

The Image of the Wounded Space. The Representation of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Cultural Space through Film

La imagen de un espacio herido. La representación del espacio cultural de Bosnia y Herzegovina a través del cine

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Breve biografía

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Resumen

El espacio cultural de Bosnia y Herzegovina (BiH) excepcional y ‘herido’ por la guerra, se estructura en varias historias compartidas, puntos de vista opuestos e identidades confrontadas. En el marco del discurso de guerra aún existente es muy difícil encontrar una base común desde la cual fuese posible re-comenzar desde el principio y construir para ese espacio el futuro pacífico al que queremos llegar. Este estudio intenta desvelar la existencia de un espacio cultural, así como su percepción a través del arte cinematográfico que podría ayudar en esta tarea compleja, desde la hipótesis de que el reconocimiento del imaginario cultural es la base para el entendimiento de los procesos y fenómenos que hoy en día caracterizan complejidad de BiH. Se analiza una serie de películas que abordan el tema de la desintegración

de Yugoslavia a través de las cuales se intenta definir el contexto cultural común de los acontecimientos sucedidos en los últimos veinticinco años. El trabajo, en cierta manera excepcional, analiza la conexión entre el espacio cinematográfico y la experiencia del espacio cultural, con el objetivo de encontrar una identidad imaginada e híbrida como base para un futuro común.

Palabras clave

Cine, identidad híbrida, espacio cultural, percepción, excepción, Bosnia y Herzegovina.

Abstract

It is not easy to objectively present exceptional and ‘wounded’ cultural space of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) that has been interwoven with divided histories, opposing views and conflicting identities. In still present war discourse, it is difficult to find a single common ground, which would allow people to start over again and build peaceful future of the space. This paper is trying to identify the possibility to recognize the cultural space in the art of the film, which could be helpful in this complex task. It is assumed that recognition of cultural layer of the space is the basis for comprehension of the processes, which have defined complex space of BiH. The analysis uses an insight into a cross-section of cinematic art from the period of breakup of Yugoslavia, attempting to describe shared cultural context of events that happened in the last 25 years. The paper establishes an exceptional connection between a film space and perception of cultural space, in searching for hybrid identity as a basis for common future.

Keywords

Film, hybrid identity, cultural space, perception, exception, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Cultural space

“When you watch a movie it is like meeting a living soul. Certain faces already change at the moment of meeting. It is in a way limiting, but on the other hand it is a proof that a film has a charm which in many ways resembles to complexity of human nature. It is a psychological microcosm of sympathy, antipathy, character, and mood which can be changed. Slight shades which make you react differently according to place where we watch a movie, and the company as well. Therefore it is all unpredictable” (Fellini).

Fellini talks about the film that is not only black or white, but depends on a number of elements, stressing out the importance of the context that has an effect on the perception of the movie and life itself. From opposite perspective, Betts (2015) says that cultural context, different perspectives, and the art of film allow us to understand dynamic relationship that a film has with the culture and vice versa (Barber 2002, Bruno 2002). Barber adds cinema as a medium, both for portraying and for precipitating, and as a crucial mediator between the spatial reality and its imaginary status in mental life. Experimenting with memory and interlinking the space and cinema, he defines this relation as a kind of laboratory. In a broader sense, Antić (2003) says that understanding a way of life, cultural context, and political orientation can be achieved through art analysis. According to Lindón (2012), processes of perception allow creation of imaginary space, which is synthetic expression of relations between people and places. Lefebvre (2013) defines it as conceptualized ideal space, which constructs everyday life and is released from it at the same time.

However, Bundalo (2010) draws attention to potential risks that can appear in this relationship between art and reality. He questions the conceptual ontology of artist-art function within (in)stability of current social perceptions. Art expresses challenging times we live in, but it is also a subject of manipulation. Thus, it is necessary to approach it exceptionally from various ways and in a large sample, because that is the only way it could give complete answers. Lindón (2012) points out that we have chosen

to pull away towards imaginary, thus the physical dimensions of the territory can be analyzed in a more neutral way.

