



**The Roma Between the Self and the Other:
Representations of the Roma
in Yugoslavian and Serbian Narrative Film**

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis focuses on the representations of the Roma minority in Yugoslavian and Serbian narrative film. As a corpus-based study (with the total of 35 films divided into seven periods running from 1945 to 2010), it examines in detail the representational strategies employed in depicting the filmic Roma, and aims to specify a developmental trajectory that these strategies take. To this end, a two-step analytical procedure is used:

(1) Information Structure Analysis, the analytical framework developed by the present author for the purposes of studying narrative representations, makes use of the diegetic domain categories (Topic/Focus; Active/Passive/Perceiver) as well as the meta-diegetic domain categories (Frame Setter) in order to identify the narrative signals deployed in the construction of minority representations.

(2) Narrative-Semiotic Analysis is concerned with the specifics of the representational content. It takes as input the findings of the Information Structure Analysis and investigates more closely the narrative roles and plot units that the Roma are assigned in the film narratives.

The representational strategies identified in the project fall into three types: Roma as *interactants*, *indices of socio-psychological patterns*, and *meta-textual devices*. The developmental path that emerges reveals a predominance of indexical representations and interactants as modified character types (the latter exemplified by such literary and filmic staples as The Fool/Jester) between 1945 and 1960; this is followed by a slow transition from the ideologically-constrained interactant representations in the 1960s to socially critical and oftentimes didactic representations in the early 2000s. The Yugoslavian New Film period (1960-1972) ushered in meta-textual roles, in which the Roma characters intervene in the filmic text from an interpretively privileged and causally separate narrative position, formulating a varyingly explicit criticism of the public image-oriented Yugoslavian politics of the day. This representational strategy has been found to decrease in number and change focus in the last two periods, thematizing broader issues such as individuality, emotionality, and the nature of relationships.

Lastly, the archetype of the *Roma musician* is posited as the most frequent and salient representation based on the analyses of the corpus.

KEY WORDS: Roma, representation, Yugoslavian, Serbian, index, interactant, Frame Setter, meta-textuality, emotion, musician.

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1 INTRODUCTION - THE ROMA IN HISTORY AND IMAGINATION

The Roma have long been part of the European and Balkan histories, and have become the most sizeable minority in Europe (Iordanova 2008b: 236), standing at about eight million at present (Hancock 2008: 182). This figure notwithstanding, a fundamental fact regarding the Roma populations around the world is that for various reasons (external as well as internal to the Roma communities), they have never been at the helm of self-representation. As objects rather than subjects of representational processes, the Roma have been depicted in European cultural history using a limited number of widespread tropes: they have been seen in turn as uncivilized and savage; animal-like, predatory, and oversexed; and inherently prone to crime and the occult. However, they have also been perceived as generous, noble, child-like and artistically gifted (Clark 2004: 230; Gay y Blasco 2008: 298). Paradoxically, even when their cultural products (such as 'Gypsy'¹ music) are accepted and celebrated, the Roma as actual heterogeneous transnational groups are not (Silverman 2014: 186).

Faced with this sort of representational stance, and having an exclusionary culture themselves (Hancock 2002: 57), the Roma have often gained a good understanding of, and identified with, the local majority cultures (Okely 2014: 66), learning in the process how to manipulate the dominant outsider concepts of themselves, exoticizing, concealing, degrading, or neutralizing them depending on the immediate interest of economic survival (Okely 1996: 77).

Although the Roma have lived in Europe for centuries, the exact time of their arrival from the Indian subcontinent is not at all clear - the historical evidence is sparse and inconclusive, and accounts of their arrival conflicting (Radovanovic and Knezevic 2014: 19). Most scholars agree that the first sufficiently reliable evidence of their presence in Europe dates from mid-eleventh century, when mention is made of them in the Byzantine Empire documents (Radovanovic and Knezevic 2014: 18; Lee 2008: 3). The time of the arrival of the Roma in the Balkans cannot be reliably ascertained. The very first mention of them in medieval Serbia dates from 1323, when a historical record states that 'a Gypsy troupe of artists and acrobats visited the Macedonian and Serbian lands'

¹ In this thesis, the term 'Gypsy' appears only when quoting primary or referring to secondary sources. In all other context, the terms 'Rom', 'Roma', and 'Romani' will be used as descriptors widely accepted by the Roma communities around the world.

(Radovanovic and Knezevic 2014: 19). Having reached the Balkans, a portion of the Roma journeyed on to Western Europe, but significant numbers remained, forming the basis of the present-day 150,000-strong Roma population in Serbia, as established in the national census of 2011 (Radovanovic and Knezevic 2014: 31).

As soon as the Roma entered the European historical record, they became victims of mistrust and hatred. The first laws curtailing the movement of the Roma were passed in 1416 (Hancock 2002: 52). The Roma were enslaved in the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in the fourteenth century, and freed as late as 1864. In the Balkans, the Ottoman Turk Empire was more lenient towards them. Some of the Roma converted to Islam to integrate more easily, and were then allowed to move up the social ladder (Silverman 2012: 8-9). Whether sedentary or nomadic, the Roma offered various artisan services in feudal Europe (most notably in Eastern Europe and parts of the Ottoman Empire), tending towards the vicinity of castles and often living a seasonally nomadic lifestyle (Lee 2008: 6).

The fifteenth and the early sixteenth century marked the appearance of the first positive typed Roma representations in theatre, introducing in the narratives of the West what Katie Trumpener terms *ahistoric nostalgia* - the longing of the burgeoning bourgeoisie for the history-less 'endless road' (Trumpener 1992: 853). Early modern societies, however, conceptualized the Roma as social deviants prone to theft and abduction. As a result, between 1650 and 1750, Western Europe (predominantly Spain) saw state terror directed towards them: this was the time of the nascent nation state's fear of de-territorialized lifestyles of ethnically dubious groups, of expulsion, prosecution, and first attempts at forced settlement (Bogdal 2012: 2-4). The Roma were pushed to the economic margin as the developing guilds were not sympathetic to competition in arts and crafts (Lee 2008: 6). This was also the period when the 'Beautiful and Passionate Gypsy' stereotype is claimed to have appeared in the public sphere. It was not a product of Romanticism; rather, it was an extension of the stereotyped representations of Roma femininity in Cervantes's *Gitanilla* (1613), combining Spanish dress, singing, dancing and an untamed female nature (Bogdal 2012: 4).

The era of classical modernity saw continued marginalization and violence against the Roma: the first projects of forced settlement of the Roma were run in the Habsburg Monarchy (Hancock 2008: 184; Bogdal 2012: 5); the nineteenth-century science relegated the Roma to the European racial periphery (Bogdal 2012: 6-7); and the ensuing

negative image of a subordinate race of thieves and swindlers had started to expand and would only be gaining in strength around the turn of the century.

Spurred on by an interest in popular legends, the archaic, and the natural, many authors of European Romanticism created female Gypsy characters which were to serve as future representational moulds: characters such as Walter Scott's Meg Merrilies (1815) and the well-known Carmen by Prosper Mérimée (1845) became vehicles of communication on the forbidden topic of female eroticism (Bogdal 2012: 6). Resulting in part from the Indian caste system, which was the organizing principle of their purported original population, the Roma response to such stereotyping was further social withdrawal (Hancock 2002: 68). The Roma in the nineteenth-century Serbia had an ambivalent position: as a largely Muslim population, enjoying the benevolence of a 'patrimonial state' after taking the Serbian side in the wars against the Ottoman Empire, the Roma were nonetheless discriminated against, especially in the taxation policies (Rakic-Vodinelic and Gajin 2009).

With social fictions serving as Roma identity markers in the society at large, the prejudices against the Roma peaked in the twentieth-century genocide. Referred to as *The Porrajmos* (Hancock 2002: 34), it was an orchestrated attempt on the part of the Nazi regime to destroy the European Roma populations. Estimates of the death toll vary, but what is certain is that between 1936 and 1944 Nazi Germany persecuted, forcibly removed, and ultimately executed between 500,000 (Moscaliuc 2010: 379) and two million Roma (Lee 2008: 56) in concentration camps in Europe. As the Roma did not have their own nation state to support them, most historians were not aware that the Roma genocide had ever taken place.

The Communist regimes in post-World War II Europe largely continued the programme of forced assimilation. The Roma were protected from non-state violence by state laws but there was little protection from the state itself. For instance, nomadism was banned in the Soviet Union as early as 1956 (Lee 2008: 57), and extreme cases of forced adaptation, including the sterilization of Roma women, took place in the former Czechoslovakia (Lee 2008: 56).

The former Yugoslavia presents an interesting case in this respect. Under the sovereign reign of President Tito, Yugoslavia was more open to the Roma: they could access the educational system, and the Romani language was spoken on dedicated radio-stations and used in print media. However, their legal status was far from clear. While the

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Yugoslavian Federal Constitution recognized the categories of nations and nationalities, a number of constitutions of Yugoslavian federal units introduced a category of *ethnic groups*, which guaranteed the protection of individual, but not collective rights (Ackovic 2009). Furthermore, Roma slums such as *Shuto Orizare* near the Macedonian city of Skopje continued to exist. The Roma were generally excluded from the socialist mainstream, and often discriminated against based on an unofficial yet effective social hierarchy (Lee 2008: 13; Silverman 2012: 10).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the legislative protection put in place by the Socialist governments disappeared. Violence increased in step with the rise of local nationalisms and resulted in increased and unwelcome Roma emigration into Western Europe and the United States. Styled as an invasion, Roma emigration has led to a sort of media panic in the wake of EU enlargement, with some countries of the EU opting for harsher immigration policies or even a version of forced settlement, as evidenced in the UK, where site-finding government duties were abolished in 1994, effectively preventing the Traveller population from moving freely (Okely 2014: 67-78).

Political persecutions have persisted to the present day. The French President Nicolas Sarkozy's 'crackdown on unauthorized settlements' is but one example of many in Europe where the Roma were repatriated to Bulgaria and Romania (Balch, Balabanova and Trandafoiu 2014). Roma non-governmental organizations have been founded in various former Soviet countries, but are largely considered ineffective (Silverman 2012: 11-13). However, starting from the first World Romani Congress, held in 1971 in London, the pan-Roma nationalist movement has been developing since the 1980s, building up the international presence of the Roma in the West (Portuges 1997: 201-202).

As they entered the international political scene, the status of the Roma changed. They have become a political project shaped by the non-Roma (either the civil society or the internationally known public figures), which has in turn created a tension between the actual heterogeneity of the Roma groups and their constructed political identity (McGarry 2014: 759). In legal terms, the Roma are recognized as a national minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Sweden, and as an ethnic minority in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovenia (McGarry 2014: 766).

The current position of the Roma in Serbia is quite paradoxical: on the one hand, state legislation has caught up with the EU standards, National Minority Councils have

been set up, and laws have been passed prohibiting any form of discrimination². On the other hand, social prejudice and marginalization seem ubiquitous: the Serbian non-governmental organization CeSID conducted an analysis of Roma-related media content on a sample of media texts in the period 2003-2012, and concluded that the indisputable willingness of the media to report on anti-Roma sentiments and actions co-exists with the sort of reporting aimed to increase the ethnic distance between Serbs and the Roma (mc.rs 2013).

*

Prejudices against the Roma have been claimed to have been systematically carried over into various art forms and combined with other images, most notably in feature film and television drama. In these art forms, two broad discourse angles in relation to the Roma people have been identified: on the one hand, the Roma are a romantic, passionate, sensual and rebellious group; on the other, they are a group with a low social status and concomitant social and economic problems (Iordanova 2008b: 236; Chansel 2009: 9, 15).

Importantly, although minority self-representation is no guarantee of progressive politics (Tzioumakis & Papadimitriou 2017: 195), a meagre number of films and television products made by the Roma results in the discrepancy between the screen Roma and the actual Roma (Homer 2006: 183-184; Iordanova 2003: 3; Iordanova 2008b: 240). Furthermore, this discrepancy is seen as a potentially powerful diagnostic of the process and outcomes of the local majority's identity building and construal, which is precisely where one of the major problems in the study of Roma representations lies: the two social domains – of social interactions and narrative film representations – tend to be conflated, and complex causal networks reduced to simplified reasoning based on analogy.

Further, although Roma images in European and Balkan art have been the focus of many articles and case studies, the Roma in Yugoslavian and Serbian cinema have not received a *systematic treatment*. Moreover, the methodology used in the existing research fails to include many of the more formal film aspects, crucial in the construction and perception of the cinematic Roma image. The present thesis aims to remedy this state of

² As evidenced, e.g. by the sheer number and content of pertinent laws and regulations: <http://www.mduls.gov.rs/latinica/dokumenta-nacionalni-saveti-manjina.php>

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affairs through a corpus-based, methodologically complex, and data-driven analysis of film form and content, and provide a detailed account of the development of Roma representations in the available Yugoslavian and Serbian feature films between 1945 and 2010. In doing so, the political history of Yugoslavia and Serbia delimits the space for both corpus construction and film analysis. The historical period covered in the present research project includes the so-called Second Yugoslavia (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; 1943-1991), the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (consisting of the federal units of Serbia and Montenegro; 1992-2003), which was re-constituted in 2003 as the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro and dissolved in 2006 after the Montenegrin vote of independence, and the Republic of Serbia (2006-).

As the Second Yugoslavia disintegrated in the Yugoslavian Civil War (1991-1995), each of the six former federal units continued down a path of specific socio-political and cultural evolution, effectively forming six different developmental trajectories with a common historical root. Serbia and the former federal unit of Montenegro were joined in a dysfunctional political union for a brief period of time, and can be said to have had related but independent cultural histories (Cox 2002: 184-187). As the modern (1992 – date) Serbian cinema is also underexplored in terms of Roma representations, the present thesis focuses on the specific developmental trajectory that runs from 1945 and the formation of the cinema of the second Yugoslavia, through the Yugoslavian Civil War, to the creation of the Republic of Serbia in 2006. The notion of *Yugoslavian cinema* is therefore *operationalized* as all the films (minimally partially) produced and distributed in the Yugoslavian political space between 1945 and 1991, and *Serbian cinema* as all the films (minimally partially) produced and distributed in the Serbian film-institutional and film-organizational space between 1992 and 2010 (including films made when Serbia was in the formal status of a federal unit, a member of a state union, or a sovereign state). It is from this pool of films that the films featuring Roma representations were selected.³

*

³ Chapter section 3.3 provides further details on the selection of the films in the corpus.

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Chapter 2 of the thesis is concerned with the preliminaries of the analysis. The notions of representation and stereotyping are discussed from a historical perspective, followed by a critical evaluation of the available research on Roma representations in Yugoslavian and Serbian film. Chapter 3 details the methodology: first, the case is made for a new model of film-narrative structure; this is followed by a method of analysis that I introduce, based on a set of logical relations between character and narrative; the section on narrative-semiotic analysis and typing that follow flesh out the analytical framework with higher-level narrative categories, while the section on the role of context outlines the epistemologically acceptable effects of the production and consumption contexts on film representations.

Chapter 4 first conceptualizes emotions as socio-psychological patterns, and then tracks the changes in the role that the filmic Roma have in the construction of these patterns across films and film periods. Chapter 5 investigates the types of interactions that the Roma take part in, providing an account of how the Roma representations are used to buttress or undermine various ideologies. Chapter 6 zooms in on an important Roma representational strategy – meta-textuality – and develops a historical account of the formal features and semantic functions of the filmic Roma as meta-textual devices.

Lastly, Chapter 7 brings all the findings together, summarizing and formulating a developmental account of the Roma representations in Yugoslavian and Serbian narrative film.

2 PRELIMINARIES: REPRESENTATIONS AND THE FILMIC ROMA

2.1 Introduction – film, representation, and the communicative situation

As they are embedded in a more general process of the social communication of meaning, film representations as depictions of characters and variously constituted character groups can be elucidated via an ‘infrastructural’ model of the *communicative situation*. The schematic below shows the elements of such a model:

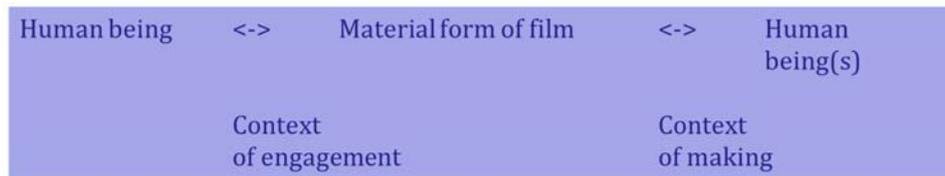


Figure 1 - The communicative situation

The model is described as infrastructural as it lists only the *minimal set* of arguably *optimally abstract* elements surrounding the phenomenon of film: it is always a human being that engages with a particular film, and a human being that participates in the process of producing a film. Furthermore, these two spatiotemporally often distinct activities unfold in two types of context – first and foremost neuro-psychological, but also socio-cultural. What the human beings produce and engage with is at this level of conceptualization the *material form of a work of art*. In the case of film, the material form includes the physical medium of storage, as well as the process of transforming structural changes in the medium of storage into electro-magnetic and acoustic waves, and vice versa. Consequently, the concepts of images and sounds only come into the picture *as a result* of neuro-psychological processes from within a specific socio-cultural context, either in the production of or engagement with a film.

