"GOOD AND BAD":
IDEOLOGY AND PERSUASIVENESS
IN POST-WAR BOSNIAN CINEMA

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Abstract

The artistic attempt to convey the reality or the author's vision of the reality can be reduced to the simple communication process between the creator of the strategic artistic idea or message aimed at the emotions of the recipient. Manipulation of the effects that the artwork has on its viewers can result in creating stereotypes. Such impact is vividly evident in the motion pictures. Ever since its beginnings the film has exerted enormous influences on the audience. Why are we watching movies? We do understand that the material before our eyes is not reality, but nevertheless we believe it. The stories need heroes and enemies in the film reality. In this "reality" the perception of what happened in a certain period of history is interpreted depending on author's believes, but also on political adequacy at the ideas of the time, and even on the origin of the finances for the moviemaking. The features of cinematography such as making the choice of POV (where and why to place the camera) and storytelling (narrative about Enemies and Saviors), subjugated to the stereotypes along with the propaganda possibilities and impacts of film contents and contexts in reference to the war and post-war reality, are the main focuses of this essay.

The reviewed and referenced Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian films are: *No Man's Land, Turneja, Nafaka, Djeca, Ostavljeni, Grbavica, Gori vatra, Parada, Srpski film, 10 minuta, Notre musique, Savršeni krug, In the Land of Blood and Honey, Venuto al Mondo, The Frog, Shot through the Heart, Welcome to Sarajevo, The Hunting Party, Krugovi,* and *Halimin put.*[1]

Keywords: Bosnian film, Propaganda, Greek Tragedy, Stereotypes, Archetypes of Good and Bad, post-war Cinema of ex-Yugoslavia.

Introduction
Trust and Cinema

There is one simple quality of film: it has to be real to be convincing. The pioneer in documentary Dziga Vertov experimented with the leftovers film stock in the editing room,

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making the new document of the already documented reality on the film reel. For him, the camera and editing are equal in the process of filmmaking and by reformulation of the reality; a new, more perfect reality is born, seen through the cinematic, as well as human lenses of the creator of the film. His famous statement: "Life caught unawares" refers to the ability of film to be perfect as opposed to the imperfections of human eyesight.[2] This cinema-eye perfection enables the creator to reinvent the perfect reality (or a new one) according to his own ideas and the messages that he wants the audience to be focused on. Nevertheless, everything in this process of cutting and editing reality depends on the point of view of the author. Whether it's the fantasy or the documentary, both of these features are in the domain of mimetic and realistic qualities. The audience easily identifies themselves with the reality on the screen. The birth of cinema is characterized by this kind of mimesis.

Documentation of the train arrival to the station by brothers Lumière is copy pasting the real life. On the other hand *A Trip to the Moon* from 1902 makes its own reality. Considered nowadays to be the predecessor of fantasy genre, this film by Georges Méliès draws the viewers into a fantasy travel to the space, but nonetheless very much real within its own made up narrative elements rules. This discrepancy between fantasy and realism is evident at the beginning of film, but also accurate and applicable today within the complex genre system of film storytelling. Both opposing styles have possibilities to be suggestive and persuasive, because both are real and we believe in them. No other art has this trust issue with its recipients. For literature one does not need to trust, but imagine. When reading fiction or poetry imagination is the most important factor in the communication process. For paintings and fine art, aesthetic components of admiration, not trust in the given reality, is what is important. For music, emotions and catharsis, but not trust, are the most inherent features of the artist–consumer process.

Through the specific performing, visual, audio, kinaesthetic, light, framing elements, the film language enables the indexing of one reality chosen by the creator of the media content that is the fixed image of the real; space taken in one moment of time with the narrative or plot filling the framed reality whose important feature is identification. Persuasive quality of this media can be found in the basic elements of its language, or code in which the message is transferred to the recipient. When we think that someone is a lousy actor, or that the film story is unconvincing, it is the viewer's trust that was betrayed in the communication with the filmic interpretation of the given reality.

Film is, therefore, a mimetic interpretation of the creator's vision and presentation of some given reality.

Good and Bad: Question of Interpretation of Film Reality?