Observing one cultural space through the film is particularly complicated in the context of the Balkans where ‘nothing is simple’ (Owen 1995) and, to an external observer, this exceptional region seems like a confusing category difficult to define. On the other hand, Lindón (2012) notes that the concept of foreign has been lost because vast majority of people knows other communities in widely diverse and remote regions, which was not so common before. Anyway, in the western popular fiction, the Balkans usually represent a threatening, mysterious and inhospitable place where western adventures are carried out. As a metaphor for conflict, violence, and uncivilized population is described in metaphorical language. The region is defined according to its position, the clash of civilizations, and the destiny marked by centuries-old hatred, as opposed to the qualities of unique identity and a language of physical geography (Goldsworthy 2015, Owen 1995, Todorova 1999).

Therefore, the concept of imaginative geography is introduced (Lindón 2012, Canclini 1997, Calvino 1974), which is observing non-physical dimensions of the territory in an exceptional way. Although the symbolic representation of the space is older than others, this imaginary involvement is relatively new concept and a new challenge for geography. Just ten years earlier, it became clear that the imagination is an indispensable part of the geography and the articulation of real space with its ingenious forms is inevitable. In this context, imaginary geography refers to multiple theoretical and methodological approaches that are allowing the study of social dimension of space (Lindón 2012).

The breakup of Yugoslavia and the war in BiH (1992-1995) has only confirmed previous definitions that have also become applicable for inner observation in a wounded post-war context. Just like the territory of BiH is strongly divided into 2 entities, 1 district, 10 cantons, 8 cities, 141 municipalities, and many different regions (Čmajčanin 2011), its cultural space is also divided

to ethnical, religious, linguistic, national, and others categories. Opposing groups, constantly going through identity conflict have used a post-war period to focus on increasing the intensity of differences, causing even deeper alienation.

Nevertheless, the analysis is based on hypothesis that it is possible to create a different narrative about identity, not including unilaterally constructed national ones about insuperable differences in BiH. The question is whether it is possible to create a unique understanding and reconstruction of a mutual cultural space, as the basis where it would be possible to build joint future. This is an already existing imaginary space, which will be analyzed, comprehend, and perceived - with an insight to a cross-section of cinematic art, without going into topics that do not reach consensus around common questions. Moreover, this exceptional and broad insight into the film space examines the existence of hybrid identity, which has characterized the space of BiH through the history.

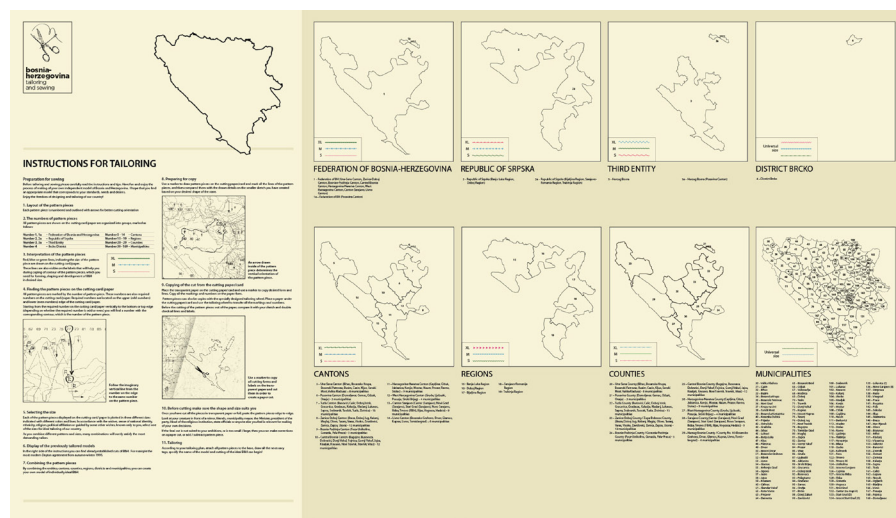


Fig. 1. Lana Čmajčanin, Bosnia and Herzegovina – Tailoring and sewing (Digital print). Source: Čmajčanin, L. (2011) [online] Available at: <<http://www.lanacmajcanin.com/>> [Accessed: Feb. 2, 2014]

Towards the hybrid identity

Although the memory of multicultural identity of BiH is still alive, its reconstruction in post-conflict period is a painful question that depends on many influences, especially on a will to solve it. Rodriguez (2000) reminds us that many scholars have developed ideas about the meaning of culture, nature of multiculturalism, as well as the tension between differences and equalities, which still allow analysis of conceptual nuances. According to Hall (1986) there are several definitions of cultural identity, but in an attempt to examine this issue in the BiH context, a ‘third’ approach has been chosen. It is the process of discovering the hybrid identity that is found in a culture (Soja 1996, Lefebvre 2013). Lindón (2012) states that the condition of hybridity is also increasing globally because the trend of standardization and homogenization is opposite to the human need to feel unique and different, as carriers of increasingly complex and special biographies.

