

Nationalist Hegemony and Its Subversions in the Post-Yugoslav Cinema/

Hegemonije nacionalizma i njihova podriivanja i alternative u post-jugoslovenskim kinematografijama

Paper prepared for the International Scientific Meeting in Golubic (Obrovac)

Republic of Croatia, 25-28 August, 2009

Center for History, Democracy and Reconciliation
Salzburg-Novı Sad

Abstract

Focusing on a selection of films by cinema directors from the region of former Yugoslavia since the early 1990s until today, the paper aims to, first, analyze the strikingly similar narratives of the films which served as propagandistic nation-building instruments in Serbia and Croatia in the first half of the 1990s, and received lion shares of state funding and media support, while not necessarily becoming blockbusters among their audiences. Second, the paper looks at the period since the late 1990s, when film-makers, both documentary and genre, start their search for alternatives and oppositions to national (ist) identity politics, mostly in the realm of everyday life. I will analyze the films as an exercise in ethnography and political-historical sociology, aiming to establish a contrast between the hegemonic, elite-level framings of post-Yugoslav reality and a more bottom-up, 'documentarist' capturing of everyday life in the most recent films, with the increasing importance in the latter of the issues of war crimes, refugee return, problems of the integration in the EU, socio-economic polarization, and collective forgetting of the socialist past. The paper also argues that despite the consolidation of a 'light-n-easy' version of ethnonationalism in the realm of high politics and in the popular culture of the region since 2000, a significant number of local film-makers in the same period have moved in the direction of critical and satirical knowledge, searching for non-nationalist ways of remembering the recent past, the legacies of socialism, war crimes, and human ties of everyday life in the ex-post-Yugoslav space.

Introduction

'Film.hr', a web site produced by and widely read by filmophils from Croatia, reported in 2004 that the steady rise in the number of films that address the issues of the recent past and the wars of the 1990s from novel, more individualist (less national-grandiose) and 'mundane' perspectives, which was registered in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina since the early 2000s, should be interpreted as a healthy response to the need to examine and (re-) construct national identities in the post-war Dayton triangle in a close relationship with the (re-)construction of European identity, where the authors possibly imply that a significant

number of local film-makers can finally assess their and their audiences' national identities without producing direct support to and replicating their state ideologies.¹

In this paper I would like to argue that the post-2000 'new film' in the above-mentioned successor states of the former Yugoslavia, which can be defined as a new politically non-conformist film sentiment and a new *film-reality relationship* - partially triggered by the change of the political regimes in Serbia and Croatia in the same year -, can be interpreted as an intensification of the production of *alternatives, or oppositions to* (rather than mere re-interpretations of) ethno-national identities.

In order to support this argument, I first need to present the remarkably similar film narratives, which may be described as cogs of the ethno-nation-building propaganda and war-mongering in Serbia and Croatia in the first half of the 1990s. In both newly emerging states, such films received a lion share of the state funds for cinema and mega-advertising campaigns, while, curiously, seldom becoming blockbusters among their audiences.

Films Affirming the Nationalist Hegemony

Srdjan Dragojevic's *Lepa sela lepo gore* (Pretty Village, Pretty Flame, 1996), an internationally successful film, is one of the most-watched Serbian films of all times. The film's plot can be summarized as follows. First, Milan's platoon storms through Bosnia burning Muslim villages. Then, Milan and six other soldiers, survivors of a surprise night-attack, find themselves trapped inside an abandoned tunnel surrounded by the enemy. Thus begins what the promotional material for the film describes as "the ten day long hell... in which there were no winners – those inside the tunnel could not escape, and those above it could not enter, or drive the trapped ones out." Throughout the film Milan's flashbacks provide a series of insights into his childhood friendship with Halil, a Muslim boy with whom he grew up during the peaceful times of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the film's quasi-documentary opening, set in the early 1970s and reminiscent of the socialist-era regime-sponsored "Filmske novosti" (Film News), the same tunnel is opened by a high-level League of Communists' official as a "Tunnel of Brotherhood and Unity." Milan recalls that, as children, he and Halil used to be scared of the tunnel, as a folk-tale Monster (*drekavac* = *zmaj, azdaja, azbaha* in the local languages) was said to inhabit it. The Monster, lurking

¹ "Politika dez/integracije i (re)konstrukcija europskog identiteta," Ogleđi, 22/12/2004, webmaster http://www.film.hr/vijest.php?tekst_id=468#

beneath the happy childhood experiences and pranks, stands for the timeless inter-ethnic animosity which was supposedly bubbling beneath the surface of multi-ethnic happiness. As regrettable as the war in Bosnia may have been, in *Pretty Village*'s ethno-essentialist perspective it also seems to have been inevitable. Dragojevic's folk Monster is but one among the many similar 'final cause' explanations offered throughout the 1990s by the local film industries.