The story of Snow White is worldwide spread and known, and it can be interpreted like Disney's 1937 animation or 2012 gothic horror version of *Snow White and the Huntsmen*. But in both versions the good guys and the bad guys are the same: wicked evil stepmother is the antagonist (the bad guy), and the beautiful, innocent Snow White is the protagonist (the good guy). Everything else can be interpreted according to the author's vision.

War is similar to fairy tales. It is a story of two different sides; good and bad. How to portray the war in the fiction, and stay true to the reality of good and bad, as well as to the

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[2] David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film*, W.W. Norton & Company, first edition: 1981, followed by other four editions revised and expanded (1990, 1996, 2003, 2016). See Serbian edition: Dejvid A. Kuk, *Istorija filma,* Beograd: Clio, 2005, Vol. I, pp. 203–207.

victims and aggressors point of view? There might be both in the real life, but is there room for both interpretations on one screen? If so, how is then possible to transfer such reality on screen without taking sides and producing further conflict? Is it possible for film to not use the above described persuasive techniques (intentionally or not) and stay true to reality? Which or whose interpretation of reality?

Even in the prehistory of feature movies as artistic expression, but also as an entertainment industry, the extraordinary impact that film has on its audience was registered. Becoming aware that there is a possibility to manipulate with these effects, the censorship boards that control the content shown in the film are created even at the very early stage of film development. In 1917, the Government of the United States formed the Creel Committee, the authority that was entrusted with the task of shaping the public opinion about the American engagement in the First World War. One of the important media, through which the Government infiltrated its messages, was feature movies. On the other continents as well as other historical and social poles, similar things happened with the birth of this new form of expression as soon as its massive influence as the new form of mass media with unique audio-visual language was discovered. Eisenstein strongly opposed to sound in film, because the cultural identity of the language would decentralise the film influence: that is differentiating and not uniting, thus would made revolutionary consciousness around the world impossible. It is no secret that Goebbels and Stalin were sitting in the editing rooms along with the filmmakers whose work is considered today anthological and films classical. Leni von Riefenstahl's work in propaganda documentaries and works on theory and practice of editing techniques by Sergei Eisenstein were closely connected to the men in power.[3] According to Bill Nichols, the film is now – as it was since its beginnings – used intentionally or unintentionally for ideological purposes.[4]

One of the inherent features of film, the psychological phenomenon of identification, can also be used as an asset in spreading well-calculated messages. If considered from the semiotics point of view, the indexical quality of film image gives the fictional worlds the quality of real. The relationship between the image and what it represents is faithful and in the realm of reality, because of the mimetic embodiment characteristic for all the performing arts, as being argued by aesthetics of Plato, Lessing or some contemporary theoreticians of film. The accuracy of the image with its referent in the real world is the characteristic of film language and kinaesthetic storytelling. The identification with this world for the recipients of the film as the message itself is just the result of this semiotic quality.

Riccioto Canudo's manifest *The Birth of the Sixth Art* from 1911 argued and proclaimed cinema – for the first time – as the new art and the synthesis of the five ancient arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry.[5] Plato's mimetic art quality was immediately recognized among early film theorists. Realism as the main style was implemented immediately in this new art. The main feature of realism is to present the world as the real one, in which all the narrative elements (plot, situation, characters, conflicts, locations, etc.) stand on their own within the organized structure of the story conducted by that world's own rules. "Realism as a self-effacing form of storytelling draws on the general tendency in much art to hide the process of its own making in favour of the impression that the world it represents exists

[3] Ulrich Gregor and Enno Patalas, *Geschichte des Films*, München, Gutersloch, Wien: Verlagsgruppe Bertelsmann GmbH C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1962. See Serbian edition: *Istorija filmske umetnosti*, Beograd: Institut za film, 1977, p. 103. See also Ronald Bergan, *Film,* London, New York: Dorling Kindersley Ltd., 2006, p. 291.

[4] See Bill Nichols, *Engaging Cinema: An Introduction to Film Studies*, New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 2010.

[5] Dušan Stojanović, *Teorija filma*, Beograd: Nolit, 1978, pp. 51–53.

on its own, autonomously".[6] Truthfulness and verisimilitude are the immanent features of narrative in film language.