According to Bhabha (1994), continuous process of social articulation that involves differences of unity primarily “requires the approval of cultural hybridity”. Negotiations about differences, as well as the alignment of past and present, are representing complexity that can be found in an analysis of identity formation process in post-conflict areas. Hall (1986) points out that rediscovery of identity is often “passionate research (...) led by a hope that out of all the misery, self-contempt, resignation and forced sacrifice, it is possible to discover some different, more beautiful past whose existence can rehabilitate us in relation to ourselves and others”. But this could be dangerous, because in such contaminated context, passion can be awoken in “wrong places” which could turn into a radical direction. When talking about common space that favours individual narratives, Arendt (1951) expresses many difficulties in attempts to reconcile common denominators of diversity.

Therefore, Ignatieff (1993) states that identification process in the former Yugoslav republics depends on what one is not in relation to others. This suggests that conflicted identities are actually depended on each other, so

we say that the Balkan differences are merging into uniformity and that essences of identities are intertwining. By following the idea of cultural essentials, a space is creating narratives that are connecting a number of communities, individuals and finally different identities (Neil 2004) and not just only one. Accordingly, hybrid identities have been essentially created out of the narrow, limited spaces, in a context of the third space (Soja, 1996, Lefebvre 2013) or imaginary territories (Lindón 2012). Therefore, every society produces its own space (Lefebvre 2013) that is balanced between two poles of conceived and perceived space. In between of these, there is the lived space of pure subjectivity, of human experiences, of people's sense-making, imagination, and feelings.

According to Goldsworthy (2002) the Balkan identities and places of culture have exactly been created in such kind of in-between or third space. Although Canclini (1997) says, this space is difficult to capture due to the cultural transformation that constitutes a system of problems with infuriating dynamics, the hypothesis states that hybrid identities can be found, observed, understood and perceived in a film space. According to Barber (2002) and Wojcik (2015) the film represents inexhaustible archives of memory which reflect the changes in cultural landscape. Therefore repeated imaginary discovery should not be underestimated (Hall 1986) because the film plays a key role in 'our' times (Petrunić 2005). This is especially worth for destroyed and wounded spaces, where film imageries proved seminal to the ways in which space would be imagined and formulated (Barber 2002).

The exception of the study is in the way the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina is observed, which is different from most other European territories. The space is presented in a way that does not only imply physical performance or plans, but is also indirectly presented with the use of film that highlights the power of imagination which has caused (Canclini 1997). This way, both tangible and intangible elements of one specific territory, and its both spatial and cultural identity are described in a kind of transformed reality. Because the film media has a special capacity and the power of language to easily get close to the mentality of people and space,

as its essence, in another, distant context.

Film space

Many theoreticians are interested in relationship between war and its film presentation as joint narrative of cultural space in former Yugoslavia. Films are reviewing history while discovering some of informal versions that are rising as new discourses from the reconstruction of events. In order to reconstruct life and the culture, film artists, as well as the entire BiH society started from the remaining traces of past, causing various processes of hybridization (Canclini 1997). A more complete picture has been revealed here, which in addition to remote observation also allows a different perspective into the 'emotional' space and destiny of characters. This kind of insight, Bruno (2002) defines as 'a haptic dynamics', a narrativized space that includes many senses and their relation to space. Inter-subjective relation is representing produced individualized psycho-geography of cultural life, as well as a kind of 'intimate cartography'. Thus, the film imaginary is not only a rediscovery but also a step towards the production of hybrid identities in common cultural space, or reinterpretation of the past (Hall 1986).

However, observation of a film space is not an easy task either, since the film is a powerful tool that represents a myth of new historical truth. In the context of 'our 90s' the film had pragmatic function of promoting national myth and the past, which became the model for present and future times, with assumptions which were often problematic and ideological. On the other hand, Daković¹ states that "a large number of filmmaking productions have avoided the media trap of propaganda," so "film narratives are offering diverse explanations of the conflict, portraying chaotic views as well as experiences of (in)voluntarily involved war participants".