This schematic representation is important for two reasons: it can be used to logically relate all approaches to film representation and its effects and workings; and it can help keep in check the speculative drive in any sort of theorizing.

2.1.1 Realism vs. representation – controversies in the ontology of film

In one of the landmark texts of classical film theory, Andre Bazin identifies filmic and photographic images as ontologically different from paintings and sculptures: the latter *represent*, i.e. stand in for other objects, while the former *present* those very objects to the viewers of a film as a result of the mechanics, i.e. the causal processes of production (Bazin 1967). The schematic in Figure 1 draws attention to the basic problem in this argument – in an attempt to acknowledge the specificity of the causal chain resulting in the filmic image, Bazin ends up blurring the fundamental distinction between the materiality of the *causing object* and the materiality of *the light-trace-recording film tape/photographic emulsion*. Furthermore, and very importantly, what Bazin effectively removes from considerations of film is the *fictionality* of characters and plots, focusing instead on actors and physical settings (Carroll 1988: 147; Thomson-Jones 2008: 22).

Kendall Walton's re-working of Bazin's basic argument does not help either. Although Walton acknowledges the necessity of what he calls a *make-believe* attitude in engaging with film in order to account for the fictionality of film content (Walton 1990), his claims that films and photographs are *transparent*, i.e. that the viewer *sees* the objects presented in the same manner as they can see objects through a magnifying glass (Walton 1984), miss precisely the same point as Bazin's argument – what is *handled* through a magnifying glass is not the same material form as what induces the viewer to *see images*.

The classic realism in film seems therefore to conflate two different types of material forms, as well as to largely sidestep the *socio-psychological* import of the production of and engagement with the material form of film. However, the classical realist notion of *being in the presence of* an object is not without political ramifications – if taken as true, then a film *presenting* an ethnic or minority *actor* may arguably entail different communicative responses on the part of the viewer. Further (the specifics of the theory aside), this issue of potentially differential responses is very relevant to the politics of film casting, and is considered in the present research project whenever deemed salient.

Classical realism did not concern itself with the intricacies of film viewing, but a school of film thought developing in parallel shifted the focus from the materiality and referentiality of film to the viewer psychology and the politics of film production.

2.1.2 The viewer and *his* ideology – the psychoanalysis of film

Deriving from the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan, and developing into a large number of conceptually related approaches and accounts (Creed 1998), the psychoanalysis of film postulates a highly schematic model of viewer psychology based on fairly strict parallelisms with child development. The overview in the table below summarizes the steps in these processes:

Child	Adult viewer
A mirror provides <i>Imaginary completeness</i> .	A film screen provides <i>Imaginary completeness</i> .
Awareness of difference from <i>Mother</i> -> sense of lack	Awareness of difference from non-filmic <i>Reality</i> -> sense of lack
<i>Accept the difference</i> => Repression of desire and entry into the Symbolic.	<i>Accept</i> the narrative resolution of loss => secondary identification => Symbolic
<i>Disavow</i> => Fetishize the mother's body and/or appearance.	<i>Disavow</i> => Fetishize the camera => primary identification

Figure 2 - Child development as a model for film viewing (Metz 1977; Baudry 2010; De Lauretis 2010; Mulvey 2010).

In this model, the process of *identification* with various filmic elements is at the heart of the viewer engagement with film. In order to overcome the sense of lack stemming from the awareness of difference, the viewer as much as the child can either accept the supra-individual symbolic resolution offered by the society / film narrative, or refuse to do so and fetishize the mother's body / the cinema itself. In a *locus classicus* of the psychoanalytical approaches to film, Christian Metz elucidates this process:

The Law is what permits desire: the cinematic equipment is the instance thanks to which the imaginary turns into the symbolic, thanks to which the lost object (the absence of what is filmed) becomes the law and the principle of a specific and instituted signifier, which it is legitimate to desire. (Metz 1977: 76)

The notion of representation plays an important role here in that the process of identification shapes individual viewer's attitudes and values via narrative structure (the secondary identification with the *characters in specific plotlines*), or via the camera (the primary identification with the *cinematic point of view*). As these two types of representations of the dominant power structures come from outside the viewer's self, they are seen in this school of thought as the Lacanian Other – ultimately deriving from Hegel (Cahoone 2003: 86), and understood here as the desired (source of) the individual's identity (Chiesa 2007: 14). Importantly, the viewer identifies wholesale with these broad representations – the depictions of socially inferior groups in such film narratives are acquired indirectly, as subordinate and negatively-valued elements of the dominant social discourse / ideology.

Due to its primary ambition to describe and reveal the workings of ideology on its main target – the white Western heterosexual male - the approach outlined above could not accommodate the complexity of the representations of subordinate social groups. Two broad theoretical expansions and two major critical responses arose as a result of this shortcoming:

As identity politics was on the rise in the 1960s and 1970s (Beltran 2018: 99), the psychoanalytical notions of the Other and Othering were recruited in the postcolonial analytical school, postulating a more socio-historically-based distinction between colonized groups or nations as the Other, and colonizing groups or nations as its related "Otherer" (Fanon 1952: 3; Iordanova 2003: 3). The colonized nation or group is identified as the Other by its constructed difference from the social or (inter)national mainstream, and the colonizer as the group or nation that constructs and maintains the constitutive differences of non-integrated or non-integrable groups. It is within this field of research that the study of *representational stereotypes* developed as the focus of the analysis shifted towards literary and film discourses (most notably in the works of Edward Said).

Its broad theoretical appeal, impressive track record in critical thought, and striking metaphorical overtones notwithstanding, the category of the Other and associated theory of Othering have attracted a significant amount of criticism: for one, the category of the Other seems rather difficult to use in *empirically-oriented* research without a number of further refinements and context-specific operationalizations; further, the postcolonial theoretical frameworks making use of this category aim to generalize the findings of what are essentially analyses of literary texts to broad socio-

historical relations - a deeply problematic analytical *non-sequitur* (Young 2016: 389-390).

Similar issues can be identified in the second theoretical expansion of the psychoanalytical approach to film, largely based on Melanie Klein's *object relations* approach. Klein's object relations model aligns the individual psychological dynamic with Freud's rather than Lacan's notion of the self, and includes a description of the psychological process of ego development in terms of the externalization of both pleasant and unpleasant mental content into material objects, and the subsequent identification with them (Roth 2005: 201; Spillius 2012: 17). Referred to as *projective identification*, this psychological notion has been applied extensively in the study of minority imaging, where it has come to mean the projection of the social majority's self-perceptions onto a minority. The field of cultural anthropology has yielded successful applications of this term, whereas its deployment in film studies can be said to have led to analytical non-sequiturs of a similar kind as in the case of Othering⁴.

2.1.3 Engaging psychoanalysis – Cultural Studies and cognitivism

The psychoanalytical account of the viewer and viewer engagement with film (or, more broadly, the subject/spectator and the ideology that shapes *him*) have often been decried as monolithic, reductionist and ahistorical (Bordwell 1996: 8-9), and have motivated two very different critical responses. The first critical response was Cultural Studies, a school of thought originating at the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the 1960s, and given its distinct theoretical shape in the writings of Stuart Hall. Hall re-conceptualized the human beings in Figure 1 above as *agents* with personal values shaping the outcome of the production of / engagement with cultural content, and the context of engagement/production as *culture* - a fully historicised field of contestation, with representations (including filmic ones!) at once constitutive of social reality and being deployed by social actors for the purposes of domination and control (Hall 1993).

Conceptually close to postcolonial studies, Cultural Studies and its conception of culture made possible a nuanced approach to stereotypes as socially embedded patterns

⁴ See chapter section 2.2.1 for a detailed overview and evaluation.

of representation reflecting broader power structures. However, a unifying conception of culture in this model also resulted in a degree of overgeneralization – filmic and social stereotypes were conflated under a theoretically broad flag of representation. For example, Richard Dyer distinguishes between *social types* (positive typed representations of the familiar), *stereotypes* (negative typed representations of the unknown), and *member types* (typed representations of socially stable patterns of behaviour) in his detailed considerations of the role and procedural aspects of stereotypes in film *and* the society at large (Dyer 1984; 1999); the effects of stereotyping on filmic images are discussed in Cowie (1993)⁵, who observes that stereotyping closes off the free *production* of image meaning. Recognizing the importance of the web of cultural meanings, but also the danger of conflation, Neale (1993) responds to, and warns against, a simplistic approach to stereotypes in a well-known contribution to stereotype theory. He goes on to identify the locus of stereotyping not in the straightforward repetition of stable structures of character traits over a number of (filmic) texts, but rather in the identifiably stable types of *differences* with respect to the totality of each specific text.

*

Cognitivism was developed throughout the 1980s, largely in response to the psychoanalytical approach to film or, more specifically, to the so-called *subject-position* theory of film, which combines Lacanian psychoanalysis with Marxism and semiotics in order to attempt to describe and *resolve* the phenomenon of film in *all* its aspects (Bordwell 1996: 8). It is not a unified theory of film; rather, it is a *stance* in film research (Carroll 1996: 62) producing an array of ‘mid-level’ theories aiming to describe different aspects of the phenomena of film and film reception. In doing so, cognitivism also shifted the focus to the viewer as an *agent* and the material form of a film as a *structured source* of the content the viewer engages with in a psychologically systematic way.

⁵ Much of Cowie’s research has been conducted within the field of psychoanalysis, but the notion of production of image meaning that the referenced article rests on falls squarely within the conceptual landscape of Cultural Studies. Furthermore, there are other examples of cross-pollination between the two research programmes – Stuart Hall himself often employed terms such as *fetish* and *disavowal* to explain various aspects of cultural representations, e.g. Hall (1997b: 266-267).

Leaning on the so-called “New Look” psychology as the ‘first wave of cognitive research in psychology’, cognitivism posits the identity of the perception and cognition involved in the processing of both non-artistic and artistic content. The narrative structure of any film is seen as a series of cues for the viewer, who then proceeds to flesh them out and arrive at an individual instance of the constructed narrative (Bordwell 2008). The process is guided by multi-level mental schemata – patterns of facts, values, and inference procedures internalized by the viewer and used in processing non-artistic content as well.

Importantly, cognitivist notions such as the Primacy Effect (the first item in an arrangement of any content forms the basis for subsequent judgments), the Recency Effect (the last item in an arrangement of any content forms the basis for the evaluation of the whole), and the Fundamental Attribution Error (correlating behaviour with character traits for others; correlating behaviour with contextual factors for oneself) can be seen as essential for filmic representations of characters and character groups. These representations are the *product* of an interaction between the structural cues in a film narrative and the psychological processes in the viewer. What is especially relevant to representing and stereotyping within this research programme is that the procedure of arriving at a representation is the same for non-artistic and artistic content, and results in a society-wide pool of *cognitions*.

These shared cognitions, or hierarchically organized mental schemata (Schweinitz 2011: 11), are used as efficient means of understanding the social and physical world and legitimizing social identities. Even modern large-scale and distinctly normative communities such as nations are constructed around representations of shared history, generalized kinship relations, and powerful symbolisms (Hayward 2000: 83). Although they are helpful in navigating overwhelmingly complex social realities, representations can in fact be alienating: when shared in-group cognitions zoom in on an out-group and provide a negative, prejudicial, or homogenizing picture of it, a socio-psychological stereotype is born (Berg 2002: 15). As socio-cognitive generalizations, stereotypes strip the out-group of its history and cultural specificities and, when repeated a sufficient number of times in a society, they become normalized.

Perkins (2013) broadens some of the important points in this approach to stereotypes, and postulates a continuous, highly complex, and often self-typing in-group/out-group dynamic that regulates stereotype production. Responding to the

dangers of conflation of the social and narrative-representational stereotypes, Condor (1988) warns against a reliance on a cognitivist interpretation of stereotypes as efficient social cognitions, as this masks the *socio-discoursal* components of stereotyping. Tapping into a long-standing tradition of literary criticism, and departing from the approach that conflates social and film characters, Schweinitz (2010) makes a useful distinction between the *socio-scientific* concept of stereotype and the *narrative* concept of stereotype. According to this view, the two types are not congruent, especially in highly conventionalized genres (e.g. the Western, or horror films).

2.1.4 Engaging the linguistic turn – The New Materiality of Film

What the psychoanalytical, cognitivist, and Cultural Studies approaches to film have in common is an implicit understanding of the encounter between the viewer and the film as unfolding at the level of *symbolic systems*. Whether the viewer identifies with the complex ideological position of the camera, responds to a culture-specific representational form, or activates psychological mechanisms to arrive at an understanding of a film narrative, the end product is couched within a *system of linguistic signs* structuring for the most part the *visual/ocular* dimension of film. As historical responses to the dubious epistemological position of the classical realism of Bazin and Walton (Elsaesser 2009: 5), these three research programmes have themselves occasioned a theoretical response that has shifted the focus once again to the material form of film, re-conceptualizing it significantly in the process.

The New Materialism (Coole and Frost 2010: 4) or The Ontological Turn (Elsaesser 2015: 5) in the theory of arts and film theory has brought a renewed focus on the discrete materiality of film and filmic objects, seen as possessing a *corporeal* nature in their own right, of which images and sounds are but two manifest forms. Coupled with this comes a new understanding of the viewer engagement with films, taken to include an *embodied* response to the *non-semantic* qualities of filmic elements such as the voice (Johnston 2017: 192) – a sort of a *sensory-motor* and *affective* reaction that may sidestep the higher neuro-cognitive pathways and never result in a symbolic representation of what is perceived (Thielemans 2015: 1).

The fate of filmic representations can be said to be peculiar in this research programme. The programme rightly emphasises the individual *experience* of film as

necessarily including all available sensory modalities, and the *material form* of film as *causally efficient* in provoking such a complex viewer response. To the extent to which this experience of film is always public, available, and shareable (Baracco 2017: 55) in the Wittgensteinian sense of the impossibility of *any private language* (Wittgenstein 1953), the approach can be said to depose but retain the symbolic nature of viewer engagement: while the viewer response always includes non-linguistic components, they are *reportable* only in the form filtered and modified by a symbolic code. By extension, the representation of filmic characters and character groups will provoke an embodied, multi-sensory response, whose linguistic description / film-theoretic evaluation is of necessity based in a conceptual system⁶. This has important consequences for the study of minority representations as well, inasmuch as a representational strategy may *foreground* their material aspects – colours, surfaces, textures – in a variety of cinematic techniques such as close-ups or extreme-close-ups.

2.1.5 Representation in film - Conclusions

The two central issues in theorizing filmic representations seem to be the relationship between the represented object and the representational form, as well as the relationship between the material form of representation and the scope of the viewer response. The focus has shifted from the *presented* object, through the varyingly binding systems of signification and varyingly linear viewer responses, to the causally efficient *filmic* objects and highly complex viewer engagement with them. What may be said to be in common to almost all the approaches presented in this chapter seems to be the importance afforded to *the symbolic* nature of communication and representation, as either an exhaustive feature or a relevant aspect thereof. Chapter section 3.4 of this thesis will detail the approach taken in the present research.

The next section of this chapter looks at the facts and principles at work in the available studies of the Roma representations in Yugoslavian and Serbian film.

⁶ The more dubious extensions and developments of the New Ontology and phenomenology of film such as Vivian Sobchak's notions of non-representational *knowledge* (Sobchack 2004), or film as a causally efficient *body* (Marks 2000; largely following from the New Materialist conception of matter as *having agency*) are left out of the discussion as the present author is of the opinion that their radical conceptual approaches may in fact obscure rather than help elucidate the nature of filmic representations.

2.2 Roma representations in Yugoslavian and Serbian film – Critical findings

The existing analyses of the Roma representations in Yugoslavian and Serbian cinema are centrally concerned with the following issues:

1. What is the *basic narrative-symbolic role* of the Roma in Yugoslavian and Serbian film? What is the mechanism underpinning this symbolic role and helping the majority viewership interpret and relate to the Roma images?
2. What are the *typical representations* of the Roma in Yugoslavian and Serbian film?

These questions will be discussed in turn.

2.2.1 The narrative-symbolic role of the Roma

The well-known film scholar Dina Iordanova sets the stage for the theoretical reflections on Roma images in film by embracing the concept of *projective identification* (Iordanova 2001: 217). As a term originating from the psychoanalytical theory of Melanie Klein, projective identification is construed as a mental process whereby an object or a person becomes identified with the unwanted aspects of the developing or fully developed self in an effort to either ‘evacuate’ these aspects or control them (Roth 2005: 205-206). In an adult, this process may also include good character qualities thought to be unsafe (Roth 2005: 207), which expands the domain of use of the term in psychoanalytic theory and practice. Because of the significant complexity of this term, the recognition of the usefulness of projective identification in the therapeutic process is highly tentative and speculative (Roth 2005: 208).

