cum o face și departamentul nostru. Titlul indică deci o deschidere, o viziune cât mai largă asupra celei de-a 7-a arte.

Revista se adresează deopotrivă studenților și cadrelor didactice, atât în calitate de cititori, cât și ca autori de articole de cinema care să fie publicate. Evident, revista este deschisă studenților și cadrelor didactice și din alte facultăți și universități, de fapt tuturor celor care propun spre publicare articole de cinema cu

caracter științific. Minimal acest lucru înseamnă stăpânirea normelor limbii române sau engleze, cunoașterea domeniului abordat și probarea acestui lucru prin utilizarea unei bibliografii și în primul rând o anume contribuție personală, calitate care îi conferă principala valoare științifică.

Am început publicând 4 articole ale unor profesori de la Facultatea de Arte a Universității Hyperion și 3 articole ale unor tineri absolvenți de facultăți de cinema din Serbia, Bulgaria și Turcia.

Vă așteptăm cu articole și sugestii pentru viitoarele numere.

## INSTEAD OF THE EDITORIAL

**H**yperkino is the review of the Department of Cinema, Photography and Media (Film and TV Directing, Film and TV DOP) of the Hyperion University of Bucharest. We agreed (at least for now) to publish it in English and Romanian in order to be accessible to as many as possible authors of scientific articles and on the other hand in order to make the review accessible even abroad.

Why *Hyperkino*? First of all, the name contains a part of the name of the university, *Hyperion*, which on its turn was the name of a titan and the name

of the protagonist of the famous epic poem "Luceafărul" by Mihai Eminescu. The second part, "kino", is an obvious reference to cinema. On the other hand, from an etymological point of view *Hyperkino* contains a reference to a notion like metacinema, that is, more than cinema, including related fields such as photography, as our department does. The title thus indicates an opening, a broader vision on the 7th art.

The review addresses both students and professors, both as readers and as authors of cinema studies to be published. Obviously, the review is open to

students and teachers also from other faculties and universities, in fact to all those who intend to publish scientific cinema articles. At least this means mastering the rules of the Romanian or English language, knowing the domain approached and proving it by using a bibliography and first of all it requires a personal contribution, quality that gives confers its main scientific value.

We started by publishing 4 articles by professors of the Faculty of Arts of Hyperion University and 3 articles by young graduates from cinema faculties from Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey.

# ELEMENTS OF JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY IN MODERN HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

Mihai Mănescu

## Introduction

*"A man tells his stories so many times that he becomes the stories. They live on after him, and in that way he becomes immortal."*

*Will Bloom (Big Fish: 2003, directed by Tim Burton)*

I have always been fascinated by stories that have influenced people throughout time. My dream is that one day I will be able to create such a story in a film that I will make myself. Talking with several professionals from the industry, I understood that in order to create unforgettable films I first have to understand something fundamental: How to create a story that will touch millions of hearts and will make audiences from all over the planet empathize with the protagonist. Obviously, this is not an easy thing to achieve, as I believe that the one element that is lacking in most of films is

depth and a powerful message. After looking at filmmakers such as Charles Chaplin, Francis Ford Coppola, Stanley Kubrick and many others I started reading about mythology and psychology. When I first encountered Carl Gustav Jung's theories regarding the Collective Unconscious and his Archetypes I knew that this was a first step in understanding how to create stories that resonate on a deeper, more profound level. Reading the book *Jung & Film*, edited by Christopher Hauke and Ian Alistair, I started to find several connections between Jungian Archetypes and Modern Cinema. Hence I began researching this area and found several studies that confirm my observations were correct, such as Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces* and Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey*. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to explore the mechanics of film narrative and to find

out how it is possible for some films to make the audience fully empathize with the story presented on screen. The usage of Jungian concepts in films can be perceived as creating a psychological connection with the visuals and story of a film which then through establishing an emotional link between the unconscious and the images on screen, offers an experience where the audience feels transformed or enlightened. By doing an interdisciplinary study exploring Jungian archetypes and film narrative techniques, I will show how these archetypes have flourished in the cinema of the last three decades, being conscious and unconscious projections of the collective unconscious that serve to personify central social and other struggles in a mass medium that entertains as well as instructs. Hence, I will show how films constitute modern forms of myths, showing our reaction

to ourselves and the miracles of our life.

## Literature Review

Born in 1875, Carl-Gustav Jung lived most of his life in Basel, Switzerland, where he graduated from the medical school in 1895. Amongst the most important moments of his life was his meeting with Sigmund Freud (1857-1939) who became his mentor between 1907 and 1913. By being the apprentice of such an important personality in the field of psychology, Jung decided to forge his own path in psychoanalysis<sup>1</sup>. Combining the study of psychoanalysis with personal mystical and paranormal experiences, Jung became very interested in mythology and the history of religion. He always thought that universal truths can be found in humanity's past. Jung was a remarkable teacher as he left behind a significant number of students who eventually became important scholars in the fields of psychology, mythology and history of religion. Among Jung's students were Marie-Louise von Franz (who carried on his work), Joseph Campbell (one of the most renowned Professors of Comparative Mythology studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century), Mircea Eliade (founder of the first History of Religion department at the University of Chicago) and many others.<sup>2</sup> Jung was interested in everything that connected psychology with religious tradition and mythology. By developing the concept of archetypes and the theory of the psyche's individuation process, Jung created a connection between the principles of psychology and those of myths. Without any doubt, his theories developed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century are the cornerstone for

many studies in different areas: from psychology to mythology and film studies.

Christopher Hauke and Ian Alister in their book *Jung & Film: Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image* explain the Jungian archetypes as "the unconscious structuring principles of the psyche which make our experience, perception and behavior distinctly human. Archetypes are the parts of the psyche which are inherited, instinctual patterns which may be realized in the individual personality. The archetype is a psychosomatic concept, linking body and psyche, instinct and image."<sup>3</sup>

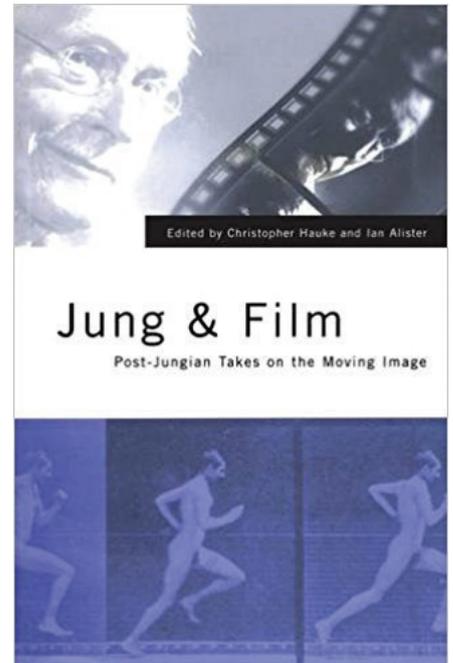
In his essential comparative study of mythology, American Professor Joseph Campbell describes the archetypes as being essential for the story just like the limbs and organs are necessary for the human body. The universality of the archetypal patterns makes it possible for any human, regardless of race or culture, to understand a story. The great storytellers use archetypes in order to recreate experiences that can be recognized by anyone.<sup>4</sup>

The archetypes don't have a fixed part in a story. If a character is identified with the Mentor archetype, it doesn't mean that he will be a Mentor throughout the whole story. The archetypes must not be seen as a rigid path that the character must follow, on the contrary. For Russian scholar Vladimir Propp, a well-conceived character is one that passes through several changes shifting from one archetype to another. By looking at the archetype as a narrative function we can observe how a character can have several functions in the same story.<sup>5</sup>

3 Christopher Hauke, Ian Allister, eds., *Jung and Film: Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image* (Philadelphia, PA: Routledge, 2001), p. 244.

4 Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Commemorative edition, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 237-238.

5 Vladimir Iakovlevici Propp, *Morphology of the Folklore* (Bucharest: Univers, 1970), p. 82.



American Screenwriting Professor Stuart Voytila explains in his book *Myths and the Movies* that there is another way to look at the archetypes. They can be aspects of the hero's personality whilst the other characters in the story are the possibilities presented to the hero throughout his journey. These can be good or evil. The hero goes on the story's journey by accumulating energies and features that belong to other characters. The hero learns from other characters and gathers everything that he has learned into one single complete human being.<sup>6</sup>

The Archetypes can be perceived as a symbol for some human features. For Screenwriting Professor Christopher Vogler, the archetypes are different aspects of the complex human personality. For him, there are 7 Archetypes that frequently appear in films: the Hero, the Mentor, the Threshold Guardian, the Shape shifter, the Trickster and the Shadow.<sup>7</sup>

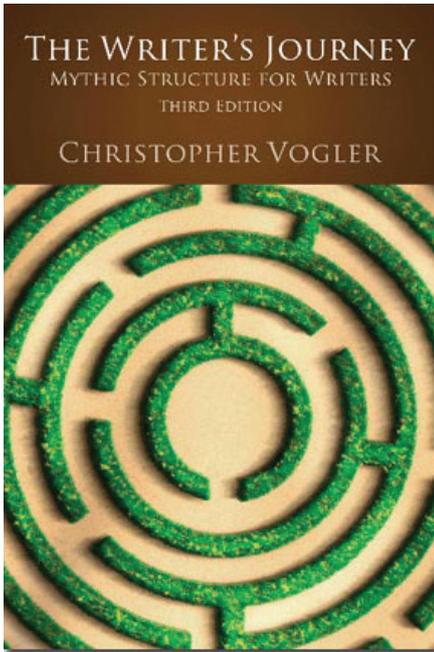
Obviously, there are several other archetypes, each being a symbol for a human feature that can be presented in stories. Folktales and legends are full of archetypal figures: the Big

6 Stuart Voytila, *Myth and the Movies* (Michael Wiese Productions, U.S.A. 1999), pp. 64-67.

7 Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*. 2nd edition (Michael Wiese Productions, U.S.A. 1998), p. 81.

1 Claire Dunne, *Carl Jung: Wounded Healer of the Soul: An Illustrated Biography* (London: Watkins Publishing, 2002), p.5.

2 Christine Maillard, 'Jung' in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, edited by Wouter Hanegraaf in collaboration with Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2006) p. 648.



Bad Wolf, the Fairy Godmother, The Stepmother, The Witch, The Prince, The Princess, The Frog, and many others<sup>1</sup>. Carl Gustav Jung and other psychologists who studied the archetypes (such as Marie Louise von Franz) have identified many other psychological archetypes. In this article, however, I will focus on an archetype that is often present in stories and films: the *Puer Aeternus*. This archetype of the *eternal child* can be easily recognized in stories such as *Peter Pan* but also in real life where we can observe many cases of men and women who refuse to grow up. Such an example is the famous pop-singer Michael Jackson who was known for his Peter Pan syndrome.<sup>2</sup> He claimed that "I am Peter Pan in my heart" and named his enormous property in California, *Neverland Ranch*. There he put up several statues of children, and built a petting zoo and even an amusement park with rides and cotton candy stands.<sup>3</sup>

1 Carol S. Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within* (Harper-Collins Books, New York 1991), pp.5-6.

2 <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/michael-jackson-what-went-wrong-20090730> accessed on 7.04.2016.

3 [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/2003-11-23-neverland-believe\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/2003-11-23-neverland-believe_x.htm) 11.04.2016

## The *Puer Aeternus* Archetype

The *Puer Aeternus* archetype was developed from an episode in Jung's psychiatric career when he was working with a schizophrenic patient aged 17, who had been seduced by her older brother. The patient had the impression that she lived on the moon and had to stay there in order to save women and children from a malevolent vampire.<sup>4</sup> Psychologically speaking, the *puer aeternus* is a concept that applies to adult men who retain the emotional characteristics of adolescents. These types of men suffered from their father's frequent absence during the childhood period or they had completely absent fathers. This has led to a strong bondage with their mothers and caused a lack of masculinity in the *puers*. According to Dr. Peter Millhado, the *puers* suffer "from a most painful and despairing condition. To be on a never-ending journey without a home, to pursue thrills and pleasures relentlessly at the expense of everything and everyone else, to impulsively defy society and women and yet need them desperately, to pay the price that lack of intimacy and commitment demands, to hungrily want success and not attain it, all leads to acute suffering and intense loneliness."<sup>5</sup> Looking at the *puer aeternus*, American psychologist James Hillman links the mythological aspect of this archetype with the *puer-et-senex* thus illustrating the relationship between the divine boy and the wise old man. Hillman claims that the *puer aeternus* is a spiritual phenomenon who lacks the father figure, hence the relationship with the *senex*, a relationship that is often approached in many of the legends and fairy tales throughout history. Just like

4 Ann Yeoman, *Peter Pan and the Myth of Eternal Youth* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1998), p. 7.

5 <http://drpetermillhado.com/puer-complex> 11.04.2016

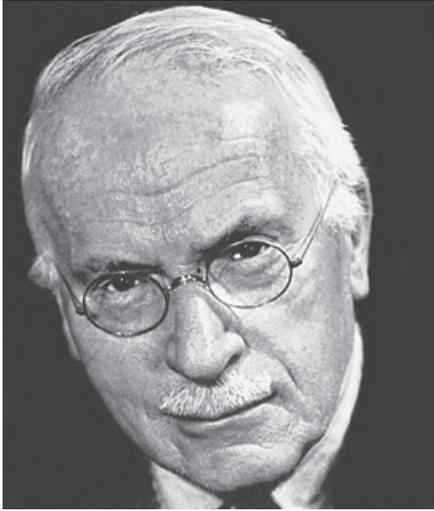
Jung does, Hillman also focuses on the relationship between the son (as a hero) and his mother and explains it as a paradigm of the consciousness development: the spirit (son) against matter (mother). In his study he proposed that "we differentiate *puer*, hero, and son, and ... suggest that the son who succumbs and the hero who overcomes both take their definition through the relationship with the magna mater.. [and] the *puer* takes its definition from the *senex-puer* polarity."<sup>6</sup>

The *puer aeternus* has its origins in the mythological god Pan. According to Hungarian scholar Karl Kerényi who followed the Homeric accounts, Pan was the son of Hermes (a symbol of the trickster archetype) and a nymph and had the body of a human being and the feet and horns of a goat. Seeing her ugly newborn, his mother abandoned him. Thus, Hermes took him to Olympus and named him Pan, from *pandemos*, meaning "of all the people". The reason that this name was chosen is that the gods adored Pan, especially Dionysus, the god of fertility and wine.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, Pan's mother, Dryope, was a nymph connected to the oak, which was a sacred tree for the Great Goddess. This is an obvious link between Pan and the forest, whilst his appearance (hooves, horns and the form of a goat) was associated by the Christians with the Devil. According to Ann Yeoman, Pan was "a god of instinct, a god of nature both within and without. Half-god, half-goat, at home in the woods and craggy mountainsides, often malignant and destructive, sometimes benign and protective, he acquires a dual aspect, combining qualities found elsewhere, in Teutonic and Celtic mythology, of the

6 James Hillman, 'The Great Mother, Her Son, Her Hero, and the Puer' in *Fathers and Mothers*, ed. by Patricia Berry (Dallas: TX, Spring Publishing, 1990), p. 166.

7 Karl Kerényi, *Hermes: Guide of Souls* (Zurich: Switzerland, Spring Publications, 1976), p. 89.



comparison of the three films, all of them have a very different approach: *Hook* is some sort of a sequel to the original Peter Pan, *Finding Neverland* shows how Peter Pan was actually created by writer J.M. Barrie (portrayed by actor Johnny Depp), whilst *Pan* is another approach on the origin of Peter Pan, this time presented in the form of a fairy tale where Peter is an orphan boy who wants to meet his mother and who is abducted by some



Wild Man and the Green Man of Nature, respectively."<sup>1</sup>

Although Pan's originated in the mythology of Ancient Europe, the main source of inspiration for Peter Pan comes from the Italian Renaissance. Here, Pan is depicted in paintings as a universal symbol of the absolute. Pan becomes a symbol for the subconscious and represents the divine flame of the spirit embodied in the material body of a child that refuses to grow up and who sacrifices himself for the others.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, we can see the connections between Pan and J.M. Barrie's original Peter Pan. For the English writer, Peter Pan was a symbol that linked two very different worlds (the harsh real industrialized world and the fantastic world of Neverland, dominated by nature). By using fairy dust and having the capacity of flying (two features that can be associated with the God Hermes), Peter Pan takes children into a world similar to the ones that J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis created (Middle Earth and Narnia).<sup>3</sup>

## Research

The research for my article will consist of an in-depth analysis of three major films that rely on the same Jungian Archetype: the

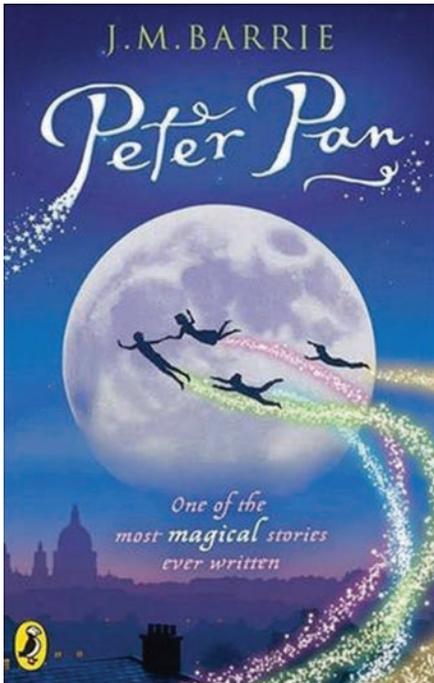
1 Ann Yeoman, *Now or Neverland*, p. 42.

2 Edgar Wind, *Pagan mysteries in the Renaissance* (Toronto:, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958), p. 161.

3 Ann Yeoman, *Now or Neverland*, pp. 84-85.

Puer Aeternus – the Child that refuses to grow up. These three films are Steven Spielberg's *Hook* (1991), Marc Forster's *Finding Neverland* (2004) and Joe Wright's *Pan* (2015). As references when analyzing these films and to show how the usage of Jungian Archetypes is reflected throughout the films narrative and imagery, I will use Carl Gustav Jung's *The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious*; as well as Ann Yeoman's study *Now or Neverland: Peter Pan and the Myth of Eternal Youth* – A Psychological Perspective on a Cultural Icon and Marie Louise von Franz' *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*. Studies in Jungian Psychology. Also, another important reference is the book edited by Christopher Hauke and Ian Alister, *Jung & Film: Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image*. All these studies show the relationship between Jungian Archetypes, characters and stories (both in film and literature).

Because an analysis of the Peter Pan concept is very complex, I will use the three films to illustrate how the use of magical worlds and imports from mythology and archetypes can lead to the success of a film. This is clearly the case for the first two films that I have mentioned above, *Hook* and *Finding Neverland*. On the other hand, the absence of these features, which will clearly be seen in the analysis of *Pan*, results in a complete failure. As we will see from the



evil pirates that take him to the fantastic world of Neverland. As I will show, all three look back to the *puer aeternus* archetype, but from different perspectives.

## Analysis

"Dreams do come true, if only we wish hard enough. You can have anything in life if you will sacrifice everything else for it."  
J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

Throughout the last decades, Hollywood films have tried to transport the audience to spectacular fantasy worlds. Using the latest technology in computer visual effects, filmmakers have tried to persuade their young audience to get immersed in their fantasy worlds via different techniques. However, they are often neglecting an essential one: the story. I believe that nowadays cinema revolves around the concept that stories are tools for special effects and not the other way around as it should be. The filmmakers who understand that story is the fundamental element to make a film successful managed to create amazing stories that are still reference points for younger generations. This is relevant for my analysis, as I will look at the *puer aeternus* archetype which is present in three films focusing on Peter Pan.