A large number of films are addressing a series of post-war traumas; ethical collapse of society, war and crime; life of refugees; poverty and shortages; brain drain; uricide; etc., which are writing a chronicle of this space. At the

1. Available at: <<http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=373841>> [Accessed: Oct. 10, 2014].

same time it is revealed how conquerors and conquered are always equally unhappy, inseparably and reluctantly connected as (eternal) 'unfortunates in an evil time', which does not seem to end in the Balkans. The repetition of this everlasting theme is present in most film productions, of which some will be analyzed.

'El ciclo Bosnio'

The exception of the study is especially expressed through the methodology. An extremely complex and 'wounded' context is analyzed through different lenses, that are to be presented honestly and objectively. Analysis has anthropological and artistic approach, which does not remain just on appearances, but delves deep into the cultural context without neglecting its other components. This extremely sensitive issue has required a very careful and wide approach. In order to achieve greater objectivity and better understanding, it is seen through the lenses of physical-artistic, real-imaginary and personal-general. Except of the (1) personal, author's observations of the space, the analysis consists of (2) representation of the art of film and (3) remote observation using the impressions of the audience outside of the spatial context of the study. This way, author achieves dialogue with a large number of participants, which helps him to consider the creation of a different narrative about the search for cultural identity of BiH from different angles. Distant 'voice of the people' helps in more objective viewing of this still vulnerable and conflicting space because as De Botton (2002) has expressed it, "it seems we may best be able to inhabit a place when we are not faced with the additional challenge of having to be there". This also contributes as a review of the possibilities for understanding and creating (not just reading) cultural space, but also as a justification, support and confirmation of this author's approach.

Therefore, the specific value of the analysis is reflected in two-way process, i.e. interaction and influences that research and author themselves realized with the participants of the study. The exception is author's approach to the projected results, which achieved a kind of self-reflection and self-correction

in communication with the audience. Regarding the subject and complex spatial context, this is especially important for achieving the objectivity (Rorty 1996) as one of the vulnerable basis of the area. Considering this, the questionnaire technique was used for data collection and obtaining knowledge, as well as the most appropriate way to get feedback from the audience. On the other hand, it is noteworthy to add that this technique was not used with the aim of sociological analysis of the collective state. A questionnaire was conducted with a smaller number of participants, but it was recognized as explorative potential of personal dependant and subjective perspectives of the responses that opens qualitative descriptions, provides a respective understanding and leads to qualitative interpretations. Thereby this reflects common sense and interpretation while different readers find different meaning, depending on subjective impressions.

The analysis was conducted on a cross-section of five films which were shown during the evenings of Bosnian film, titled 'El ciclo Bosnio' that took place in November 2014 in the bar 'Entresuelo' and Centro de Lenguas modernas de Universidad de Granada, in Granada (Spain). Considering that only five films have been selected (from nearly fifty that analyses the tragedy of Yugoslavian breakup) which are showing complexity of the context, the cycle had a number of limitations. Final selection was a compromise, according to the place of projection, informal atmosphere, structure of the audience, and other influences. Apart from being filmed in post-war period (2001-2013), with the exception of the first movie by Kusturica (filmed immediately after Tito's death in 1981), films have fulfilled other criteria, such as: they were completely or partially filmed and produced in BiH; setting takes place in BiH; the directors of all three BiH constituent peoples have been represented; the films have been translated to Spanish; they are more or less politically correct; they are winners of international film awards and are rated with mild violence scenes.

The movie *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* (1981)² by Emir Kusturica opened

2. Golden Lion award at the Venice Film Festival.

the show. The film introduced the audience to general picture of society several decades before the war. For the most part, the program dealt with the war issues, as dominant feature of the observed period. Thus, (war) drama with elements of comedy and melodrama has prevailed. Two films portrayed horrors of war but also unique spirit of the people: *No Man's Land* (Danis Tanović, 2001)³ and *The Tour* (Goran Marković, 2008)⁴. Both *Fuse* (Pjer Žalica, 2003)⁵, and *Circles* (Srđan Dragojević, 2013)⁶ closed the topic. The film *Fuse* illuminates absurdity of division in first post-war years, and *Circles* uses war to tell the background of universal human story by portraying efforts for reconciliation. Each of these movies can be observed by having certain film scenes absorbed as segments of real physical areas in BiH. However, all of these areas have some other symbolic meaning as well, which can be looked for in the whole film expression, time, and space where film plot was set, including the context in which the films were made. Finally, the perception of one film space also depends on the context in which it is perceived.