Bogorodica (Virgin Mary, 1999), a work of the young Croatian director Neven Hitrec, offers a collective portrait of the entire Serb ethnos as drunken brutes who, under suitable conditions, would not fail to turn to their primal desire to slaughter and rape. In the Serbian film *Noz* (Knife, 1999, Miroslav Lekic), one finds a cinematic shrine of the classics of the most popular in the 1980s (then still fresh and on the rise) Serbian populist literature: the film is based on Vuk Draskovic's ethno-phobic, hatred-provoking historical novel by the same name. Serbs are here portrayed as martyrs who, throughout history, stoically endure the sophisticated exercises in torture by the blood-thirsty Bosnian Muslims (whose cultural and religious identity is, also denied any autonomy through insisting on the fact that they are merely the Islamicized, culturally 'disoriented,' descendants of the Serbs). Bogdan Zizic's 1994 film *Cijena zivota* (The Price of Life) opts for a 'Griffithian' condemnation of inter-ethnic marriages, as something bound to end in tragedy. Not only does its central protagonist, Ivan (a Croat escaped from a Serb camp in the vicinity of the city of Vukovar), kill the sadistic Serb paramilitary whose Croat wife has been helping him in hiding; Ivan also becomes the surrogate father to the woman's son, thus securing the 'proper' paternal authority for the child of a mixed – that is 'deviant' – ethnic origin (Croat mother and Serb father).

One cannot fail to mention the most internationally acclaimed director from the region Emir Kusturica, whose internationally acclaimed *Podzemlje* (Underground, 1995) puts forth the view of the Yugoslav inter-ethnic conflicts as some sort of natural and regular earthquake-like disasters, and promotes a crudely relativizing ("all sides are equally guilty") approach to the crimes committed during the Bosnian bloodshed. In addition, Kusturica's alignment of blame ties the experience of socialism to the conspiracy of Great powers, a form of colonial Leviathan that would employ interchangeably communism and capitalism to keep the people of Yugoslavia subordinated, uninformed of the grand plot, and occasionally engaged in interethnic brutalities.

Despite their numerous content and stylistic differences, all the above films exemplify what Gyorgy Konrad calls ‘political hysteria,’ asserting that the inter-ethnic hatred and fighting of the 1990s was *inevitable*, as something that resulted from the durable cultural milieu of the region. This cultural sub-stratum was allegedly ‘irritated’ or ‘wounded’ by the socialist era, where the communist leaders tried to suppress ‘healthy’ national identities (‘healthy,’ implying that they strive for state independence). All of the above films either downplay, deliberately mask, or, at the very least, fail to notice the key aspect of the nationalisms’ victory in the former Yugoslavia: the extent to which the 1980s and 1990s ethnic fears in the region started out as an instrument of power in the hands of the political and cultural elites, - and not at the grassroots -, and were introduced into the everyday reality of ordinary people through enforcing violence from above as a ‘new order’ of ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations.

During the 1990s in all post-socialist states the state budget system for cinema funding started disappearing: this was all the more true in Yugoslavia’s successor states where the wars and social and cultural devastation added a lasting context of impoverishment. Despite that, all of the above films had received during this period gigantic sums for their realization, while being allowed by state ministries many less visible but significant privileges, such as the use of communal and military services, e.g., vehicles, security escorts, and labor power. In addition, they all received (free) long-lasting promotions and various advertising campaigns in a range of public media. Interestingly, with the exception of Kusturica’s (previous Palme D’Or winner) and Dragojevic’s films, the rest of the films could not boast to have passed the box office tests: despite the ongoing war-mongering and nationalist propaganda at the time, the audiences did not demonstrate their preference for these films. Why weren’t the public watching them in large numbers?