In film history, there have been many productions and adaptations of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. The first *Peter Pan* was a silent film from 1924, directed by Herbert Brenon. After that, in 1953, Walt Disney Company created the most well-known adaptation of *Peter Pan*, the animated feature *Peter Pan*, produced by Walt Disney himself. The next attempt to portray J.M. Barrie's hero was in Spielberg's *Hook*, which will be one of the films analyzed in my article. In 2002, the Disney Company released a sequel entitled *Return to Never Land* and in 2003 director P.J. Hogan released *Peter Pan*, a major box-office failure for Universal Studios.<sup>1</sup> The *Peter Pan* source of inspiration continued in 2004 when Marc Forster directed *Finding Neverland*, a very successful film, both in box-office (grossing over 51 million \$ in the U.S.) and in reviews. The film also won an Academy Award for *Best Original Score*. Following a series of animation spin-offs based on J.M. Barrie's character Tinkerbell, Peter Pan's fairy, the last adaptation of *Peter Pan* was Joe Wright's *Pan*, a film that had a very bad box-office (grossing 35 million \$ in the U.S.) and received very bad reviews: 26% rating on review aggregator site Rotten Tomatoes<sup>2</sup> and 36 score on Metacritic.<sup>3</sup>

In *Hook*, Steven Spielberg brings forward a Peter Pan that has grown up and forgot about the magic of Neverland, whereas in *Finding Neverland*, director Marc Forster presents the story of a child that wants to grow up. On the other hand, although it is a story about Peter Pan, Joe Wright's *Pan* leaves out the *puer aeternus* archetype and presents the story of a young boy Peter who is kidnapped by Blackbeard's pirates and taken to Neverland, where he eventually becomes Peter Pan.

Whilst the first two films discuss

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0316396/>, accessed on 18.04.2016

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/pan\\_2015/](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/pan_2015/), accessed on 18.04.2016

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.metacritic.com/movie/pan>, accessed on 18.04.2016



the archetypal theme of I, which can be translated as the young-old duality, *Pan* is different from the other two because it is ignoring the fundamental themes of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

Both in *Finding Neverland* and *Hook*, the narration centres around the father-son relationship, whilst *Pan* focuses on the relationship between Peter and his Mother. However, as Ann Yeoman discusses, in the original *Peter Pan* story, the *puer aeternus* is presented as a spiritual phenomenon and represents a natural stage in man's evolution process. Man must not let himself be dominated only by the young impulses, or by the stiffness of adulthood. For a harmonious existence, man must embrace the *puer-et-senex* unity as a manifestation of the duality that lies in every human being.<sup>4</sup> Looking at Spielberg, the *puer-et-senex* archetype can be encountered throughout his whole filmography, not just *Hook*. It is a known fact that the American director, born into a family of Jews, had a hard childhood where the absence of a father influenced his personality. In many of his films, the parents (especially fathers) are distant from their children, absent or

<sup>4</sup> Ann Yeoman, *Now or Neverland: Peter Pan and the Myth of Eternal Youth*, pp. 22-23.

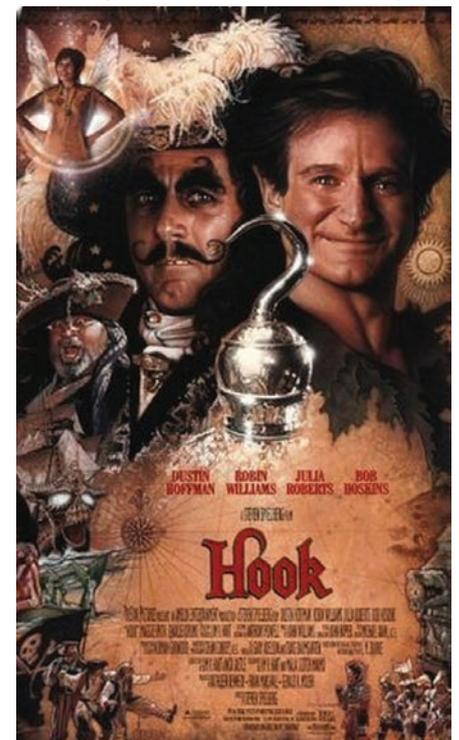


careless. In *Hook* Peter Banning, who is the adult Peter Pan, is a successful businessman. He is so occupied that he doesn't have any free time to spend with his own children. In *E.T.* (1982), the father of main character Elliot is fully absent and this has a strong impact on the character's evolution. *Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade* (1989) is the most profound of the trilogy because it presents in detail the tense relationship between Indy and his father (who is more preoccupied with his work than with his son). In *Empire of the Sun*, Christian Bale's kid character Jamie gets separated from his parents and ends up living through the atrocities of the War between Japan and China. Finally, in *Artificial Intelligence* (2001), Spielberg presents the story of a robot child programmed to love who is then abandoned by its foster parents. The robot, David, wants to become a real boy in order to be accepted into the family. On this whole background, Spielberg builds his own version of J.M.

Barrie's Peter Pan.<sup>1</sup> If the *puer-et-senex* archetype is present in many of Spielberg's films, this is not the case for Marc Forster or Joe Wright. Forster's films are very different from *Finding Neverland*, the only exception being the adaptation of *The Kite Runner*, where the main protagonists are children. The portrayal of the *puer-et-senex* archetype can only be found in *Finding Neverland*, as *World War Z*, *Quantum of Solace* and *Monster's Ball* are just a couple of examples from Forster's directing career showing the major story differences approached by the German director. The same happens with Joe Wright. Looking at his filmography, we see that he mostly directed TV Mini Series and his films revolve around adaptations of famous novels such as Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*,

1 Michel Le Gall & Charles Taliaferro, 'The Recovery of Childhood and the Search for the Absent Father' in *Steven Spielberg and Philosophy: We're Gonna Need a Bigger Book*, ed. by Dean A. Kowalski (Kentucky, IL: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008) pp. 38-39.

Ian McEwan's *Atonement* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Except the fact that these films are all adaptations, there is no common element that shows how the *puer-et-senex* archetype is essential to Wright's filmography. In *Hook*, the main character Peter Banning is way too busy with his career and does not care about his family's needs. In ignoring his children, he reflects the *senex* archetype in opposition with the *puer* one. He forbids his children to be free and always tries to make them understand that they have to become responsible and mature (both features of the *senex*). However, Peter Banning's life is changed when his children are kidnapped by Captain Hook. So, he must go to Neverland in order to rescue them. Eventually he finds out that he is, in fact, an adult Peter Pan who has given up on Neverland in order to build a family and to become a father. Hence, throughout the story we observe the evolution of the main character from a pure *senex* archetype into a *puer* one. By becoming Peter Pan once again, Peter Banning rediscovers his own true identity, that Divine Child that is specific to the *puer aeternus* archetype. The script is well-written and although it is not as complex





JACK: Yeah, junk bond. [Jack throws his ball towards the ceiling of the plane, causing the oxygen masks to drop and scare Peter]

PETER: What in the hell is the matter with you? When will you stop acting like a child?

JACK: I am a child.

PETER: Grow up!

Hence, we see how Spielberg clearly illustrates the *puer-et-senex* archetypal opposition in just a couple of well written lines. Also, when arriving in Neverland, Banning is told by Rufio that "All grown-ups are pirates... We kill pirates." That means if adults are pirates, Peter cannot rescue his children unless he reclaims his childhood and Peter Pan identity. As Tinkerbell tells him "that place between sleep and awake, the place where you can still remember dreaming" shows Peter Banning that he has to recover his dreams and let go of his adult behavior in order to learn how to fly and defeat Captain Hook.<sup>1</sup>

Looking at *Hook* from a philosophical perspective, authors Michel Le Gall and Charles Taliaferro argue: "From a Socratic point of view, why should one have reverence for those who are older? We suggest that one of the reasons lies behind the lesson Peter learns in *Hook*: Peter recovers his youth. In a sense, then, one reason for a young person to respect an older philosopher (and this can cover 'all lovers of wisdom') is that he or she has been younger longer."<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, I believe that *Hook* is the story of Peter Banning's redemption. It is a fable talking about the journey taken by Banning in order to reclaim his past as Peter Pan, saving himself and his family by rediscovering his inner child. I believe that we can consider this film a moral lesson for our time, a period dominated by hard-work, stress and insecurity. As we live in a period

<sup>1</sup> Michel Le Gall & Charles Taliaferro, 'The Recovery of Childhood and the Search for the Absent Father', p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Le Gall & Charles Taliaferro, 'The Recovery of Childhood and the Search for the Absent Father', p. 48.



as other Spielberg films, it has touching moments that remind the audience why the director chose Peter Pan as his theme. For example, in the beginning of the film we observe a scene

between Peter Banning and his kid, Jack. As they head towards London we hear the following exchange:

PETER BANNING: Jack, my word is my bond.



of darkness, Hook reminds us to return to our childhood and discover the *puer aeternus* lying dormant inside our souls. The film has a lot of color and energy, and turned into a successful Hollywood blockbuster.

The conflict between maturity and childhood which is present in J.M. Barrie's novel, as well as in Jung's concept of *puer aeternus* is suggested in *Finding Neverland* by the discussion between the characters of Johnny Depp and Dustin Hoffman.

It is interesting to mention that Dustin Hoffman plays the part of a grumpy old theatre director, resembling his part played in Spielberg's film *Hook*, where he gave life to Captain Hook himself. I believe that this is not a coincidence. In the dialogue between Barrie and the Director we see how the latter gives the writer a solution to create a very successful play by emphasizing the word "Play". This is a subtle way for Forster to illustrate how a great masterpiece can only be created by an artist who manages to perfectly communicate with his own imagination.

In philosophy, there is a concept referring to the playful side in man, a concept that can be closely related to the *puer aeternus* archetype. This is the *homo ludens* and it comes from the book with the same name, written by Dutch historian Johan Huizinga in 1938. Huizinga suggests that to play is necessary for the condition of the human being and is an essential element in human culture. Huizinga identifies 5 features of the play concept:

1. Play means freedom;
2. Play does not show real life;
3. Play is different from the ordinary life by location and duration
4. Play creates order and is order. Play requires absolute and supreme order.
5. Play is not connected with any material interest no profit can be generated from it.<sup>1</sup>

By this concept, I believe that Huizinga confirms the theories of J.M. Barrie regarding the necessity of play and childhood for a spiritual evolution of mankind. On the other hand, director Marc Forster perfectly depicts the theories of Huizinga by a subtle directorial trick. He creates a sequence which uses parallel cutting between the real and the fantasy world, in the moments when James Barrie plays with the four brothers. This is similar to the narrative style of Tim Burton's *Big Fish* (2003), a film that also insists on the importance of imagination in the life

1 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1992), pp. 8-13.

of grown-up men. Thus, *Finding Neverland* combines the grey real world of 20<sup>th</sup> century London with the colorful fantasy from J.M. Barrie's mind. This can also be exemplified by the scene that follows a fight between James and Mary (his wife). As they separate, they go into two different bedrooms: she enters a bleak room and he goes into a fantastic world, Neverland.

The finale of the film allows us to draw some important conclusions. Forster shows how both children and adults alike become charmed by visions of Neverland, a metaphor for Eden. Both worlds have been lost in the past, and wait for us to recover them in the future. After all, Peter Pan is just a fairy tale, but it is also an allegory for one essential thing — the redemption, the restoration to perfect innocence. *Finding Neverland* encourages us to hang on to the ability to believe in profound mysteries even as we go on with our adult lives. It charms us to continue to hope and to believe in unseen things, no matter what harsh realities we have to face in this world.<sup>2</sup>

The third film of my analysis, one that is completely different from the first two is *Pan*, directed by Joe Wright. Looking at the dull script of *Pan*, we can easily understand the importance of depth in a story, especially in a Peter Pan one. As film critic Mike McGranaghan calls it, *Pan* "takes a character whose appeal rests in his simplicity and meaning, and drops him into a soulless special effects extravaganza".<sup>3</sup> The main story revolves around characters which appear in the original J.M. Barrie story. Peter is a London orphan boy who lives in the harsh days of the Second World War. He is abducted by Blackbeard's pirates and taken to the strange world of Neverland where he has to discover his true identity as the Pan.

2 <http://www.lookingcloser.org/2004/12/finding-neverland-2004-2/>, accessed on 10.04.2016

3 <http://aisleseat.com/pan.htm> accessed on 11.04.2016



Also, in contrast with the previous two films, *Pan's* protagonist wants to discover his mother instead of his father. This brings us to a major problem regarding the original *puer-et-senex* archetype. By changing the father figure to the mother figure, Wright fundamentally changes the original background of the Peter Pan symbolism.

The shift in the parent figure transforms the *puer-et-senex* archetype into Carl Gustav Jung's mother complex. For Jung, the mother complex is "a potentially active component of everyone's psyche, informed first of all by experience of the personal mother, then by significant contact with other women and by collective assumptions. The constellation of a mother complex has differing effects according to whether it appears in a son or a daughter."<sup>1</sup>

The archetypal change adds to

other changes that Wright did in the *Peter Pan* lore. As critic Felix Vasquez claims, "Nothing about "Pan" really understands the idea and concept behind Peter Pan, as it presumes fairy dust is the key to Peter's ability to fly, turns Peter in to some hybrid of magical characters and even turns Tinkerbell in to a very minor character tacked on for a cameo."<sup>2</sup> With a beginning resembling Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and continuing with character Hook being a hero that gives no hint that he might once become J.M. Barrie's villain and with a Neverland that is bleak, harsh and left without magic and color, *Pan* gives the impression that the director didn't even read or understand J.M. Barrie's novel. Even if both *Pan* and *Hook* had negative reviews, the latter is still considered a classic, even though it is not the best film Spielberg has done in his career.

My belief is that *Hook* gained its reputation because Spielberg was faithful to the original Peter Pan archetype and story, even if he created some sort of a sequel. Wright's prequel changes the fundamental archetypal mechanics, lore elements and therefore changes the story dynamics to the point where audiences are caught off-guard and may feel cheated. Ultimately *Pan* focused on visuals as it is a fantasy adventure with a lot of special 3D effects that invites its audience to embark on an awfully big adventure. Unfortunately, it "lands with a dull thud where it matters most: our hearts."<sup>3</sup>

## Conclusion

Throughout my article I have shown how the archetype of the *puer aeternus* is still present in contemporary films, just like it existed throughout the history of literature. In contemporary cinema, the archetypes make their presence felt in successful films and can cause a film's failure when they are not there. As my analysis shows, a Jungian archetype such as the *puer aeternus* can be found in various forms in films that have the same theme. When used correctly, these films can become masterpieces that bring tears to our eyes, such as *Finding Neverland*. However, when the writers and directors fail to bring out the depth that the archetype concept add to the story, then the film will be boring, dull and criticized by many, just like we have seen it in the case of *Pan*. Based on the literature review and analysis that I have presented in this article I have reached an important conclusion: the film must rigorously respect the methods of storytelling that were used for thousands of years. Just like Carl Gustav Jung claims it, these archetypal patterns persist in the collective subconscious of every

1 The Jung Lexicon, <http://www.nyaap.org/jung-lexicon/m/>, 'Mother Complex'. Accessed on 12.04.2016

2 <http://cinema-crazed.com/blog/2015/12/22/pan-2015-blu-raydvd-digital/>, accessed on 18.04.2016

3 <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/whats-on/film-news/pan-movie-review-hugh-jackman-10248267> accessed on 10.04.2016

human being. When they are used in a story, human beings will empathize with the story and it will generate emotions. Nevertheless, in today's world, emotion means success and that is the ultimate purpose of every filmmaker.

To conclude, I believe that the last line from *Finding Neverland* is the foundation of all the philosophy regarding the concept of Peter Pan and the *puer aeternus* which I have analyzed in my article:

BARRIE: She went to Neverland, and you can visit her anytime you like. If you just go there yourself.

PETER: How?

BARRIE: By believing. Just believe!"

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**Mihai Mănescu** - scenarist, doctor în cinematografie și media al UNATC "I.L. Caragiale" București, master în istoria religiilor și a ezoterismului occidental al Universității din Exeter, Marea Britanie. Din filmografia sa amintim: "Ultimul Zburător" (2014), "Live" (2015), "Academia Română: 150 de ani în serviciul Națiunii Române". Povestea pasionat de interdisciplinaritate, Mihai Mănescu a tradus în 2013 pentru editura Herald "Eroul cu o mie de chipuri", scrisă de marele profesor american de mitologie Joseph Campbell, carte de referință în studiul mitologiei comparate. În prezent, Mihai Mănescu predă scenaristică la Universitatea Hyperion și este manager de proiect în cadrul Fundației HOSPICE Casa Speranței, contribuind activ la dezvoltarea primului centru socio-medical din România destinat îngrijirii copiilor cu boli genetice, rare, cu prognostic limitat de viață.

# FRAMING THE POST-GEZI ISTANBUL: NEW ISTANBUL DOCUMENTARIES ON THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN PROTESTS

Özge Özdüzen

## 1. Introduction

While the actors/actresses or directors of films are credited, the cities remain the un-credited protagonists of many films in the history of cinema. Since one of the cinematographers of the Lumiere brothers shot a short film in Istanbul in 1896, Istanbul has always been a protagonist of a variety of fictional and documentary films. As the centre of culture, arts and commerce in Anatolia for centuries, Istanbul has also been the centre of not only the previous film industry Yeşilçam<sup>1</sup> but also the

1 Yeşilçam industry is known as the 'Turkish Hollywood' active from the 1950s to the late 1980s.

'New Turkish Cinema'. This paper will portray a specific point in the history of Istanbul's representation, following the Gezi Park Protests<sup>2</sup>, which was one of the most wide-ranging waves of protests in its history. In focusing on the documentary practice in the aftermath of the Gezi Protests, I will define the genre of 'New Istanbul documentaries' following the film *Ekümenopolis* (İmre Azem, 2011) as I argue that *Ekümenopolis* initiated this specific genre. Although the styles of the following 'New Istanbul documentaries' are distinct, they have shared characteristics of bearing witness to the

2 For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to it as the Gezi Protests.

same era of urban decline and social movements in Istanbul.

Similar to Papadimitriou's research (2016: 470) on the forms and political intent of the documentaries that have addressed aspects of financial and political crisis in Greece from 2009 to 2012 in order to explore the ways in which the financial crisis led to political instability and social upheaval, this chapter aims to capture the documentaries on Istanbul from 2011 to 2015. The underlying intention is to map out the relationship between these documentaries with the radically changing urban fabric of Istanbul and people's protests against them. For



the purposes of this paper, I focus on three feature length documentaries namely *Hasret*, *Love Will Change the Earth* and *Trans X Istanbul* that were made after the Gezi Protests as well as *Ekümenopolis*, which was shot and distributed right before and during the protests.

## 2. Background on the Contemporary Istanbul

Istanbul's integration into the capitalist modality beginning after the military coup of 1980, made Turkey open to the rise of neo-liberalism and political Islam in the 1990s and 2000s. In this context, Istanbul has slowly developed into a global city from the 1980s to the 2000s, consolidating its status as a transnational market place for global operations and it became the primary arena of operations for the AKP government<sup>1</sup>. Nowadays, the landscape of Istanbul is marked by vast numbers of large shopping malls (Ertekin, Dökmeci & Ünlükara, 2008; Arslan, Sezer & Işığçok, 2010), gated communities (Geniş, 2007; Akgün & Baycan, 2011), and luxurious hotels (Özer & Saldamlı, 2015). 'The transformation in Istanbul under the banner of "renewal" went hand in hand with the decay of the old neighborhoods and the aggressive and rapid destruction

and replacement of their communities, while the city center focused on creating new shopping quarters and themed streets for the new consumers, tourists, and yuppies' (Erek & Köksal, 2014: 304). In addition to the neo-liberal agenda of the current government, the renewal of Istanbul also meant Islamising it.