Questionnaire design

Reactions were positive and projections were crowded. Most attention was given to *No Man's Land* and *Circles*, while films *Tour* and *Fuse* were less attended. Considering the themes and very influential ending scenes which carry the message of the films, projections ended in almost complete silence. Films by Kusturica and Marković raised most commotion. Both films opened the discussion about cultural prejudices, media constructed visions of war, roles of individual parties, one-sided guilt and politics. Viewers from different parts of the world (beside Spain, mostly from South America, Western and Eastern European countries, as well as from the Balkans) saw the films. The audience has greatly enhanced the research by filling out the questionnaires and participating in the informal discussions.

3. Academy Award winner for Best Foreign Language Film.

4. FIPRESCI prize, Valladolid.

5. Heart of Sarajevo.

6. Berlinare, winner of the Forum award.



Fig. 2. Event poster. Source [online] Available at: <entresuelogranada.blogspot.com> [Accessed: Oct. 31, 2014]

The questionnaire was composed of 12 questions with open multiple-choice type and with possibility of additional comments, which were grouped into three sections. (1) First set of questions was addressed to the profile of examinees (sex, age and occupation); (2) the other was about representation of the most influent image seen in the film; and (3) finally third involved feelings about the possible future of cultural space (feelings of space, representation of felt cultural diversities, spatial reflection, etc.). The questions are directly focused on the possibility of perception of cultural space through art, its understanding, the meaning of the identity and visions of future. In addition to common set of equal questions for all films, there were also some questions adapted to each specific film. These are primarily from the second group of questions relating to specific film shown and the subject around which discussion was developed. The questionnaire was conducted by answering questions immediately after projections at the event place.

Among over 150 viewers, total 42 of them filled out the questionnaire that shows that a fairly large percentage of the audience was really interested in the topic. This way, they expressed their desire to understand the complexity of identity issues in multicultural areas. They also showed a willingness to cooperate in the search for a common cultural space and hybrid identity, according the hypothesis that this identity still exists in BiH. 57,14% of viewers were women and 42,86% men. 35,71% of them were younger than 25 years old, 30,95% were between 25 and 40, while only 7,14% were older than 40 years. They were mainly students- 38,10%, architects 16,67%, artists 4,76%, geographers 4,76%, sociologists 4,76% and others 28,57%. Most examinees saw the film *Circles* 80,95%; followed by *No Man's Land* 40,48%; *Tour* 23,81%; *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* 21,43%; and *Fuse* 19,05%. Hereafter we will see what the film space of Bosnia and Herzegovina is like, and what kind of identities and cultural spaces it represents.

Do You Remember Dolly Bell?

“Ideology and religion is the business of the poor, Maho.
I’m surprised by you!” (Quote from the film)

The film portrays complex context of socialist Yugoslavia torn between two worlds, East and West, with rooted traditional values and modern lifestyle. Conflict is observed in several scenes, which are showing the director’s awareness about the rich culture of the area, inherited and accepted identity, carried with all his being. The scene of vigil over the body of Dino’s father set in the dining room constructs one strong film space of rich identity, which could not be expressed completely free during Yugoslav socialism. While Tetak is playing a well-known traditional song *sevdalinka Teško meni u Saraj’vu sama* every gesture represents explosion of symbols which are constructing the truth of an everyday life in Yugoslavia. Film is particularly known by the phrase: “Every day in every way I’m getting better and better”, but the question is in which direction did the cultural space of BiH really progressed since then.



Fig. 3. Screenshot of the film scene.

Do you remember BiH before the war? Is the space of brotherhood and unity Bosnian history? What was a part of history of the area? What are you remembering BiH for? The audience answered these questions from human perspective recognizing a simple man, which is ‘one of us’, and who has lived through a number of social, economic, and cultural changes, during his life, often not being aware of them (questionnaire). The answers can imply that feelings relating to past are still alive and expressed, but in the meantime they are also contaminated with memories of war period. Thus, contemporary life after the war takes place in a kind of a gap between distant and recent past, confusion and identity crisis, as well as a very uncertain future.