I take hints to answer this question from the realm of political sociology and one of its novel concepts - ‘ethnic underbidding.’ In contrast to the explanations of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, which either emphasized ‘ancient hatreds,’ or the manipulation by the skilful politicians who knew how to ‘play the ethnic card,’ Valere Chip Gagnon looks at the discourse of those politicians in Serbia and Croatia who won the 1990 multi-party elections and shows that they actually did *not* emphasize the ‘ethnic hostility card’ in their electoral campaigns. Instead, they stressed ethnicity and nationality only as aspects of democratization,

i.e., as issues of inter-ethnic equality or non-discrimination.² Only in the aftermath of their victories, they had unleashed the discourse and media machineries spreading inter-ethnic hatreds, which *followed* (not preceded) the first instances of organized (and staged) violence. Hence, one can conclude from this that during the 1990s, despite the fact that the great share of films on the market in Serbia and Croatia supplied narratives of ethno-national exclusivism and inter-ethnic hatred, the audiences in the region did not affirmatively respond to such perceptions of ethnicized interpretations of the conflict and the wars.

The Non-Nationalist Identity Batch during the 1990s

Milcho Manchevski's *Before the Rain* (1994) makes a brilliant contrast with Miroslav Lekic's *Knife* in demonstrating that 'tradition,' the patriarchal mode of governing and harmonizing local community and neighbourhood relations (between Albanian and Macedonians in Macedonia) is not necessarily ethnonationalistic, and that it is annulled or deemed irrelevant (rather than boosted) by the nationalist politics of state-building in the early 1990s. In contrast to Zizic's *Cijena zivota*, Manchevski's main characters get killed by 'their own' (co-ethnics, even family members) because they insist and remind their human environment of a routine practice of peaceful co-existence that was widely shared and went unnoticed. 'Miscgenation' on various levels of communal life is shown here as part of desired and often practiced everyday communication, and part of communal resources and memory that got destroyed from above.

Marsal (1999), a film by another Croatian director of younger generation Vinko Bresan about the spectre of President Tito haunting the inhabitants of a tiny Dalmatian island, and *Tito for the Second Time among the Serbs* (1994) directed by the most resilient prime mover of Yugoslav and Serbian socially engaged documentaries Zelimir Zilnik take a radically different stand toward the 'dark Communist era' from the one outrageously orchestrated by Kusturica in his *Underground*. In these two films, the dead father of the dead nation arrives to expose the unstable hegemony of the post-communist era, both in terms of its allegedly 'ancient' monochrome ethnic identities, and the greed and violence of (former communist) elites who try not to, but cannot escape emulating the grandeur of Tito's lifestyle and popular charisma.

² Valere Chip Gagnon, *The Myth Of Ethnic War: Serbia And Croatia in the 1990s* (Cornell University Press, 2004), Introduction, chapter 1 and 2.

During the 1990s and continuing in 2000s there arrived new cinematic analyses of the widespread social, economic, and cultural deterioration in the region. In *Tetoviranje* (Tattooing, 1991), veteran Macedonian director Stole Popov explores the institutional breakdown of the Yugoslav socialist system through a naturalistic depiction of the hardships of prison life. In *Crvena prasina* (Red Dust, 1999) Zrinko Ogresta's develops further (and without sardonic humour) from Bresan's *Marsal* the phenomenon of 'tycoonization,' which is exposed as an illegal and justice-perverting appropriation of formerly state-owned firms and industrial plants: war-profiteers and gangsters are shown as directing and leading the legalization and legislation of economic crime in Croatia. In his *Marble Ass* (1995), Zelimir Zilnik deconstructs the established homophobic concept of the Serb "national being" by viewing it through the prism of gender and sexuality. Freely mixing mock-documentary approach and "trash" aesthetic, Zilnik depicts the travails of two real-life transvestite-prostitutes, Marilyn and Sanela, two Serbs who do not conform to the prevailing patriarchal macho male ideal. Marilyn, the transvestite street walker, emerges as the sole guardian of sanity, humanity, sensitivity, and even maternal domesticity – in short, of normalcy – in the sea of lawlessness, violence, and severe economic frustration.

A sociological approach to inter-ethnic tensions is found in Andrej Kosak's *Autsajder* (The Outsider, 1996), one of the most popular Slovenian films of the 1990s. At its center is the Yugoslav 'Southern question': the problem of ethnic and class elitism and cultural and even physical violence levelled against the Bosnian work migrants in Slovenia since the mid-1970s. *The Outsider* tells the story of Sead, a Bosnian teenager whose family moves to the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana, in the early 1980s (his father is an officer in the Yugoslav People's Army). Kosak criticizes *both* the state-propagated forms of Yugoslav "brotherhood and unity" - which, by the late 1970s, have deteriorated into dogmatic ideological clichés -, as well as actual distortions of interethnic friendship and solidarity with the marginal in the everyday xenophobia in Slovenia. Seeking to preserve the ideal, *The Outsider* finds it in the realm of youth subculture. There, unaffected by the official ideological rules of conduct (and opposed to their parents' racism disguised as decent behaviour) trans-ethnic solidarity acquires a new energy and flourishes in a spontaneous fashion.