In his critical studies of the attitudes towards the Roma among Serbian intellectuals during the Yugoslavian Civil War (1991-1995), Dutch anthropologist Mattijs van de Port appropriates projective identification from psychoanalysis, and applies it in the discipline of cultural anthropology to capture the incongruent love/hate relationship towards Roma tavern musicians which he detects among the Serbian intellectual elite. In this carefully designed and comprehensive study, van de Port relies on interviews with the Serbian subjects and his personal experience as a participant observer of the Serbian

social life, concluding that the Roma are treated in Serbia as figures onto which are projected both the valued and unacceptable features in the social narrative of the Serbian mentality (Van de Port 1998).

Van de Port's analysis of the Serbian majority groups' relationship with the Roma minority is firmly grounded in empirically discovered facts, and its use of the concept of projective identification can therefore be considered appropriate and motivated. But when the concept of projective identification is appropriated by film scholars, its carefully delineated use and meaning start to become blurred. Dina Iordanova uses projective identification in a broad analytical sweep, claiming that the filmic Roma, and especially the Roma in Yugoslavian/Serbian film, are in fact projective identifications of the majority film authors, representing 'what we are, though we are not allowed to be it.' (Iordanova 2001: 217). Focusing on the political and economic aspects of film industry, Iordanova makes a further claim that in depicting the Roma as outsiders, the Balkan film makers express a sense of exclusion from the Western symbolic orders (Iordanova 2001: 218). By so doing, Iordanova posits a two-part conceptual structure of projective identification: on the one hand, projective identification implies that the social majority projects some of the socio-psychological features that it thinks or suspects it possesses onto its own representation of a social minority; on the other, the purpose of this self-identification process is for the social majority to exploit the distance between itself and the Roma to symbolically transpose its frustration over not belonging to the desired (European) cultural circle.

This explanatory approach is taken up by a number of film scholars in the theoretical works concerned with the Yugoslavian/Serbian on-screen Roma. In her 1996 study of the representations of the Roma in film, Nevena Dakovic acknowledges the widespread use and explanatory appropriateness of the psychoanalytical mechanisms that regulate the process of representing the Roma in film: '[The Roma are] the object through which the subject expresses the repressed.' (Dakovic 1996: 330). In her subsequent work on Roma representations, Dakovic uses the term projective identification as a starting point in her reflections on a small sample of Yugoslavian Roma-themed films, stating that the Roma represent 'the nation's own experience of marginalization and stigmatization in and by Europe,' and that what Gypsies are to the Balkan cinema equals what the Balkans are to the international cinema (Dakovic 2010: 392). In her essay on *I Even Met Happy Gypsies (Skupljaci perja*, dir. Aleksandar Petrovic,

1967), Dakovic presents a version of this concept based on the notion of authorial intent: by way of a conscious, politically motivated decision of the director, the Roma images are used vicariously in the film in order to avoid censorship as a potential consequence of openly criticising the Yugoslavian majority (Dakovic 2003: 106).

Marko Zivkovic reworks the concept of projective identification into a socio-psychologically simpler and clearer statement of its internal mechanics: Roma are used by the dominant group for the dominant group (Zivkovic 2001: 170). Expanding on this basic idea, he conceives of the Yugoslavian social space in semantic terms, whereby the Roma are used *metonymically* for the purposes of radicalizing the identity contrast between the majority and the other groups: being the lowest in rank, the *specific position of the Roma in the social hierarchy stands for the entire lower end of the hierarchy*. In the representational chain linking Europe and the Balkans, the Roma are once again used to stand for the entire Balkans as its least appealing and therefore most convincing part.

In his research on the post-Yugoslavian cinema, taking up Zivkovic's idea of the metonymic nature of Roma images, Dino Murtic uses projective identification to explain the fact that caricatured representations of the Roma in Kusturica's *Black Cat White Cat* (*Crna macka beli macor*, 1998) symbolize Epicurean lifestyles (Murtic 2015: 150). His use of the term in question reveals its inherent theoretical limitations: while observing that Roma caricatures are employed as the most convenient, i.e. readily available, stereotypes, Murtic leaves aside the problematic issues of authorial or viewing subject's self-identification and projection, reducing the complex notion of projective identification to what can be rephrased as '*symbol of*' or '*socially entrenched analogy of*'.

Goran Gocic does not commit to the term 'projective identification' in his overview article on the Serbian filmic Roma, but does state that the images of the Roma are in fact the 'images of the hidden Balkan self'. Furthermore, in an interpretive move similar to Dakovic's 2003 article, he adds that in their 1960s, Yugoslavian New Film incarnation, these images also articulate a hidden message of accusing Yugoslavian Communism of being responsible for generating the depicted traits of primitive, brutal pagans in everyone (Gocic 1996: 352).

Gregg De Cuir reiterates Iordanova's general position by positing the Yugoslavian/Serbian film Roma as the invisible Other, i.e. an ignored (and ignoring!) social group which is inscribed with meaning constructed around the sense of identity of the Yugoslavian majority (De Cuir 2015: 104). Although De Cuir's thoughtfully simplified

notion of projection may be more analytically useful, his interpretation of the textual equivalents of this erasure is dubious. Focusing on one of the famous elements of costuming in Petrovic's *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, he claims that the white suit worn by the Roma protagonist, Beli Bora (Bora the White), is in fact just such an expression, i.e. a textual symbol referencing the film-external notion of the *erased identity* of the Roma. The assumptions behind this particular interpretation may in fact be analogous to the problematic assumptions underpinning the forays into clarifying the role of the Yugoslavian/Serbian on-screen Roma:

Bora's white suit has been the staple of many short analytical excursions in the critical reflections on the Yugoslavian/Serbian onscreen Roma: Radenko Rankovic sees it as expressing a limited sense of nobility amid the all-encompassing Northern Serbia's mud (Rankovic 2001: 210), Dina Iordanova as symbolizing the need to demonstrate prosperity in the midst of crisis (Iordanova 2001: 221), the well-known Romani scholar Ian Hancock as a symbol of purity as well as purity in appearance only (Hancock 1997: 54), and Vladimir Sudar interprets it as part of the general symbolic potential of the character himself – as an embodiment of free human agency and individuality (Sudar 2013: 129). With a possible partial exception of Vladimir Sudar's analysis, what is striking in all these interpretations is that they all seem to be *postulating* comparatively rigid meanings of a filmic text element *without proper corroborations* in the form of detailed analyses. An element such as the white suit can only be interpreted as part of the web of intra-textual, intertextual, and contextual meanings (i.e. with respect to the culture-specific symbolisms), taking care at all times not to lose sight of the theoretical possibility that the element in question may in fact have to remain open-ended due to its constitutive ambiguity as a visual sign, or void of any clearly identifiable symbolic role.

The use and status of projective identification is arguably similar to the role of the white suit in the interpretations of Petrovic's *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*. As a concept originating in psychoanalysis and used in specific approaches to cultural anthropology, projective identification refers to how *individuals* as social *agents* conceptualize their own identity in empirically available discourses. If it is meant to refer to the ultimate reason and/or mechanism of filmic-image and meaning construction, it requires a detailed interpretive justification on a corpus of precise and thorough (inter-/con-) textual

analyses⁷. This justification of the concept seems to be entirely lacking in the analyses discussed above. The operation of projective identification in Roma-themed films is either *postulated* by fiat⁸, as a theoretical axiom of sorts (as evidenced in, e.g. Dakovic 2003, Iordanova 2008b, and Dakovic 2010) or supported externally, by referencing authorial intent (as in, e.g. Iordanova 2001, Sudar 2013, or Murtic 2015), whereby film directors are typically *quoted* as *framing in their public discourse* the Roma representations in Yugoslavian/Serbian films as *being about the majority* rather than the Roma themselves. Admittedly, authorial intent is not altogether irrelevant to the question of film meaning. While it may be useful in mapping out typical semiotic production-consumption trajectories, it cannot be used in theoretical analyses as an unqualified guarantee of meaning or a ‘meaning-ex-machina’ of sorts. Testing the claims that the Roma minority are used for specific representational purposes requires a detailed analysis of as large as possible a sample of filmic texts.

The issues surrounding the theoretical justifiability of the term ‘projective identification’ have been addressed by other scholars as well. Dissenting from the majority opinion in Yugoslavian and Serbian film scholarship, Serbian anthropologist Slobodan Naumovic provides a succinct criticism of projective identification as a practical tool in understanding the role of the Roma. While acknowledging the in-group/out-group dynamic that may be behind the representation process, and indeed situating the Roma in the national repository of images, Naumovic challenges the idea that the Roma are a projected image of the majority and an element in the representational chain establishing a structural analogy between Europe and Yugoslavia/Serbia on the one hand, and Yugoslavia/Serbia and the Roma on the other (Naumovic 2010: 9). In light of the poignantly critical depictions of social groups and ethnicities *other than the Roma* in his analysis of *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, Naumovic interprets the Roma images as metaphoric expressions of the Socialist regime’s repression and policy failures.

Echoing Naumovic’s scepticism regarding the theoretical appropriateness of projective identification, Radmila Mladenova notes the lurking Balkanism in the deployment of the concept:

⁷ Another way of legitimizing the concept would be to use the corpus of viewer responses. This kind of audience response approach falls outside the scope and domain of this study.

⁸ Strausz 2014 is an interesting, if relatively frequent, example of a study which details elements of Roma representations in Hungarian film within a cognitivist framework, only to go on to make similarly unwarranted generalizations in the direction opposite to the context of use of projective identification -- from film structure to assumed and unchecked audience responses.

Thus, the thesis that Balkan filmmakers try to win the sympathies of Western audiences by offering endearing gypsy stories as an indirect excuse for their own barbarism only testifies to the pervasive power of balkanism.

(Mladenova 2016: 28)

However, while the danger of inherent Balkanism is certainly an insightful contribution to the critique of projective identification as an explanatory term, Mladenova's take on Dina Iordanova's claims reveals another problematic aspect of the term itself. Mladenova incorrectly ascribes to Iordanova the claim that film authors *try to win* the sympathies of Western audiences. In point of fact, in her many contributions to the study of Roma images in film, Iordanova seems to vacillate between projective identification as a *conscious strategy* and an *unconscious mechanism*, which reveals the weakness in the use of the term. Whereas in psychoanalysis and cultural anthropology the term is well-defined, motivated, and largely adequate, film studies have left it a vague concept, implying a complex causality that remains lacking in evidence.

2.2.2 The typical Roma representations in Yugoslavian and Serbian film

The second major question dealt with in the critical literature on the images of the Roma in Yugoslavian and Serbian cinema pertains to *how* the Roma are represented. The available theoretical contributions can be broadly divided into overviews (often brief and invariably limited in the number of films and/or characters analysed) and case studies, prompting some theorists to point out that, generally speaking, 'knowledge of the cinematic representations of Romanies is still limited, considering that films featuring Gypsies are so many' (Iordanova 2003: 11).

Roma-themed films in Yugoslavia are indeed quite numerous. The depicted Roma are mostly supporting or minor characters, with a small number of films featuring Roma protagonists. The early days of former Yugoslavia, before World War II, saw the making of *Ciganska svadba* (*Gypsy Wedding*, Stanojevic, 1911), of which not a single frame has been preserved (Dakovic 2010: 393; Murtic 2015: 129). Other similar efforts of cinema enthusiasts include *Kovac raspela* (*The Blacksmith of the Crucifix*, Hanus, 1920) and the never completed silent film *Ciganin Hajduk Brnja Ajvanar* (*The Gypsy Outlaw Brnja*

Ajvanar, Ledic, 1927-) (Murtic 2015: 129). The film industry in Yugoslavia blossomed after World War II (Nebesio 2007), and the Roma-themed films that were made in the immediate aftermath of the war were largely inspired by or based upon literary originals. Film scholars make brief mention of this period, mostly noting the literary origins of these films and the images of Roma women as beautiful and passionate (e.g. Iordanova 2001: 213; Dakovic 2010: 394; Murtic 2015: 130).

Critical analyses of the period between 1960 and 2005 feature for the most part the following 'Big Four' films: *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (*Skupljaci perja*, Aleksandar Petrovic, 1967), *Who's Singing Over There* (*Ko to tamo peva*, Slobodan Sijan, 1980), *Time of the Gypsies* (*Dom za vesanje*, Emir Kusturica, 1988), and *Black Cat White Cat* (*Crna macka beli macor*, Emir Kusturica, 1998). The analyses focus to a far lesser extent on *Guardian Angel* (*Andjeo cuvar*, Goran Paskaljevic, 1987), and *Three* (*Tri*, Aleksandar Petrovic, 1965); in addition, a small number of Socialist-ideology-shaped and contemporary films are mentioned in passing only, and their plots briefly outlined without detailed analyses; for instance, Dino Murtic and Nevena Dakovic mention *Gucha: The Distant Trumpet* (*Guca!*, Dusan Milic, 2006) (Dakovic 2010: 398; Murtic 2015: 150); Dino Murtic also makes mention of *Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies* (*Hamlet, ciganski princ*, Rajkovic, 2007) as well as making a generic reference to 'ideological cinema' of the Socialist period leading to 'non-stereotypical' representations (2015: 131). More recent films such as Zelimir Zilnik's *Kenedi is Getting Married* (*Kenedi se zeni*, 2007), or *Skinning* (*Sisanje*, Filipovic, 2010) have not been thoroughly analyzed yet⁹.

The lists of the stereotypical representations of the Roma in the Yugoslavian and Serbian film are therefore largely based on reflections on the aforementioned Big Four films. The best-known and most widely-quoted is certainly the list of stereotypes posited by Dina Iordanova, but similar lists are provided by Nevena Dakovic and Dino Murtic, while partial generalizations can also be found in the studies by Nikolina Dobрева and Radenko Rankovic:

⁹ Zilnik's *Kenedi is Getting Married* is the topic of a short and insightful essay by Jurij Meden, available on Zilnik's personal website. The essay specifies some features of Zilnik's style and identifies a sort of social activist tone that never deviates from an attitude of solidarity and respect for its subjects (Meden n.d.).

Dina Iordanova	Nevena Dakovic	Nikolina Dobрева	Dino Murtic	Radenko Radovic
(1996, 2001, 2003, 2008a, 2008b)	(2003, 2007, 2010)	(2007)	(2015)	(2001)
	Noble savage			Nature-loving
Passionate love, hot blood, self-destruction	Passionate		Prone to merriment, bohemian	Prone to merriment
		Adept at magic		Mysterious
Trouble with the law; non-compliant	Cunning criminal	Criminals		Prone to thievery
Teenagers mature			Roma seductress	
			Roma man as free-spirited	
		Musicians	Entertainers	
		Victims	Victims	
	Wise mother			

Table 1 - The Roma stereotypes in a small number of Yugoslavian/Serbian films

Although he provides a comparatively thorough list of the Roma-related Yugoslavian films, including those with the Roma as supporting characters only, it should be pointed out that the overview study by Radenko Radovic stands out in terms of analytical literalness – in his approach to film representation as a *reflection* of the broader social reality, Radovic takes the above representations at face value, as genuine depictions of actual Roma traits and features (Radovic 2001: 211-212).

Crucially, in addition to basing the stereotypical representations listed here on a limited number of analysed films, the above studies typically look at a small number of characters or even at a single character only. In *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, Beli Bora (Bora the White) as the protagonist receives critical attention at the expense of the character of his arch-enemy Mirta (Bata Zivojinovic), two female characters – Lence (Olivera Vuco)

and Tisa (Gordana Jovanovic), and many other unnamed minor or marginal characters who do in fact contribute towards the image of the Roma as an ethnic group.

Aleksandar Petrovic's *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* receives the most detailed analytical treatment in Vladimir Sudar's 2013 study. Providing a comprehensive account of the technical aspects of the film (editing, camera, types of shots, lighting) and the political and economic environment in which the film was made, Sudar situates the filmic Roma in the context of the tensions between the official ideological narrative and the actual state of affairs in the Yugoslavian society at large. Insisting on identifying Petrovic's style as *naturalistic* (Sudar 2013: 129), he interprets the Roma protagonist as an embodiment of free agency and individuality and, as has already been recognized in the relevant literature¹⁰, connects the Roma treatment in *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* to the Roma as a leitmotif and part of the social mosaic in Petrovic's earlier film *Three* (Sudar 2013: 102).

Following Iordanova (2003: 8), Nevena Dakovic adds to Sudar's analysis by categorizing *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* as a melodrama which utilizes Balkan exotica to communicate with the viewership (Dakovic 2003: 103-105), introducing thus in the discussion of Roma representations the important question of *genre* and how it relates to the ethics of Roma representations. Dakovic shares Sudar's view that Petrovic's style should be termed *realistic* at the level of the film's supporting characters (2003: 105), but nonetheless classifies the Roma representations in the film as *excessively exotic* in a later essay (Dakovic 2010: 394).