No Man’s Land

“Our battlefronts are still a no man’s land, and eternal image of war, difficult to overcome” (Daković⁷)

No Man’s Land is a cinematic journey of the irony and absurdity of war and its inherent origins, circumstances, and historical interpretations (Petrunić 2005). Film is recognized as the most acceptable version of BiH’s war film, which reflects stereotypes created outside of BiH in a balanced extent, but also adds local allusions that are more or less politically correct. The film is presented as the testimony of war horrors but it also portrays cheerful spirit of the people who managed to live through everything that has been happening.

The trench where Serbian and Muslim soldier meet and fight each other is the second recognized film space. Its physical boundaries are creating a third space in which a sense of neutrality subsists. Ethnical nationalism has been deprived of every sense in the moment when two soldiers were made to fight wars because of interests and processes that never could be understood. When the protagonists begins to argue over ‘who started the war?’ they get in a constant state of tension wavering between moments

7. Available at: <<http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=373841>> [Accessed: Oct. 10, 2014].

Fig. 4. Screenshot of the film scene.

of anger and frustration which are muted by moments of recognition and belonging. The trench as a particular location engages their beings in a hermeneutic play. By sparing the life of the other man, peace is observed, a peace that erupts into war outside of the boundaries of the trench. Yet, the director states that “the protagonists in fact speak the same language, and although, the Serbs call it Serbian, the Bosnians call it Bosnian, and the Croats call it Croatian, we understand each other perfectly” (Portuges 2002, p. 676). This certainly raises the hope for existence of single collective identity and common cultural space.



Fig. 4. Screenshot of the film scene.

Tragedy, portrayed in a subtle way, and feelings such as despair, fear, tension, absurd accident, helplessness, injustice, irony, hatred, and survival are only some of the associations that were singled out by viewers as most influential (questionnaire). Finally, a man left on a mine was the most striking image and a message indicating unstoppable competition and new inevitable conflicts. It seems like death is the only salvation, which is again a kind of Balkan eternal destiny. Although it tries to portray a laid-back attitude, the film shows a complex and painful topic that was set on a general level at the end of the film. The question ‘Whose Bosnia is it,

nobody's or everybody's?' remains unanswered because at that moment, the audience did not have the strength to answer it. Besides, the answer can be both, and something in between, like some supposed "common" space.

The Tour

"I'm not a Serb, I'm an actor!" (Quote from the film)

Marković uses this cry to show his Yugoslavian orientation and strong but also a bit banal, critical attitude⁸. He deals with war as a stage set of personality conflicts, which are the result of the negative emotions and their projections to the Other. Important film spaces can be singled out through the prism of confronting group of actors from Belgrade who are going on a tour during the war in 1993, reaching the war zones in Bosnia, wandering around from battlefield to battlefield, from army to army⁹. These are primarily cruel, cold-blooded and degrading natures of war, including still present scars that can be felt in interpretations (questionnaire). On the other hand, there is obviously controversial contradiction between two worlds - art and war, which are demonstrated by disarmed, completely oblivious and isolated artists during the entire tour.

Meetings in the theatre show lack of awareness, as well as knowledge and empathy towards the events, which are present in the centers of power where wars are actually carried out. Divided, formally different, but essentially completely the same, media space has created a unique atmosphere where war seemed right on each side. Finally, most important spaces of The Tour can be recognized in a labyrinth of all divided areas, which are revolving around each other, and the chaos between them. Geographically, religiously, and ethnically divided space is at the same time united in the idea of war, hatred of the other, and beyond that a nostalgia for past and common cultural space.

8. Available at: <<http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Kultura/t51803.sr.html>> [Accessed: Nov. 15, 2014].

9. Ibidem.



Fig. 5. Screenshot of the film scene.

Considering political neutrality of the film, the audience had different opinions when asked whether the BiH's tour had to happen, if it is over, or if it is still going on. While a minority was led by prejudices and unilateral view of the topic, majority of the audience expressed views about the conflict as still existing political idea. This distorted image of space and time represents another truth about the tragedy on all sides that happened the same way, at the same time.