The globalisation process in Istanbul could be defined as an 'Islamic global city project' centred on Islamising the City, especially in its current day (Öktem, 2011: 35). The Islamic global city of Istanbul implied the increasing penetration of mosques in the centres and new centres, the boom of the neo-Ottoman style, especially within the interiors of hotels and other spaces and the lessening numbers of alternative spaces for different religious or ethnic groups as well as sub-cultural communities, other than Sunni Turks. These Islamic spaces are mixed and are in harmony with the 'Western' style shopping malls, studios, concert and convention venues, and chain stores.

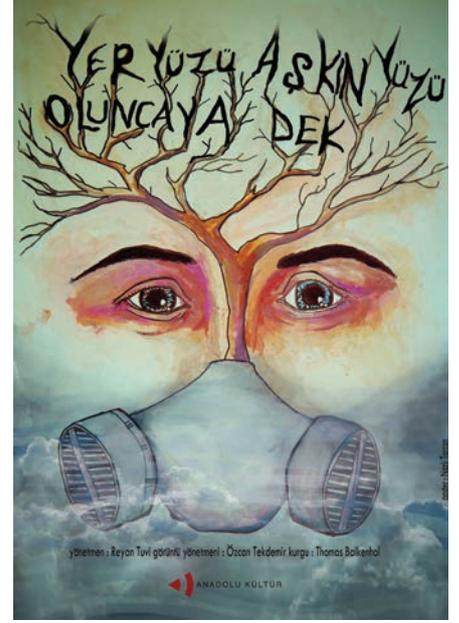
As a response to these developments, Istanbul has been home to many social movements in its history and one of the peaks of these movements was the period after the representation crisis in 2011 across the Arab peninsula (which resulted in the Arab Spring) and the Western global cities (which led to the Occupy movements). As a response to

the authoritarian turn in Turkey, Istanbul has become a city of social movements in the 2010s. The peak of these social movements was the Gezi protests, which began on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May and lasted until the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 2013. It was primarily a response to the AKP government's intention to remove the Gezi Park in order to build the Ottoman Style Artillery Barracks instead of the park. It was primarily a reaction to the commercialization of urban spaces in Istanbul, but generally speaking it became a wide-ranging response of a diversity of communities across Turkey against the increasing authoritarianism of the AKP government. In parallel with these developments, there are many recent films that represent the changing façade of Istanbul and people's resistances against it.

## 2. Documentary cinema in Turkey and the New Istanbul Films

While the history of 'fictional' cinema in Turkey has attracted national and global attention, documentary cinema in Turkey has only recently been acknowledged. Candan (2014) describes the documentary cinema in Turkey as 'the red-haired stepchild' of Turkish cinema, condemned to invisibility and triviality for a long time. However, documentaries are now visible more than ever before, especially since the

<sup>1</sup> AKP's (Justice and Development Party) has been the main governing party in Turkey from 2002 onwards.



1990s (Candan, 2014: 113). This is partly because of the increasing numbers of documentaries being made, growing numbers of film festivals such as the specific documentary film festival Documentarist<sup>1</sup> and other similar exhibition and distribution avenues. In addition, the democratisation of Turkey in the early 2000s contributed to this picture as many documentaries were being made about previously taboo subjects such as the Kurdish or Armenian identities and resistances. 'With the proliferation of digital cam-corders and non-linear editing systems from the 1990s onwards, more and more young filmmakers have been making documentary films in Turkey. With this new wave filmmaking, more diverse and critical voices are being heard in documentaries' (Candan, 2014). These filmmakers have delved into taboo issues in Turkey, while also experimenting with new aesthetic forms and go beyond conventional documentary practice. While Candan argues that the dominant mode of documentary cinema in Turkey was quite didactic such as

the TRT<sup>2</sup> documentaries and fell into the expository category of Bill Nichols's terminologies<sup>3</sup>, the newer documentaries narrate more personal stories from Turkey, which also implied experimenting with the boundaries of documentary-making.

Prior the recent increase in the number of documentaries and the growing quality of them, the 'New Istanbul Films' in the New Turkish Cinema point to a new tendency in the cinema of Turkey, as Suner (2010) points out, a pioneer example of which is the *Sommersault in the Coffin* (*Tabutta Rövaşata*, Derviş Zaim, 1996) (Suner, 2010: 142). According to Suner, 'this film and the following 'New Istanbul Films' present two intertwined images of Istanbul: one is the Istanbul that the main character experiences as the physical environment, which is a harsh and disturbing image and tells a story of exclusion; the other is the Istanbul as a rising global city in the international arena' (Suner, 2010: 142-146). Following *Sommersault in the*

2 Founded in 1964, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation is the national public broadcaster in Turkey.

3 Nichols (1991) identified five main documentary modes, the observational, expository, interactive, reflexive and performative. In 2001, he also added poetic into this schema (Nichols, 2001). He wrote that these six modes set up conventions that a given film may adopt and provide specific viewer expectations where they feel having fulfilled (Nichols, 2001: 99).

*Coffin*, *The Third Page* (Üçüncü Sayfa, Zeki Demirkubuz, 1999), *Distant* (*Uzak*, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, 2002) or *Pandora's Box* (*Yeşim Ustaoğlu*, 2008) captured Istanbul's streets and the interiors of houses. In these films, the interiors and exteriors of Istanbul are equally agoraphobic spaces for the characters, while the beautiful images of Istanbul such as the views of the Bosphorus are juxtaposed at the same time. While these fictional films represented Istanbul as a passive city that mostly remained silent in the face of the top-down transformations, the New Istanbul documentaries portray Istanbul not only with its weaknesses, complications and contestations but also with its resilience as a city of resistance.

### 3. Ekümenopolis: Establishing the Genre

In the New Istanbul documentaries, the beauty of Istanbul is still there, but in a more obscure and lifeless way. I argue that *Ekümenopolis: Ucu Olmayan Şehir* (İmre Azem, 2011) created the genre of the 'New Istanbul Documentaries' and that the other documentaries followed its oeuvre, especially following the Gezi protests. The material roots of this genre were already there due to the radical changes in the city's structure, but until the making of *Ekümenopolis*, there were not feature length contemporary

1 The Documentarist commenced in 2007 in Istanbul and it generally takes place each year in June. Its organising committee also organises the Istanbul Doc Days, which showcases documentary films all throughout the year.



films focusing on Istanbul's changing identity. Unlike *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (Fatih Akın, 2005) and other fairly recent documentaries to point to the hybrid identity of Istanbul as in a perpetual state of crossing (Simpson, 2006), *Ekümenopolis* announces the loss of this state due to the irreversible concretisation in the city. Shot on location scenes introduce the urban regenerated sites of Istanbul where the newly rising apartment buildings dominate the whole frame. The film does not only portray the photographic images from the ongoing construction projects of the third bridge and the Marmaray, which accelerated the loss of green spaces in the city, but it also focuses on people's experience with the city. It shows how people got dispersed from their own neighborhoods in Ayazma (which is a central neighborhood) to the lifeless suburbs outside of Istanbul. The film's use of animation and graphic images to support its cause and its experimentation with sound divert the conventional understandings of documentary, especially city



documentaries.

Although the second half of the film represents the first person experience of a family that was sacked out of their houses in Ayazma, the general style of the documentary is quite 'macro' in the way that it appeals to the analysis of the experts more than others. The experts, ranging from academics to architects, speak about the neo-liberalisation of the

urban in Istanbul, which makes the film more of an expository<sup>1</sup> account of these changes, to re-

1 Nichols (1991: 23-33) defines the expository documentaries (the classical mode), which began with John Grierson, relying on the argumentative pitch. In other words the logic of the argument takes priority over the spatial and temporal continuity between shots. It thus emphasizes the impression of objectivity and of well supported argument.

fer back to Nichol's terminology (1991; 2001). The film shows the fragmented nature of Istanbul and Turkey while pointing to the ways in which people are being excluded from their natural habitats through the new urban renewal projects. At the level of story, the film is idealistic, as it provides an anti-neoliberal agenda with regards to the changing façade of Istanbul. Ekümenopolis presents an image of Istanbul unlike any other previous films as it turns the all-too-familiar image of the concrete buildings into a nightmare and chaos. Instead of the private realm such as the interiors of the houses, the film captures people's experiences on the streets. For instance, the majority of interviews used were conducted in the common spaces of gated communities or just outside of these gated communities, where the spectator was able to clearly observe these buildings in the background, from a distance. Although the film follows the particular story of a family from Ayazma and their resistance to the construction company in the second half, it emphasizes collectivity more than the individual stories and thus eschews personal perspectives as it is generally the case with other expository documentaries.

#### 4. Hasret: Longing for the Past of Istanbul

Hasret (Yearning, Ben Hopkins, 2015) is another documentary that captures the changing rhythm and nature of Istanbul in the post-Gezi period. It is a poetic<sup>1</sup> and reflexive<sup>2</sup> documentary on the 'new' Istanbul that chronicles the every day lives of refugees, rubbish collectors, activists, Alawites and cats in Istanbul. For Nichols, 'proposing perspectives and interpretations of historic issues, processes and events, documentary contributes to the formation of memory' (Nichols, 1991: ix). Other than proposing perspectives of the past, some documentaries presents perspectives and interpretations of the present situation in a way as to witness the current happenings in reference to historical processes that happen before the eyes of the director or the participants. Hasret represents the multi-faceted feature of the everyday life in Istanbul through the first person experience of and voice-over by the director himself. The poetic mode of the documentary stems from the use of ghosts or cats or the dead people which results in the frequent loss of historical references, while its reflexive mode results from the satirical presence of the director and his emphasis

on the making of the documentary at a specific time period with a particular crew. The director seems to be dreamy and unrealistic about the future of the documentary, which also becomes a source of frustration for his crew in the making of the film. The second half of the documentary shows the director's efforts of filming after his crew left him and went back to Berlin, which was due to his confusing perspective about the subject and future of his documentary.

Although he seems to be confused about it, the ending product is quite a poetic and political first person portrayal of Istanbul that is defined by its resistance and its marginalised inhabitants. While the camera captures the graffitis and posters from the Gazi and Armutlu neighborhoods, which are two 'revolutionary' Alawite neighbourhoods in the centre of Istanbul, the voice-over remarks: 'This is an Istanbul that most tourist guides and media reporters never cover.' Rather than highlighting the beautiful landmarks of the city, Hasret showcases the underrepresented parts of Istanbul, such as the Gazi, where marginalised identities inhabit. From the point-of-view of Hasret, Istanbul is defined by its resistance to the government and Turkish norms. The director also interviews



people from these Alawite neighborhoods, illegal workers and the activists that resisted during the Gezi Park.

The film portrays the neighborhoods full of concrete blocks after old neighborhoods were knocked down and replaced by the housing blocks. While Hasret captures the lively streets of Istanbul, it also shows the lifeless lives of people in the newly emerging suburbia of Istanbul. The film notes that the boom of construction sector also has consequences for the every day lives and working conditions for many people. For instance, the director goes out to the open-air queues of immigrants on the streets. These immigrants and refugees wait to be recruited daily for the construction sector. The director interviews them and the viewers learn that the Afghans and Kurds fight over daily jobs in the biggest industry of Turkey; the construction sector. The undocumented unofficial workers in Istanbul live like 'ghosts'. Other than people whose ethnicity and work are exploited by others, the director follows the stories of the dead and representatives of a variety of religious cultures that lived side by side in the city for centuries, while also pointing out that religions other than Sunni Islam are slowly dying out in the post-Gezi era. The director follows the suggestions of an old actor, who recommends him to follow the dead of Istanbul, in order to fully understand its history and culture. These details add a playfully serious atmosphere to the documentary. Overall, the importance of this documentary is that it not only benefits from poetic and reflexive modalities in its political perspective on Istanbul and its people, but it also has a vibrant sense of humour.

### **5. Love Will Change the Earth: The Censored images of Istanbul**

Love Will Change the Earth (Reyan Tuvi, 2014) is a landmark not

only in terms of its representation as well as its reception as this documentary announced the beginning of another era of censorship in Turkey. While censorship has always been omnipresent in the history of Turkish cinema and 'has been a matter of policing from the very beginning and it has been one of the major ways the state has intervened in the distribution and exhibition of films (Erdoğan & Kaya, 2002: 53), the density and scope of censorship increased after the Gezi Protests. Love Will Change the Earth was censored in Antalya Film Festival in 2014, which marked the beginning of a more restrictive era in terms of censorship of films in Turkey. The documentary shows that the Gezi Protests burst out of the intention of the public in Turkey to go beyond authoritarian, neo-liberal and the Islamist agendas of the current government. On the one hand, activists boycotted the main symbols of neo-liberalism such as shopping malls. On the other hand, communities created bonds of solidarity with other different people, with whom they did not have any previous bonds. Based on this context, Love Will Change the Earth follows six distinct activists in their engagement with the Gezi Park as a protest space. While one of them represents the Kemalists, another one represents the LGBTI communities in Istanbul. The third one is a member of anti-capitalist muslim organisation, whereas another one is a homeless person. The most central participants of the documentary were a regular student and a nurse that voluntarily cured people who faced state violence during the protests.

In some ways the camerawork and editing were a bit sloppy and sound was at times fuzzy, but Love Will Change the Earth was a vital instance of how people used and experienced Istanbul as a city of resistance in 2013 and fought for claiming their right to their own city. The film uses the evidences from the participants'

engagement with the Gezi Park and other parks and turns them into a linear narrative form. For instance, the documentary starts with the early days of the protests, continues with the first blockage and moves on to the meetings and forums at the Abbasağa Park when the Gezi Park was closed down by the police forces. It concludes with scenes from Berkin Elvan's intensive care in the hospital, who was the 15 year old child that died due to a gas canister months after the protests were over. Although the documentary provided a linear storytelling and an almost amateur use of cinematography, it became a pioneer for the following Gezi films. It also created cultural protests of filmmakers, film critics and juries at the Antalya Film Festival in 2015. Following Love Will Change the Earth, a lot of other films on the Gezi Protests were made and circulated such as Haziran Yangını (The June Fire, Gürkan Hacı, 2015).

### **6. Trans X Istanbul: Portraying the Lives of Transgender Communities**

Trans X Istanbul (Maria Binder, 2014) is different from the abovementioned films as it conceptualises the Gezi not only in its own time span but also by turning the camera to the multi-layered tensions, struggles and counter-existences of transgender communities prior to, during and in the aftermath of the Gezi Protests. In this context, it looks at how the LGBTI communities use the city and how the radical changes have had an impact in their everyday lives. Trans X Istanbul is a brilliant 'personal is political' portrayal of personal stories of transsexual communities, who previously lived in the newly urban regenerated district of Tarlabası in Beyoğlu. It uses a 'first person plural' strategy, which relies on an individual filmmaker's own subjectivity in their own larger collectivities and means that the film engages in more circuitous route



to self-representation (Lebow, 2012: 7-8). In some documentaries, the 'intimacy pact' between a documentary filmmaker and subject feeds into what an audience sees on the screen (Paget & Roscoe, 2006). The pact between the director Maria Binder and the LGBTI rights' activist Ebru feeds the film's pessimist and witty tone and puts the audience at a very dynamic position vis-à-vis the film and the screen. The film's journey is from global city of Istanbul to the bedrooms of the informants, from walking to sensing and mapping the city. It shows how transgender people are discriminated, expelled and have easily been sacked out of their houses in the centre of Istanbul while also capturing their participation in the Gezi Protests. It portrays Istanbul of the transsexual communities and the ways in which their neighbourhoods in Beyoğlu have been gentrified over the course of radical urban regeneration programmes. They have been sacked out of their neighbourhoods, which impacted their personal relationships and social lives, for instance some of them were isolated from their communities. Similar to Spence and Avcı's (2013: 296) rendering of the Prison No: 5 (Çayan Demirel, 2009), Trans X Istanbul

draws on their memories, and attributes absolute authority to their lived experience (through the on-camera attestation of violence and suffering in their new neighborhood in Avcılar). In doing it, the documentary offers us a new truth: a truth which runs counter to the state-sanctioned truth, a truth that is to become part of the public record, for all time.

## 7. Conclusion

While films representing Istanbul have always been an important feature of the cinema in or on Turkey, its representation has changed in the contemporary documentary. The New Cinema in Turkey used Istanbul as a claustrophobic and impartial space while the new Istanbul documentaries engage with it as a city of protests, where its residents struggle to make it a better space. The 'New Istanbul Documentaries' point to an increasing representation for the people who have long been excluded from the mainstream media outlets, even the alternative films. Rather than representing the beauty of Istanbul or focusing on its passivity, these films document the uncanny, deprived, marginalised, underrepresented

Istanbul with an emphasis on how Istanbul-based activists and marginalised communities use it. After Ekümenopolis was widely circulated not only in film festivals but also was shown at the Gezi Park when it was occupied, today there are increasing numbers of 'activist' films being made representing the post-Gezi environment in Istanbul. All of the new Istanbul documentaries address a social and political issue, but they also play around with the conventions of documentary practice by employing a diversity of cinematographic elements such as the use of animation, unconventional sound and music. Although their styles and political intentions are different, these four documentaries represent a specific period in the history of Turkey, that is a more authoritarian period not only in terms of its impact on people but also with respect to the urban structure of Istanbul. The making of these documentaries and their reception in different settings have also been important avenues of discussion as they tend to create public debates around the nature of current problems in Turkey and showed the suppressed possibilities of existence, antagonisms of reality and potential for change.

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**Dr Özge Özdüzen** completed her undergraduate studies and masters, which focused on aesthetics, in the philosophy department at Bogazici University, Istanbul. She continued her studies at the cinema and media research department at Bahcesehir University, while working as a teaching assistant in the media department at Istanbul Bilgi University for three years. From 2012 to 2015, she worked as a tutor in the media department at Edge Hill University in England while doing her PhD on the film festival culture in Istanbul. She contributed for various edited books on the cinema in Turkey and Iran and has recently published on film festivals and social movements in Istanbul. Since 2006, she has also been working as a film critic as a member of SIYAD (Turkish Film Critics Association) and FIPRESCI, writing film reviews for magazines and newspapers in Turkey and the Balkans. In addition, she participated in national and international festivals as a jury member. Her academic interests include, but not limited to audience research, film reception and distribution, political economy of film and media, social movements, documentary studies and the cinemas of the Balkans and the Middle East. Winner of the "Best Critic Award" at Alticine Film Festival, Athens 2015.

# Φ ȘI ESTETICA FILMULUI

Diana Mețiu

Cuvântul "ESTÉTICĂ", conform definiției din Dictionarul Explicativ al limbii române este "știința care studiază legile și categoriile artei, considerată ca forma cea mai înaltă de creare și de receptare a frumosului"\* (1) sau "ansamblul de probleme privitoare la esența artei, la raporturile ei cu realitatea, la metoda creației artistice, la criteriile și genurile artei"\* (2)

Estetica filmului se ocupă, așadar, de esența cinematografului, cum se raportează aceasta la realitate și invers, cum se influențează reciproc, cum se creează, am putea spune, una pe alta. Pentru că, în funcție de ce anume hotărăște valoarea unei opere de artă cinematografică, dacă nu de niște criterii sugerate de realitatea însăși, a fiecărei epoci istorice, mereu schimbătoare, care generează actele creatoare dar și a celor stabile, profunde ale esenței universului în care suntem în permanență co-creatori. "Problema conținutului, problema care hotărăște valoarea operei de artă, nu poate fi însă rezolvată decât pe calea unei juste orientări ideologice și estetice."\* (3).