What if or when the reality of the truth is no longer to be trusted? What can a filmmaker depict? Does the depiction of good and bad always have to be from his or others ideological standpoint? Can there be middle ground and grey area in film narrative? What happens when the mainstream, official government or even oral history has lost its credibility? The media have infiltrated messages of hate, that produced the conflict in the first place; information covered in lies were aimed at the mass audience with the goal of making devastating war to be the final outcome of this propaganda communication. This communication, coded in film language of close-up persuasiveness, depends on the audio-visual language of news, first invented on the silver screen as the film language. It uses identification as the tool for persuasive communication outcomes. If film can be used for purposes of creating bad in the real world, can it be also a tool for happy ending in reality? Bearing in mind the film persuasiveness: can film depict or reinvent the reality, for the benefits of future reconciliation of the sides in conflict?

The Origins of Bosnian Cinematic Sentiment

The cinema crisis today can be argued in two different opposing discourses. One is mostly philosophical and the other of an entertainment origin. European film today is engaged elite cinema questioning the ordinary middle class people and styles of life. It is somewhat a moral debating of present time and social connotations. Hollywood movies, on the other hand, are based on the traditional realistic and/or postmodern narratives wrapped in the often persuasive roller coaster spectacle of visual enchantment. Bosnian films, being of European origin, tend to incline to the more philosophical rather than entertainment styles. Although, one can argue that the majority of Bosnian after war films has humorous (black-humour) and absurdity notes on the subject of national conflict and war.

The absurdity of Bosnian war is very explicitly given in the last shoot of Oscar awarded feature film *No Man's Land* from 2001, directed by Danis Tanović. After a hilariously absurd quarrel over why and how the war started, a man is left on the ticking bomb by everyone (soldiers in conflict, journalists, European Community, United Nations official, etc.).

For Bosnia, the filmmakers stand as her best representatives, having gained international recognition in film festivals around the globe and international audience interest. "Before the breakup of Yugoslavia, Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, was a small but vital and lively centre of film production and film culture. In the late 1950s, the Sarajevo group of documentary filmmakers associated with Bosnia film established a well-deserved domestic and international reputation for stylistic inventiveness and political boldness".[7] The Bosnian cinema is not to be considered outside of Yugoslavian cinema, because its growth was directly related to the other republics in former Yugoslavia and the same cinematic identity of realism is inherent for the films made from 60s to the 90s. Modern Bosnian films are not selling illusions but reality. Ever since the beginnings of Bosnian film in the Yugoslavian Cinema in the 60s, the narratives represented in films depicted plots and life problems of the ordinary people lives and middle classes. "As in past periods, feature films (as well as short films, documentary films, and animated films) continue to be made that offer stylistically varied, non-genre-driven narratives and critical visions of an often tragic past and a complex, unpredictable, and volatile present".[8]

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[6] Bill Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

[7] Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience, 1945-2001*, 2nd edition, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 228.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Fig. 1 – Still frame from the movie *No Man's Land*, 2001.

Bosnian bleak reality is often represented like this in the Yugoslavian cinema. Following the tradition of tragic stories in postmodern times, when tragedy became a synonym for everyday life, Bosnian war and after war experience continues to be present as the subject of the contemporary Bosnian film. Having deficient public and government support for the movie production, Bosnian films (made by Bosnian authors and taking place in Bosnia) are often coproduced by European funds and state funds from the neighbouring countries Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. Having the multi-cultural, multi-religious filmmakers, authors, producers and film crews working together on set and in production, how is the director who manages the crew able to impose his/hers own vision of the war, when the crew itself has past memories and traumas that they share with others, only on different sides of the war perspective? So, where to look for the suggested ideology and opinions of the author behind the film reality and its makers – survivors of the war?

Representation of the reality that film is offering consists of the plot (usually conflict) based on the actions and motivations of the characters. The cultural background of the character can be presented (manipulated) in the behaviour, the lines and actions, and costume. The point of view of the camera (position of the camera), framing and editing within the constrictions of the genre or pure author style is imposing a certain idea on the reality represented in the movie. Looking at these parameters is it possible to determine how is the Bosnian reality propagated in the film?