Circles

With great political background and based on true story, the film is about people who are trying to leave the shadow of past events that have marked their lives¹⁰. And that is the murder of young Serbian soldier (Srđan Aleksić), on the main town square in Trebinje, who tried to save a friend of different nationality during the war in BiH. Although Moll (2016) writes about other sides of Aleksić's personality and life, and about broader context, he is a part of recognized, heroic war mythology around which a consensus has been made and as such is cultivated. Rodriguez Andreu (2012) believes that "a man should put aside his loyalty to one nation and in the chaos of

10. Available at: <<http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1099587>>. [Accessed: Nov. 23, 2014].

war decide which side of the trench to fight for - for or against war". It is believed that Aleksić confirmed that humanity is above ethnical divisions. Dragojević says that Circles are talking to people who are willing to be open and speak out that one Srđan Aleksić lived among them. "I believe that he is real, authentic hero of our time, who will replace the 'heroes' who were imposed on us by society and that he will last forever"¹¹.



Fig. 6. Screenshot of the film scene.

The viewers have also recognized him as the most influential part of the film. This film space of universal human values is formed by relationship between people, acting and failing to act, psychological space between actors, view, silence, emptiness, memory, thinking, forgiveness, religion, as well as visual and emotional strength (questionnaire). Although the film is talking 'about people who have trouble walking because they are carrying heavy burden of the past', they are still managing to leave this circle of past. Just like the act of Aleksić went beyond frame of what is accepted, which got him hurt. However, the question is whether Bosnia and Herzegovina can leave the shadow of past and start living a normal life, some other circle based on positive values.

11. Ibidem.

Fuse

The storyline takes place immediately after the war when two confronted sides are put under the challenge of together organizing a reception for president of USA. Although everything needs to look perfect in a small town, there are still remains of war hiding, as well as ethnic tensions, corruption, crime, etc. which are starting to scratch the surface. The film shows that war and nationalism are not some epic stories, but that there is so much more happening 'behind'. Ordinary people are victims of great interests, manipulation, criminals, politicians, and international bureaucrats. Political message of the film is that, when you remove manipulation and exploitation, ordinary people can coexist and work together with no problem at all.



Fig. 7. Screenshot of the film scene.

This film space is presented as simultaneous kinship and distance, as well as a mesh of lives of confronted sides, which rely on each other despite of divisions. Common cultural space is located in the same event, past, and future, which are divided. Rhetorical question 'Where does it burn, if and how can the fuse be put out?' has been translated to symbolic answer about fuse as the symbol of life, a spark which raises spirits and heats the passion,

as well as engages a number of different actors whose activities contribute to richness of the area. Fuse simply needs to be directed the right way.

Understanding space

Understanding space refers to (1) the real relation between the film (plot-setting-place), specific place and culture; (2) the possibility of understanding the cultural space through the art of film; and finally (3) the character of a specific cultural space and its (4) meaning for everyday life and the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From the images marked by the audience as most influential, several representations can be singled out. For 26,92% of viewers these are setting of the film, followed by mentality of people 23,07%, war 19,23% and finally reconciliation for only 7,69%. From these, it is obvious that predominant images are to a large extent connected to specific space. The plot and the setting are inseparably connected and defined by that same connection. It turns out that an event is equal to space, so an exclusiveness of one over the other is recognized. Setting would not be the same without that image, nor the image would be what it is in some other place, thus the setting is recognized in harmony with cultural space. Some other meaning is present in 23,07% of responses, which can mean that the images have created vagueness towards the complex mosaic of different impressions. They are presenting an important view of the space in some other way, when talking about a person as individual, whose human qualities can be expressed and who can exist independently of one specific space, implied mentality and events that define him. These answers are giving universal value to the space, which exists as a parallel, out of the formal and accepted, rising optimism and possibility to rediscover and re-establish joint dimensions of cultural space.

Recognizable cultural space that combines its physical and mental component is a proof of the hypothesis that states that in the region of post-transitional society, contaminated with history and amnesia, a common cultural space still exists, which is a product of all of the diverse, intertwined, and complex

identities from different levels. Therefore, this cultural space can be observed from the representation of contemporary art, film in particular, as 55,55% of respondents have confirmed. 22,22% of them are partially sure, 16,66% are not sure, while only 5,55% of the participants denied this statement.