În acest articol as vrea să mă opresc numai asupra unuia dintre cele două aspecte menționate mai sus, cel al reflexiei legilor existenței în realizarea unor opere de artă cinematografică. Nici un film, ca nici un alt act creator nu este perceput ca frumos, dacă omul, nu îl recunoaște în el însuși. Această recunoaștere nu se produce numai la nivel conștient, ci, mai ales, la nivel subconștient. Ce înseamnă

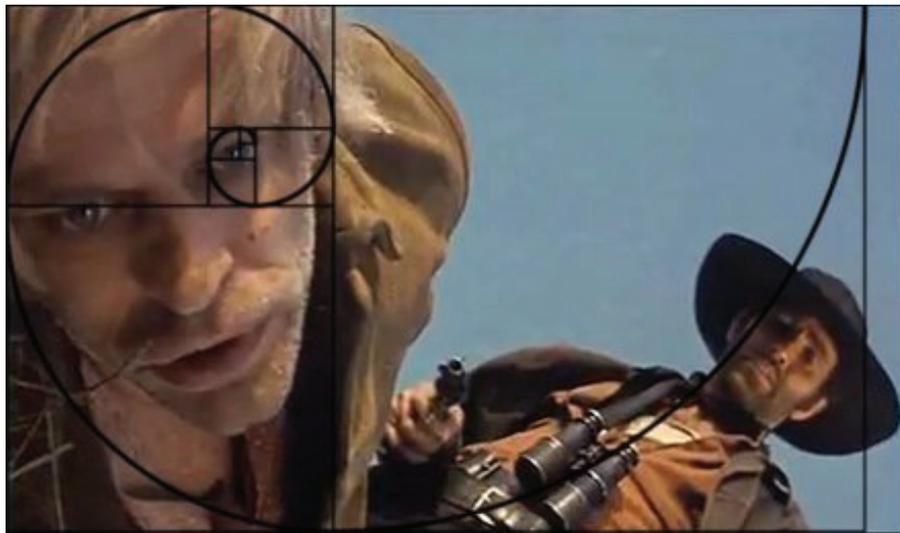


## Matematica în filmul „Va fi sânge”, de Ali Shirazi

această recunoaștere? Reprezintă identificarea legilor după care artistul a creat imaginile filmului sau cu legile firii, cu legile existente deja în natura umană și peste tot în acest univers. Acestea au ajuns la noi, au fost expuse și demonstrate, datorită mai multor izvoare istorice din antichitate, ca mai apoi, să fie preluate în perioada renașterii, avându-i ca promotori pe cei mai mari artiști ai epocii: "arhitecții: Filippo Brunelleschi, Donatello, privit ca întemeietorul stilului florentin (a fost și mare sculptor), Leon Battista Alberti, Bramante (renumit și ca pictor), Andrea Palladio; sculptorii: Lorenzo Ghiberti, care a decorat porțile baptisteriului din Florența, Donatello, Andrea del Verrochio, sculptor și pictor florentin, care a pictat o parte din celebrele fresce din Capela Sixtină de la Roma (+ 1488), Antonio Pollajuolo (pictor și sculptor florentin, autorul monumentului funerar de bronz, al papei Sixt IV din biserică Sf. Petru din Roma), Luca della Robbia, Jean Goujon în Franța, decoratorul palatului

din Paris; pictorii: Giovanni da Fiesole, supranumit Era Angelico, un florentin care a pictat, între altele, frescele din Capela Sfinților Ștefan și Laurențiu din Palatul Vaticanului (+ 1455), cei doi Bellini (Gentile și Giovanni), Luca Signorelli, din școala umbriană, care a pictat frescele eshatologice din Capela Sfintei Fecioare din catedrala de la Orvieto (+ 1523), Pietro Parugino, care a pictat cele dintâi fresce din Capela Sixtina de la Vatican, Sandro Botticelli, Andrea Mantegna din Verona, reprezentantul cel mai ilustru al școlii padovane, Giorgione și Veronese, Correggio, care a pictat cupola baptisteriului și pe cea a domului din Parma, Jean Cousin în Franța, iar în Germania Albrecht Durer, Hans Holbein și Mathias Grunewald, ultimul, un gotic în Renaștere, autorul altarului din Isenheim, la Colmar, în Alsacia."\* (4), ale căror creații sunt prețuite și astăzi ca fiind capodopere universale.

Aceleași legi pe care aceștia le-au aplicat în operele lor sunt legile pe care și marii regizori,



Din filmul „Der Morder des Klan” - regizor Giuseppe Vari

directorii de imagine, scenografiile celebre le-au aplicat în creațiile lor cinematografice. Iar aceste legi nu sunt altele decât cele după care este făcută întreaga creație.

Omul creator nu este altceva decât un foarte bun observator al existenței și un mare imitator, fie că o face conștient, fie la nivel subconștient. O creație cinematografică reușită nu este alta decât aceea în care existența se reflectă cu exactitate. Și când spun existență, nu mă refer numai la niște scenarii de viață, ci la felul în care viața e clădită și organizată. Mai concret: nimic în natura aceasta nu crește haotic, ci după niște legi anume, conform unor coduri numerice. Așa cum nici o lucrare artistică și, implicit, nici un film artistic, nu este realizat haotic, ci după niște legi artistice matematice, pe care regizorul ori le învață la

o instituție de profil ori, pur și simplu, le simte, iar aceste legi învățate la școală sunt aceleași după care este organizat totul în natură.

Omul de știință Max Cohen a emis următoarele cugetări: "Limbaajul naturii este matematică. Tot ce ne înconjoară este pus în ecuație. Toate reprezentările grafice ale unei ecuații, pun în evidență o secvență. Natura este formată din secvențe. Oamenii ce sunt?" Va invita să reflectați la această întrebare. Eu încă mă mai gândesc.....

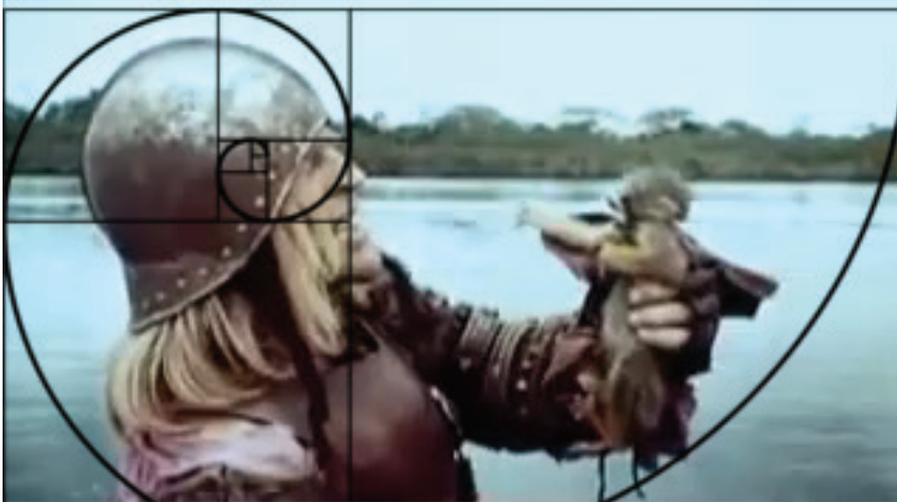
Codul numeric al existenței noastre și implicit, al fiecărui cadru genial de film artistic este cunoscut în artă ca numărul de aur. Aceasta calitate "de aur" este datorată unui număr infinit de zecimale rezultat în urma unui raport, numit tot "de aur"\*(6), care generează o "spirală de aur" \*(7). Aceste

elemente sunt definatorii pentru a face dintr-un simplu cadru de film, un cadru de film genial, dintr-o lucrare artistică, o operă de artă.

Numărul de aur, simbolizat prin litera grecească  $\Phi$  (PHI) este egal cu 1,6180339887... urmând o infinitate de zecimale \*(8) . Proporțiile dintre părțile corpului uman, ale plantelor, ale animalelor, dispunerea planetelor, a galaxiilor, a celulelor, atomilor, toate acestea (și mult mai multe) respectă numărul de aur. Este un veritabil cod al universului.

Cu toate că această a fost folosit din vremuri îndepărtate, alături de alte elemente de geometrie sacră, cele mai vechi exemple fiind tăblițele babiloniene pe care au fost descoperite calcule care utilizau numărul  $\Phi$ , iar cel mai cunoscut exemplu fiind cel al Piramidei lui Keops din Egiptul antic - dacă împărțim înălțimea sa la jumătatea bazei sale, obținem numărul de aur - cel datorită căruia, aceste secrete bine păstrate au ajuns informații de masă, cunoscute tuturor și predate în școli, este matematicianul italian Leonardo Pisano, cunoscut la acea vreme și ca Leonardo Bigollo\*(5) sau ca Leonard de Pise, după orașul natal, dar mai ales, ca Fibonacci (filius Bonacci). După acest din urmă nume, a fost numită și invenția sa, conceptul cu proprietăți remarcabile - matematică, estetică, dar și mistică - Șirul lui Fibonacci, o înșiruire de numere, a căror două cele mai importante proprietăți sunt: prima este că fiecare număr din șir este suma celorlalte două de dinaintea lui și cea de a doua este că raportul dintre două numere succesive, începând cu cel de-al 14-lea element, este egal cu  $\Phi$ . Astfel șirul arată așa: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377, 610, 987, 1597, 2584, 4181, 6765 ..... și așa mai departe.

Șirul lui Fibonacci a mai fost numit și Domnul iepurilor, de la o problemă pe care a investigat-o Fibonacci în anul 1202, în cadrul unui concurs de matematică



#### Din filmul „Cobra verde” - regizor Werner Herzog

condus de imparatul Frederick al II-lea care cerea aflarea raspunsului la intrebarea "Câte cupluri de iepuri obținem la sfârșitul unui an, dacă începem cu un cuplu, care produce lunar un alt cuplu, cel din urmă, devenind productiv luna următoare."

Primul tratat despre numărul de aur a fost scris în 1509 de călugărul franciscan, matematicianul și părintele contabilității, Fra Luca Bartolomeo de Pacioli, cunoscut ca și Luca di Borgo după orașul său natal și ilustrat de plurivalentul genial, Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci – cunoscut ca cel mai mare pictor al renașterii, dar și ca inventator, sculptor, arhitect, om de știință, muzician, matematician, inginer, scriitor, dar și ca medic, geolog, astronom, botanist, istoric și cartograf, paleontolog și chiar antropolog. Colaborarea celor doi s-a datorat faptului că Leonardo da Vinci a fost primul care

a sesizat că părțile care compun corpul uman respectă regula de aur.\*(9)

"Divina Proportione" - acesta este manualul care a revoluționat lumea și, după care, și acum, cei care aleg să-și manifeste creativitatea în orice profesie, îl cunosc sau ar merita să îl știe pe dinafară, așa cum au făcut-o și marii artiști și filozofi ai lumii, care au înțeles că înțelepciunea divină se poate exprima prin elemente de geometrie sacră.

Mari personalități ale cinematografiei universale au respectat legile numărului de aur în creațiile lor artistice, iar, atât publicul cât și specialiștii i-au răsplătit pe măsură. Nu este nevoie să fii învățat aceste legi, ca să știi dacă au fost respectate sau nu. Pur și simplu le simți, pentru că te regăsești în ele sau nu. Omul conține în el toate aceste legi, proporții, raporturi, așa

cum toate elementele din natură o fac. Astfel, simte nevoia, firesc, să le regăsească și în creațiile semenilor lui. Ce alt model estetic decât natura inconjurătoare, ne este mai aproape?

În cinematografie construcția cadrelor se face ca și în pictură, respectându-se aceleași reguli de compoziție. Iar proporția de aur, în toate formele ei, apare în lucrările tuturor artiștilor de talent din acest domeniu. Căci talentul, ca orice calitate naturală a omului, te face să depistezi frumosul și echilibrul din natură și să-l replici în tot ceea ce faci.

**Francisc Ford Coppola**, cel care a reinventat conceptul de filme cu gangsteri, câștigător a două premii Oscar, pe lângă alte șase nominalizări, a trei Globuri de Aur și a șapte premii Taurus, - "The Godfather" / "Nașul", "The Great Gatsby" / "Marele Gatsby". "Demenția 13", "The rain people" / "Oamenii ploii", "The Conversation" / "Conversația", "Apocalypse Now" / "Apocalipsa acum", "The Cotton Club", "Don Juan DeMarco"; **Franco Zeffirelli**, pare-se urmașul lui Leonardo da Vinci, regizorul de film care a realizat și cele mai apreciate unsprezece producții pe scena Metropolitan Opera - "Romeo and Juliet" / "Romeo și Julieta", "The Taming of the Shrew" / "Imblânzirea scorpiei", "Jesus of Nazareth" / "Iisus din Nazaret", "Brother Sun, Sister Moon" / "Frate soare, soră lună", "Hamlet"; **Steven Spielberg**, câștigătorul a trei premii Oscar - "Jaws/ Fălci", "Saving Private Ryan" / "Salvați soldatul Ryan", "Schindler's List" / "Lista lui Schindler"; **Martin Scorsese**, unul dintre cei mai importanți regizori, care a realizat peste cincizeci de filme - "The Departed/ Cârțița", "Goodfellas/ Băieți buni", "Taxi Driver"/ "Șoferul de taxi", "Shutter Island"; **John Ford**, a[reciat ca fiind cel mai bun regizor de western - "The Searchers"/ "Căutătorii", "The man who shot Liberty Valance" / "Omul care l-a ucis pe Liberty Valance", "The quiet man" / "Omul liniștit"; **Frank Capra**, câștigătorul a trei

Oscaruri pentru "You can't take it with you" / "Nu o poți lua cu tine după moarte", "Mr. Deeds goes to town" / "Mr Deeds: Moștenitor fără voie", "It happened one night" / "S-a întâmplat într-o noapte", "It's a Wonderful Life" / "O viață minunată"; **Billy Wilder**, a realizat șaiszeci de filme în cinzeci de ani, obținând multe nominalizări și multe premii - "The Apartment / Apartamentul", "Some Like it Hot / Unora le place jazz-ul", "Sunset Blvd / Bulevardul Sunset"; **Alfred Hitchcock**, părintele thriller-ului - "North by northwest" / "La nord, prin nord-vest", "The Birds / Păsările", "Psycho"; **Stanley Kubrick** - "Paths of Glory" / "Cărrările gloriei", "Spartacus", "Lolita", "Eyes wide shut / Cu ochii larg închiși"; **Akira Kurosawa**, un fel de Hitchcock japonez - "Seven Samurai" / "Cei șapte samurai", "The Hidden Fortress" / "Fortăreața ascunsă"; **Ishirō Honda**, cel mai notabil regizor japonez pentru seria de filme tokusatsu „Godzilla”; **Ingmar Bergman**, nominalizat la 9 premii Oscar - „The Seventh Seal” / "Al șaptelea sigiliu", "Smiles on a Summer Night" / "Surasul unei nopți de vară", "Wild Strawberries" / "Fragii salvatici" și "The Virgin Spring" / "Izvorul fecioarei"; **Yasujirō Ozu**, regizor și scenarist de film japonez cunoscut și datorită tehnicii sale de filmare distinctivă, pe care a dezvoltat-o încă din timpul când făcea filme mute - "Văd că m-am născut, dar...", "Ce a uitat doamna?", "Surorile Munakata", "Orez cu ceai", "Amurg la Tokio", "Floarea echinoxului", "Toamna familiei Kobayakawa", "Gustul peștelui sanma"; **Pedro Almodovar**, unul din cei mai premiați regizori de film într-o limbă străină - "Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios" / "Femei pe punctul de a face o cădere nervoasă", "Átame!" / "Leagă-mă", "Tacones lejanos" / "Tocuri înalte", "Todo sobre mi madre" / "Totul despre mama", "Hable con ella" / "Vorbește cu ea", "Volver" / "Întoarcerea"; **Andrei Arsenievici Tarkovski**, unul dintre cei mai influenți cinești ai erei



Din filmul „Barry Lyndon” - regizor Stanley Kubrick

sovietice și ai întregii istorii a cinematografului - "Andrei Rubliov", "Oglinda", "Călăuza", "Solaris", "Exilul", "Nostalgia", "Sacrificiul"; **Nikita Sergheevici Mihalkov**, laureat al premiului Oscar pentru filmul "Soare înșelător", "Acasă, printre străini", "Piesă neterminată pentru pianină mecanică", "Câteva zile din viața lui Oblomov", "Oci ciornie", "Bărbierul din Siberia"; **Eldar Aleksandrovici Reazanov**, cunoscut pentru filmele de comedie pe care le-a realizat și au devenit foarte populare în Uniunea Sovietică și Rusia - "Noaptea carnavalului", "Balada husarului", "Atenție la mașină", "Incredibilele aventuri ale unor italieni în Rusia", "Ironia sortii", "Idilă la serviciu", "Garajul", și mai ales "Gară pentru doi" și "Fata fără zestre"; **Luc Besson**, unul din exponenții stilului filmic cunoscut ca "Cinéma du look", ce a contribuit la realizarea a peste nouăzeci de filme - "Leon", "Al cincilea element", "Lucy", "Profesionistul", "Mesagerul: Povestea Ioanei d'Arc", "Ultima luptă", "Subway", "Marele albastru", "Nikita", "Atlantis", "Angel-A"; **Richard Linklater**, omul din spatele seriei de succes "Before Sunrise", "Sunset", "Midnight", "Boyhood" / "12 ani de copilarie" și "School of Rock" / "Școala de rock"; **Mike Leigh** - "Mr. Turner" / "Domnul Turner", "Secret and Lies" / "Secrete și minciuni", "Another Year" /

"Un an din viața", "Vera Drake", "Naked" / "Dezgolit"; **Jafar Panahi**, regizorul care redefinesc teme profunde umane ale cinematografului iraniene - "Taxi", "This is Not a Film" / "Acesta nu este un film"; **Werner Herzog**, considerat unul dintre cei mai mari regizori ai Germaniei, ce a portretizat eroi cu visuri imposibile, oameni foarte talentați în domenii obscure sau în conflict cu natura - "Signs of Life" / "Semne de viață", "Fitzcarraldo", "The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser" / "Enigma lui Kaspar Hauser", "Woyzeck", "Where the Green Ants Dream" / "Unde visează furnicile verzi", "Aguirre, the Wrath of God" / "Mânia divină", "My Best Fiend" / "Prietenul meu cel mai bun", "Scream of Stone" / "Strigătul pietrei", "Cobra Verde", "Heart of Glass" / "Inimă de sticlă", "Rescue Dawn" / "Evadare în zori", "My Son, My Son, What Have You Done?" / "Fiule, fiule ce ai făcut?", "Queen of the Desert" / "regina desertului" - toți aceștia și mulți alții au creat filme comparabile cu capodoperele existenței, vieții în sine, univesului și spiritului divin manifestat în materie. Dacă am face stop-cadre pe cele mai reprezentative scene ale acestor filme și am aplica peste aceste imagini, grile cu secțiunile de aur, cu spirala de aur, cu șirul lui Fibonacci, am putea demonstra evidența talentului artistic, cum că acestea se suprapun peste



Din filmul "Gravity" - regizor Alfonso Cuaron

elementele importante ale cadrelor, punctate plastic – formal, valoric sau cromatic, ce transmit mesaje importante ale povestii în desfășurare. Chiar dacă aceasta observare este de competența criticilor de film, ochiul privitorului nespecializat percepe și el, chiar dacă nu își explică și de ce, aceste elemente, traducându-le printr-o simplă afirmație: "Îmi place". În vederea susținerii acestei teorii, am ales doar câteva

imagini care să ilustreze acest articol. Ce reprezintă cadre de film, care impresionează într-un mod foarte plăcut ochiul, tocmai pentru că proporțiile de aur sunt respectate cu rigurozitate. Desenul secțiunii de aur peste imagine scoate în evidență centrul optic și celelalte puncte de maxim interes care îl susțin, amplificând mesajul simbolic al cadrului. \*(vezi imaginile 2 – 7) Internetul abundă de astfel de suprapuneri mai ales peste

capodopere ale picturii din perioada renesanțistă, cât și peste monumente arhitecturale cèlebre. Sunt multe "short movies" despre "the golden ratio" (secțiunea de aur), dar o astfel de analiză pertinentă asupra unor cadre de film nu există într-o proporție multumitoare. Ali Shirazi, un tânăr regizor și scenarist, este unul dintre puținii care s-a ocupat de acest aspect. În filmul „Golden Ratio on Film: The math in There Will Be Blood's cinematography”, în traducere „Proporția de aur în film: Matematica în filmul „Va fi sânge”, Shirazi analizează cele mai reprezentative scene ale filmului și aplică peste imaginile în derulare diverse grile ale proporției de aur\*(vezi imaginea 1), subliniind măiestria artistică a lui Robert Elswit, argumentând astfel și cele opt nominalizări și Oscar-ul pentru imagine.\*(10)