New and alone in Ljubljana, Sead – the child from a mixed marriage (Slovene mother and Muslim father), immediately finds friendship and understanding among the local punk rockers, whose expressions of teenage angst include shouting curses and singing protest songs about the Yugoslav People's Army and the League of Communists. The manner in which Kosak asserts the supra-national character of this underground youth music scene, of

which Sead becomes a member, is truly captivating. Besides detailing the elements of the local punk movement – which developed a strong and lasting tradition in Slovenia, the Ljubljana counter-cultural scene also includes elements of the distinctly Bosnian 1980s youth culture. The music for *The Outsider* was composed by Sasa Losic, a Bosnian pop-musician whose band *Plavi orkestar* (The Blue Orchestra) was also linked to the Bosnian and immensely popular across Yugoslavia subcultural movement known as New Primitivism. The most direct reference to New Primitivism comes in their key protest song performed by Sead and his band "Anarchy All Over Slovenia": this punk tune (easily imagined as a local equivalent of *The Sex Pistols*' "Anarchy in the UK"), represents a paraphrase of one of the biggest New Primitives' hits of the 1980s, "Anarchy All Over Bas Carsija" performed by the music and satirical theatre group *No Smoking* (Zabranjeno pusenje). *The Outsider* ends tragically. Unable to endure any further his father's army-like disciplinary methods, faced with the deterioration of his relationship with Metka, a Slovenian girl, and with the prospect of having, once again, to move to a different town (his father is being relocated to a new military garrison), Sead commits suicide. His final act takes place on May 4th, 1980, at the very moment when all television stations in Yugoslavia are announcing the passing of Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito. With this symbolic link established between the death of Sead, an ethnic Yugoslav, and the death of the supreme representative of the country's socialist system, *The Outsider* makes it clear that, even as it endorses resistance to Titoist ideological dogmatism and authoritarianism, it views the ending of Broz's era not as the beginning of the desired collapse of the Yugoslav "prison-house of nations," but rather as a prelude to the savage murder of authentic, bottom-up, inter-ethnic ties among its peoples.

'New Films' of the 2000s: Multiplications of the Discontent

One little known film drama, produced in 1997 for Bosnian television, offers a powerful counterpoint to the lurking folk-Monster from the tunnel in Dragojevic's *Pretty Village Pretty Flame*. In Muhamed Hadzimehmedovic's *Poslije bitke* (After the Battle), a Bosnian Muslim and a badly wounded Serb, fighters in the opposed armies and each on the run from the enemy, meet in the hills of Bosnia. Despite their enmity, the Muslim helps the Serb, who reveals that he is a deserter. As the two move on together, they are unaware of a sniper unit that is closing in on them. The last scene in the film depicts the Muslim burying his Serb companion and marking his grave with an improvised cross. At precisely this point, the Serb sniper catches up with him: as the sniper observes the soldier, he hesitates to shoot him since he is not certain what side he belongs to. His uniform is stained with blood and

mud, obscuring his military identifications. If the soldier is a Muslim, why is he marking the grave with a cross?

In Dragojevic's *Pretty Village* a Serb soldier trapped in the tunnel loads his gun while giving each individual bullet a Muslim name. The soldier seems to be in need of some reassurance that the targets of his bullets will be some concrete bodies of Ethnic Others (which he cannot see from the tunnel). In contrast with Dragojevic's film, in *After the Battle* it is precisely the stark visibility of the enemy/other before the sniper that introduces *uncertainty* about their identity. Hadzimehmedovic illuminates a much more complex than presented by Dragojevic issue of 'killing the other': no weapon, however precise it may be, can detect with absolute certainty the Ethnic Otherness: only murder can (?) remove the doubts about its evilness.

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai explains how numerous instances of extreme physical brutality in the cases of 'inter-ethnic' aims to destroy any pre-existing history and reminders of a common trans- or inter-ethnic forms of coexistence and, moreover, of the presence of 'others' within the very person of a (potential) murderer-perpetrator of war violence.³ Appadurai broadens the standard critique of (nationalist) approaches to state building and ethnonationalist violence, which tend to focus on the discursive role of media propaganda, prejudice, and collective memories, and present them as inevitably and uniformly spreading the threat of ethnic "others." Appadurai suggests, instead, that we focus on the *uncertainty* in determining a compendium of ethnic features of individuals, and the imprecision and hilariousness of firm of ethnic boundaries.