In her case study of *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, Radmila Mladenova employs Yuri Lotman's spatial model of culture, as well as critical whiteness and postcolonial studies, to develop a rather schematic interpretation of Petrovic's film. Mladenova construes the plot as an instantiation of the *life-death-resurrection* narrative pattern, but *without* the resurrection component (Mladenova 2016: 6); further, she posits a number of binaries regulating the semantic potential of the characters as instantiations of the myth of the gypsy: Beli Bora and his rival Mirta are contrasted as an anti-hero/character double pair on the one hand, and the female singer Lence and the teenager Tisa as two *femmes fatales* on the other (ibid: 3). In the interpretive process, Mladenova introduces the notion of

¹⁰ See, for example, the 1987 study by Andrew Horton, where the author analyzes the genre of *Partisan* films, identifying in passing the motion of the camera in *Three* as resembling the observer's Point of View and thus depicting the direct experience of the society of which the Roma are a part.

authorial intent but in a different form: according to the article, the film form is a manifestation of Petrovic's colonizing gaze hidden behind the camera (ibid: 3), and Beli Bora is Petrovic's *alter ego* who fails to complete his rite of passage into humanity (ibid: 6). There seem to be a small number of interpretive oversights as well, e.g. Tisa does not disappear, as Mladenova claims (ibid: 7); she is in fact shown at the end of the film communicating with the police officers and denying that she knows anything about Bora's whereabouts. Rather more problematically, by simplifying or ignoring the narrative logic of the film, some interpretations of the Roma characters in the article reiterate the stereotyping that they aim to decry. For instance, Bora is seen as 'the epitome of the uncontrollable gypsy passion for alcohol' (ibid: 8), and the scene where Tisa is sexually assaulted by two foreign truck drivers is interpreted as an indication of her sexual promiscuity (ibid: 10), not taking into account the factors of her young age, depicted dependence and impressionability, and the fact that she had been cunningly manipulated into intimacy by one of the drivers.

In comparison with the other Big Four films, Slobodan Sijan's 1980 masterpiece *Who is Singing Over There* is hardly touched upon in critical analyses. Vladimir Mijic observes that as outsiders and being accused of theft, the filmic Roma mirror the Roma in the society at large (Mijic 2003: 115). Adding to the praise of the film, Dino Murtic terms this sort of depiction as an extraordinarily condensed yet comprehensive panoramic view of the Yugoslavian/Serbian society (Murtic 2015: 132), and Hamid Naficy identifies in his study *An Accented Cinema* the ethical superiority of the depicted Roma (Naficy 2001: 260).

Unlike *Who is Singing Over There*, and as a result of his unmatched critical acclaim, global renown, popularity, and controversy, Emir Kusturica's films take up most of the analyses in the film scholarship looking at Yugoslavian/Serbian film Roma. Two of his films – *Time of the Gypsies* and *Black Cat White Cat* – are concerned with the Roma, and the critical consensus seems to be that the Roma in these two films are exploited and exoticised into easily communicable stereotypes (Hancock 1997: 52; Iordanova 2001: 223; Iordanova 2002: 88; Malvinni 2004: 197; Dobрева 2007: 147; Pasqualino 2008: 341; Chancel 2009: 51; Dakovic 2010: 394; Murtic 2015: 150).

Time of the Gypsies, released in 1988, was Kusturica's first Roma-themed international success story, and is based on the news report of the illegal trafficking of Roma children across the Italian border. However, the true story only serves as a jumping

point for delving into the purportedly ethnographically rather accurate yet stereotyped Roma world (Jordanova 2002: 69) in which a timeless ethnicity lives a magic-imbued existence. In light of the ethnographic elements in the plot and the ensuing tension between the ethnographic and the magical, the magical elements in the film are largely seen to be unnecessary and ‘gimmicky’ (Hancock 1997: 56). Focusing on stereotyping, Dobрева points out that the images of the Roma in Kusturica’s film are aligned with the director’s pre-conceived notions of the Roma minority and are therefore not in the least transgressive (Dobрева 2007: 147).

A number of authors make generally positive evaluations of Kusturica’s films about the Roma. Hamid Naficy situates *Time of the Gypsies* in the tradition of films concerned with journeys of homelessness and wandering, distinguishing between said film as an instantiation of the *discourse of displacement*, and *Black Cat White Cat (Crna macka beli macor*, Kusturica, 1998) as significantly more phantasmagoric, employing to a greater extent the material objects from the Roma culture (Naficy 2001: 225-227). In his comprehensive and thematically rich study of Kusturica’s films, Goran Gocic echoes Naficy’s notion of displacement and the role of the Roma material culture; he notes the *marginality* of the depicted Roma populations (Gocic 2001: 93), and their social transgressions as indicators of the failure to integrate and of their inherent cultural *jouissance* (ibid: 103-107). Giorgio Bertellini’s study of Emir Kusturica’s *oeuvre* links biographical and textual data, calling the character of Perhan from *Time of the Gypsies* ‘a character in movement’ (Bertellini 2015: 70).

Adding to the pool of positive evaluations, Silvia Marchetti investigates the role of space and settings in *Time of the Gypsies*, noting the film’s problematizing of the ‘immutability of the notions of “culture” and “home”’ (Marchetti 2009: 198). Marchetti’s article also foregrounds the experience of transformation as central to Perhan’s character, but engages in the reduction of the rich image symbolism via prescriptive statements about the meanings of a number of on-screen objects (ibid: 198; 199; 206). Furthermore, the notions of hybridity are invoked without a proper justification – the mere fact that Perhan reunites in Italy with his sister Danira is not enough to claim as the article does that a new ‘hybrid home’ has been set up there (ibid: 205).

In a generally rare investigation of the gendered nature of Roma representations in Yugoslavian/Serbian film, Nevena Dakovic explores the role of Roma women in *Time of the Gypsies*, and establishes that the character of the Grandmother is the central

mythological figure which embodies and transcends worldly order, which is in turn centred around the all-female family of the film's protagonist, Perhan (Dakovic 2007: 46). This representation of Roma women is not sociologically accurate – Roma groups are in fact patriarchal, with only post-menopausal women being granted the role of young women's spiritual advisors (Lee 2008: 8; Dakovic 2010: 396). This makes Dakovic's finding all the more important for a further investigation of gendered Roma representations.

Kusturica went on to direct another Roma-themed film -- *Black Cat White Cat*. As in *Time of the Gypsies*, this film is shot almost entirely in the Romani language, and features a cast of largely non-professional Romani actors. As an ode to a hedonistic way of life (Murtic 2015: 148), it ceases to employ images to support the narrative; rather, its narrative serves to hold together a dazzling series of images all geared towards celebrating the experience of the irrational and the 'feel-good roller-coaster adventure' that is Roma life (Iordanova 2002: 87). In his study of female characters in Yugoslavian film, Goran Milovanovic also looks at the image of the female characters of *Ida* and *Ladybird* and, in agreement with the general tenor of Dakovic's analysis of female characters in *Time of the Gypsies*, finds that they are impish creators of their own destiny (2001: 205).

Two more films featuring the Roma have been the subject of varying detailed analysis. Goran Paskaljevic's *Guardian Angel* (*Andjeo cuvar*, 1987) was lauded in Aleksandar Erdeljanovic's cursory overview article as 'a moving study of Roma children' and a criticism of 'the society that does not care' (Erdeljanovic 1996: 342). In contrast, Goran Gocic criticises the film's contemptuous look at the Roma from the outside, effectively reinforcing the ethnic boundary between the Roma and the Serbian majority (Gocic 1996: 353).

Lastly, mention should be made of Mark Thornton Burnett's study of Aleksandar Rajkovic's 2007 feature *Hamlet – Prince of the Gypsies* (*Hamlet, ciganski princ*). Burnett's study stands out in terms of the choice of film and the analytical scope and detail, and is a valuable contribution to both Shakespeare and Romani Studies. In his comparative analysis of Bence Gyöngyössi's *Romani Kris* and Rajkovic's *Hamlet*, Burnett identifies the primary semantic plain of *centres vs peripheries* as the most relevant to the construction of the narrative meaning. Furthermore, he pinpoints the metaphoric potential of the plot and the *mise-en-scene* for the conceptualization of the commodity- and capital-

structured modern world, as well as for the societies in economic and political transition, most notably the Balkan states.

2.2.3 Critical findings on the Roma as regulators of textual meaning

A number of film scholars examining the representations of the Roma in Yugoslavian and Serbian film have noted an additional narrative function of the Roma that entails their elevated textual status, i.e. their *meta-textual* role. However, the treatment of this particular topic is far from systematic and detailed. This section of the literature review looks at how this specific textual status of the Roma is approached in the available literature, setting the scene for a comparative analysis in Chapter 6 of the present thesis.

As an analytical tool, meta-textuality is not given a rigorous theoretical treatment in the available research. David Malvinni observes that the early Eastern European Roma representations largely include musicians and performers (Malvinni 2004: 166). This is a useful observation, as it is precisely these professions that form the bulk of the meta-textual representational strategies employed in depicting the Roma in Yugoslavian / Serbian film, from the beginnings in the 1960s up until the most recent features. Malvinni makes a further, very important point regarding the role and status of music in films with Roma musicians. Focusing on a small set of films (the 1993 documentary *Latcho Drom* by Toni Gatlif, the 1998 feature *The Red Violin* by François Girard, and the 2003 documentary *Black and White in Colour: A Portrait of a Gypsy Singer* by Mira Erdevicki), he recognizes the ‘sonic force’ of the Gypsy music sounds, and argues for a conception of sound as an independent element, free from ‘a determinate imaging/mapping’ (ibid: 169). Freedom from image-driven structural determinism is at the heart of meta-textual deployment, so it can be argued that Malvinni is providing a sort of conceptual scaffolding for a further investigation into the nature of meta-textuality in film.

In his extensive study of the *oeuvre* of the Serbian director Aleksandar Petrovic, Vlastimir Sudar focuses on what he aptly terms ‘structural novelty’ in the film *It Rains in My Village* (*Bice skoro propast sveta*, 1968). Sudar quotes a characterization of the Roma orchestra originating from the film director himself, whereby their role in the film is identified as that of a *chorus* lying outside of the narrative, with the lyrics interpreted as providing ‘a comment applied in a Brechtian fashion’. This role of the Roma orchestra,

and the fact that they are claimed to perform a local folk song known as the *bećarac* would, according to the film director, make the film into a sort of a 'large *bećarac*' or a 'folk opera' (Sudar 2013: 166). As the Roma performances in this film tend to stay within the strict formal confines of the film diegesis, their exact semantic functions need to be clarified and the types of the performed songs re-analysed and elaborated on. Furthermore, Sudar claims in his study that 'Petrović himself wrote most of the lyrics for the songs – the *bećarci* [plural] – played in the film', which is factually incorrect. Similarly, the music in the film is not credited to Petrovic and Vojislav Kostic as authors, as Sudar claims (ibid: 174); rather, Petrovic and Kostic selected among a number of traditional or authored songs available to them.

The meta-textual role of the Roma in *Who is Singing Over There (Ko to tamo peva,* dir. S. Sijan, 1980) is discussed by a number of film scholars. Mijic (2003) likens the performances to 'gods in ancient Greek drama' (117), but stops short of a further elaboration on the precise nature of this similarity. The meta-textual role is identified here as 'strong commentary' (117), and the songs performed by two Roma characters described as 'ominous' and as repeated injections into the filmic text, in which the Roma 'sing about themselves' and 'by extension, about other Roma in similar circumstances' (116). There appears to be some discrepancy between the notion of strong commentary tied to the role of ancient drama gods on the one hand, and the focus on Roma destinies on the other, but Mijic does acknowledge the fundamental contribution of these Roma performances to the meaning of the filmic text.

Dakovic (2010) does not take into consideration the formal status of the Roma performances in Sijan's film; rather, classifying the two Roma characters as 'boys' [sic] and focusing on the song content, she interprets their performances as a means of displaying their difference through music, anticipating the war disaster (398). While the claim regarding the anticipatory function of the song content is indisputable, the observation on the assertion or establishment of difference is questionable precisely because it seems to be conflating the diegetic and the meta-textual, i.e. non-diegetic domains.

Murtic (2015) provides a more detailed categorization of the Roma performances in Sijan's film in the context of ancient literary forms. Drawing a distinction between the Roma as diegetic and non-diegetic characters, Murtic identifies the non-diegetic performances as that of the *chorus* in ancient Greek theatre (133), providing a refrain to

the film plot. Further, the song lyrics are taken to supply the commentary on the goings-on in the fictional world, and the performances are described as non-classical, with the Roma musicians facing the camera and their songs ‘addressed [...] to the movie audience’ (133). Leaving aside the theoretical problem of whether facing the camera does indeed entail addressing the film audience, Murtic’s analysis follows the general tenour of Mijic (2003), but supplements the consideration of Sijan’s film technique with a more precise literary history-based classification.

Overall, the investigated films are few in number, and the analyses, albeit on the right track conceptually, do not develop a suitably complex set of analytical categories, nor are they sufficiently nuanced. The methodological framework employed in the present research with the aim of remedying this state of affairs is outlined Chapter 3.

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In summary, Roma representations in Yugoslavian/Serbian film are examined on a *limited corpus of films*, focussing largely on the Big Four (*I Even Met Happy Gypsies, Who Is Singing Over There, Time of the Gypsies, and Black Cat White Cat*). Moreover, Roma protagonists in these films receive the bulk of critical attention *at the expense of other supporting or minor characters*, which results in theoretical investigations without a sufficiently high analytical resolution or control for gender, age, and character status (main, supporting, minor). The available analyses largely do not include detailed accounts of *the mise-en-scene, costuming, lighting, camera, editing, and sound (music and language)* nor is there a historical account of the development of Roma representations of a necessary scope and level of detail. Lastly, many of the postulated stereotypes seem to have been inherited from general studies on Roma film representations, and as such are sometimes used without the necessary critical distance.

In order to address these issues, a comprehensive film corpus of 35 films was collected with a view to providing a systematic developmental account of the Roma representations in the Yugoslavian and Serbian film between 1945 and 2010. The next chapter details the methodological framework developed to this end.

3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS, CORPUS, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This section specifies the research questions that the present study aims to examine, detailing the source material used and the methodology employed.

3.2. The research questions

The subject-matter of the present study are Roma representations in the Yugoslavian and Serbian film in the period between 1945 and 2010. The research questions that the study aims to answer are provided below:

RQ-1: What *cinematic techniques* and *narrative strategies* are employed in the individual films in the corpus to represent the Roma?

RQ-2: How do the filmic Roma representations *change* in the period 1945-2010?

3.3 The corpus

In line with Research Question 2, and with a view to ensuring a comprehensive analysis, the present research study uses a film corpus consisting of 35 Yugoslavian / Serbian films. The corpus was selected based on the following *four criteria*:

- Whether a film was produced and distributed in the Second Yugoslavia (1945-1991) or Serbia (1992-2010). Partially internationally funded films had to have a Yugoslavian- or Serbian-based production and distribution company (as in the cases of *Underground* by E. Kusturica, or *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* by A. Rajković).
- Whether a film contains depictions of Yugoslavian or Serbian Roma.
- Whether the depictions of Yugoslavian and Serbian Roma are judged as having sufficient narrative significance to merit an analysis.

Further, television films were excluded from the analysis, for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, it was necessary to avoid analytical incommensurability and possible methodological incongruities that would have arisen from the use of material made for two different media, with their different histories and sets of norms. In addition, there were practical limitations to how many films could be analysed in a reasonable amount of detail within the space of the thesis.

Based on the criteria set out above, the corpus films were identified and selected using the resources of the Library of the Yugoslavian Cinematheque¹¹ in Belgrade (with film archives, as well as book, journal, and newspaper collections available for the period 1945 - date), the online film database of the Serbian Film Centre¹² (available for the period 1992 - date), and the comprehensive film lists and fact sheets provided in Petar Volk's detailed historical overview *Serbian Film in the Twentieth Century* (Volk 2001, covering the period 1911-2000).

The films were either purchased from the distributor, or obtained from the director (Želimir Žilnik kindly provided a copy of *Kenedi is Getting Married*) or the producer (Dragan Ivanović provided access to *Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies*).

These films are divided into seven initial groups based on a combination of broad thematic/stylistic and socio-historical criteria. The second and third groups overlap chronologically as a result of the complexity of the relevant historical period and the associated Roma representations.