When answering the questions whether it is possible to understand cultural space of BiH, 52,38% of the subjects said that they could feel it, while other half, just partially could. This way the audience showed a great level of empathy towards the events that have marked recent Bosnian history. Regardless that they did not have similar experiences, viewers did not express any lack of understanding. Empathy based on screened film space and personal imagination is placing one's self in the position of actors and the space itself, which is universally recognizable, etc.

Besides recognizing the 'common' cultural space of BiH and the possibility of understanding it through the art, the analysis shows the basic characteristics of that space. 56,41% of the subjects have perceived cultural space of BiH as divided, 33,33% of them have considered it as mixed, 3% as unique, while only 2,56% have perceived it as the space in constant transformation. Nevertheless, these data are equally talking about perception as well as previously constructed media representation of the Balkans (questionnaire). On the other hand, they correctly reflect the real state of divided, homogenized and reorganized territory. Based on cross-section of films, the audience recognized complexities and contradictions of the space the same way it is present in reality, in all of its dimensions, cultural and real ones.

Anyway, viewers have different opinions about diversity of BiH. Despite the dominant perception of conflict, 50% of them have marked cultural diversities as an advantage; 7,5% of them considers it irrelevant in relation to everyday life in BiH; 2,5% believe these are representing resources for one's own reconstruction and can mean more opportunities to challenges of reality. However, 40% of the viewers believe that rich cultural diversity is disadvantage, which causes instability and leads to constant conflicts.

These results show that the awareness about contemporary wars and their causes is very high among very wide and heterogeneous structure of people. They confirm that wars do not actually rise from cultural diversities: “Wars led in former Yugoslavia weren’t wars of ‘sevdah’ or ‘turbo-folk’ music, Christianity or Islam, i.e. all of these or those customs and identities, they were wars for dominance over territory and resources, which were advertised as wars for identity” (Bačanović 2012).

69,04% of respondents claimed that multicultural area is the future of the country, 7,14% of them believe the answer is in divided area, while only 2,38% of them have a vision of an unique territory. The remaining 21,42% of the viewers are very careful in their estimations and predictions, considering images presented and past experience. United community has a great potential, but it demands political will as well as technical persistence and society who is determined to make it happen.

Closing the circles

When giving additional comments the audience has admitted that cultural space of BiH remained unknown outside of television war reports, which reduced their knowledge about European culture we share. Viewers have expressed regret over this limitation, but on the other hand, they have stressed the importance of such, indirect way of presenting cultural space that could be promoted as model of broader relevance. Accurate understanding of observed film space and its transformation into the cultural one shows that art of the film can be legitimate source of knowledge about specific processes and phenomena. Analysis confirms that one cultural space can be adequately presented and perceived in many exceptional ways. In doing so, it is only important to consider methodological basis, as well as essential and technical criteria, which are allowing such objective approach. This is especially important in specific post-conflict zones, vulnerable and complex contexts as the Bosnian is.

Analysis has also shown wounded cultural space of BiH, characterized by the complexity of its identities and cultural diversities as well as an eternal conflict between them. This specific image is recognized and described as common cultural space where all the conflicting parties are equally participating and sharing it with each other. Objective insight into the film space, which at the same way testifies about the same events on all conflicted sides, can contribute to better understanding of common context. Recognizing personal roles; respecting cultural diversities and equalities; recognition of similar destinies; acceptance of sufferings as well as crime convictions on all sides; acknowledging the fact that conflict cannot bring victory or defeat to anyone; that it is important to stay human and to create new values together; (...) these are all characteristics which indicate that the result is neither black nor white, as Fellini stated about the film in the beginning. There cannot be found any final, total, or general solutions since the conflict itself and multicultural space form part of hybrid cultural and spatial identity of BiH. It can just be concluded that common culture of remembrance, cultural exchanges and artistic creations could be grounds for further processes and its development towards hybrid identity.

When commenting on contemporary artistic representation of the recent past and the impression about the present time, the viewers expressed their beliefs that this is possible, and that horrific images of war conflicts are left behind. In the same spirit they are expressing their optimism about evolution of mentality, healing of the wounds, and hope for a better tomorrow. Finally, vision of the future gives hope and confirms the thesis, that there is the common basis of identity in BiH, which can be further constructed. Space is seriously wounded, fragmented, and vulnerable, but it can be worked on, with a goal to rebuild historically multicultural community, as well as joint future.

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