In the war space of former Yugoslavia, where large populations (as elsewhere) had developed and practiced complex social identities that transgressed, erased, and mixed the visible ethnic markers, bodily brutalities, which included mutilations, rapes, burials and reburials in unmarked mass graves, served to create a certainty over the allegedly obvious "ethnic otherness" of enemies. The real, peace time, confusion and porousness of ethnic boundaries in the regions where the worst ethnocidal crimes were to be committed, needed to be eradicated – and only brutal mass deaths seemed to have had the effect of drawing the 'primordial' borders. Following this perspective, ethnonationalist agendas had been based not on the apparent obviousness of interethnic hostilities and injustices, or intolerable proximity of 'others', but on their opposites: the lived experience of the uncertainties over larger ethnic group labels of the populations. In the end, only the death of individual persons, who, if left

3 Arjun Appadurai , "Dead certainty: Ethnic violence in the era of globalization.," *Public Culture* 10 (2), 225-247, 1998.

alive or unmutated, would be a constant reminder of ethnic impurity and uncertainty, could make the tension over this uncertainty (temporarily, at least) bearable.

A bulk of the post-2000 films in the region take a novel approach to the issues of inter-ethnic separation and war crimes, treating them as stemming from some concrete instances of the use and abuse of political and military power, not as a matter of the ‘natural course of history.’ They also center on the human relations that the war experiences destroyed, and, hence, reveal the need to link the wars of the 1990s with the *immediate* (rather than a distant) socialist *past*. One of the most striking first examples of this development (that support Appadurai’s theses) among the films in the region is Dino Mustafic’s *Remake* (2003). On the surface, the ‘Remake’ refers back to the events seemingly similar to the beginning of the war in Sarajevo in 1992 – to the start of the Second World War and Sarajevo in 1943. There is a film-within-a-film that involves two sets of friends from the same Sarajevo neighborhood who end up on opposite sides of the war. Since the protagonist, Tarik Karaga (Ermin Bravo) just happens to be an aspiring screenwriter himself, it’s his award winning scenario that ultimately allows him to leave Sarajevo for Paris, though only for a short while. There he is asked to address the intellectual community about what he has seen and experienced in Sarajevo. Although Tarik draws inspiration for his survival and his criticism of the indifference of the West (Western Europe primarily) from his own father’s experience of WWII, the parallel with the previous war actually ends with Tarik and his best friend Miro dying together in a bomb blast where their suicide keeps their friendship (and their inter-ethnic identities) undamaged.

Vinko Bresan, by now a definitive blockbuster-making director in Croatia (since his hilarious light satire *How the War Started on My Island/Kako je počeo rat na mom otoku*, 1996, which could be also treated as subversive of the then dominant nationalist war narrative) made his *Witnesses* (Svjedoci) in 2003 as a first attempt to deal with war crimes on the Croatian side with an additional breakthrough in his effort to incorporate the ‘Serb Other’ into the identity of the (Croat) witness of the murder (war crime). Vinko Bresan now clearly abandons irony and satire in this film that offers a mercilessly honest and emotional account of how war and ethnic hatred corrupt moral behaviour.

Milutin Petrovic’s *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Zemlja istine ljubavi i slobode, 2000) is arguably the first film effort in Serbia to delegitimize the (nationalist) perception of Serbs as victims of a world and Croat-Slovene-Muslim conspiracy. As the 1999 NATO bombing takes place outside, a Belgrade mental patient Boris tells the story of a mafia hitman ordered to kill his best friend to a in the bomb shelter. As the psychiatrist fails to establish a

diagnosis for Boris, he observes the growing gap between the seemingly normal and 'cool' lifestyles of the Belgrade youth and new 'middle class' and their indifference to the suffering of others and pursuit of violence as means of maintaining their 'normalcy'. Milutin Petrovic's films successfully escape any possibility to perceive their morale as an attempt to resurrect a 'healthy Serb' national identity or to feel sorry for his characters (it is useful to compare and contrast his films to Radivoj Andric's *When I Grow Up I'll be Kangaroo / Kad porastem bicu Kengur*, 2004). The problem and the conflict lie elsewhere, and above all in the oblivion and indifference to the causes of violence, suggests Petrovic, – not in the allegedly missing 'correct' national ethos.