1. *Early re-presentations*: The films in this group were made after World War II and the Yugoslav-Soviet Split in 1948. The Yugoslavian film was slowly expanding its thematic range in a new socio-political system in which the political elites were acutely aware of the importance of film as a regulator of public discourse. One of the most prominent issues in film making at the time was whether and how film should relate to the rich literary and theatrical traditions (Volk 2001: 122-124), and this is reflected in the source of filmic Roma representations: they are all based on literary or dramatic works of great cultural significance:

¹¹ Link to the website: <http://www.kinoteka.org.rs/biblioteka-jugoslovenske-kinoteke/>

¹² Link to the website: <http://www.fcs.rs/en/films/film-database/>

Sofka (Sofka), Radoš Novaković, 1948

Ciganka (The Gypsy Woman), Vojislav Nanović, 1953

Anikina vremena (Legends of Anika), Vladimir Pogačić, 1954

Hanka (Hanka), Slavko Vorkapić, 1955

2. *Ideologized representations*: By the 1960s, Yugoslavia was undergoing sweeping economic and political changes. The public discourse was considerably polarized – views on social and political issues ranged from a self-assured Party-line conservatism to openly liberal, anti-authoritarian ideas that called into question even the great myths of the National Liberation War (Goulding 2002: 67-72). The second group of films thematizes the dominant ideological narratives:

Prozvan je i V-3 (The Roll-Call of Form 5-3), Milenko Štrbac, 1962

Diverzanti (The Demolition Squad), Hajrudin Krvavac, 1967

Krvava bajka (A Bloody Tale), Branimir Tori Janković, 1969

3. *Interrogating representations – The Yugoslavian New Film*: The 1960s brought a series of challenges to the ruling Communist ideology - from film authors with liberal or openly critical takes on the Socialist system and its new Man, to sympathetic film critics, philosophers, and journalists. Roma representations are featured in eight films of the period.

Tri (Three), Aleksandar Petrović, 1965

San (The Dream), Mladimir Puriša Đorđević, 1966

Jutro (The Morning), Mladimir Puriša Đorđević, 1967

Skupljači perja (I Even Met Happy Gypsies), Aleksandar Petrović, 1967

Kad budem mrtav i beo (When I Am Dead and Pale), Živojin Pavlović, 1967

Biće skoro propast sveta (It Rains in My Village), Aleksandar Petrović, 1968

Podne (The Noon), Mladimir Puriša Đorđević, 1968

Burduš (Burdus), Miodrag Popović, 1970

4. *Socialist drama and melodrama*: After the turbulent 1960s, the 1970s in the Yugoslavian (film) history brought a consolidation of the Socialist doctrine and the Party establishment. At a time of the consumerist heyday, the criticism voiced through films - made in large part by authors educated at The Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague - was less radical in tone than that of their Yugoslavian New Film predecessors (Goulding 2002: 79-83, 143), and largely consisted of social satires, in which the Roma play an important part:

Siroma' sam al' sam besan (I'm Poor But Angry), Dragoljub Ivkov, 1970

Idu dani (As Days Go By), Fadil Hadžić, 1970

Specijalno vaspitanje (Special Education), Goran Marković, 1977

Ko to tamo peva (Who's Singing Over There), Slobodan Šijan, 1980

Osam kila sreće (Eight Kilos of Happiness), Puriša Đorđević, 1980

5. *Political and economic decadence*: The death of President Tito in 1980 marked the beginning of the Yugoslavian crisis. Amid renewed political tensions and brewing ethnic ones (Meier 1995: 9-22), film makers' vision covered the entire spectrum of poetics: from light comedy, through bitter socio-psychological studies, to melodramatic celebrations of history and innovative crossovers. The Roma seem to be framed in a wide variety of contradictory ways in this group/period:

Idemo dalje (Onward We Move), Zdravko Šotra, 1982

Kamiondžije ponovo voze (The Truckers Are Back on the Road), Milo Đukanović, 1984

Jagode u grlu (Fallen Headlong), Srđan Karanović, 1985

Šmeker (The Cool Guy), Zoran Amar, 1986

Anđeo čuvar (Guardian Angel), Goran Paskaljević, 1987

Dom za vešanje (Time of the Gypsies), Emir Kusturica, 1988

Kako je propao rokenrol (The Fall of Rock & Roll), G. Gajić, Z. Pezo, V. Slavica, 1989

6. *War and the Carnavalesque*: With the outbreak of the Yugoslavian Civil War in 1991 and the breakup of Yugoslavia, radical politics and social tragedy placed the concerns of ethnic minorities and ‘non-aligned’ individuals at the back seat of regional history (Volk 2001: 444-468). The tragedy of the Yugoslavian peoples was the subject of a number of films, but the Roma are featured in the total of three:

Mi nismo anđeli (We Are Not Angels), Srđan Dragojević, 1992

Podzemlje (Underground), Emir Kusturica, 1995

Crna mačka beli mačor (Black Cat White Cat), Emir Kusturica, 1998

7. *The transition*: After the toppling of Slobodan Milosević’s regime in Serbia in 2000, the self-reconstructing civil society turned its gaze to all the repressed social groups (Beretka and Székely 2016). The Roma representations in this period seem to have become both the suffering subject and the suffering object of integration into (film) history:

Munje (Thunderbirds), Radivoje Andrić, 2001

Guča! (Gucha: Distant Trumpet), Dušan Milić, 2006

Kenedi se ženi (Kenedi is Getting Married), Želimir Žilnik, 2007

Hamlet, ciganski princ (Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies), Aleksandar Rajković, 2007

Šišanje (Skinning), Stevan Filipović, 2010

*

Chapter 3 – The research questions, corpus, and theoretical framework

The table below provides an overview of the film corpus:

Early re-presentations	Ideologized Representations	Interrogating representations	Socialist Drama and Melodrama	Political and Economic Decadence	War and the Carnavalesque	The transition
Sofka (1948)	The Roll-Call of Form 5-3 (1962)	Three (1965)	I Am Poor But Angry (1970)	Onward We Move (1982)	We Are Not Angels (1992)	Thunderbirds (2001)
The Gypsy Woman (1953)	The Demolition Squad (1967)	The Dream (1966)	As Days Go By (1970)	The Truckers Are Back on the Road (1984)	Underground (1995)	Gucha: Distant Trumpet (2006)
Legends of Anika (1954)	A Bloody Tale (1969)	The Morning (1967)	Special Education (1977)	Fallen Headlong (1985)	Black Cat White Cat (1998)	Kenedi is Getting Married (2007)
Hanka (1955)		When I Am Dead and Pale (1967)	Who Is Singing Over There (1980)	The Cool Guy (1986)		Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies (2007)
		I Even Met Happy Gypsies (1967)	Eight Kilos of Happiness (1980)	Guardian Angel (1987)		Skinning (2010)
		It Rains in My Village (1968)		Time of the Gypsies (1988)		
		The Noon (1968)				
		Burdus (1970)		The Fall of Rock'n'Roll (1989)		

Table 2 - Overview of the film corpus

3.4 The methodology

The present research project focuses on the following aspects of Roma representations in the Yugoslavian and Serbian film:

1. Roma characters' identity and appearance
2. Roma characters' actions and interactions with majority characters
3. Roma characters' relation to the film narrative as a whole

In line with Research Question 1, the representational aspects listed above are construed as essential indicators of the narrative role and status of Roma characters, and are examined using the following two methods:

- a. Information Structure Analysis
- b. Narrative-semiotic analysis

The first method aims to identify abstract narrative elements operating in the process of construction of Roma representations, while the second focuses largely on the specifics of narrative content. The two methods are elaborated on below.

3.4.1 Information Structure Analysis (ISA)

The term Information Structure Analysis originally refers to a method of *linguistic* analysis which aims to specify the ‘utterance-internal structural and semantic properties’ (Kruijff-Korbayová & Steedman 2003: 2), relating utterances to larger discourse structures. I have fully re-conceptualized the category terms that the original method of parsing employs for the purposes of analysing film as a specific medium of communication and minority representations as a specific research topic.

Furthermore, the Information Structure Analysis that I have devised relies on a specially developed model of the narrative structure of film, as well as on a number of categories used in the analysis of minority representations. These are discussed in turn.

3.4.1.1 *Film ontology, conceptual spaces, and narrative structure*

At the fundamental level, any film consists of two types of content stream: the *image track* is a succession of images punctuated by cuts, and the *sound track* a succession of sounds punctuated by silences. The image track can be argued to have two types of visual content – *figurative* (i.e. representational) and *non-figurative* (i.e. non-representational), whereas the sound track is typically understood to include noise, voice, and music (Chatman 1990: 135). For the purposes of the present research study, I have re-worked the three sound components posited by Chatman into two – *verbal* and *non-verbal* – reflecting an essential role of speech in the construction of character narration/narrator.

A figurative image stream allows for a higher-level link between two or more depicted objects or states of affairs – a relation of *inferable causation* between them. To illustrate this, a change in the states of affairs can be brought about by, for example, a

character performing an action, or an inanimate object affecting its environment. Non-figurative images generally do not lend themselves to such a parsing, but do make possible an *associative* reading, whereby meaning is created through systematic links between various visual components. Similarly, the sound track may also be parsed independently based on the principle of inferable causation, but with a proviso - this process relies heavily on the associative links between the sounds made and the objects / states of affairs implied by the sounds. Thus, although it is by no means the only way of relating elements of film content, inferable causation can be said to be a fundamental feature of narrative film.

Furthermore, the two content tracks can be *coordinated* in a number of ways: film sounds may be *inferable as causally linked* to the objects shown on the image track or *causally separate* from them. If they are causally linked, sounds can be *synchronized* with images in varying degrees – corresponding either to the on-screen images or to the images presented previously or subsequently.

The category that formalizes the various logical relations between images and sounds in the Information-Structural (ISA) model is termed *conceptual space*. A conceptual space combines *inferable causation* with *medium-specific features* of visual / aural identity:

Definition: A conceptual space is a unit of narrative content that consists of *both* or the *latter* of the following:

- One or more *non-contradictory* causation chains (where a chain may have only one visual element, i.e. object / state of affairs)
- A demonstrably *stable* specific visual / aural identity (where a specific identity *can* be achieved by a minimum of one figurative or non-figurative image, or a minimum of one verbal utterance or noise/music piece)

In the context of research on character representations, a causation chain typically includes processes and/or actions performed by characters, often in an identifiable narrative space-time. The condition of non-contradictoriness entails that a separate conceptual space is required in the case of film narratives problematizing alternative / possible worlds, embedded or frame narratives, and various experiential modes (e.g.

character perception, cognition, dream-like states, etc.). What links these experiential modes is a principled possibility that individual experiences deviate (and thus *contradict*) the chain of causation established by the narrative and/or shared by other characters.

The condition of demonstrably stable visual / aural identity relies on the medium-specific vehicles of content creation. For example, for the visual component these include camera work/editing/*salient features* of the mise-en-scene, as well as discrete *visual motif types* if the image track features non-figurative content. For the auditory component, the vehicles of content creation include identifiable voices, verbal motifs, as well as specific music pieces and genres.

The notion of conceptual space has ramifications for the concept of *diegesis* as well. As a staple term in narrative analysis (Hayward 2000; Nelmes 2012; Bordwell, Thompson, Smith 2017), diegesis can be summarized to consist in the most general terms of an inferred and/or resultant all-encompassing coherent structure serving as the backdrop to the story. The ISA model uses an altogether different logical grammar, and conceives of diegesis as *(con)current conceptual space(s)*, shifting value as the narrative progresses as a properly deictic¹³ category. Importantly, the classical notion of diegesis is the limiting case of the notion of diegesis in the ISA model: in the absence of contradictory or visually/aurally independent conceptual spaces, a narrative has only one conceptual space with a clear visual/aural identity.

A classification of conceptual spaces can be made based on the discussion above:

- Conceptual Space (CS) 1 – combines the image track and the sound track; the visual content is figurative and presented in a causation chain; the sound is *causally linked* to image, and can be:
 - o *Fully diegetic* – the sound is synchronous with the on-screen images;
 - o *Spatially diegetic* – the sound is asynchronous, and originates from the same space but a different time;
 - o *Temporally diegetic* – the sound is asynchronous, and originates from a different space but the same time;

¹³ Deictic is used here to denote linguistic categories such as *person* – the referent of the personal pronoun ‘I’ shifts back and forth between the speaker and the interlocutor. What is diegetic in a film can therefore be said to shift from one set of *concurrent* (simultaneously presented) conceptual spaces to the next.

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- *Disparately diegetic* – the sound is asynchronous, and originates from a different space and time.
- CS2 – includes only the image track; the visual content is *figurative* and presented in a causation chain.
- CS3 – includes only the image track; the visual content is *non-figurative*.
- CS4 – includes only the sound track; the auditory content may include verbal and non-verbal content; the sound is *not* causally linked to the on-screen image, and is considered *non-diegetic* with respect to the concurrent conceptual space if this conceptual space is of type CS1 or CS2.

The ISA model of narrative structure recognizes some sound-image combinations in a single conceptual space and disallows others. By way of summary, the table below provides a schematic overview of the conceptual space types and the permissible image track and sound track content combination.

			Image		
			Figurative	Non-figurative	Both
			CS2	CS3	Disallowed
Sound	Verbal	CS4	Allowed - CS1	Disallowed	Disallowed
	Non-verbal				
	Both				

Table 3 - *Image*: CS2 and CS3; *Sound*: CS4; *Combined image and sound*: CS1.

As regards logical relations between conceptual spaces, the ISA model is *dynamic* in that it allows conceptual space modifications: two or more conceptual spaces can remain *distinct*; they can *merge* (e.g. when a character’s perceptions – constituting in and of themselves a separate conceptual space - turn out to be fully aligned with the shared perceptions of other characters), or *overlap* (e.g. when a character’s perceptions have elements in common with other conceptual spaces – in terms of the physical space, actions, visual styles, etc.); or they can be in the *set-subset relation* (e.g. when editing brings to the fore an element of a conceptual space for the purposes of assigning a specific

textual function to it). Importantly, whatever textual operations are performed over the conceptual spaces in a narrative, all of them are also systematically linked via the *semantic mapping potential* – the routes of meaning construction that are dealt with in the next subsection.

3.4.1.2 *Character actions/interactions and their relation to the narrative*

The categories that the ISA employs to identify formal aspects of character actions/interactions and their relation to the narrative include the following:

- a. **Topic** (Active / Passive / Perceiver)
- b. **Focus** (Active / Passive)
- c. **Frame Setter**¹⁴

These categories are broadly conceptualized as *ideal types*, i.e. occupying *boundary positions* on a multi-dimensional cline. In a distinctly non-Aristotelian approach to categorization, the category features are not construed as necessary and jointly sufficient for the process of categorization. Rather, each instance of a formal relation between relevant narrative elements is situated along a cline, its position (i.e. the features it has) more or less removed from the ideal type, i.e. the boundary position.

Focus is thus defined in the ISA model as a film character or character detail which is the object of another (majority) character's gaze. This category overlaps to a significant degree with the category of Focus in the standard narratological analysis (e.g. Jahn 2017; Lhn.uni-hamburg.de. 2017). Having said that, the ISA model re-conceptualizes the logical relation between the subject and object of gaze in that the latter belongs to a *different* conceptual space.

Topic is defined as a film character or character detail which is introduced in the film narrative, and maintained in a minimum of one and a maximum of all conceptual spaces,

¹⁴ The terms Topic and Focus are widely used in the linguistics literature. For a definition of Frame Setter in the field of linguistics, see Krifka (2007). The terms Active / Passive / Perceiver, as well as Associated / Non-associated (defined and discussed further below) are mine.

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for varying amounts of film time, while not being an object of another (majority) character's gaze.

The features of *Active / Passive* further flesh out the formal ISA analysis with respect to the *causal agency* powers in the film narrative:

Active is used to denote *initiating* diegetic interaction with the *majority* (characters), responding to attempts at interaction by the majority characters, **or** initiating diegetic action(s) that belong(s) to the causation chain of events constituting the plot or subplot.

Passive is used to denote *not* initiating / responding to (attempts at) diegetic interaction with the majority (characters) **and not** initiating diegetic action(s) that belong(s) to the causation chain of events constituting the plot or subplot.

Depending on whether there is a demonstrable systematic link between a passive topic/focus and another element in the film narrative, passive topics/foci can be divided into:

- *Associated* (contiguous) passive topics/foci – presented in the film narrative as being systematically accompanied by another narrative element.
- *Non-associated* passive topics/foci – presented in the film narrative without any such systematic link to another narrative element.

Perceiver Topic denotes a diegetic character whose perceptions of the world are provided via the following:

- a. The *point-of-view* shot (as an answer to the implied question 'What is the character seeing?', and is often realized in the sequence *Gaze shot – POV shot – Response shot*);
- b. The *subjective* shot, which simulates the perceptual world of the character in question;
- c. The *over-the-shoulder* shot, which includes both what the character in question perceives and the character, shown from the back and to the side.

Perceiver Topic is linked to the notion of Focus. Whether active or passive, a focus character or character detail belongs to a separate conceptual space. If this space is presented at any point in the narrative as identical to the conceptual space of the Perceiver Topic, the two conceptual spaces merge.

Frame Setting is understood as a function that a conceptual space can have with respect to the film narrative as a whole. This function is realized via one or more specific elements within the frame setting conceptual space, and these elements are referred to as Frame Setters.

The frame setting conceptual spaces are *generally causally separate* from the other conceptual space(s) in the narrative and, as the notion of conceptual space is dynamic, can be presented to *change* and include an increasing number of elements. All four conceptual space *types* can theoretically have the frame setting function, and the present research study aims to determine which of these types are present in the corpus.