#### NOTE

- \*(1) și (2) – aceasta este definiția oficială a cuvântului "estetică" prezentată pe site-ul <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/estetica>
- \*(3) – citat din revista de cultură, politică și artă "CONTEMPORANUL- ideea europeană ", S. II, 1953, nr. 360, 4/3.
- \*(4) - împărțirea pe categorii artistice a celor mai renumiți maestri ai renașterii (arhitecți, sculptori și pictori extrasa de pe site-ul <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/liturgica/arhitectura-bisericeasca/mari-artisti-renasterii-70717.html>
- \*(5) - "Bigollo" înseamnă "călător" în limba italiană
- \*(6) - "Spunem că un segment de dreaptă a fost împărțit în medie și extremă rație atunci când segmentul întreg se raportează la segmentul mai mare precum se raportează segmentul cel mare la cel mai mic" – după Euclid. Cu alte cuvinte, dacă  $(a + b) / a = a / b$ , atunci segmentul  $a + b$  a fost împărțit într-o secțiune de aur cu simbolul  $\Phi$ .
- \*(7) - Spiralele respectă regula de aur, respectiv, raportul dintre diametrul unei spirale și cea următoare este egal cu  $\Phi$ , numărul de aur
- \*(8) - Valoarea exactă a lui  $\Phi$  până la cea de-a două mii zecimală apare în cartea "Secțiunea de Aur: Povestea lui Phi, cel mai uimitor număr" de astrofizicianul LIVIO Mario și anume: 1, 61803 39887 49894 84820 45868 34365 63811 77203 09179 80576 - cea de-a cincizecea zecimală 28621 35448 62270 52604 62818 90244 97072 07204 18939 11374 - cea de-a o sută zecimală 84754 08807 53868 91752 12663 38622 23536 93179 31800 60766 72635 44333 89086 59593 95829 05638 32266 13199 28290 26788 06752 08766 89250 17116 96207 03222 10432 16269 54862 62963 - cea de-a două sute cincizecea zecimală 13614 43814 97587 01220 34080 58879 54454 74924 61856 95364 86444 92410 44320 77134 49470 49565 84678 85098 74339 44221 25448 77066 47809 15884 60749 98871 24007 65217 05751 79788 34166 25624 94075 89069 70400 02812 10427 62177 11177 78053 15317 14101 17046 66599 14669 79873 17613 56006 70874 80710 - cea de-a cinci sute zecimală 13179 52368 94275 21948 43530 56783 00228 78569 97829 77834 78458 78228 91109 76250 03026 96156 17002 50464 33824 37764 86102 83831 26833 03724 29267 52631 16533 92473 16711 12115 88186 38513 31620 38400 52221 65791 28667 52946 54906 81131 71599 34323 59734 94985 09040 94762 13222 98101 72610 70596

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 93855 57697 54841 49144 53415 09129 54070 05019 47754 86163  
 07542 26417 29394 68036 73198 05861 83391 83285 99130 39607  
 20144 55950 44977 92120 76124 78564 59161 60837 05949 87860  
 06970 18940 98864 00764 43617 09334 17270 91914 33650 13715 - cea de-a două mia zecimală

\*(9) - În acest sens, da Vinci a măsurat distanța de la talpi, la vârful capului omului și a împărțit-o la distanța de la tălpi la buric, obținând, bineînțeles numărul de aur.

\*(10) - vezi toate fotografiile din seria Paul Thomas Anderson's „There Will Be Blood”

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**Diana Metiu**

- Lector, predă in cadrul UNIVERSITATII HYPERION, Facultatea de Arte Vizuale „Geo Saizescu” discipline ca „Estetica filmului”, „Analiza plastica a imaginii de teatrale si cinematografice”, „Comunicarea si ArteleVizuale”, „Compozitia culorii in artele vizuale”  
 - Director la mai multe festivaluri de film si Gale cinematografice, in colaborare cu U.A.R.F.  
 - Pictor de costume si scenograf  
 - Colaborator la diverse publicatii culturale („Arhitectura”, revista Uniunii Arhitectilor din Romania, „Contemporanul - ideea europeana” etc)

# REBUILDING LIFE: EARLY 2000S CINEMA IN SERBIA

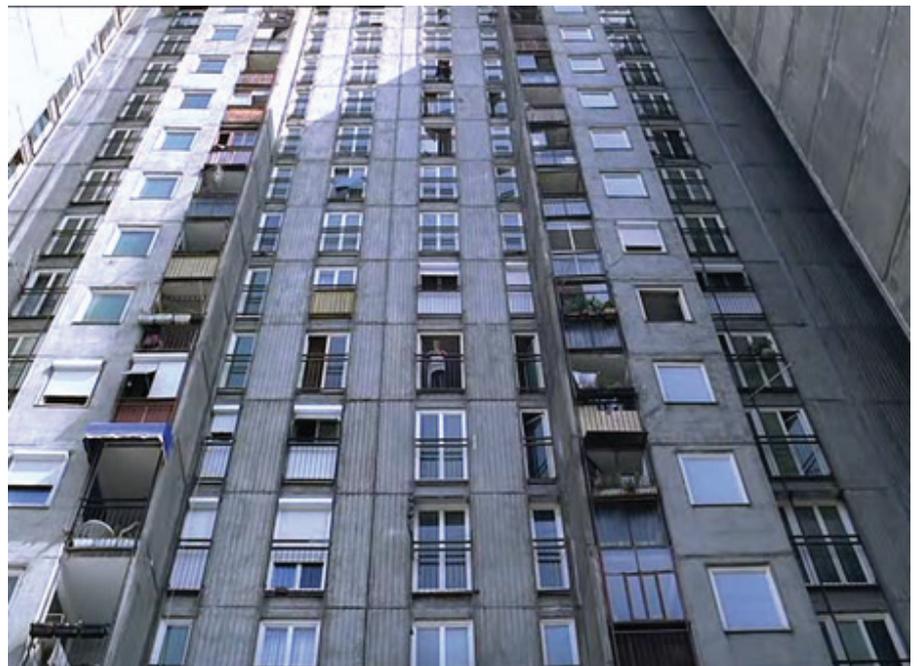
Galina Maksimovic

## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine rebuilding or renewing as one of the common motifs in early 2000s cinema in Serbia, specifically the films made by the New Belgrade School directors, by using David Bordwell's classification of meanings. The focus is on the repressed (symptomatic) meaning, as this motif is often hidden or disguised. Among the used examples are both films that include this motif explicitly and implicitly.

## Introduction

In his book *Making meaning: Inference and rhetoric in the interpretation of cinema*, David Bordwell writes about four types of meaning regarding films: referential, explicit, implicit and repressed (symptomatic). Unlike referential or explicit meaning, the implicit and repressed meaning tell us something beyond the depicted world, something about the world a film is made in. One of the most important differences between the implicit and repressed meaning is the awareness of the author about it, as repressed meaning may often be unwillingly present, sometimes even contradictory



### Absolute Hundred

to the implicit meaning which is supposed to reflect the author's worldviews. Writing about the repressed meaning, Bordwell states:

*To a great extent, the search for repressed meaning developed in response to wartime cinema.<sup>1</sup>*

Considering Bordwell's connection between wartime cinema

<sup>1</sup> Bordwell, David (1991), *Making meaning: inference and rhetoric in the interpretation of cinema*, Harvard University Press, pp. 78

and repressed meaning, post-war cinema may as well be a fruitful field of symptomatic meanings. Early 2000s cinema in Serbia was still burdened by the recent wars, which is why the films of that time were rich in social and political comments, even when the narratives didn't include explicit war elements.

After a decade of turmoil, war conflicts, and hyperinflation Serbia enters the process of transition to then promising democratic society. Consequently, Serbian cinema in the



### Love and other crimes

early 2000s is burdened with subjects of the recent past and war consequences but also enriched by the subtle feeling of hope. This transitional period in Serbian cinema has additionally popularized the tendency of putting urban city environment under the spotlight. Belgrade becomes the dominant setting of Serbian cinematography, often depicted as ruined, but with the potential to renew itself. In terms of narrative, it is achieved through numerous motifs including social renewal, literal physical rebuilding, or attempts to revive happier days. Although it is maybe not the most prominent type of motif in the Serbian cinema of these years, it is definitely not negligible. The latent presence of such motif opens the possibility for different interpretations of those often explicitly violent films, giving them a warmer, soothing tone. Also, its presence is some kind of a collective "symptom" for many authors of this time, which leaves us a chance to read what Bordwell calls repressed meanings through an entire group of films. Films set in this urban context were mostly made by the generation of filmmakers defined by Nevena Dakovic as New Belgrade School (not that the term *New Belgrade School* doesn't always imply New Belgrade municipality setting, although it often

does). According to Dakovic, New Belgrade School begins in the early 90s with *We are not Angels/Mi nismo anđeli* (1992, d. Srdjan Dragojevic), but becomes dominant in early 2000s. The filmmakers belonging to New Belgrade School were born in the 1970s and have studied at the Belgrade Faculty of Dramatic Arts.<sup>1</sup>

*The common denominator of the films is being great examples of urban films i.e. Belgrade narrative. (...) The film texts express and articulate the new (cultural) identity of Belgrade – juggling urbicide and reurbanization (their conflict marking the city's history) – and the profile of national cinema.*<sup>2</sup>

City renewal is often more than just a convenient setting and background image. It has its own role in empowering the stories of people who are starting all over, trying to renew their happiness, reestablish normality or overcome the past. Before focusing on these films, it is crucial to get familiar with their specific setting – New Belgrade.

1 Dakovic, Nevena (2007), *Cityscape in Cinema in The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region*, Institute for International Relations Zagreb, pp. 180

2 Same

## New Belgrade

New Belgrade is the most populous municipality in Belgrade, set between the historical part of Belgrade and Zemun, on the left coast of the river Sava. The first phase of building New Belgrade took place after the World War II (1947 – 1950), while the municipality was officially established in 1951.<sup>3</sup> Ljiljana Blagojevic describes New Belgrade as the city of predominantly socialist mass housing and a city in a "societal ownership" based on the ideological premise of the right to a residence as a universal right for a common public good.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, New Belgrade was the city of hope after the World War II. During the 1999 NATO bombing, New Belgrade suffered an attack where a heating plant was struck. After the bombing, just like the city, the hope had to be rebuilt as well. It has inspired several authors of New Belgrade School, whose films included these rebuilding motifs, giving us a chance to explore their repressed meaning.

### Rebuilding the city in *Sky Hook* and *Bare ground*

In some films, the motif of rebuilding is pretty tangible. In Ljubisa Samardzic's directorial debut, *Sky Hook/Nebeska udi-ca* (2000), the reurbanization begins even before the urbicide has ended. The story takes place during the NATO bombing in 1999. Regardless of the fact that the film is about the 1999 bombing, its position and its socio-political comments are conditioned by the new atmosphere set in 2000.

A group of friends living in New Belgrade building blocks, led by Kaja, refuses to live in shelters – instead, they decide to rebuild a basketball court destroyed by

3 [www.novibeograd.rs](http://www.novibeograd.rs), Important years in the history of New Belgrade

4 Blagojevic, Ljiljana (2014), *Novi Beograd: Reinventing Utopia in Urban Revolution Now: Henri Lefebvre in Social Research and Architecture*, Routledge, pp. 302



### One on One

a bomb. They move from their small flats to their ruined concrete neighborhood. The iconic setting of wrecked, still smoking factory near the residential buildings certainly won't be much beautified by an improvised court and a new basket. Playing basketball certainly won't eliminate the sounds of warning sirens, the fact that any of the characters may be recruited anytime or any other danger they are dealing with every day. However, basketball was always an important sport in Serbia (Yugoslavia).<sup>1</sup> Considering all the country's past basketball successes, it is completely understandable why this film chooses basketball to represent the rebuilding of normality during the chaos and desperation. It is confirmed through a fantasy scene where Kaja, who is some kind of local basketball god, imagines himself playing basketball with famous Yugoslav national team players in a demolished setting. On the border between an implicit and symptomatic meaning, this film tries to impose the image of a country that wants to be seen as a nation with healthy potentials instead of being seen as a wounded country.

The rebuilding motif is tightly related to Kaja's personal

drama, since he is trying to renew his family happiness, while his ex-partner Tijana wants to take their Son to Italy. Leaving country is her way of rebuilding normality, completely opposed to Kaja's ideals of fixing everything by building a court. Eventually, their 5-year-old son Jovan, who is mute due to the trauma, remains a symbol of both of his parents' attempts of change: renewed normality through the escape to Italy with his mother and renewed meaning and beauty of nation's strengths through his love for the basketball.

Ljubisa Samardzic's film *Bare Ground/Ledina* (2000) is yet another example of rebuilding normal life in a society, again set in a New Belgrade neighborhood. This time, the neighbors are not so united in a noble goal of renewing their environment. The only one who actually cares about such an issue is Ostoja, who is fresh out of prison and wants to make a garden in front of buildings. Basically, the initiator of the change is the one who is the least expected to do such a thing, while "normal" neighbors sabotage his attempts by ruining his garden. The collective character of the neighborhood is depicted as a bunch of miserable people, unsatisfied with their own environment, but unable to find motivation to fix things (or even accept other people's initiative to do something nice for the community).

They are judgmental, bitter, malicious, and even xenophobic. Their general condition is well accentuated by the setting – dilapidated New Belgrade blocks, unkempt building surroundings, little shops which serve as an "info center" for the latest rumors. The collective character of neighbors represents an obstacle to Ostoja who wants to renew the neighborhood, but they are also an obstacle to Dragan and Ksenija, a young Serbo-Croatian couple, who are trying to reestablish their family's peace. The neighbors' passive aggression is devastating. Eventually, this obstacle manifested as unconsciously auto-destructive group largely contributes to the tragic outcomes. Rebuilding is depicted as impossible, with the tendency to cause collateral damages. On the level of symptomatic meaning, people are the one to blame for everything bad that happens here – not the war, the system or anything else. While Samardzic's previous film *Sky Hook* featured a child who is the symbol of the potential future renewal, in this film a child dies, implying that there is no future.

### Recovering from crime through crime

Not all the early 2000s films feature characters who fight for a positive change or renewal or use legal and legit means to achieve it. On the other hand, the blood on their hands doesn't always deprive them of somehow noble goals. Their cruelty could be easily attributed to their harsh environment and their personal will could be seen as victimized by some kind of omnipresent evil that breaks even the strongest of them. They are trapped in monotonous concrete building blocks of New Belgrade emerging on an ex-military territory, the ghetto of the 90s, dark underground passages, ruined basketball courts among the buildings, creepy abandoned playgrounds. Over and above, it is inevitable for the protagonists to get involved with some of the

<sup>1</sup> For a deeper insight, read *Why the Most Important Olympic Basketball Team Wasn't the Dream Team* by Tom Hawkings, published in the *Rolling Stone* on 2nd August 2016

criminals who rule the territory. The protagonists initially want a change that could lead them to a normal life, stability, safety and prosperity. Over the course of time, they realize the change cannot be done without getting their hands dirty.

This tendency remained Serbian cinema for a long time. In *Love and Other Crimes/Ljubav i drugi zločini* (2008, d. Stefan Arsenijevic) the protagonists want to start from a scratch by emigrating abroad. This film features a particularly vivid setting, depicting not only the surface of the residential buildings but the hidden spaces between them as well, covered in graffiti and trash. It is more than obvious that these hidden spaces are perfect for the city's darkest secrets and people's greatest fears. Great camerawork creates an ultimately claustrophobic atmosphere, persuasive enough to clear out this is a place the protagonists certainly want to abandon. Anica is the initiator of change, while Stanislav is her young love interest and her lover's right hand in his criminal business. In order to achieve their goals, they have to rob Anica's lover. Their simple idea of changing their lives inevitably includes a new crime. Considering the terrible conditions they are living in and bad relationships they are about to end, they practically don't have any doubts if they should do it, which is why they don't face many real challenges.

The things are not that simple in Srđan Golubovic's *Absolute Hound* (2001). Sasa's brother Igor was an Olympic champion in shooting who went to war and became a drug addict afterward. While Sasa trains, dreaming of becoming a champion himself, his brother is in huge debts to the mafia. The tenseness of their problems is additionally emphasized through the specifically shot setting. Fast camerawork and unusual shooting angles create an atmosphere resembling the aesthetics of music videos (hip hop music videos



**Sky Hook**

may be the closest to this film's style) and speed up the rhythm. In such an environment, Sasa's talent only superficially seems two-sided, offering two opposite choices – to be used for sport or revenge. The first choice is only seemingly a better choice, as there is no guarantee that his success will be appreciated. His brother is the living proof of that. The second choice only seemingly lacks morality, as Sasa's basic motivation is the wish to help his brother mixed with the anger caused by a perplexed criminal system they are trapped in. The tragedy is that his goals necessarily include new crimes. Only new crimes can bring them some kind of restart and a chance of rebuilding their lives. As the director has stated in an interview, this film is a *concrete western*.<sup>1</sup> In a way, Sasa does resemble classical western heroes who fight crime with crime. In the same interview, Golubovic talks about his motivation for making this film, stating that the story has emerged from his own infirmity and anger as he was noticing people are unable for a real change. The inferior and powerless position of the people who have inspired Golubovic and other New Belgrade

<sup>1</sup> Sonja Ciric's interview with Srđan Golubovic (2001), *An enclosure to the disagreement with life/Prilog neslaganju sa životom*, magazine *Vreme*, issue 556

School filmmakers reflects distortedly in their films. Film characters strive for a change wholeheartedly – they snap, lose their minds, get extreme in their goals and means. The difficulties of achieving changes in real life during the transition may be among the key reasons for such a prominent tendency of striving for changes, renewals and rebuilding of life on screen. Another film depicting a noble hero becoming an anti-hero on his path to renewing normal life (as normal as it can be) is *One on One/1 na 1* (2002, d. Mladen Maticević). Macak (The Cat) is a local basketball player, who could be drafted for a professional club anytime. He lives frugally with his grandfather in a New Belgrade flat, earning money on street basketball games at an old court nearby. Everything around him is slowly falling apart and he suddenly doesn't even have the basic safety in his life, which was never comfortable, but previously at least included tight sleep. At some point, Macak is trying to help his best friend Cime whose brother owns big cash to a local criminal. The gangsters are after Cime, which triggers Macak's sense of injustice and anger. Macak is quite wise – he is neutral with the gangsters and doesn't cause any riot. He negotiates with them, sticking to

his pacifistic manners. Eventually, he gets involved so deeply with the underground system. His new basketball court, the place of winning battles, is a shady basement club owned by the gangsters. He is trapped in its darkness, among the graffiti walls, with the city slum. Gun is his only way out to his previous state, where he is honest to himself, defending his values (justice being one of them).