Departing from war themes, yet further developing alternative and oppositional identities to the 'prescribed' ethno-national ones as main topics of the films, the film of the Croatian director Dalibor Matanic *Fine dead girls* (*Fine mrtve djevojke*, 2002) applies techniques and elements of the horror genre to show the everyday life in Croatia. The story develops around the following plot: there is a child missing, his mother is looking for him, suspecting that an old woman, a tenant (and at the same time the landlord) has kidnapped him. The plot thickens around the discovery that the two new tenants (one of which is the narrator) are homosexual partners. All the other tenants, presenting themselves as 'normal' are: an illegally practicing gynaecologist (his patients are nuns and victims of incest and, thus, his practice problematizes or even mocks the 'sacred' notions of nationalist ideology-the church and the family), a prostitute, and an old man keeping his dead wives in the apartment. The discovery of the lesbian couple triggers a chain of violent rapes and deaths. The crisis of the dominant hypocritical morale ends in the annihilation of 'otherness,' leaving the chilling atmosphere of the social void behind.

Summer in the Golden Valley (2003) by Bosnian-director Srdjan Vuletic weaves the theme of the young generation's rebellion in a fashion similar to Kosak's *Outsider*, establishing a sociological path dependency link between the generational protest of the 1980s (by now members of the middle-aged cohort) and the habitus of young people whose childhood was marked by war violence, economic austerity, and the (unrecognized) shame, humiliation, or conformism of their parents. In order to repay the debt left to him by his deceased father, the main character of the *Summer*, a Sarajevan youth, plunges into the world of urban crime as the legacy of his father's generation leaves him almost no leeway for becoming a person he wished himself to be. In the words of Srdjan Vuletic, the director: "I am part of a generation of sons whose fathers left them nothing but a legacy of destroyed cities, fallen principles and the chaos of a broken society. Generations of sons have become

hostages of bad decisions made in the past. This film is about the moment when we, the sons, must decide whether to correct our fathers' mistakes or simply tell them to fuck off. My choice is the latter."⁴

In Lieu of Conclusions

In this paper, I aimed to start exploring the rich potential of the cinema in Yugoslavia's successor states to develop post- or trans-national identities, and, perhaps more importantly, to reveal the lines of social and political conflicts and their non-nationalist solutions. The films which I have briefly analyzed above address something that could be called a long *silenced alternative* to the nationalist hegemonies, both in terms of political activism and cultural production. This study complements and broadens the theses of political sociologists and anthropologists, such as Valere Chip Gagnon, about the non-nationalist conditions of war mobilizations in the former Yugoslavia (*ethnic underbidding* versus 'ethnic overbidding' thesis) and Arjun Appadurai's work on inter-ethnic war violence as acts of extreme erasure and forced forgetting of an *inner inter-ethnic identity* (as opposed to the theses that war crimes supposedly confirm the pre-existing otherness of the enemy). These theses gather support in the most recent trends of non-nationalist film production in Yugoslavia's successor states. This line of artistic production provides a contrast to the reductionist explanations of the role of culture in the former Yugoslavia, which affirm nationalist interpretations of culture as fixed and 'given' property of individuals, where culture is identical to ethnicity, and 'normal' communities are ethnically homogeneous.

While the above theoretical arguments deserve further elaborations, I would like to now sum up the main features of the cinema in Yugoslavia's successor states:

1. Departures from the task of nationalist propaganda; departures from the hegemonic interpretations of the war and conflicts; disappearance or mockery of ethno-national pride and patriotism (e.g., Hrvoje Hribar's *What is a Man Without Moustache/ Sto je muskarac bez brkova*, 2005)
2. A resurrection of the role of black humour and satire (esp. in reaction to the top-down imports of the Western views and agendas of multiculturalism, such as in Pjer Zalica's *Fuse/ Gori Vatra*, 2003 and the Oscar-winning Danis Tanovic's *No Man's Land/ Nicija zemlja*, 2001)
3. Pan-ex-Yugoslav film collaborations are on a steady increase: linked to 4.

⁴ <http://www.bhfilm.ba/?otvori=bhfilm>

4. Increase in the number of spectators of local films (audiences may prefer films from the region - in contrast to the national-patriotic films of the 1990s)

If we are witnessing the beginnings of new forms of multiculturalism through, both, the narratives of the films and the practical acts of collaborations and co-productions between the film-makers, producers, and actors from the territory of former Yugoslavia, it should not take a very long journey before this accelerating film practice meets its adequate analysis in social and political science, and starts also examining the films' audiences and their preferences in the regional cinema market.