The frame setting function is essentially a mapping relation between Frame Setters and two or more target conceptual spaces. As a way of setting up meaning-construction trajectories, the mapping process establishes the interpretive privilege of the frame setting conceptual space, and consists of any or all of the following:

- *Association* - the frame setting conceptual space (FS CS) *is systematically presented in parallel with* a content element shared by all or the majority of the other conceptual spaces in the film narrative. For example, a CS4 *non-diegetic*¹⁵ melody may accompany an on-screen character or presented event.
- *Direct reference* - the FS CS *names* a content element shared by all or the majority of the other conceptual spaces in the film narrative. For example, a CS4 voiceover can provide the name of the on-screen character, or refer to the character by name.
- *Classification* - the FS CS *classifies via abstract concepts* a content element shared by all or the majority of the other conceptual spaces in the film

¹⁵ Unlike Frame Setters, Associated Passive Topics are diegetic and do not provide an interpretive framework as construed here.

narrative. For example, a CS4 voiceover can class a specific building as a military facility.

- *Evaluation* - the FS CS *evaluates via abstract ethics-related concepts* a content element shared by all or the majority of the other conceptual spaces in the film narrative. Evaluation should be seen as a subset of classification, as it implies grouping target elements into particular ethical categories. For example, a CS1 character can break the fourth wall and refer to a fellow character in the narrative as an immoral person.
- *Organization* - the FS CS *orders* the content shared by all or the majority of the other conceptual spaces in the film narrative via *abstract concepts denoting spatial or temporal arrangements*. As a mapping process, organization relies on direct reference and classification. For example, a CS4 voiceover can name an on-screen character and announce his/her imminent death.

Depending on the FS CS content (i.e. physical space-time, characters, events, verbal and non-verbal sounds, or para-text as a non-figurative content form, etc.), the FS CS and the target conceptual spaces can be distinct, overlapping, or in a set-subset relation.

Frame setting conceptual spaces allow for heterogeneous narrative phenomena to be construed as sets of mapping routes between FS CS content and target CS content. For example, *timeline management*, a staple *character narration* operation whereby the target conceptual space timeline is constructed and populated with characters, events, and connections between them, can be interpreted as an FS CS element (specifically, a character) directly referencing, classifying, and organizing target CS content. Furthermore, if what is classified or evaluated is content *types* (e.g. ‘A is a character’; ‘B is an interesting prop’) at the level of the film narrative, frame setting acquires a *meta-narrative* function; if, however, it is the *fictional* nature of the film narrative that is asserted in the classification, then frame setting is a *meta-fictional* strategy¹⁶.

Importantly, FS CS are not the only ISA elements that can impose an interpretive framework. Perceiver Topics imply a point of view, which acts as a locally salient

¹⁶ The definitions of the terms *meta-narrative* and *meta-fictional* are taken from Nunning 2005.

regulator of the content *in focus*. The table below summarizes some of the relevant features of related ISA elements:

Perceiver Topic	Frame Setting
- Diegetic	- (Non-)diegetic
- (No) causal agency	- No causal agency
- Provides <i>local interpretive framework</i>	- Provides <i>general interpretive framework</i>

Table 4 - A comparison of ISA interpretive frameworks

3.4.2 Narrative-semiotic analysis

The narrative-semiotic analysis makes use of the categories and results of the ISA analysis and expands the investigation by focusing on the particulars of the representational content as well as the links between this content and other filmic elements. As the research looks into the following aspects of the Roma representations in the Yugoslavian and Serbian film:

1. Roma characters' identity and appearance
2. Roma characters' actions and interactions with majority characters
3. Roma characters' relation to the film narrative as a whole,

the narrative-semiotic analysis is concerned with Item 1 (identity and appearance) first if deemed salient, and makes use of the medium-specific (i.e. cinematic) *conceptual space* features, as well as the broader narrative features. The two groups of features that are taken into account are listed below.

3.4.2.1 The cinematic CS features:

- a. *Mise-en-scene*: quality, intensity, and direction of lighting; framing; types of space (open/closed; positively connoted/negatively connoted); use of colour (black and white vs full colour; filtering; graininess)

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- b. *Cinematography*: type of shot (extreme close-up, close-up, medium shot, American shot, full shot, long shot, extreme long shot); duration of shot; camera movement in place (pan, tilt, roll); camera movement through space (dolly, crane, hand-held); focal length of camera (zoom-in, zoom-out)
- c. *Sound*: accompanying or associated music or sound effects (music genre, theme/signature tunes, fully/spatially/temporally/disparately diegetic/non-diegetic)
- d. *Editing*: type of cut (straight/jump cut), type of transition (dissolve, fade out/fade in, swish pan, wipe).

Only those features which are identifiably and reliably associated with the Roma representations are considered.

3.4.2.2 The broader narrative features:

- e. *Character type/status*: protagonists/antagonists, supporting characters, minor characters. This feature relies on the ISA categories of Topic, Focus, and Frame Setter, as they provide part of the input for determining feature values (i.e. whether a Roma character is a protagonist or a minor character).
- f. *Personality traits*: the traits that a Roma character demonstrably possesses.
- g. *Physical appearance*: traditional costumes vs majority-style clothes; typical facial expressions of e.g. anger, passion, cunning; well-groomed or unkempt.
- h. *Language used*: Romani vs Serbian; thick caricatured accent vs no caricatured accent in Serbian.
- i. *Occupation*: the professional roles that a Roma character has in the film narrative.
- j. *Age and gender*
- k. *Form of self-identification*: referring to oneself as Roma or another ethnicity; being referred to as Roma or another ethnicity; not being labelled in terms of ethnicity.

3.4.2.3 Narrative subplots and associations

The analysis proceeds by determining the *types of subplots* that Active Topic/Focus Roma characters are part of in individual films. These findings are then collated in order to identify the corpus-wide general patterns.

Narrative micro-systems of *association* are examined for the Roma characters in Associated Passive Topic/Focus ISA roles, with the aim of identifying all diegetic contiguity relations in a properly *semiotic* analysis. The associations between the Roma characters and other filmic elements where the Roma can also *independently* signify said filmic elements are referred to as instances of *textual indexicality*.¹⁷ This concept is operationalized in the textual script below, which also provides an example of one such micro-system of representation – that of *emotions*.

Feature ₁		Feature ₂	
Site of expression	Socio-psychological pattern	Vehicle of expression	Source

Table 5 - The general structure of the textual script and the structure of emotion representation

Perceiver Topics and Active/Passive Foci are used to further flesh out the film narrative-internal politics of representation. Specifically, any difference or misalignment between the Perceiver Topic and Focus conceptual spaces (i.e. the world in which the perceiving person is located and the world of his/her perceptions or cognitions) is an indication of the construction of the narrative-internal system of values (Neale 1993: 46-47).

In and of itself, Frame Setting implies an elevated narrative status as it imposes an interpretive framework on the narrative or some of its parts. The narrative-semiotic analysis here looks into the particulars of the imposed interpretive framework, again attempting to identify the system of values behind the process of interpretation.

¹⁷ The notion of indexicality derives broadly from C. S. Peirce’s semiotic classification (Peirce 1883).

3.4.3 Typing

The analysis then proceeds to investigate the issue of *typing*. A distinction is drawn here between *individuated* and *non-individuated* characters. Individuated characters possess a complex psychology which is represented in the film narrative via depictions of psychological states or motivated actions. Any positive or negative personality traits of such characters would by definition have to be a subset of all the depicted personality elements. Non-individuated characters, however, are not shown as possessing complex psychologies, and are represented using a restricted set of features listed in subsection 3.4.2.2 (items *f*. through *j*.).

The notion of *type* employed in the present research study follows from the distinction between individuated and non-individuated characters: the latter can be readily classed as types based on a reduced or simplified depiction, while the former are classed as types based on common, salient, and repetitive features. Importantly, however, straightforward cross-corpus repetitions of one and the same restricted set of features are not automatically considered as instantiations of a character type. Rather (following Neale 1993), in order to identify a type, the analysis takes into account the significance of the employed feature set in the construction of value-weighted difference at the level of the individual narrative. A type is postulated only if one and the same feature set is deployed to a sufficiently similar extent and with the sufficiently similar effects in the narrative structures of a number of films.

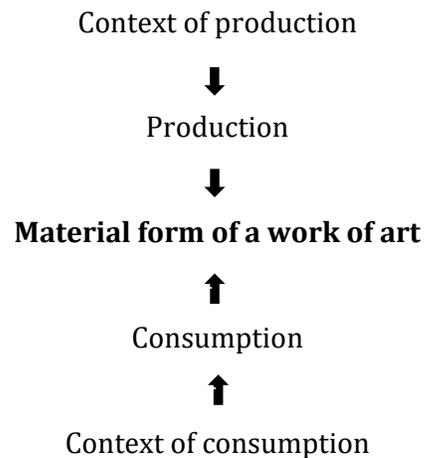
The classification of types is developed and employed with the above considerations and principles in mind, based on the modifications that I have made of the classifications by Dyer (1989; 1994) and Schweinitz (2010):

- *Positive types* – non-individuated character types depicted using positively-connoted restricted features;
- *Negative types (stereotypes)* – (non-)individuated character types depicted using negatively-connoted restricted features;
- *Archetypes - genre-specific* ‘conventionalized intertextual types’ (Schweinitz 2010: 284), often identifiable as staples of literary, theatrical, or filmic traditions (e.g. The Fool, Carmen, or Scrooge).

3.4.4 The role of context

In order to elucidate the relations between Roma representations and the broader context of their production, the analysis is supplemented with discussions of *salient contextual information*.

As regards the notion of context, the present research study posits an *ontological* difference between a work of art and the circumstances in which it arises. What this purports to say is that a work of art cannot in any theoretical sense be *exhaustively ontologically reduced* to its context, nor can the context be identified with a work of art that arises in it. The process of production / consumption of a work of art is therefore understood as necessarily having the following structure:



The material form of a work of art arises *as a result* of many distinct causes operating simultaneously or in succession¹⁸:

- (1) The personality of the author(s), including their knowledge, experiences, sensibilities, tastes, artistic instincts, etc.
- (2) The vagaries of the production process, i.e. an interaction between planned and unplanned events, e.g. casting vs availability of actors.
- (3) The art / industry traditions within which a work of art of made, including predecessors, contemporaries, norms, institutions, production values, etc.

¹⁸ In his study on Ozu, David Bordwell uses a similar notion – that of the concentric circles of causality (Bordwell 1988: 17).

(4) The broad political power structure, and the broad economic regime in the society.

(5) The socio-cultural sphere, i.e. the broad cultural patterns and values in the society.

As one progresses from (1) to (5), the causal power exerted upon the material form of a work of art typically broadens and shallows as the sphere of influence expands, causal chains become increasingly complex, and individual phenomena go out of focus. This is why *full* causal accounts of such complex social phenomena as works of art (or aspects thereof) can be seen as virtually impossible to develop. Furthermore, as formal accounts of causation in the field of the philosophy of history acknowledge, *chance* has a fundamental role in modelling general history or any special histories (e.g. history of art) (Brien 2013: 80), yet again bringing into sharp relief the distinction between *ontology* (actual causation chains) and *epistemology* (the limits of our knowledge of the causation chains) (Stanford 1997: 130).

Conversely, replacing ‘author(s)’ with ‘consumer(s)’ in the schematic above, the consumption process can be said to start from the material form of a work of art, to which a ‘consumer’ brings (1) in a context made up of (2) through (5). Works of art are therefore only ever interpretable in a process much like the one described above, and a ‘view from the outside’, (i.e. an objective perspective - an oxymoron in its own right), is categorically impossible. Importantly, the very same follows for attempts to *develop an explanation* of the role of context in the production of *specific* works of art. Providing such an explanation is *delimited* and *structured* in equal measure by the research context as a subtype of the context of consumption and the questions posed within it.

The abovementioned deep epistemological constraints associated with attempting to formulate full causal accounts of a work of art are well-known in the literature (Verstegen 2013: 78). This is why, rather than make potentially unsubstantiated claims regarding strict and exhaustive causal relations, the present research study utilizes the *interpretive history* approach. Interpretive history attempts to *characterize* a historical period or work of art (Verstegen 2013: 80), emphasising in this process ‘the manner in which aspects of society or of the culture of the period, or both, fit together in a pattern...’ (Mandelbaum 1977: 39–40). It relies on the *selection* of contextual information and *inference* to the best explanation, as it paints an unavoidably subjective but by no means arbitrary picture of the cultural phenomenon at hand (Stanford 1997: 92-98). Such contextual information is construed as *concurrent/correlative only* – a

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product of the researcher's fundamentally subjective inferential processes. This caution is necessary as the researcher runs the risk of confabulation when choosing between equally possible interpretive scenarios.

To sum up, the analysis employed in the present research study is supplemented and thus completed by utilizing contextual information: *aspects* of the socio-cultural context deemed *most relevant* to specific Roma representation *types/strategies* are selected, and the links between them discussed in greater detail.

4 ROMA AS INDICES OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PATTERNS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines in detail the Information-Structural role of Passive Topic/Focus as a starting point in Roma representations. The *Passive* feature is defined herein as denoting not initiating / responding to (attempts at) diegetic interaction with the majority (representatives) and not initiating diegetic action(s) that belong(s) to the causation chain of events constituting the plot or subplot. Depending on whether there is a demonstrable systematic link between a Passive Topic/Focus and another element in the film narrative, passive topics/foci can be divided into:

- *Associated (contiguous)* passive topics/foci – presented in the film narrative as being systematically accompanied by another narrative element.
- *Non-associated* passive topics/foci – presented in the film narrative without any such systematic link to another narrative element.

Importantly, these categories are not seen as dividing the theoretical space in Aristotelian, all-or-nothing terms, based on necessary and jointly sufficient conditions. Rather, they are understood as *ideal types* that actual, identified formal narrative patterns more or less adhere to.

When applied to the corpus of films used in the present research, these categories have yielded the total of nine films in which Passive Topics / Foci are employed systematically in connection with one or more other elements (effectively making them *associated or contiguous*). Specifically, the Roma in these Information-Structural categories are found to largely be musicians performing in social contexts wherein specific emotions are expressed by the majority characters.

For the purposes of further Narrative-Semiotic analysis, a conceptualization of emotions is embraced here which stems from the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's analysis of natural language terms for emotions. Unlike with the physiological views of emotions, which interpret them as largely determined by physiological changes in the organism (Levenson, Soto, and Pole 2007: 781), the Wittgensteinian brand of social-

constructionism understands emotions as socially sanctioned and normativized forms of behaviour, fundamentally determined by contextual factors (Green 1979; Belucci 2013). Within such a view, emotions are less *internal states of being* than they are *contextually appropriate or inappropriate performances*, tied up with issues of power and social hierarchy (McCarthy 1994: 275). The latter factors have been shown to operate in the Serbian culture at large, especially in the context of Roma performances as vehicles of facilitated emotion expression (De Port 1999a, 1999b; Markovic 2015, 2017). Filmic depictions of emotions are particularly amenable to a contextual-performative analysis, due to the nature of the representing medium – filmic images and sounds efficiently convey the cultural scenarios that emotions are predicated upon.

In the present research, the notions of context and emotion are operationalized in the following way: the context is conceptualized as the *socio-cultural script*, and the emotion as the *socio-psychological pattern*. The categories used in the analysis are provided below, and discussed in detail in the analyses *only* if found textually relevant:

The socio-cultural script:

1. Context - what precedes / follows the situation
2. Basic situation
 - Space and time
 - Participants
 - Roma participants
 - Roma character roles
3. Activities
 - a. Types of activities
 - i. Self-identification or self-characterization involved?
 - ii. Other-identification or other-characterization involved?
 - b. Changes in the activities
 - i. Who initiates the changes
 - c. Interactions
 - i. Who watches whom
 - ii. Who speaks to whom

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- iii. Who dances with whom
- iv. Who engages in violence against whom
- v. Etc.

d. Power dynamic (ordering, maltreatment, etc.)

4. *Socio-psychological pattern*, i.e. affect / emotion

- a. Explicit / Implicit
- b. Identifiable components of expression
 - i. Verbal / Gestural / Bodily / Interactional

Importantly, as they are contiguous with the expressions of emotions as conceptualized above, the Roma are understood to be *indices of socio-psychological patterns* – they point to the socio-cultural script and socio-psychological pattern, and can be used to mean / represent both in the accumulation and manipulation of cultural meanings.

A total of three periods will be discussed: the early adaptations 1945-1959, the Socialist decadence of the 1980s, and the 1990s as the decade of Yugoslavian Civil War and the dissolution of the second Yugoslavia.

4.2 The post-war Roma representations: Bucking the trend in the 1940s

In the five years following World War II, the Yugoslavian film industry was largely focused on representations of the National War of Liberation and the Socialist reconstruction of the Yugoslavian society. A total of thirteen films were produced in this period, out of which only one – *Sofka* (dir. Rados Novakovic, 1948) looked at ‘pre-war historical subjects and adapting [...] literary sources to the screen’ (Goulding 2002: 23).