Purgatory in Bosnian Film Realism

Film narrative originates from performing arts and literature. Drama and action between the characters is the essential narrative tool, and it cannot exist without a conflict. No one wants to see happy people being happy. A good story consists of the plot that indicates a conflict between the good guy and the bad guy. Using appropriate professional terminology: the story is

based on the opposing interests of the protagonist and the antagonist. Propaganda of protagonist is the anti-propaganda of the antagonist. The protagonist's existence is conditioned by the antagonist. In other words, if there is no one to fight with, and nothing to fight for, the protagonist cannot exist. Here lies the argument for close connection between propaganda and film: in order to have a protagonist, a bad guy must be created. A bad guy is the enemy, a good guy – the saviour or the victim. Basically, and taken the dramaturgy in a very simplified manner, stories are the conflict between the good and the bad. As is the war. Or is it not? Is there something more Ugly behind it?

For most stories in the official history the bad guy is stereotypically and ideologically detected and commonly accepted. In films stereotypes have to be created because it has to be clear who the good guy is. The film reality succumbs to the reality of good and bad. The battle between good and evil is an essential narrative for films. After the devastating war in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995, no winner is officially proclaimed. The Dayton Accord signed in December 1995 stopped the killings and that's how the massacres in the centre of Europe in the 20th century were ended. No winner. The International Court of Justice in The Haag in 2007 delivered the decision on Genocide (not ethnic cleansing) committed in Srebrenica. Two entities: Serbian and Bosnian-Croat were created, as those were the major two sides in the conflict. Bosnian history now has the story with no winner that will always be subjected to the future interests of power.

"While many cities may wish to boast of their multicultural tolerance, Sarajevo has lived it for several centuries. It is a tolerance that embraces and celebrates Moslem, Jewish and Orthodox religions and customs – a tolerance that embraces Bosnian Serbs, Croats, Muslims, and other ethnic groups and nationalities"[9]. It is evident that so many Bosnian films are keeping and propagating this multiculturalism quality. Characters are of different national and religious backgrounds and not necessarily the bad guy is always the aggressor or soldier. Whether it is *Nafaka* [Destiny][10], that humorously depicts war and its aftermath, or *Turneja*/*The Tour*[11], a Serbian movie that describes the beginning of the war from the point of view of a theatre group from Belgrade that happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, or Bosnian films, *Djeca*/*Children of Sarajevo*[12], *Ostavljeni*/*The Abandoned*[13], *Grbavica*/*Esma's Secret*[14], stories about the post-war perspective of the younger generation, whose life is extremely affected by the past: all of these movies are not openly propagating either side in conflict, but rather sophisticated ideological opinions and views are subtly given through the characters' behaviours and actions. The bad guys are stated clearly, but not insisted upon. The memory of enemies and victims is changeable, as perceived in *Krugovi/Circles*[15], but one adamant position of authors of these films stands: war was unnecessary, there were no winners, and it was all for nothing.

One of the films that reflect the above stated style of addressing to the question of past and truth about the war reality is *Žaba/The Frog*[16]. The actor Emir Hadžihafizbegović transcends his own interpretation generating a powerful cathartic effect, in such a way that it explains the tragedy behind the war that caused innocent to suffer. Survival of the hero in this tragedy and no good and bad features of the romanticism make the film, and other films of the

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[9] *Ibid*., p. 231.

[10] Directed by Jasmin Duraković. Release year*:* 2006.

[11] Written and directed by Goran Marković. Release year*:* 2008.

[12] Directed by Aida Begić. Release year: 2012.

[13] Directed by Adis Bakrač. Release year: 2010.

[14] Written and directed by Jasmila Žbanić. Release year: 2006. Other titles: *Sarajevo, mon amour* (France, Canada); *Sarajevo, dragostea mea* (Romania).

[15] Directed by Srdjan Golubović. Release year: 2013.

[16] Directed by Elmir Jukić. Release year: 2017.

same period, draw on the only possible truth behind the real events. Greek tragedy happened in Bosnia. Hero survived with PTSD. Something ugly and tragic is behind this reality and the verisimilitude of the film was not sacrificed for ideological purposes and explanation of who are the good and who are the bad guys.

Fig. 2 – Poster of the film *Djeca/Children of Sarajevo*, 2012.

Fig. 3 – Emir Hadžihafizbegović in *Žaba/The Frog*, 2017.