Obviously, *One on One* is another concrete western, with the particularly accentuated urban atmosphere of cramped buildings, with basketball courts being the only open space and the only space of freedom for the protagonist. Fast frames of the scenery, shot in black and white, additionally enhance the claustrophobic feeling of this urban environment mixed with the hopelessness. Macak's apartment is much contrasted to the outside world, very old-fashioned, with high walls and outdated furniture. This place is tightly related to Macak's grandfather, who tries his best to satisfy their basic needs. He is a man of past, who makes a living by selling old medals and other "junk" at the flea market. Basically, he is trying to get rid of the past, because the present asks for it. His character subtly depicts the transition which implies selling the past in order to provide you a chance to survive. Grandfather's job is another way of searching for a restart of life which could bring them re-establishing of their peace and

stability. Eventually, even the grandfather ends up assimilated into the criminal system, working as a night guard at the basement club. Speaking in the context of symptomatic meaning, it seems like the author is trying to tell us that the integration into the new system inevitably corrupts people.

### Conclusion

All of the films above are not related only by the repressed symbols of renewal, but by their endings as well. These films end up tragically – the change the protagonists were chasing turns out to be unsatisfying or even bring greater troubles. If we relate this to the transitional period during which these films were made and if we read those films symptomatically, we can say the faith in the developing democracy wasn't that strong – on the contrary. In *Sky Hook*, the protagonist ends up as a victim of another bomb. His attempt of rebuilding city and normality failed. His only hope for a real change is in his son, which implies that faith in change (rebuilding the society through the democracy) is something to be left for the future. Paradoxically, in *Bare ground*, a child is killed, which may imply an opinion that democracy has no future in Serbia after all. In *1 on 1* and *Absolute Hundred*, there is no bright future at all, considering how the protagonists got involved in criminal. In *Love and other crimes*, the future (democracy)

is very uncertain.

These potential meanings are strictly symptomatic, and therefore, do not have to be understood as a definite truth. However, considering that the motif of rebuilding is quite present in early 2000s cinema in Serbia and considering that it was the period of rebuilding the society through democracy, the filmed consequences of this rebuilding (that usually fails) definitely seem relatable to the authors' willingly or unwillingly expressed views on the transition and the possible future of democracy.

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**Galina Maksimović** is a graduate of Dramaturgy at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. Winner of the "Best Critic Award" at Alticine Film Festival, Athens 2015. Presently she is a part time collaborator of the Serbian Film Centre.

# THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE ROMANIAN NEW WAVE

Marian Țuțui



East of Bucharest (A fost sau n-a fost?)

**Keywords:** Eastern Europe, Balkan cinema, ex-communist, Ethnocinema, center and periphery, transnational cinema, globalization, black humor, non-diegetic.

## Preliminaries

It is still a problem to debate where does Romanian New Wave belong to. Until recently one would have tried to define it in terms such as East-European,

Balkan, ex-communist, peripheral, clash of civilizations etc. Sometimes such perspective would lead to correct mapping but also to shallow stereotypes. Therefore, Eastern intellectuals reacted to such formulas. Macedonian dramatist Goran Stefanovski reacted very critical: 'When Indiana Jones goes "out there", he doesn't go to any particular history or geography. He goes to a jumbled-up Third World, full of greasy losers, mostly

without a face, and mostly killed wholesale. Because Hollywood doesn't make room for geography and history, Eastern European artists do not feel properly represented. So, they yearn to supply their history and geography. Their own map of the world. Their own compass. But here lies the trap which makes them obsolete. Their kids who go to the cinema are between 18 and 22 and they don't care about geography and history.

They care about Indiana Jones.' (Stefanovski, 2009).

In his book *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* Tzvetan Todorov sententiously claims: 'I am writing this book to prevent this story and a thousand others like it from being forgotten' and to point out 'what can happen if we do not succeed in discovering the other' (Todorov, 1984: 247). Indeed, the author is right in noticing that the Spaniards were never able to fully discover the American Indians because they could not accept them as equals. Therefore, valuable information was lost or distorted forever. We can apply such reasoning when it is about the reception of Eastern Europe cinema. On the other hand, we have to admit that unfortunately some regions and of the world and their culture are doomed to remain less known and therefore mysterious, exotic or underestimated.

Is it indeed relevant to belong to a certain space? According to Aristotle art 'tends to express the universal' and events may be particular to a specific situation and not be part of a clear cause-and-effect chain. Therefore the function of art is not to relate what has happened, but what may happen. (Butcher, 1902: 35-37). Moreover, the Romanian New Wave directors systematically avoid the spectacular, exotic and picturesque and yet manage to be distinct and successful. Hence logically a question arises: do they depict Romania and some particular Romanian places and events, Eastern Europe or South-East Europe? Do we deal with stories of peripheral Europe, stories on transition or simply with good story-telling? How can we explain the paradox that they are successful when they pursue the banal?

Some commentators have noted similarities with Italian Neorealism (Doru Pop, 2014: 55) but can we really talk about a return thereof in another time and space? Others have been trying to find an influence of

Dardenne Brothers or of Michael Haneke (Fulger, 2013). But most of them, especially after the first success, had certain expectations from the Romanian filmmakers in rendering the society in which they have been living in. Antonia Kovacheva noticed that 'for a while, exoticism has persisted among newcomers from Central and Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. [...] [T]here is still an expectation of sad movies originating in the shantytown ghetto south-east of Vienna' (Kovacheva, 2007).

### A Matter of Reception?

As incredible as it may seem today, in the 1980s Romanian cinema was held in some kind of disrepute although between 1939 and 1989 it had received nine awards at the major festivals of Cannes, Venice and Berlin. The success has been considered sporadic and therefore film encyclopedias ignored the Romanians or mentioned only Ion Popescu-Gopo's Golden Palm in 1957 for the animation film *A Brief History (Scurtă istorie, 1956)*. However, the French have always been more open to new films schools and trends and even to their Latin cousins, the Romanians. Georges Sadoul in his broad edition of *Histoire générale du cinéma* Tome 6 (1954) mentions almost quite early most cinema schools in the world, inclusively the Romanian one. Roger Boussinot in his *L'encyclopédie du cinéma* (1967) grants four pages to Romanian cinema. British David Parkinson in *History of Film* uses both broad multinational formulas as 'Eastern Europe' in order to make reference to Bulgarian and Romanian cinema before 1970, while the cinema in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland or Yugoslavia is analyzed separately, as well as national names 'Romanian' and 'Bulgarian', especially after a certain affirmation beginning with 1970.

Moreover, some fiction films allude ironically to Romanian cinema. In Arthur Hiller's *Author!*

(1982) a playwright embodied by Al Pacino warns his children: 'If you don't enjoy this goddamn Romanian movie tonight [...] you aren't getting a penny from me for the rest of your life.' In *My Sweet Little Village* (1985), an Oscar-nominated comedy by Jirí Menzel, two adulterous lovers in a Czech village buy tickets again for a Romanian movie not only for the weak-minded boy in whose house they meet, to get him out of the way, but also five tickets extra in order to be sure that this second Romanian film will not be also cancelled for lack of spectators.

Today things changed a lot. Two prestigious critics have expressed, at first glance, divergent views on this New Wave. In 2007 *Variety's* Derek Elley feared that 'it's easy to assume, from fests' picks, that (currently "hot") Romanian cinema is all grungy, DV-shot, miserabilist dramas' and declared his appreciation for Nae Caranfil (Elley, 2007), a Romanian director not belonging to the New Wave. Three years later Steven Zeitchik in *Los Angeles Times* expressed the opinion that 'Romanians can't make a bad film. It's, like, illegal in their country. Or at least not in their DNA. Over the last four years, filmmakers from the small Eastern European nation have swept into the south of France every May and put far bigger, more storied film cultures to shame, the US and the fiercely proud host country among them.' (Zeitchik, 2010)

Indeed, things changed. Lucian Pintilie, a veteran director generally held as a main precursor for the new generation was sometimes misunderstood in the 1990s although he received the Grand Special Jury Prize in Venice for *Next Stop Paradise (Terminus paradis, 1998)* and was two times nominated in Cannes for the Golden Palm. His first nomination in Cannes was for *An Unforgettable Summer (Un été inoubliable/ O vară de neuitat, 1994)*. This movie renders some dramatic events in the 20s from



**California Dreamin'**

a disputed territory between Romania and Bulgaria after the Balkan Wars. Although the film was unanimously appreciated the foreign critics did not understand if the action took place in Romania or Bulgaria or why if the bandits were Macedonians, the Romanian army retaliated on Bulgarians (Lisa Nesselson, 1994). In fact, in Romanian it was about 'Bulgarian komitadjii' or 'Macedonian bandits' that is Bulgarian rebels fighting to unite territories like Macedonia with Bulgaria.

It is most eloquent how things changed with foreign critics when scrutinizing two films by Cristi Puiu. Ruthe Stein mentions that the action of *The Death of Mister Lazarescu* (*Moartea domnului Lăzărescu*, 2005) takes place in Bucharest but needs to add that the protagonist is 'an unfortunate remnant of Soviet rule.' Seven years after, when analysing *Aurora* (2010) François Barge-Prieur infers that 'Cristi Puiu makes a chronicle of ordinary violence in nowadays Bucharest through the portrait of a man overwhelmed by financial and relationship problems' but does not feel to add that it is about 'Eastern Europe' or else

(Barge-Prieur, 2012). We can draw at least two conclusions. The younger Romanian directors have learnt how to make their films for a wider market inclusively by tackling contemporary topics, easier to comprehend. On the other hand the Western critics have learnt to pay more attention to Romanian movies. Some critics of Eastern European extract have also acted as mediators contributing to a better understanding of the milieu. When reviewing Radu Jude's short *The Tube with a Hat* (*Lampa cu căciulă*, 2006) Marina Kaceanov admits: 'For me, originally coming from the Communist bloc and living in Moldova (a Romanian border-neighbour) for 15 years, the situation was so familiar and the characters so recognizable that I didn't doubt for a second that the story was simply taken from real life and shot on camera.' (Kaceanov, 2008). It is the case even with an Australian critic, Andrew L. Urban: 'A somewhat surprise - but deserved - winner of the 2007 Palme d'Or, 4/3/2 is the first in what will be a trilogy of films director Cristian Mungiu is making that are all set in what he ironically calls the Golden Age

of Romanian communism. More of a grey cement age, if this film is a guide, and having lived in an East European communist country myself, I can (sadly) vouch for its authenticity of tone and mood. This is a world where Western cigarettes, Tic Tacs and other items are available on the ubiquitous black market. Abortions, too.' (Urban, 2007).

Recently also Romanian scholars and critics have contributed to explaining the 'miracle' of the Romanian New Wave (RNW). We can consider the special issue of *Film International* dedicated to Romanian New Wave or the books *Contemporary Romanian Cinema. The History of an Unexpected Miracle* (2013) by Dominique Nasta and *Romanian New Wave Cinema: An Introduction* (2014) by Doru Pop.

### **An attempt of Mapping**

Most films belonging to RNW have their action taking place in Bucharest nowadays: Cristian Mungiu's *West (Occident)*, 2002), *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* (2005), *Aurora* (2010), Radu Muntean's *The Rage (Furia)*, 2002) and *The Paper Will Be Blue (Hârtia va fi albastră,*

2006), Cătălin Mitulescu's *The Way I Spent the End of the World* (*Cum mi-am petrecut sfârșitul lumii*, 2006), Călin Peter Netzer's *Medal of Honor* (*Medalia de onoare*, 2009) and *Child's Pose* (*Poziția copilului*, 2013), Radu Jude's *The Happiest Girl in the World* (*Cea mai fericită fată din lume*, 2009), Tudor Giurgiu's *Love Sick* (*Legături bolnăvicioase*, 2006), Corneliu Porumboiu's *When Evening Falls on Bucharest or Metabolism* (*Când se lasă seara peste București sau metabolism*, 2013) etc.

Cristi Puiu's *Stuff and Dough* (*Marfa și banii*, 2002), the film that inaugurated RNW is a road movie about a youngster carrying some mysterious parcel between Bucharest and Constantza, the main harbor of Romania. In Radu Muntean's *Tuesday, After Christmas* (*Marți după Crăciun*, 2010) the protagonist leaves Bucharest in order to visit his lover in Constantza. His previous movie, *Summer Holiday* (*Boogie*, 2008) is about a short revealing vacation spent by the Black Sea. Ruxandra Zenide's *Ryna* (2005) is about a girl raised as a boy and confined to isolation in the Danube Delta. The Carpathian Mountains can be briefly seen in *Tales from the Golden Age* (*Amintiri din epoca de aur*, 2009, Hanno Höfer, Răzvan Mărculescu, Cristian Mungiu, Constantin Popescu and Ioana Uricaru).

Corneliu Porumboiu's previous films *12:08 East of Bucharest* (*A fost sau n-a fost?*, 2006) and *Police, Adjective* (*Polițist adjectiv*, 2009) mirror his hometown Vaslui and Moldova region (Eastern Romania), while Marian Crișan with *Morgen* (2010) and *Rocker* (2012) remained faithful to his native town Salonta, respectively to Western Transylvania by filming in the major local town Oradea.

Cristian Nemescu's *California Dreamin'* (2007), Tudor Giurgiu's *Of Snails and Men* (*Despre oameni și melci*, 2012), Tudor Cristian Jurgiu's *The Japanese Dog* (*Câinele japonez*, 2013) and Radu Jude's *Aferim!* (2015) render little towns in Southern

Romania.

We can add some of the well-known short films but the map will not change. Bucharest is the location of Mitulescu's *Traffic* (*Trafic*, 2004), Puiu's *Cigarettes and Coffee* (*Un Cartuș de Kent și un pachet de cafea*, 2004), of Cristian Nemescu's *Marilena de la P7* (2006), Adrian Sitaru's *The Cage* (*Colivia*, 2010) and *Lord* (2011) etc. Crișan's *Megatron* takes place in Bucharest and in a nearby village. *Liviu's Dream* (*Visul lui Liviu*, 2003) and *A Trip to the City* (*Călătorie la oraș*, 2004) by Corneliu Porumboiu are about some village in Eastern Romania. Bogdan Mustață's *A Good Day for a Swim* (*O zi bună de plajă*, 2007) and Adrian Sitaru's *Waves* (*Valuri*, 2007) take place in Black Sea resorts. In two shorts, *Silent River* (*Apele tac*, 2011) by Anca Miruna Lăzărescu and *Oxygen* (2010) by Adina Pintilie one can see the Danube. Both of them evoke two tragic episodes of the times of communist dictatorship when people tried to cross the Danube swimming.

Sometimes it is difficult even for Romanians to recognize the towns and places filmed, while foreigners will recognize mainly East European landscapes characterized by shabby communist blocks of flats. Only in *Traffic* one can see more of Bucharest, while in *West* and *Child's Pose* can see the new luxury buildings belonging to the upper middle class. For such reason besides the common plot (a tragic traffic accident and the attempt to avoid the consequences) the latter is similar with Paolo Virzi's *Human Capital* (2013, Italy/ France).

The natural landscape is almost entirely absent. Even when there is some natural landscape in the background, it is banal, so are the faces of the characters. Again, there is no beauty or picturesque. For Dominique Nasta Nemescu's graduating picture *C Block Story* (*Poveste de la scara C*, 2003) is 'extremely convincing' due to its 'noisy, block-of-flats, "kitchen sink" neorealist atmosphere' (Nasta, 2013: 214). In *12:08 East of Bucharest*

she notices again 'the subsequent sequences reveal equally shabby interiors, describing the post-Communist poverty-stricken environment through stage like frontal views inside three ordinary provincial apartments.' (Ibid, 167). Călin Căliman considers that '*California Dreamin'* tells a last century story based on a real fact when an American NATO train loaded with strategic weapons for a military intervention in Kosovo is blocked for several days (about five) in a Romanian plain village ("where Romania's map bends", as an American officer puts it) due to the stubbornness of a station master.' (Căliman, 2012: 637). On *Morgen* Mihai Chirilov concludes: 'By placing the action in a border village, Crișan suggests the absurdity of any borders, more obvious today in a free world, and by imagining a hero of most simple humanity (András Hatházi) who, although disapproved by his wife (Elvira Rîmbu), hosts a Turkish immigrant (Yılmaz Yalcin) in his own yard, feeds him and helps him cross the frontier.' For Codruța Crețulescu the border village was a quiet, almost sleepy until the foreigner arrives. 'The only "extra-terrestrial" is the immigrant two times alienated because he got there fortuitous and does not understand a word of Romanian. However, the mere appearance of this stranger (otherwise docile) is sufficient to threaten the peace of the two locals.' (Chirilov, 2011: 19)

Lucian Georgescu explains philosophically the absence of landscapes and even the futility of travelling: 'The cinematic narration is today closed inside the city walls, the escape being possible at most in some extra-terrestrial landscape as the Earth is a territory of urban verticals. Not at all of heavenly horizontality (...). In the beginning the road has been a means, not just an end in itself as it has become nowadays when stopping means to be aware of the surrounding desolate landscape. Looking through the windshield of a moving car the surroundings look alive and

## Tuesday after Christmas (Marți după Crăciun)



populated. But since you stop you discover that everything is dry. There are no territories to discover, no more frontiers to cross, while people are the same everywhere: surrogates of human beings. Everything has been said, everything has been done.' (Georgescu, 2011: 131). He adds: 'If you watch *Angling (Pescuit sportiv)*, directed by Adrian Sitaru, 2009) nothing seems to have changed in ten years of 'liberalism' since Ovidiu left with his van to Bucharest. The block where Ovidiu's mother owns a small shop in *Stuff and Dough* is identical with the one from which Mihai (Adrian Titieni) and Iubi (Ioana Flora) leave for a picnic.' (Ibid., 146).

Marilena Ilieșiu attempts to explain the role of the shabby concrete blocks surrounding which are not insignificant because they are almost everywhere present in Romanian films: 'With RNW the camera keeps from the characters a distance that allows it to register almost at epidermal level reactions, gestures and movements; the plan sequence is modelled on the time of an action, the director seems to install in a mobile outpost wherefrom he follows the almost natural beginning of a story observing its fluency and conduct. Space generates its own visual stories which intersect with those of the characters (different types of towns at Puiu, Porumboiu and Mungiu). The buildings are ground by a superficial disease (degraded, patched, cracked walls) but also by a profound one, of their function. The world in which the heroes move is not

only a framework consistent with their status, but their sensorial extension (the building is an extension of the epidermis, of the cover.' (Ilieșiu, 2011: 155). She adds, inspired by Radu Jude's *The Happiest Girl in the World*: 'Even University Square [the symbolic centre of Bucharest], accessorized with filming equipment becomes a huge box that comes through the advertising spot, the image of the "happy" consumer.' (Ibid., 171).

Besides the lack of natural landscapes, glamour and picturesque, they have noticed also the 'absence of extra-diegetic sound (or non-diegetic soundtrack), which was usually interpreted as a source of authenticity' (Doru Pop, 2014: 109). Dominique Nasta discovers how such absence is perfectly compensated and even turned into an advantage in one of Adrian Sitaru's shorts: 'Waves is probably one of the most complex contemporary Romanian shorts. During the film's climactic scene, the audience witnesses a foreign tourist's mysterious disappearance amidst the Black Sea waves (...) In terms of cinematography (Adrian Silișteanu), editing and mise en scène, the film is not minimalist. Thus, the opening is almost Hollywood-style, with quickly edited shots of the Roma boy walking among the crowd of vacationers. Sound mixing is very realistic and results in the development of autonomous auditory 'channels'. Direct sound combines dialogue, crowd noises, entertaining French music, radio football commentaries and mobile phone conversations.

Such a soundscape brings forth lots of information about Romanian society on the brink of a new century.' (Nasta, 2013: 149-150).

An Austrian magazine has recently used 'Ästhetik der Echzeit' ('The Aesthetics of Real Time') as the title of an article about Cristi Puiu's *Aurora* (Landsgesell, 2011). The author even used the expression 'Slow-motion film mode'. Of course, it can be extended to a crime movie with the same pace, *Police, Adjective* by Corneliu Porumboiu.