As an adaptation of the Serbian playwright and novelist Bora Stankovic’s novel *Impure Blood* (*Necista krv*, 1910), *Sofka* paints a dark picture of the family lives deeply affected by the changing socio-political circumstances in the late 19th-century Serbia. As the old social order is collapsing after the successful insurrection of Serbs and Bosnians against the Turkish rule in the Balkans (Goulding 2002: 30; Cox 2002: 53-54), an old aristocratic family from the southern Serbian town of Vranje faces the challenges of deprivation and consequent loss of all social standing. The daughter Sofka is forced to marry into a *nouveau riche* farmer family, and is confronted in the first part of the film with the intense emotions and overt advances of her father-in-law.

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The Roma in the film are all musicians and minor characters. Their formal, Information-Structural roles, transition back and forth between Passive Topics (i.e. characters exerting no causal influence on the progression of the plot) and Active Topics (i.e. interacting with the majority characters and moving the plot forward). As Passive Topics, the Roma are *associated* with expressions of a number of psychological states, and can therefore be considered as *contiguous* Passive Topics.

All the presentations of the Roma characters in the film take place in the sequence depicting Sofka's wedding celebrations. At the outset of the festivities, the diegetic Oriental melodies can be heard as the Roma wind and percussion band start their performance. The camera zooms out, showing the dance ring forming, which effectively sets up the cultural script of the wedding, and introduces its first formal element – a specific dance form (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - The ring forming to the sound of Oriental music.

As the festivities continue, a contrast is established between the diegetic music of the Roma orchestra, which continues to provide a socio-cultural identification of the events at hand, and the non-diegetic score authored by the Serbian composer Stevan Hristic. The latter is couched in the tradition of classical music, and can be construed as a Frame Setter elevating the overall narrative tone and imparting a sense of solemnity and dynamism to the diegetic goings-on.

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The two types of music are brought together in the scenes depicting the high point of the wedding celebrations. The non-diegetic festive music starts off with the sound of the Roma band drums, shown briefly on-screen, and continues with more pronounced Oriental, drum-based motifs. The image track presents a series of situations and activities that develop the cultural script of the wedding: the majority guests are shown in various stages of overtly marked merriment (in terms of facial expressions, gestures, and bodily postures), enjoyment of food and dance, alcohol-induced daze, and apparent sensual abandon. Importantly, overt acts of aggression are part and parcel of this socio-cultural situation – shots are fired out of pistols and knives are thrown, hitting drum skins and walls (Figure 4). Cinematically, multiple pans employed can be interpreted as denoting a state of abandon and disorientation.



Figure 4 - Shots fired in the wedding festivities.

In these scenes, the Roma take a doubly indexical role – as the important contributing elements of the cultural script of Wedding, they provide the setting for the expression of a number of psychological states and engagement in numerous activities. On the other hand, what is represented in these scenes is the music the Roma perform, and on occasion the instruments – a lower-level representational indexicality where the music and its source stand for the performers themselves.

The cultural script of the wedding and the concomitant socio-discursive practices remain stable until one of the majority protagonists, Sofka's father-in-law Marko,

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expresses an intense attraction to his daughter-in-law Sofka. On the morning of the second day of the festivities, the guests seem tired and quiet, and the Roma musicians are resting in silence. Overcome with sexual and romantic feelings for Sofka, Marko orders the Roma to play (Figure 5):



Figure 5 - Marko ordering the Roma musicians to play.

Marko Play!

Sofka: No, father, I can't. I'm tired.

Marko: Play, I say! When the mad and wild Stojan fell for Stamena, his first cousin, as far as he was concerned, it was - burn down the city or have Stamena! Stamena cries and implores him, but he, mad and wild that he was, says: 'Stamena, Stamena, you spring garland, a beautiful girl has no kin!'

[Marko walks over and grabs a Roma musician by the vest.]

Marko: Play!

Roma musician: I don't know, Marko... Even though we're Gypsies, we do have a soul. No more.

[Marko looks overcome with emotion.]¹⁹

This scene provides an important shift in Roma representational techniques. In terms of their formal narrative roles, the Roma transition into Active Topics here, and assert themselves as human in the face of the aggression that dehumanizes and instrumentalizes them. Even more importantly, they are outside the family-based Serbian social order and this fact enables them to counter social transgressions, and thus to re-assert the social norms. At a point when Marko calls for a legitimation of his socially unacceptable feelings via the continuation of the social ritual of the nuptials, the Roma refuse and effectively stop the festivities. Marko then abandons the farm and his family. Hence, and rather paradoxically, the Roma in *Sofka* stand for and help construct a socio-culturally sanctioned and situationally bound set of practices and emotions, stepping out of their social position when the order that assigns this specific role to them is violated through extreme and socially transgressive psychological states. A prominent part of this shift in social roles is a further negation of the associated power dynamic – although in a dominant socio-economic position, the majority protagonist Marko is refused service by the economically inferior Roma, precisely *because* the general power dynamic and social hierarchy has been called into question.

4.3 The literary and theatrical adaptations of the 1950s

In the 1950s Yugoslavia, the decentralization of the film industry management resulted in a broader range of thematic concerns and less rigid genre-related constraints. The glorification of the Yugoslavian Communist Revolution was giving way to a greater thematic variety, as reflected in a number of previously eschewed genres, e.g. comedies and satires, action-adventures, the new realist films, and, importantly, literary-historical films (Goulding 2002: 38-39, 43-58; Volk 2001: 101-103). The latter group consisted of a number of literary or theatrical adaptations, and as many as three featured Roma characters or Roma-related themes.

¹⁹ All transcripts and translations by the present author.

4.3.1 *The Gypsy Woman*

The first in this group was *The Gypsy Woman* (*Ciganka*, dir. Vojislav Nanovic, 1953). Based on Borisav Stankovic's play *Kostana* (1902), and following in the footsteps of *Sofka*, *The Gypsy Woman* also calls into question the oppressive social order maintained by the Serbian majority. The film is set in the small town of Vranje in the south of Serbia at the end of the nineteenth century. The beautiful Roma girl Kostana's singing in a local tavern has become a cause for concern for the town authorities and many townswomen, as the local men seem enchanted by the singer and her songs to the point of ignoring their daily chores and family life. Two men in particular are taken by her: Mitke, the brother of a town official, weary of the ordered social life; and Stojan, the young son of the respected townsman Haji-Toma. When Kostana is banished from the town by the authorities, Stojan and Mitke abduct her from her caravan, and take her to a near-by mill. Stojan's father Haji-Toma arrives, is soon captivated by Kostana's song and dance, and ends up killing his son in a shooting. Kostana is then imprisoned by the authorities until she gets married. When she finally has an arranged marriage, a caravan takes her away as the broken Mitke looks on in the rain and thickening night.

The Roma characters depicted as *indexicals* have varied formal roles: the Roma dancers and musicians are either Passive Topics (not interacting with the majority and not progressing the plot), or Active Foci (as the objects of the majority's gaze having a causal effect on the plot). Kostana and her parents, on the other hand, are Active Topics and Foci (they are causally efficient in their interactions with the majority, and observing them has an effect on the plot), and therein lies the peculiarity of their *indexical* role – as they are *repeated* objects of the townsmen's gaze, they are indeed *explicit* indices of emotionality. The emotion driving the gaze is not love; rather, it is an expression of a sense of *existential nostalgia*, a lament over lost youth as a lament over the inadequacies of a socially-constrained life. However, Kostana does end up affecting the psychological states of a number of the majority characters, and therefore also has an active role in the diegetic construction of emotions.

The first scene where indexicality is evident is the first tavern scene. Kostana is singing a well-known local song in Serbian²⁰ as the majority patrons watch:

²⁰ This song has a number of versions in standard Serbian, the local Serbian dialect, and the Macedonian language.

O fair Lenche,
open the small door, open the gate,
So that I can kiss, o fair Lenche,
Your red lips, your rosy lips.

I cannot, o my dear Mile,
Get up and open the door -
My old mother lies on my garments,
On my garments, you wild one,
And I cannot get up and open the door,
Get up and open the door for you.

As Kostana sings, some patrons have expressions of emotional abandon on their faces, most notably Mitke. One of the guests then raises a glass in enjoyment. The scene helps construct a specific emotionality and a view of life by dual means – the language and the visual representations. The song that Kostana sings can be construed as an effective discourse on the cultural scripts and concomitant emotions (as modes of normativized behaviour!) surrounding romantic relationships. Sitting on top of this is the social context where this is taking place – the tavern acts as a normativizer in its own right, i.e. a socially-sanctioned locale where certain kinds of emotions can be expressed in a certain number of ways.

Visibly overcome with emotion (Figure 6), Mitke then asks for a slow song about the torments of the soul, and *explicitly* rejects the life of a *pater familias*. Kostana sings the words from the original play as the drunk patrons appear lost in thought, and one of them shoots a round from his pistol:

If you only knew, o lass, if you only knew
How strong the sadness over lost youth is,
...
You would take me to your home, lass,
And kiss my brow, lass.

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This is where the link between the contextually-bound psychological state of the majority characters and the Roma singing becomes *contiguous*. Furthermore, language is once again used to strengthen the link, as Mitke makes *explicit* mention of the emotions that he has and which he relates to the song(s).



Figure 6 - Mitke in a state of abandon as he listens to Kostana's song.

A number of scenes taking place in the courtyard of the deserted mill reveal a combination of indexicality and efficient causality. Kostana, her parents, and a number of other Roma are in the courtyard hiding from the authorities. Mitke asks Kostana's mother Aisa to dance, and she complies. The dance the Roma women then perform is choreographed and ordered, to the sound of traditional south-Serbian ethnic music. Dressed in Turkish-influenced traditional clothes, the dancers are shown either in long to medium point-of-view shots or, on occasion, in a crane shot, in a highly stylized dance formation. Importantly, Mitke stops the performance saying that Aisa reminds him of old age and, as she is bowing submissively, pays her with a coin, which establishes a clear pattern of socio-economic dominance.

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Mitke then demands that Kostana sing a song about loneliness and a yearning for his restraint-free, life-loving youth. Kostana indeed performs a traditional song from the southern Serbian town of Leskovac - *O Fair Lass (Bela dude)*:

O lass, o fair lass,
Are you at home, fair lass, are you alone?

I am at home, o wild one, but not alone:
My old mother is at home, o wild one,
My old mother, o wild one, and my old father.

At this point, Stojan's father Haji-Toma arrives, giving the Roma in the courtyard some food and money, re-iterating thus the socio-economic pattern of dominance established when Mitke pays Aisa for the dance.

When Mitke eventually manages to soften Haji-Toma anger over his son Stojan's attachment to Kostana, Kostana continues her performance, and sings in Serbian a famous Turkish folk song (Zlatanovic 2009: 68):

You have such beautiful hair, lass.
Do you feel sorry to lose it?

Well, if I did,
I would not let you
Run your fingers through it.

You have such beautiful eyes, lass.
Do you feel sorry to lose them?

Well, if I did,
I would not let you
Drink from them.²¹

²¹ The song contains a question-response ordering mistake – the drinking should be an alternative response to the 'lips' question.

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You have such beautiful lips, lass.
Do you feel sorry to lose them?

Well, if I did,
I would not let you
Kiss them.

You have such a beautiful face, lass.
Do you feel sorry to lose it?

Well, if I did,
I would not let you
Leave love bites on it.

As Kostana re-creates thus an assertive male-provocative woman sort of male-female relationship, centred on a sexualized female character, Haji-Toma gives in to her charms and becomes obsessed (Figure 7).



Figure 7 - Haji-Toma in a state of abandon before Kostana.

This emotional abandon can therefore be said to be *induced* in Toma by Kostana's song and appearance. What follows next negates in large measure Mitke's previous declarations of fatherly feelings for Kostana, as well as Haji-Toma's stately rigidity and moral posturing. Haji-Toma requests a song and demands that Kostana bare her breasts as she sings and dances, and Mitke becomes visibly excited. One way of interpreting this situation is that the nostalgia for lost youth is inextricably/metonymically linked to Mitke's and Haji-Toma's sense of (lost) sexual potency as an integral part of it. This specific connection is also at work when Mitke impatiently rejects Aisa's dancing as too reminiscent of his own old age and death – the young and ebullient Kostana is for him at once an *iconic* sign of his lost youth and maladjusted present, as well as an *index* of his emotions and drives.

In a more general sense, the Roma as indices of socio-psychological patterns help construct via song and dance a specific mode of engagement with the social world – one that privileges youth over old age, as well as the free expression of intensely sexual and romantic emotions over social propriety, order, and emotional inhibition. As an affective force, Kostana is shown to be able to also induce such an emotionality in a number of male majority characters. However, she is far from an unruly rebel – she simply chooses a different structural position in the society – that of a tavern singer. It is her *effect* on the patrons and other men as a *de-inhibitor* of *socially potentially dangerous* emotions that presents a threat to the social order – the emotions that are kept in check via the socio-cultural script regulating tavern behaviour are released freely through her attraction to the patrons and skill as a performer.

4.3.2 *Legends of Anika*

The second Serbian film from the 1950s that features the Roma as indices of socio-psychological patterns is *Legends of Anika* (*Anikina vremena*, dir. Vladimir Pogacic, 1954). The film is an adaptation of the Serbian novelist Ivo Andric's short story *The Times of Anika* (*Anikina vremena*, 1931), and has a number of significant interventions in the structure of the narrative and character development. The story takes place in a small town in Bosnia, in the early nineteenth century. The local inn-keeper's wife manages to seduce a young and inexperienced Mihailo, the son of the town gunsmith. When the

husband learns about the affair, the wife kills him with a knife that Mihailo hands to her. Mihailo then runs away, his conscience weighed down by the murder. A few years go by, with Mihailo engaging only in short and meaningless affairs with other women. When he returns to his hometown, he becomes attracted to the famed beauty Anika, but does not act on this emotion, largely as a result of his fear of and disillusionment with women. Profoundly shaken by his rejection, Anika becomes the town 'harlot'. When Anika's intellectually disadvantaged brother Lale realizes that she loves Mihailo and that they could still become a couple, he kills her. At this point, and for reasons of his own, Mihailo is also contemplating murdering Anika. When he enters her home, he finds her body on the floor, and weeps.

The film has a frame narrative: Mihailo finds Anika's dead body and takes it to a magistrate who also was Anika's lover at one time. The three most important men in Anika's life, Mihailo, Jaksa (a young deacon in love with Anika and ready to throw everything away because of his love for her), and Anika's brother Lale are then brought into the magistrate's office separately to recount their experiences with Anika in a series of flashbacks. The third flashback has a slightly different structure in that Lale is not the narrator but an *experiencer* of the events; in this segment, it is Mihailo who can be heard in a voiceover recounting the events preceding Anika's death and involving Lale.

The Roma characters in the film include Anika's quick and sarcastic maid Jelenka and a number of musicians (one female singer and dancer, and a group of male musicians) who perform at the local tavern and at various public events. In terms of Information-Structural roles, Jelenka is an Active Topic and Focus (i.e. causally efficient in interactions with the majority, both when observed by the majority and not), whereas the other Roma characters are Passive Topics (i.e. they do not causally advance the plot, and are *associated* with specific other narrative elements). Both groups of characters take part in the construction of indexical relations, but in different ways and settings.

The first important scene with indexical elements takes place outside Anika's home. Anika has become well-known for her promiscuous behaviour, and has been attracting swaths of interested men, some of whom become infatuated and obsessed. One such man appears in the publicly accessible portion of Anika's front yard with a Roma orchestra, and performs the emotions of *being lovelorn* (Figure 8):



Figure 8 - A man performs his feelings for Anika.

The cultural script being re-constructed in this scene includes drinking, a facial expression of yearning and abandon accompanied by a specific bodily posture, and a Roma orchestra performing a suitable song. In this particular instance, the Roma female dancer (dressed in Turkish-influenced traditional Muslim attire) is performing a dance to the sound of a slow song played on the traditional instrument *zurla*. The whole scene is shown from a high angle – likely the top of the staircase, which would force an Active Focus interpretation of the scene (i.e. the scene is the object of Anika’s gaze and concomitant evaluation, followed by an action). As there is no language involved, it is the visual elements that provide a normativizing performance of Being Lovelorn. The Roma performers do not partake of the interactions between the majority characters, nor are they in any way addressed therein. The scene is completed when Anika orders the group to leave her home.

The other three relevant scenes all share a similar spatial and semiotic structure: a Roma character is singing a sad and slow song in Romani as a majority character, sitting in the immediate vicinity, is shown experiencing the emotions of sadness and frustration over rejected or unrequited love. The first such scene takes place in Anika’s home after

the visit by the lovelorn villager above. Anika asks Jelenka to sing, upon which Jelenka starts her song while seated in the foreground (Figure 9):



Figure 9 - Anika lovelorn at her home, with Jelenka singing in the foreground.