All the post-war films are coherent in one idea: the war was stupid and the consequences devastating. Traditionally depicting Joe the neighbour and his life as the absurdity in tragedy with wider connotation in the present society, the contemporary Bosnian films are not bluntly propagating either side in conflict. Subtle offensive characterizations in lines or action of the antagonist are noticeable, but not adamantly claiming the rights of the winner and hero. Twenty years after the war one would expect to find at least one feature movie in the James Bond style, or at least following the Yugoslav cinema tradition of partisan action films. But, of all the films made, almost every single one is related to the war and after war experience; and none of them is made in the style of action-hero-saviour-of-the-day-propaganda. Sergei Lukyanenko in his bestselling gothic novel *Night Watch* (2008) stated: "Once you start understanding the enemy, you lost the war."

The Bosnian understanding of what the war was like for the common citizen (ordinary film character) is best explained in the tragically ending comedy *Gori vatra*/*Fuse* from 2003[17]. Bosnian Muslim Hamdo and Bosnian Serb Stanko are having a drink and discussing the war and who started it referring to it as a "screw up". Raising their voices in the conclusion that the problems in the whole story were the outsiders who came to save "me and you". The conversation ends bleakly stating that the separation of their ethnic groups was unnecessary. The film is not negating the fact that the Serbs were the bad guys in the war, but also portrays some Bosnian Muslims in the post-war period as corruptive and morally devastated. Almost grotesquely comic are the Muslim, Serbian, Croatian and Albanian characters in *Parada/The Parade*[18] – ex-war heroes (each in their own side) who now work together as bodyguards of the gay pride procession in Belgrade against the almost neo-fascist chauvinist youth. As much as the earlier work of Srdjan Dragojević, that can be considered ideological and provocative, this film is mocking the war conflict and even though the stereotypical characters are offensive cultural representation, the film ends in the bitter sentiment of the tragedy and absurdity of

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[17] Written and directed by Pjer Žalica.
[18] Written and directed by Srdjan Dragojević. Release year: 2011.

violence. The bad guys are defined, but do not bare the necessary mask of religion, ethnicity or nationality. The antiheroes, a bunch of ruthless and unscrupulous war veterans, are presented as heroes, because their antagonist is presented as real evil, with the mask of homophobic and blood thirsty neo-fascists.

Fig. 4 – Still frame from *Parada/The Parade*, 2011.

The concept of someone outside being the Ugly one (international community or fate itself) is evident in the 2010 snuff Serbian movie *Srpski film*/*A Serbian Film*.[19] If the content of this film is viewed metaphorically, the context is connotative and applicable to the war and breakup of Yugoslavia. Again, the man shooting, directing and producing the slaughter (gaining money on it) in the last scene of the movie is the Ugly one. It is an evil even greater than the bad which Bosnians, Serbs and Muslims were capable of during the real war. No real propaganda on bad guys and heroes is given in these films.

"The nearly four years of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the brutal forty-six-month siege on its capital, Sarajevo, had a devastating impact on all aspects of life and culture. Enduring the longest siege of a major city in modern history, Sarajevo was mercilessly subjected to months of terrifying shelling and sniping... What remained intact, however, was a small group of talented Sarajevo filmmakers who chose to remain in their city and to shoot back – not with bullets, but with expertly aimed cameras trained with unerring accuracy on the profoundly important human stories that were unfolding daily, and demanding to be told."[20] Who was telling these stories? The ones who were at the same time witnessing the horrors of

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[19] Directed by Srdjan Spasojević. Release year: 2010.
[20] Daniel J. Goulding, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

war and devastation of their city; and not only documenting the reality on film, but putting it into the fictional reality in movies.

Masterly cinematographic essay from 2000, the short film *Hop, Skip, Jump* by Srdjan Vuletić, as well as the brilliant sequence shot in Ahmed Imamović's *10 minuta/10 minutes* (2002), point out that the bad guy behind the line is killing innocent civilians, children and women, but the idea behind it is not to propagate emotions of hatred, but of abhorrent disgust over what people are capable of, and question the limits of humanity in general. These films are capturing Vertov's idea on the cinematic perfection of the eye, accurately making a new reality as an interpretation of the real horror of war. Who started or won the war is present but diminished, because the Ugly truth has shown its real face, which is beyond the black and white fiction reality and is dragging the good guys into the grey monotony of Dante's purgatory. This is how most of the modern Bosnian cinema could be described. It is a Purgatory for ordinary people that are heroically trying to overcome the tragedy that descended on them. The bulk of Jean-Luc Godard's *Notre musique* from 2004 takes place in the post-war Bosnia, and is referred to as Dante's Purgatory. The film transcends the elusive idea about the collective conscience of humanity and hollowness of secularism as well as religious empathy that requires the good guy to be the victim for the system of our reality to be stable. Collectiveness represented and interpreted by the creator of the film through the individual strives, sacrifice, suffering, devastation, destruction, violence is not stereotyped, it's just unimaginable, as is something that could not happen even in the movies.