### Widening the Map: the Balkans

In terms of aesthetics, unlike other films made in the Balkans the ones of the Romanian New Wave are united more by a realist, almost documentary, austere and minimalist style than by black humor, which is also present. Realism has always implied certain accessibility towards the masses while postmodernism counts on a recovery of hitherto despised vulgar genres and ultimately on a democratic return to the popular. The Romanian New Wave is an anti-aestheticism movement aspiring to banality as a measure of veracity therefore its realism does not attract the general public.

Eastern filmmakers have noticed that their societies in transition are hard to live in but spectacular to render and stylistically turned their contrasts into antithesis and oxymoron while the absurdities and malfunctions of the system sometimes become sources of irony and black humor. Corneliu Porumboiu admitted 'a special kind of humor, an absurd humor' (Andrew James Horton, 2007) common to the Balkan filmmakers. In fact, black humor has probably been until recently the only common element of the Romanian New Wave with Kusturica and other Balkan filmmakers.

Kusturica's influence can be invoked in Cristain Mungiu's episode *Turkey Girl* from the omnibus movie *Lost and Found* (2005). Tatiana, the main character in the

film, is at the age of first idyll but still attached to her turkey. She considers it a special creature and hardly accepts that her father offered it to the doctor who will operate her mother for the second time. Her affection for the turkey reminds of the similar one of teenager Perhan in *Time of the Gypsies* (1988). Cristian Nemescu's *California Dreamin'* reminds also of Kusturica and mainly of *Life is a Miracle* (*Život je čudo*) because has a station-master as a character. In the short fiction film *Marilena de la P7* (2006) of the same director the main character can provoke short-circuits and cut the lights, which reminds again of Perhan, with his telekinetic powers. In *How I Spent the End of the World* the perspective of a teenager girl and of a child allows Mitulescu to reconstruct 1989 with a mixture of humor, nostalgia and freshness of perception as with Menzel or Kusturica, never perceived in Romanian films before, except maybe in *Sundays on Leave* (*În pericoloso sporgersi*, 1993) by Nae Caranfil. In this respect the raving scenes are the best. Eight years old Lalalilu dreams about receiving from Ceaușescu himself a wheel of cheddar cheese, then the scene continues in the real plan with the family breakfast and a piece of cheddar cheese. He also plays the submarine by which he can transport his family over the border as his father stimulates him by impersonating Ceaușescu. The scene where he imagines making a huge balloon from chewing gum seems taken from a Kusturica film.

On the other hand, we can notice an extension of the RNW style in other Balkan countries. In the documentary *Sofia's Last Ambulance* (*Poslednata lineika na Sofia*, 2012) by Bulgarian Ilian Metev some could notice an alleged influence of Cristi Puiu's *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* (2005). Considering the fictional world of Puiu's classic as a model of reality, which has in turn inspired Metev's gritty documentary might seem absurd, but Genoveva Dimitrova's observation to this effect

is not only flattering, but also true (2012). And it would not be a stretch to say that the universe, created by the films of New Romanian Cinema does not simply mirror, but create a model of reality, whose influence on young Balkan filmmakers – not only in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of general thematic direction – is further acknowledged by Jurica Pavičić in his writing about post-Yugoslav films. In his view, Romanian cinema represents a 'political gesture', a way of rendering a different Balkan cinema, which would challenge the Kusturica-like Balkan style, seen as politically regressive and auto-colonial. The influence can be noted, suggests Pavičić, in the films of Croatian directors Dalibor Matanić, and more specifically his film *Mother of Asphalt* (2010), or in Tomislav Radic's *Three Stories about Sleeplessness* (2008), as well as in *Ordinary People* (2009) by Serbian filmmaker Vladimir Perišić (2011: 208, 264).

### Cinematic Extension of Europe

It should also be noted that lately the NRC directors have increasingly resorted to co-productions, flaunting transnational topics – a predictable move, prompted by the need to reach international markets, prompted by the transition to market economy and the inevitable move towards globalization. Yet, one of the latest successes of NRC, Radu Jude's *Aferim!* (2015), could be defined as a Balkan Western, situated in the 19th century. Co-produced by Bulgaria and featuring Bulgarian folk costumes, it is a shared Balkan fable about the "clash of civilizations" in Samuel Huntington's terms, rather than an instance of transnational cinema, pure and simple.

Defining 'Ethnocinema' Goran Gocić noticed that it was prompted by a kind of conditional appropriation: 'if "ethnofilms" satisfy certain production and aesthetic criteria, Eastern (European) artists could be included in the Western canon, even to the extent that

they redefine it.' (Gocić, 2001: 5-6). Moreover, by the accession of several ex-Communist countries to the European Union and the ensuing move towards globalization brought on yet another change to the discourse on place which, as Dina Iordanova argues, 'it is no longer a prerogative of the "center" reflecting on its "margins";' since 'what formerly was deemed a "periphery" is endowed with new vitality that challenges the traditional narratives of locale and movement, and replaces them with new takes on place and itinerary.' (Iordanova, 2001). Building on Gocić and Iordanova's remarks, I will argue that NRC has genuinely extended cinematic Europe towards the East – and not just including it as an exotic periphery as was the case with Kusturica's films in the 1990s. Such an extension means inclusion of other voices and an eventual redefinition of Europe and its art, which is an almost incredible achievement, and I will further argue that the NRC directors have been able to prove what Hermann Graf Keyserling noticed as early as 1928: 'According to its essence Europe is also a Balkan Peninsula. Let us imagine Europe as unitary and vast as America or Russia: its inner sense would disappear. Europe is by its essence small and divided, both physically and psychically. Its oldest spirit is born in the Balkans. It is not about the ancestry of the old Greeks but about that first time in the Balkans in the field of tensions between the city-states who fought each other that specific difference began and from that on it has gone on continuously from a people to another. Europe represents the same type of unity as the ancient Balkans.' (Keyserling, 1993: 275- 276).

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**Marian Tutui** holds a Ph.D. on Balkan cinema at UNATC (Romanian Academy of Theatre and Cinema). Between 1993- 2013 he was the curator of the Romanian Cinematheque. Currently he is a researcher at the "G.Oprescu" Institute of Art History and professor of film history at Hyperion University. He is a member of FIPRESCI (2008) and author of four scripts for documentary films. He is also author of several books on cinema among which *A Short History of Romanian Cinema* (2005, 2011, in Romanian and English), *Manakia Bros or the Image of the Balkans* (2005, 2009 in Romanian and English) and *Orient Express. Romanian and Balkan Cinema* (2008, 2011 in Romanian and English, awarded with Prize of the Romanian Film Critics Association). Since 1995 he has collaborated with film criticism to magazines in Romania, USA, UK, Sweden, Russia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Moldova, Macedonia and Albania.

# PROVOCAREA 3D

Adrian Drăgușin

Cinematograful este, prin definiție, o artă colectivă. Hollywood-ul este construit în momentul în care se dezvoltă producția în serie mare a mărfurilor standardizate.

Cinematograful vizează marile public, un public de masă luat în ansamblu, fără deosebire de clasă, de vârstă, de sex, de religie ori de naționalitate. El se adresează individului mijlociu sau universal evitând să-i șocheze pe spectatorii formați în culturi diferite. El se află la antipodii artei elitiste care pretinde o formație și coduri specifice de lectură. O artă de esență democratică, cosmopolită, cu vocație imediat planetară. Cinematograful se prezintă de la bun început ca o artă care, liberă de dominația trecutului, se bazează, exact ca și moda, pe primordialitatea axei temporale a prezentului. Și asta în cel puțin trei sensuri. Pe de o parte, ca industrie, cinematograful caută succesul comercial cel mai imediat și cât mai mare posibil.

Totuși, simultan, cinematograful se înscrie, în felul său, în ceea ce caracterizează la modul propriu opera avangardelor, tehnica pe care Daniel Bell o numea „eclipsarea distanței”. Aceasta

se definește prin spargerea spațiului scenografic euclidian și dispariția esteticii contemplării în profitul unei culturi centrate pe „senzație, simultaneitate, instantaneitate și impact”. [1]

„Spectatorul nu mai este exterior lumii artei închise asupra ei înseși. Nimic asemănător nu s-a mai întâmplat vreodată în nici o altă artă. O ideologie de o nouă tate radicală apare pentru prima oară în această abolire a distanței intime a spectatorului.” [2]

Noua modernitate se vedește printr-o triplă metamorfoză afectând ordinea democratic-individualistă, dinamica pieței și cea a tehnostiinței. Societatea hipermodernă este cea în care forțele de opoziție față de modernitatea democratică, individualistă și comercială nu mai sunt structurante și care, prin aceasta, este lăsată pradă unei spirale hiperbolice, unei escaladări paroxistice în sferele cele mai diverse ale tehnologiei, ale vieții economice, sociale și chiar individuale. Tehnologii genetice, digitalizare, ciberspațiu, fluxuri financiare, megalopole, dar și pornografie, comportamente de risc, sporturi extreme, performanțe, happening-uri, obezitate, adicții: totul capătă proporții,

se extremizează și devine vertiginos, „fără limite”. Astfel, cea de-a doua modernitate se prezintă ca o imensă fugă înainte, un angrenaj fără sfârșit, o modernizare excesivă. Or, tocmai această dinamică a ultramodernizării caracterizează cinematograful contemporan. O putem constata, bineînțeles, în imagini și în povestiri, dar și în tehnologii și în însăși alcătuirea cinematografului. Acesta e antrenat ca un tot în logica modernizării exponențiale.

Dacă ideea unui cinematograful hipermodern se impune, acest fapt se datorează în primul rând cascadei de invenții tehnologice care au transformat radical atât alcătuirea sa, cât și modurile de consum. Desigur, cinematograful a fost întotdeauna o artă care convoca resursele multiple ale tehnicii, dar, în mod evident, un nou prag a fost depășit odată cu dezvoltarea tehnologiilor de vârf: videoul, începând cu anii '80, și mai ales digitalul, după anii '90.

Tehnica a lăsat locul hipertehnologiei electronice și informatice. Miniaturizarea camerelor, apariția sistemelor Louma și Steadycam, sofisticarea progresivă a camerelor VD au



schimbat treptat chiar și modul de abordare a actului de a filma. Pentru moment, cinematograful e departe de a fi în întregime digitalizat: rămâne totuși faptul că, prin intermediul imaginii hibride analogico-digitale, o imensă mutație a intervenit deja în etapele de concepție, de realizare, de montaj ale unor filme de foarte mare succes (*Titanic*, J. Cameron, 1997 *Jurassic Park*, S. Spielberg, 1993, *Lord of the Rings*, P. Jackson, 2001). Tehnologia digitală poate nu numai să reducă sau să suprimă platoul, să retușeze imaginile, să-i fixeze pe actori în medii artificiale, să le capteze mișcările cu ajutorul calculatorului pentru a le restitui într-o formă animată, să realizeze personaje sintetice și pur virtuale, dar ea face posibilă deopotrivă vizualizarea unor scene și a unor lumi inedite odinioară imposibil de „concretizat”.

De unde, deasemenea, evoluțiile radicale pe care imaginile de sinteză le antrenează în domeniul animației. Tehnicile 3D le înlocuiesc din ce în ce mai mult pe cele 2D. În 1995, Disney, care domnea fără să împartă cu nimeni puterea asupra lumii animației tradiționale încă din anii '30, este nevoit (și asta în condițiile în care era pe cale să-și piardă locul de frunte) să se asocieze cu Pixar, stăpânul noilor tehnologii, pentru a produce, în cazul filmului *Toy Story*, primul lungmetraj realizat integral pe calculator.

*Avatar* (J. Cameron, 2009) devine important ca bornă a graniței între cinematograful secolului secolului XX și cinematograful secolului XXI. *Avatar* ca producție cinematografică a anului 2009 este în fond avatarul cinematografului lui Lumière. Esența spectacolului nu se schimbă, dar pentru că spectatorul și tehnologia sunt astăzi altceva decât la 1895, *Avatar* arată altfel. Arată tridimensional, cu o imagine perfectă, cu o coloană sonoră impresionantă chiar dacă în domeniul narațiunii nu aduce nimic nou. Altceva este important la *Avatar* (2009) și anume faptul

că tehnologia filmului de până acum este răsturnată. A existat un montaj, nu în perioada de postproducție, ci în perioada de preproducție, adaptarea utilajului de filmare se producea concomitent cu filmarea propriu-zisă imaginile reale erau amestecate cu imagini generate pe computer. Regizorul a avut tot timpul un control total al producției pentru că în camera lui de supraveghere avea imaginea generată de computerul care asambla imaginile disparate ale diverselor locuri de filmare (Simul-Cam). După *Titanic* (1997), în care Cameron a folosit imagini generate de computer, dar ponderea lor nu a fost atât de importantă, la *Avatar* (2009) imaginea virtuală lasă puțin loc imaginilor reale. Într-un film ca *Avatar* (2009), actorii devin plăsmui imaginare ale regizorului, ei pot arăta cum dorește acesta, fără a se recurge la machiaj sau la filmări speciale. Paralela cu desenul animat poate fi lesne făcută, dar, în fond, și desenul animat este un „avatar” al cinematografului. Fiecare fotogramă, la desenul animat sau în filmul de ficțiune, poate fi acum, prin tehnici digitale, strict controlată. Poate *Avatar* (2009) a fost doar o încercare de a readuce spectatorii în sălile de cinema. Sistemele de televiziune de tip Home-Cinema, ecranele uriașe care domină orașele îi îndepărtaseră pe aceștia de misterul sălilor de cinema. Succesul de public pe care îl are *Avatar* (2009) dovedește că filmul, spectacolul cinematografic se simte cel mai bine în lumea atracțiilor senzoriale.

Cu noile tehnici de captare a imaginii, a mișcării și de control al mișcării se pot obține cadre care până acum nu erau posibile. Imaginea și sunetul digital întăresc realitatea, în timp ce decorurile virtuale le înlocuiesc pe cele reale. Regizorii au acces la efecte tehnice vizuale inaccesibile în urmă cu câțiva ani. Progresele din domeniul infografiei revoluționează lumea spectacolului vizual.

Realizarea unui film sau emisiuni

TV presupune mai mult decât prezența personajelor pe ecran. Au trecut 30 de ani de când Michelangelo Antonioni, pentru *Zabriskie Point*, (1979) a turnat (la propriu) vopsea verde pe o pajiște pentru a obține o culoare mai densă. Mai recent, *Apollo 13* (R. Howard, 1995) a fost realizat cu imagini de arhivă, din care s-a înlocuit cerul pentru a-i da o notă mai dramatică, s-a adăugat iarbă, a fost demolată o clădire recentă, reconfigurat totul în planuri 3D și creată o scenografie virtuală și animată. Cu cât grafica pe computer devine mai accesibilă, filmele și programele de televiziune pot avea afecte vizuale tot mai elaborate. Creațiile digitale permit imaginilor să apară perfecte (chiar prea perfecte, substituind o imagine a realității cu o altă realitate, a imaginii).

S-a trecut dincolo de efecte speciale. Evoluția sistemelor computerizate a dus la o schimbare uriașă și în realizarea filmelor. Calculatoarele permit realizarea de personaje virtuale, a unor animații mai realiste decât până acum, a unei interacțiuni mai bune între actorii virtuali și cei reali. Această tehnologie revoluționează filmul clasic, desenele animate, animația tridimensională și spectacolele live. Finețea realizărilor merge de la dans la parada modei. Chiar dacă din punct de vedere estetic nu este deosebit, *Ghosts* (Stan Wilson, 1997) cu Michael Jackson este o referință în evoluție.

Sistemele de captare și reproducere a mișcării revoluționează tehnica filmului de animație, creând o nouă imagine, influențată de mișcările omului. Animația clasică presupune mii de desene și o muncă intensă, chiar și pentru lucrul în două dimensiuni. Sistemele actuale de captare a mișcării permit animatorilor să transpună mișcarea umană personajelor animate tridimensionale. Următorul pas este „umanizarea” aspectului actorilor virtuali. Una din tehnicile folosite se bazează pe scannarea în 3D a feței unor actori reali și maparea texturii astfel



obținute pe modelul virtual. La aceasta se adaugă sincronizarea mișcării buzelor cu vocea (lipssynch). Tehnica de reproducere a mișcării revoluționează tehnica animației, creând o nouă imagine, controlată de mișcările omului. Animația clasică pe celuloid presupune mii de desene, dar noile sisteme de captare a mișcării permit animatorilor să transpună mișcarea umană modelelor virtuale ale personajelor animate.

Evoluția sistemelor computerizate permite crearea unor personaje animate mai realiste decât până acum. Interacțiunea dintre actorii virtuali și cei reali devine perfectă. Această tehnologie revoluționează desenele animate, animația tridimensională și spectacolele live. Dacă imaginația creatoare există, limitele sunt dictate doar de capacitatea calculatoarelor.

Ceea ce trece peste ani este asocierea cinematografului cu narațiunea, iar mediile digitale sunt percepute drept ceva care permit cinematografului să-și spună poveștile în alt mod.. Pe de altă parte, mediile digitale obligă la reconsiderarea însăși a esenței cinematografului: aceea că filmele nu reprezintă înregistrarea a ceea ce există în fața camerei, ci crearea a ceva ce

nu a mai existat. Această abordare nu este nouă, ea constituind esența animației, dar a fost marginalizată în cinematografie. Cu mediile digitale, ea revine în atenția generală. Au fost prezentați anterior, într-un crescendo al complexității, câțiva pași în această direcție. Generalizând, în era digitală a cinematografului, filmul digital = material filmat clasic în decor, cu actori reali + grafică pe calculator + procesarea atributelor imaginii + mixare + animație 2D/3D.

Tehnologia actuală produce un nou gen de spectacole cinematografice, în care se pare schimbă relația spectatorului cu spectacolul. Ideea este aceea a unei noi legături cu imaginea în mișcare. E un nou înțeles al participării spectatorului la film, mai mult decât simpla vizionare pe ecran, ca observator pasiv, prin crearea senzației de imersiune în universul proiectat pe ecran, o vizionare din „interiorul” filmului.

În cinematograful dinamic, senzația de imersiune este amplificată prin adăugarea unei note suplimentare de realism. Scaunele sunt așezate pe dispozitive hidraulice care le imprimă o mișcare dirijată de acțiunea de pe ecran. Vizionarea devine și o experiență de mișcare. Filmul

dobândește o dimensiune nouă, mișcarea, alături de imagine și sunet.

În altă manieră, sistemul IMAX perfecționează un experiment tridimensional, care estompează granița dintre imagine și realitate. Cinematograful IMAX 3D oferă imagini stereoscopice cu rezoluție mare. Sistemul de proiecție este bazat pe două role, corespunzătoare fiecărui ochi. Filmul este proiectat într-o cupolă specială care învăluie publicul. Vizualizarea filmului se face cu ochelari speciali, realizați din diode cu cristale lichide, cu diafragme sincronizate ce se închid și deschid în același ritm, cu o frecvență nedetectabilă de ochi. Sistemul oferă o rezoluție foarte mare, o imagine amplă, sunet spațial.

În aceeași logică high-tech, digitalul a revoluționat în totalitate concepția însăși a decorurilor și a efectelor tehnice, devenite „speciale”. El conferă postproducției, prelucrării sunetului prin etalonaj – ambele digitalizate – un loc tot mai important, până la montajul care se informatizează în așa măsură încât acum se depărtează de montajul de modă veche, pe masa de montaj, care, de la cinematograful mut, constituia în mod tradițional ultimul moment al creației

filmice. În mod similar, echipamentul sonor al sălilor – Dolby, THX, digital - ca și proiecția tot în digital, care nu este decât la începuturile sale, modifică profund condițiile de proiecție.