Savršeni krug/The Perfect Circle[21], the first after war Bosnian film, is a metaphor for the siege of Sarajevo, but also the connotation of resistance and refusal to submit in the face of violence and surrender by dying. The idea of totally experiencing the opposing religions and multi-culture by an individual becomes collective in the film reality. Shot on the real locations, devastated by the shelling, the set designs are ideological, because they become the witness of the certain historical reality. "Form, ideology, and politicizing effects enjoy a shifting, unstable relationship that is best understood when located in relation to a given historical moment and particular audience."[22]

The truth caught in *Savršeni krug* is evident to the survivors. In the same way the fake set design of the fighting scene background in which the glass windows are intact can be easily detected in the movie *In the Land of Blood and Honey*[23] by someone who has witnessed the siege of the European city at the end of the 20th century. The indexical quality is an issue here, because it does not correspond with the referent, but also does not make its own references in the fictional world, making it believable. The film loses the viewers trust (especially survivors' attention) not just because the images aren't giving the right message. The story is purely conceived as the romance between the victim of the rape and the rapist. It is rumoured that the film is inspired by a true story. The reality behind it is not questionable. The film reality is not holding well the strings and stretches of the narrative, performing and editing.

The reality in the Italian movie from 2012, *Venuto al Mondo/Twice Born*[24], that takes place in Sarajevo before, during and after the war, is much more convincing and faithful to the original referent in reality, even if it is a purely fabricated image of reality that surpasses the indexical quality and passes beyond to the metaphorical symbols. Even if metaphorical and artistic, the reality is believable and the emotional impact gigantic in a still shoot of the two windows that are shattered and lighting subdued to the grey gloomy purgatorial colours of the

[21] Directed by Ademir Kenović. Release year: 1997.
[22] Bill Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
[23] Written and directed by Angelina Jolie. Release year: 2011.
[24] Directed by Sergio Castellitto.

war, during which the song by Nirvana is interrupted by the loud explosion, after which the window view becomes the war sight.

Fig. 5 – Still frame from *Savršeni krug*/*The Perfect Circle*, 1997.

One of the best foreign movies about the war that are indexical and symbolic at the same time to the referencing reality of war is *Shot through the Heart* from 1998, directed by David Attwood. The twisted, almost surreal world of the city during the siege and the subtle explanatory features of everyday life are of the utmost importance for any study of the war. Good guys and bad guys are defined and their motives explained. As well as in *Welcome to Sarajevo* by Michael Winterbottom (1997), the set design is real and locations for shooting were devastated in reality, so this visual feature has noticeable impact.

The Inside and Outside View on Bosnian Culture and War

Foreign movies (American production especially) are in need to determine who started the war, whereas domestic, including the Serbian films, are harsher and more realistic in depicting the horrors of war but not focusing so much on the bad guy. They also do not openly state that everybody is equally to blame. The general idea can be drawn as a conclusion that the war is stupid, and we did not need it. As the typical good story needs the dichotomy of good and evil, foreign understanding of Bosnian conflict has to be simplified and stereotyped. It is often given as a justification of the political silence at first and then the humanitarian or military intervention. The conflict between Hamdo and Stanko (the Bosnian pronunciation of the two names sounds similar), both Caucasian, similarly dressed (which suggests they have the same social status), and – judging by the eloquently delivered lines – sharing the same background education, is an incomprehensible phenomenon to be solved unless one of them is on the side of evil. The complex social, cultural, religious, historical web of relationships that these imaginary guys have has been manipulated by media to the conflict with disastrous consequences for both sides.

That's why *The Hunting Party*, directed by Richard Shepard in 2007, tells the story of catching the bad guy, the war criminal Radovan Karadžić. It is very clear who the good guys are. Although filled with stereotyped judgmental images, the impression of justification, remorse, and pay off for the actions that the international community and the USA did or did not take concerning the war in Bosnia is the major idea behind the film. The opening scene shows the arrival of the plane to Sarajevo International Airport along with the collage of images associated with Bosnia. The background music is of oriental origin, and has nothing in common with the Bosnian musical heritage. The shoot of an old guy in the Old Town of Sarajevo, built during the Ottoman rule in the Middle Ages, shows him with the fez on his head, even if people ceased to wear it about a century ago. Incidentally that costume is also of Ottoman origin, not Bosnian. The comparable referent of this stereotyped image would be if a European citizen would expect to be greeted upon the arrival at the J.F. Kennedy Airport in USA by an Apache dressed in the costume of his ancestors. The final title card in the film justifies the international involvement in the conflict, pointing out the Bad guy:

"In theory, the official hunt for war criminals in Bosnia continues to this day. However, the two most wanted men – Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić – continue to elude the US, the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, The Hague and all in the civilized world who claim to be looking for them. In the ten years that Radovan Karadžić has been on the run, he has published two books and one play. Perhaps, if the International Community opened a summerstock theatre…"

One year later the war criminal was caught. Still, the Bosnian and foreign cinema that addresses matters related to war has not been able to catch the Ugly truth on how and why the conflict happened in the first place, and whether it is going to happen again. The brilliant Croatian film directed by Arsen Ostojić, *Halimin put*/*Halima's Path* from 2012, taking place in Bosnia and based on true events, covers the shocking story of an adopted child raised by the Muslim family and killed accidentally by the biological father in Serbian Army. Horror of the absurdity of life, powers beyond our reach, manipulation of the masses, the birth mark of an enemy for other religions and cultural groups, is what the real Ugly face looks like in Bosnian reality and cinema.

Truth is Tragic, but Tragedy of the Ugly we have to live with

Film can be a persuasion tool, but is also a work of art and a testimony of the social context that it interprets. This interpretation might be intentionally stereotyped or unintentionally, ideologically driven point of view of the creator of the film idea and messages. Subtle infiltration of ideas and reformulation of truth in the creation of the fictional truth is subjected to propaganda manoeuvres, that can have great impact on the audiences' ability to identify with the good and the bad represented in the film. The general impression of the Bosnian cinema after the war, given the argument that no James Bond feature was made, and the grey reality of war and after war purgatory places the characters as either antiheros or victims, leaves the bitter taste of need to blame someone. If there is no explicit hero, is there an enemy? Is it possible that the Bosnian films, with all the propaganda impact film can manipulate with, are not capable of conducting a major propaganda effect after the Bosnian conflict? Was the conflict devastating and absurd to the point of numbness on the international scale of humanity? The Bosnian cinema becomes the memory of the culture in time and absurdity of conflict. The real bad guy is not propagated openly and the hatred is not heated up by the propaganda techniques that film could use to this purpose. For transgressing the etiquette of the

bad guy to the metaphorically powerful and beyond comprehension Ugly one, maybe this cinema can have a reconciliatory outcome and warning effect for the future generations. Tragedy comes to those we can identify with and that suffer undeservedly. There is no explanation to be questioned for the will of gods in ancient Greek tragedy and humans and heroes alike have to accept the fate. Fate is what made bad things become ugly. Ugly we can blame, because it is something outside of us. We do not blame the neighbour or brother. There is no winner. Therefore these films reflect exactly that. Ugliness from the outside made the tragedy. Spectators are not ideologically pushed to the conclusion of hating the bad ones.

Analysing the Jacobson's communication process[25] in the limelight of humanly inherent persuasiveness, every film with its powerful audio-visual identification feature can be considered persuasive and ideological. Any film critic or analysis as well. The film referencing done in this essay can be differently understood and interpreted. It is the author's wish to have it enlighten the viewers with new insights and arguments for further debate or persuasion, but consider the rules of tragedy, ugliness behind the fate, and human incompetence in differentiation of good and bad.

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[25] See Roman Jakobson, *Lingvistika i poetika*, Beograd: Nolit, 1966.