Aceste bulversări anunță oare moartea cinematografului? Hipertehnologia, cu tipul de hiperconsum pe care-l suscită, este oare mormântul creației, așa cum auzim adesea spunându-se? Categoriec nu. Este de ajuns să remarcăm că istoria cinematografului este și cea a tehnologiilor sale și că sunt numeroși marii creatori care, de la Gance la Godard, s-au interesat îndeaproape de inovația tehnică. Departe de a deturna cinematograful de la funcția sa artistică – expresia unei viziuni a lumii și privirea critică asupra realității - hipertehnicitatea high-tech-ului îi permite să și-o asume într-un mod nou. Mereu mai multă electronică înseamnă mai multe posibilități deschise pentru cinematograful, fără ca aceasta să fie (mai este oare nevoie s-o spunem?) o condiție suficientă a creației. Cinematograful hipermodern nu-și va găsi cu siguranță sufletul în orgia electro-digitală, dar nici nu și-l va pierde în mod necesar.

Astfel, ne putem imagina un canal cinematografic integral HD, de la turnare până la exploatarea în săli. Cu tot ce reprezintă aceasta ca avantaje (calitate superioară a imaginii, reducerea costurilor, copii care nu se

deteriorează, varietatea culorilor și chiar posibilitatea proiectării în relief, cu ochelari polarizanti). Un viitor care, în ceea ce-l privește, n-are nimic virtual: există deja 250 de săli 3D în Statele Unite; vor fi mai mult de 1000 în 2009. Ideea mutației hipermoderne a cinematografului își găsește aici deplina concretizare tehnostințifică. Acest cinematograful a fost etichetat ca *postmodern sau neocinematograful* și semnaleză într-adevăr printr-o estetică a excesului, o căutare a depășirii limitelor, un fel de proliferare vertiginoasă și exponențială. "Mereu mai mult" din toate: ritm, sex, violență, viteză.

Taxonomiei lui Deleuze trebuie să-i adăugăm acum o categorie pe cât de crucială, pe atât de necesară: imaginea-exces. [3] Filmele n-au fost niciodată elaborate mai tehnic, modurile de a povesti n-au fost niciodată atât de diversificate, amestecurile de ton, bruierea liniilor, ambiguitățile de sens n-au fost niciodată căutate în mod atât de sistematic. Cinematograful hipermodern este cel al multiformei, al hibridării, al pluralității. Acum încălcarea regulilor merge de la sine, ea este integrată. Cinematograful modernității este cel care ilustrează astfel o categorie conceptuală inedită și ea: imaginea-sinteză.. Chiar și atunci când, din punct de vedere senzorial, spectatorul este integral scufundat în spațiul filmic,

abolindu-se, așa cum s-a văzut, distanța față de imagine, cinematograful hipermodern creează o distanță de un alt ordin, care ține de spirit, de un mecanism intelectual și umoristic.

Clivajul dintre artă și industrie, dintre cinematograful de autor și cinematograful comercial și-a pierdut din radicalitate.

Se nasc astfel filme de un al treilea tip, al căror profil nu mai este chiar atât de distinct. Cum să caracterizezi *Million Dollar Baby* (C. Eastwood, 2004), *The Piano* (J. Campion, 1993), *Tacones Lejanos* (P. Almodovar, 1991) *Time of the Gypsies* (E. Kusturica, 1988) *Marie Antoinette* (S. Coppola, 2006) *Black Dahlia* (B. de Palma, 2005)? Dar *Forrest Gump* (R. Zemechis, 1994) și *La Vita E Bella* (R. Benigni, 1997) sau *Le Grand Bleu* (L. Besson, 1988)?

Dintr-o dată, cultura de masă nu mai este ceva ce se distinge net, pe fond negativ, de cultura elitistă; aceste două teritorii se suprapun, fac schimb între ele, se amestecă în mii de feluri creând un cinematograful mixt din punctul de vedere al tendințelor.

Uneori, globalizarea este asimilată cu puterea de omogenizare a produselor și a culturilor, cu uniformizarea practicilor, cu occidentalizarea sau americanizarea lumii. Globalizarea nu-i totuși decât la începuturi: se anunță un cinematograful din ce în ce mai deteriorat, mai transnațional și mai pluralizat.

[1] Daniel Bell, trad. Fr. Les Contradictions culturelles du capitalisme, PUF, Paris, 1979, p.119

[2] Béla Balasz, Le Cinéma. Nature et évolution d'un art nouveau, Payot, Paris, 1979, p.128

[3] Laurent Jullier "L'Ecran post-moderne", ibid., pp. 24-270,

**Adrian Drăgușin** (n.03.09.1951) este absolvent și doctor al UNATC cu lucrarea „Cinematograful digital”. Conferențiar universitar la Facultatea de Arte a Universității Hyperion. Director de imagine din 1977 la Studioul București. Semnează imaginea a 16 filme de ficțiune de lungmetraj și a peste 200 de documentare. Din 1990 este director de imagine la TVR. Premii la SIMFEST 1995, APTR 2006, UCIN 2007 și FIFE 2016.

# SOFIA ON SCREEN: A CITY NON GRATA

Mariana Hristova

When I came up with the idea to explore the film image of the city that I know best among the ones I have seen on screen, namely my home country's capital Sofia, my major internal contra argument was the fact that this city is not really beloved by the film camera. Of course, many Bulgarian productions took place in Sofia but apart from documentaries dedicated to the city itself, very few fiction films put it particularly in focus. However, even being in "supporting role", the presence of Sofia on screen provides metanarratives which might not be substantially significant for the dramaturgy of the certain films but reveal important features of urban life in Bulgaria and thus enrich the cinema realm of Balkan cities on screen. For that reason I decided to take the challenge and collocate Sofia on the map of Balkan and international cinema, despite its overall modest appearance.

In the following text I will try to position Sofia's cinematic image in the context of other Balkan cities by differentiating several typical approaches of depicting Balkan city on screen and will also cast light on the more and more often but almost anonymous appearance of Sofia in Western films.



A peasant on a bicycle

## Provincial Exoticism, Tragedy and Disillusion

Talking about Balkan cities, it appears that the concept of urban life in the Western sense applied to the Balkans is already problematic. As David A. Norris from the Department in Russian and Slavonic Studies at the University of Nottingham points out in his study *In the Wake of the Balkan Myth*<sup>1</sup>, along with the process of industrialization and in the course of the emerging Modernity at the end of 19<sup>th</sup>

century a significant difference appeared between the Western cities and the ones in the South-East. While the West was influenced by the philosophical and intellectual trends of the Enlightenment, by advances in agricultural technology, changes in land tenure and changes to the political order, demographic revolution in the emergence of large urban areas, such transformations hardly raised an echo in the far south-east.<sup>2</sup> For many Balkan cities (especially the ones in ex-communist countries) modernization

came much later as part of the "bright future" planning of the totalitarian regimes, therefore it was perceived ambiguously. On one hand, city life indeed provided more comfort and a diversity of life opportunities. But in order to catch up with industrialization, the process was forced by authorities and many countryside people left their rural idyll only to find themselves lonely in the crowd and stuffed in low-quality prefabricated concrete buildings. An entire movement in Bulgarian cinema has been inspired by this nostalgia for the lost paradise – the so called Migration cycle from the 70's created some of the most beloved by local audience films. Instead of celebrating modernity, they rather tell mundane stories of village people who moved to the nearby small town for the sake of prosperity but in fact only to mourn their lost relationship with land and nature. In an emblematic sequence from one of the most acclaimed titles *A Peasant on a Bicycle* (1974, dir. Lyudmil Kirkov) a neighbor of the protagonist who is about to be fined for growing up pigs illegally in the inner courtyard of an apartment building, loudly resents the fact that law allows people to have dogs and cats in house while really useful animals are banned. The episode has converted into a nationwide joke which mocks philistines and the failure of Bulgarian urbanization, but it is also a good example of the village-to-city migrants' mentality. Probably namely this mentality together with the artificial process of urbanization contributes to a perception and meaning of urban life in the Balkans which significantly differs from the one to the West. The hastily contrived cities in reality directly impact the visual aspect of their cityscapes, therefore their eventual image reflections which circulate on big screen.

Typically, western cities are present and recognizable on screen with their famous landmarks playing also roles of tourist

attractions. One could hardly think of a film taking place in Paris without a single shot of the Eiffel tower, the Triumphal Arc or at least a café corner around Montmartre. Film images especially in mainstream movies often show Western urban life as a combination of class, luxury and prosperity which nowadays is also related to certain promotional strategies. On the contrary, Balkan films rarely point out the beautiful sides of urban living. Balkan cities on film often are a *mise-en-scène* of decay and poverty where people suffer in alienation surrounded by hideous buildings. In some exclusive examples when a city is glorified, it is not the city of nowadays but its idyllic image from the past which usually demonstrates provincial features. Like in the opening scene of *Underground* (1995, dir. Emir Kusturica) at Kalemegdan where the city of Belgrade is being introduced in festive tonality: the two drunk friends Petar Popara - Crni and Marko Dren are riding a horse carriage downtown in the middle of the night, singing and shooting to salute Marko's brother while treating the surroundings as their own property. The year is 1941 and Belgrade with traditional low buildings and cobblestone roads looks more like a town. As the action gets closer to present times, the romantic aura is fading to make room for the terrifying contemporary reality.

Another distinctive approach in the depiction of a Balkan city in film is wrapping it up in a tragic aura. Undoubtedly, post-war Sarajevo is the most exploited city in this context not only as visual scenery but as a source of horrific stories as well. In *Grbavica* (2006, dir. Jasmila Zbanic) the film action inhabits the most fiercely tortured neighborhood during the Sarajevo occupation in the Yugoslavian war in order to reveal the tragic part of its hidden war history – the mass rape of women who were forced to give birth to children conceived in violence. The action

is predominantly located in the said district depicted in grayly toned scale but what counts more is the narrative provided by the place. An earlier Bosnian film, *Summer in the Golden Valley* (2003, dir. Srdjan Vuletic) explores the underground crime world in Sarajevo which the teenage main character Fikret is forced to deal with in a reality of post-war chaos and poverty. The city is observed from a double angle – mostly from the point of view of the marginalized urban bowels but also from far above on a rooftop, where Fikret brings his beloved girl, so they can identify with the view from Western airplanes with happy passengers flying over Sarajevo. The contrast between youth dreams for normal life and the reality in ruins depicted predominantly the dark palette of the night is embodied by the juxtaposition of these two possible angles towards the cityscape, therefore the city itself plays a key role in the fable. The tragic approach in depicting a city could be recognized in Turkish cinema too but it is rather some bitter-sweet melancholy best described by the Turkish word "hüzün" as Husseyn Karabey, the director of *Do Not Forget me, Istanbul* (2011) defines it in an interview for Cineuropa<sup>3</sup>. Such a melodramatic aura hovers around Fatih Akin's films as well, most distinctively in *Out of Heaven* (2007) where the city is a crucial crossroad, attractive namely in its fatality.

The third approach is the disillusioned one, flavored with bitter irony. It most often concerns contemporary reality where the city is a scene of decay, being it physical or emotional. In the Slovenian film *Fuck it!* (2000, Miha Hocevar) a group of boys are surviving a tedious summer in Ljubljana, not having enough money in order to have access to the desired amount of alcohol, drugs and sex. They spend monotonous days drinking cheap beer on the curbstones in a dull neighborhood while the city center is sporadically shown



### Grbavica

as a faraway cityscape – a clear remark that in contradiction with their age, they stay away from active life, imprisoned in a peripheral environment. In *Ljubljana* (2002, dir. Igor Sterk) the city participates actively in the fable as a playground for the infantilism of the main character's Maresh who hangs out in nightlife Ljubljana with his bored bunch of friends only to gather even more boredom. Although the characters in this film belong to a higher social layer, they seem to be suffocated by urban life just as the boys in *Ljubljana*. To sum up, in both films the city is presented as an unhealthy living ambience.

Sofia is largely presented in Bulgarian cinema namely in disillusionment. But while in the above mentioned Slovenian films the characters stay in Ljubljana despite its negative effect on them, Sofia in a significant majority of contemporary Bulgarian films either exists only in words or occurs to be the starting point for a cathartic escape.

### A City to Escape From

Sofia has all the aspects of a typical Balkan city as long as it is a focal point of multiple

religions with the corresponding cityscape – an orthodox and an Armenian church, a mosque and a synagogue positioned within approximately 500 meters from each other in the heart of the city. Its visual potential is mostly exploited by not so famous American productions due to the low budget film equipment and professionals available in the area. However, I cannot recall of a title among these films where the city is mentioned as itself. It is not an especially attractive filming location for Bulgarian cinema either – one of the hot ongoing debates in the Bulgarian film circles is why many contemporary filmmakers keep avoiding the city not only as a film set but also as a narrative inspiration.

One of the possible answers is in the insignificance of its recent history: it is difficult to see Sofia as an authentic source of extraordinary narrative as it has not been in the center of any crucial event in the near past, being it war or other political conflict. Another point is its urban appearance – the old part is not well preserved, so it could hardly attract cameras searching for picturesque cityscapes. In other words, it lacks both

tragic and romantic aura which makes it scarce of exoticism – a compulsive feature for a place to be labeled as “typically Balkan”. Sofia is bypassed even in Theo Angelopoulos' *Ulysses' Gaze* in which Harvey Keitel's character undertakes a trip in search for the common history of the Balkans but when passing through Bulgaria, he chooses the second biggest city Plovdiv instead of the capital. Now it seems more understandable why many Bulgarian young directors who are aiming international recognition are not keen to film stories rooted in Sofia – it is not an attractive spot according to the stereotype about the Balkans which often turns to be of a crucial importance for the success at an international film festival.

While for many characters from the films of the Migration cycle Sofia is an unreachable city to live due to the restricted rules for obtaining a citizenship during communism, therefore it rarely appears on screen, in contemporary Bulgarian cinema it is a starting point for a cinematic getaway. The escapist leitmotif has been launched in 2002 with *Emigrants* (dir. Ivaylo Hristov and Lyudmil Todorov) whose

three young and lost characters regularly dream to leave for Argentina while observing aircrafts taking off from Sofia airport. And although they never fulfill their dream, their craving to be somewhere else penetrates the whole ambience. It is probably the first film to open the debate on the phenomenon of "internal emigration" – a recent term used in everyday spoken language defining the capsule in which intelligent and sensitive people get imprisoned in a situation of political and moral corruption that has poisoned social and private life at all levels.

Some 10 years later this same kind of internal emigrants still do not have the resources to leave the country, but can at least escape from the city. The opening scene in a depressing Sofia suburb of *Sneakers* (2011, dir. Ivan Vladimirov, Valeri Yordanov) reveals the miserable family situation of one of the characters. Such a beginning is like a catapult that stimulates a journey to a deserted beach without a fixed return date. A similar approach could be noticed in *July* (2012, dir. Kiril Stankov): Sofia is just the meeting point where two old friends fill up the car with oil and alcohol in order to take off on a purifying trip towards the seaside sunrise. In both films Sofia with the street dirt, unpaid electricity bills and unsolvable personal issues is like the haunting ghost of their unbearable everyday lives. The filthy incarnation of a brutal reality which on screen is pushed away by an escapist desire.

*Avé* (2011, dir. Konstantin Bojanov) is even more radical as characters escape not only from the city but from the truth itself. Main heroine Avé is a pathological liar hitchhiking to Ruse who simply does not want to accept things and people in the way they are. In the course of the fable we do not see Sofia in a single frame but the traumatic family story of Avé rooted in the city has influenced deeply her profile.

*Eastern Plays* (2009, dir. Kamen



### Eastern Plays

Kalev) shows what happens to people who stay in Sofia without even dreaming to leave it. The protagonist Hristo is a disillusioned artist on methadone who needs several beers extra per day in order to survive the surrounding reality. The film provides an authentic look towards Sofia's underground social layers such as junkies, drug dealers and neo-nazi communities but also to non-institutionalized artistic circles which seem to be marginalized as well. *Eastern Plays* is one of the few contemporary Bulgarian films where Sofia is portrayed visually and socially even with a poetic touch but only to conclude that it is a painful environment lacking perspectives.

Two other films which are firmly located in Sofia are *Dzift* (2007, dir. Javor Gardev) and *The Colour of the Chameleon* (2012, dir. Emil Christov) based on the scripts by Vladimir Todorov, a professor of Cultural history of Eastern Europe at Pennsylvania university. Both perform not only a philosophical analysis of the totalitarian machine but also a visual investigation of the aesthetics of these times by emphasizing on the grotesque features of regime's absurdities and by hyperbolizing the significance of communist symbols. Sofia is

*noir*, stylized and even beautiful on big screen but again is not there to be itself. It is rather an instrument for illustrating the author's thesis.

An interesting attempt to explore Sofia's little known corners and urban legends is the ironic documentary by the underground group Bidon Film "Sofia Video Guide" (2007, dir. Nikola Boshnakov) which focuses on peripheral historical facts and aspects of city life which are rather demythologizing. It is questionable if the Royal Palace has been really equipped with second hand furniture from an Austrian brothel as stated in the film but such a rumor synchronizes with the feeling of fakeness and emptiness of many Sofia inhabitants. "This is a city that no one stands but we are trying to pack it for tourists, to make it a cultural capital. To obtain an EU grant, to decorate things. *Sofia Video Guide* is just as nasty as the city itself, that is why it is the ultimate film about Sofia", the director Boshnakov comments the amateur-like style of the film.<sup>4</sup>

Probably the only cheerful representation of Sofia in a recent Bulgarian film could be found in *Lora from Dusk Till Dawn* (2011, dir. Dimitar Kotsev-Shosho), an independent low budget



### Summer in the golden valley

production made with a photo camera by a good-humored director of commercials who gathered his circle of nightlife buddies to make a funny urban-topic film out of their insider's jokes. The plot flirts with the fantasy genre but the ambience more or less documents the lifestyle of people in Sofia who work in the creative industries, their favorite bars and meeting points. Although all characters seem to enjoy their life in the city, it is hard to neglect the amount of alcohol and soft drugs they consume on screen. And what could be more escapist than that?

### Popular in Anonymity

When it comes to international cinema, it is a hard task to come up with a foreign film where Sofia "plays itself". Its most significant appearance turns to be in the French "East/West" (1999, dir. Régis Wargnier). Sofia pops up in the very culmination moment of the film and plays a crucial part as it is the

getaway door for Sandrine Bonnaire's character's escape from the Soviet Union to France after ten years of attempts. Sofia is the borderline between East and West, a transitional zone. Coinciding with Bulgarian filmmaking tendencies, the city is one more time a preferred escapee destination, though in a different context.

Since the former state film studio "Boyana" in the suburbs of Sofia has been privatized in 2007 by an American company, Sofia turned into a factory for mainstream entertainment films where it "plays" other cities simply because it is a cheap filming location. In most of them the city is unrecognizable but there are few curious cases which make Sofia's connoisseurs burst into laughter. In the coproduction between USA, Spain, Canada and Bulgaria *Automata* (2014, dir. Gabe Ibáñez) the socialist architectural style of the National Palace of Culture passes for some futuristic headquarters of a company that manufactures

robots while in *Hitman*, Sofia's most famous orthodox church Alexander Nevsky pretends to be a church in Moscow.

Summing up the listed examples, it seems that I wrote more about Sofia's absence or avoidance in film than its actual presence. And while such a conclusion might not be in favor of a pure cinematic research, it could contribute to a cultural investigation of the perception of urban life in the Balkans among local inhabitants. In the case of Sofia, it seems that the overall negative experience of living in the city has influenced the cinematic reflections, mostly expressed by disregard. However, I am curious to observe if the eventual appearance of Sofia praising films in future could be a precondition for a more positive identification with actual urban life.

### References: (Endnotes)

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