The scene itself is constructed around identifiable expressions of sadness, but a verbal buttressing comes in the form of Anika crying ‘Mihailo! Mihailo!’ as she buries her head in the pillows to the sound of Jelenka’s song. This cry of sadness provides an explicit identification of the source of her sorrow, and could be argued to at least partially stem from the circumstances of its expression – the context allows the constructed emotion to robe itself in a succinct lower-level indexical form (i.e. the *source of emotion* standing for the *emotion*, in many ways similar to the double indexicality in *Sofka*).

Jaksa is shown in the same type of setting. After Anika openly rejects his love, and mocks him with the mention of her other lovers, Jaksa attends an open-air celebration, and finds a seat in a tent where the Roma orchestra are performing. As the Roma singer sings a sad song in Romani, Jaksa is shown in the foreground, looking exhausted and despondent (Figure 10):



Figure 10 - Jaksa lovelorn after Anika rejects him; the Roma singer in the background.

The cultural script played out here could also be classed as Being Lovelorn, with details and modalities slightly different. The Roma and the music they perform provide an indexical link to the emotions felt by the characters, but they achieve this via the iconicity of the music they perform, i.e. via the formal features such as the slow tempo and low tones.

Jelenka plays an important part as a Passive Topic turned Active in the last instance of indexicality in *Legends of Anika*. After she drives Jaksa away, Anika is sitting by the window, visibly despondent. Jelenka is shown in the foreground again, singing a slow and sad song in Romani. At one point, she turns to Anika and asks:

‘Anika, why are you doing this? You’ll be alone for the rest of your life.’

Anika replies,

‘I was born alone.’

Jelenka then resumes her singing, but her formal and substantive role has now changed: she takes on the role of Active Topic, and confronts Anika regarding her apparently dangerous anti-social behaviour, demonstrating an awareness and interest in the consequences of a woman's socially deviant lifestyle.

In sum, the Roma in *Legends of Anika* have a distinct role as foundational elements and indices of the socio-cultural script of Being Lovelorn. Jelenka steps out of this role to confront Anika with the consequences of her actions, and rather like the Roma in *Sofka*, by so doing she re-asserts the broader socio-cultural norms that Anika seems outside of.²²

4.3.3 *Hanka*

The last film in this group - *Hanka* (dir. Slavko Vorkapic, 1955) - stands apart in many important senses. Based on the short story *Hanka* (1954) by the Bosnian short story writer Isak Samokovlija, the film contains a number of significant narrative interventions: the literary original has an initial frame narrative, with the character of the pathologist as the narrator; the removal of the frame narrative in the film results in the disappearance of the narratively explicit attitude of suspicion directed at the Roma. Further, the character motivation in the original centres around passionate love and blind jealousy - behavioural features subdued in the film rendition.

The story is set among the Bosnian Muslim Roma in the first half of the twentieth century. The Roma community depicted in the film is run by a heavy-handed patriarch who criticises a young Roma man Sejdo for his independence and ethically-motivated interventions in the community. The patriarch also scolds Hanka, a free-spirited young Roma woman, for her refusal to abide by the social norms and expectations and have an arranged marriage with his son Musan. Hanka and Sejdo resist this sort of oppression in a calm and principled way, fall in love, and eventually marry. Sejdo is then framed by Musan's father and the majority authorities that he is in cahoots with, and is sent to prison. He is unhappy with Hanka working as a singer at a tavern, and instead suggests she sell her wedding gift to solve their financial problems. When he is released, he removes Hanka from the tavern where she found employment contrary to his wishes. As

²² Having said that, unlike in *Sofka*, where Marko's feelings for Sofka violate the rules of the cultural script of Wedding, in *Legends of Anika* there are two such scripts – Being Lovelorn, which the Roma help construct, and Proper Conduct as a Woman, which Anika seems to be in violation of, and to which fact Jelenka draws Anika's attention.

he is unable to find a job, he eventually accepts a position on the estate of Ajkuna, an older and well-to-do Roma widow. He falls under her spell, and becomes fascinated with wealth and the associated hedonism. Unbeknownst to Sejdo, Ajkuna sends money to Hanka to remarry, which Hanka refuses. Angry and disappointed, Hanka seduces the patriarch's son Musan, and accepts the necklace she once refused. In an attempt to keep the affair with Sejdo secret, Ajkuna kills her estate overseer, but the authorities release her. As soon as he realizes Ajkuna is interested in another – majority - young man, Sejdo goes back to Hanka. They re-unite, but when Hanka misconstrues Sejdo's roadside conversation with Ajkuna as treacherous, she lies about being pregnant with Musan's child. Sejdo slays her, and she utters her last words, 'You do love me!'.

The story told in the film is peculiar in a number of respects. Unlike all the other films in this early period of Yugoslavian film history, the film features Roma protagonists and tackles Roma-community-internal socio-ethical issues. Furthermore, the socio-ethical problem the film focuses on is couched as almost a narrative polemic on the reach and limitations of female empowerment in a fundamentally patriarchal society.

The representation and semiotic function of socio-psychological patterns is equally unique. In two 'establishing' scenes from the life of the Roma community – the celebration organized for Musan, and the wedding of Hanka and Sejdo – Roma women and men dance as the orchestra plays an up-tempo song combining Turkish and Middle-Eastern influences. This neutral depiction sets up a socio-cultural pattern, as well as a contrast with the scenes of interactions between the Roma and the Bosnian majority in the tavern as a kind of public space.

In the first scene featuring such an interaction, Hanka is singing in Serbian (spoken throughout without a Romani accent) at the tavern to make ends meet as Sejdo is serving his prison sentence. Hanka performs a slow song about the nostalgia of love, written by the Serbian poet Branko Radicevic:

Complaint (abridged)

Where are you, my love, where are you, my nourishment?

Where are you, my sweet light of day?

Where are you, my shining sun?

Where have you been?

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It has been a week already
Since you last visited me!
The sun has set – and darkness has fallen -
And I am left alone!

As she sings, Hanka is shown in close-up shots and mid-shots, as a Passive Topic or Focus (i.e. not interacting with the majority, or being observed without further causal contact). The orchestra members are also Romani. What follows establishes a situational expression of an emotion - a full shot of a majority woman looking melancholy and listening to the song, sitting next to a dozing majority man. The woman picks up her glass and drinks:



Figure 11 - A melancholy woman listening to Hanka's song as she drinks.

The emotion that may be hypothesized from the majority woman's facial expression is embedded in a socio-cultural context, and becomes part of a cultural script that includes behavioural patterns such as drinking, as well as the features of context such as the Roma song. It is all these elements and the content of the song that flesh out the emotion as a socio-psychological pattern.

Another important aspect of these performances becomes clear in a comparison with a similar scene towards the end of the film. Ajkuna becomes interested in a young majority officer and is having dinner with him at the very same tavern. The same song is performed by a different Roma singer, and this is the moment Sejdo catches Ajkuna red-handed, and remembers Hanka's tender words (shown in a voiceover that can be classified as *disparately diegetic* – originating from a different diegetic space-time):



Figure 12 - Sejdo remembers Hanka's words.

The effect that the song has on Sejdo makes it possible to argue that the Roma performer is in fact an Active Focus here. Furthermore, the lyrics of the song indeed help construct and perform the emotions of both Roma and majority characters, but their role is broader in these two scenes. Unlike in the previous films, the content of the song equally applies to the situation that the characters of Hanka and Sejdo are in: Hanka is alone while Sejdo is in prison, and Sejdo is both witnessing his lover drifting towards another man, and remembering the past. In other words, the indexicality of the Roma performances is given further depth through their self-referentiality.

The film also contains what is after *The Gypsy Woman* and *Legends of Anika* a staple feature of emotion expression – scenes of majority men closely observing female Roma dancers:



Figure 13 - A majority man watches the Roma dancers in a rare OVS shot.

The Roma belly-dancers perform to an up-tempo Oriental-sounding song as Active Foci, and as in *The Gypsy Woman*, the majority men's attitudes and emotions are at once shaped by the context, and induced by and focusing on the performers.

4.3.4 The literary adaptations - overview

The first four films analysed in this chapter have a number of features of common: firstly, the Roma characters in all the films help construct socio-cultural scripts that conceptualize male-female relationships, especially in terms of acceptable and unacceptable emotions (as socio-psychological patterns). In *Sofka*, the Wedding script regulates the emotions of the bride's kin, and is halted when these emotions violate the social norm; *The Gypsy Woman* features an acceptable degree of Emotional Abandon at a tavern, and a displaced (or rather, erroneously situated!) expression of abandon, doomed to fail in a socio-cultural context; in *Legends of Anika* and *Hanka*, the Being Lovelorn script constructs the emotions related to the loss of, or frustration over, the desired romantic relationship and the consequent sadness.

The Roma in these socio-cultural scripts have a variety of formal and substantive roles. In terms of Information Structure, their roles include Passive and Active Topic/Focus, with the Active group of roles assumed at points where they exert an identifiable influence on the other characters. In *Sofka*, the Roma musician asserts his humanity and re-asserts the social norms related to weddings and family relations; in *Legends of Anika*, Jelenka reminds Anika of her fate as a social pariah; in *The Gypsy Woman*, Kostana induces a state of abandon in the male characters; and in *Hanka*, Hanka's and the Roma singer's performances once again induce a specific response in the male characters. Generally speaking, the Active role types present in this period have two identifiable functions – to re-assert the value and/or binding force of the social norms, or to induce a specific sort of emotionality.

The emotions as factors and products of (the discourse of) socio-cultural scripts can find additional means of construction *via explicit linguistic terms* in the case of *Sofka* (Marko describes his emotions in a straightforward narrative), and *The Gypsy Woman* (both Mitke and Haji-Toma use actual language of emotions), or *metonymically*, as in *Legends of Anika* (Anika keeps repeating Mihailo's name) and *Hanka* (Sejdo remembers Hanka's loving words). Implicit, largely performative emotionality is constructed in *Legends of Anika* (as evidenced in the behaviour of Jaksa in the celebrations, and one of the men present in Anika's front yard) and *Hanka* (in the example of the majority woman listening to Hanka's song).

The spaces where the socio-cultural scripts are played out and emotions as socio-psychological patterns constructed are largely public (taverns, open-air or in-door celebrations) and rarely private (e.g. Anika's quarters). The professional roles the Roma play in these spaces are those of musicians, and dancers and entertainers. Jelenka from *Legends of Anika* stands apart as Anika's maid and confidante²³, but she too sings in her role as an index of socio-psychological patterns.

The power dynamic between the Roma and the majority is based on these professional roles. As hired performers and entertainers coming from a marginal social group, the Roma are placed in an inferior socio-economic position, but are rarely treated with condescension and arrogance (Marko's treatment of the Roma musicians in *Sofka* would be one such example). Further, the power dynamic is profoundly affected by the

²³ More on those two roles in chapter section 5.3.1.

interventions in the social sphere that the Roma make. Although it could easily be claimed that it is once again the Roma musician/entertainer that is proffered as a favoured and rather ubiquitous Roma stereotype, the indexical and occasional active roles the Roma have in this period clearly suggest their narrative importance and a considerable semiotic distance from narrative stereotyping.

In the period between the early adaptations and the social decadence of the 1980s, indexicality was not employed in representing the Roma in film. The next instances of this representational strategy re-appear in the political crisis of the 1980s.

4.4 Roma in the time of decadence – Indexicality strategies of the 1980s

After President Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia was politically stable for a comparatively short period. The new collective leadership seemed resolute and acted as a united front, but the socio-political sphere was far from calm. The political tensions and power struggle at the federal level coalesced with brewing ethnicity-centred narratives, sending Yugoslavia on the road to the ethnic conflict in 1991 (Meier 1995: 1-22; 57-61).

In such circumstances, film as a vehicle of representation has a variety of roles at its disposal. It may thematize the social tensions with the aim of producing the discourse that challenges the implied validity of any established socio-ethical patterns; or it may indeed embrace, re-express, and thus foreground any of the dominant socio-political narratives. In the 1980s Yugoslavia, with the film industry experiencing an unprecedented production boom, a number of genres seemed to follow either the former or the latter representational route. The film-makers of the so-called *New Yugoslav Cinema* group were attempting to critically assess the past and the present while a host of popular, light entertainment comedies re-constructed, foregrounded, or played with the narratives of patriotism as deeply-rooted in the populace (Goulding 143-149; Volk: 172-182).

The indexical roles of the Roma are present in three films in this period: a popular comedy *The Truckers Are Back on the Road* (*Kamiondzije ponovo voze*, dir. Milo Djukanovic, 1984); a social drama *Fallen Headlong* (*Jagode u grlu*, dir. Srdjan Karanovic, 1985); and an urban comedy *The Fall of Rock'n'Roll* (*Kako je propao rokenrol*; dir. Zoran Pezo, Vladimir Slavica, Goran Gajic; 1989). These will be discussed in turn.

4.4.1. *The Truckers Are Back on the Road*

The film *The Truckers Are Back on the Road* has a straightforward linear narrative, and follows two majority characters – retired professional truck drivers Paja and Jare – as their hopes of a peaceful life are shattered in a streak of bad luck: Paja’s riverboat gets stolen, and Jare’s house may be sold in a foreclosure. They attempt to make ends meet, find the stolen boat, and secure the funds necessary to keep Jare’s house, meeting in the process a large number of characters from different backgrounds. In terms of genre, the film is a light comedy with a loose, almost road-film structure, also featuring performances of folk singers popular back in the day.

The Roma characters appear twice in the film – at the family house-warming party at the very beginning, and at a wedding party at the end, celebrating the marriage of the new house owner’s son. They largely do not interact with the majority characters, and can therefore be seen as Passive Topics or Passive Foci. There is, however, a single important instance of interaction between the musicians and the majority, taking place in the scene at the beginning, when Paja orders a song. This interaction puts the Roma in the Information-Structural role of Active Topics.

In the house-warming scene, the Roma orchestra are shown in a pan, through a VHS camera operated by Jare’s daughter, or in a series of objective shots. The orchestra members are ethnic Roma, and play a merry folk instrumental on their brass instruments. The melody, recognizable as an instance of traditional folk music, serves as an important component of the socio-cultural script of Celebration. As a sort of a sonic background, it establishes a link to the folk (or para-folk) regional identity (Figure 14).



Figure 14 - Paja arrives at the housewarming party.

Up until the moment of Paja's arrival, the orchestra have no interactions with the family and their guests, and the music does not change. Paja then orders a song, and the Roma orchestra comply. The song they perform next is *Yugoslavia*, composed by Danilo Zivkovic in 1974, with the lyrics written by a well-known Serbian musician and composer Milutin Popovic Zahar:

From the river Vardar all the way to Mount Triglav,
From the Djerdap Gorge all the way to the Adriatic Sea,
Like the string of beads on a glittering necklace,
Awash in glorious sunlight,
Proud amid the Balkans,
Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia!

I have travelled far and wide,
Walking down the road of my destiny,
Carrying you in my heart.
You have always been dear to me,

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My precious homeland,
Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia!

I love your rivers and mountains,
Your forests, fields, and the sea,
I love your proud people,
Both the farmer and the shepherd,
When he plays his pipe,
Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia!

Much blood was spilled for you,
You were born of our struggle,
The workers' hands created you,
May you live happy in freedom,
Let our love guide you,
Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia!

The song did not fare well upon initial release, but when it was re-released in 1980, it became a hit across Yugoslavia. The lyrics provide a patriotic discourse full of pathos and sentimentality, and act as a tool for the forging of national identity, unifying as they do into a single 'object of political beauty' the staple landscapes, pastoral scenes, the *gastarbeiter* nostalgia, and Communist ideology.

As the music starts, the family and guests form a ring and start the folk dance. The grandfather is carrying the Yugoslavian national flag as he dances, and Jare is hoisted to the balcony, where he unfurls the flag, shown in a series of detail shots. The opening credits then start to roll:



Figure 15 - The national flag unfurled to the sound of *Yugoslavia*.

Although they assume the role of Active Topics when they respond to Paja's request, the Roma are effectively relegated to the margins of this celebration. As can be seen in Figure 15 above, they have been removed from the final shots, and only the music can be heard. The music has a clear ritualistic function, as it legitimizes the gathering and the activities, allowing the *performance* of public patriotism at a private event.

This ritualistic role and the instrumental nature of the Roma in the scene above are made clearer via a series of merry-making scenes at various taverns that Paja and Jare stop at on their travels. In a commercial *tour de force*, as many as three majority folk stars of the day²⁴ are placed within the film narrative, and given small parts of local singers at three different public spaces the two friends find themselves in. They are all female, and perform merry folk songs alongside majority orchestra members. In addition to the spectacular nature of these appearances, a prominent enough binarism is thus set up between the two types of musical performances, but the contrasts do not stop there. As the three stars sing about personal desires and emotions, and male-female relationships,

²⁴ In the order of appearance, Snezana Djurisc (country fair tent), Nada Topcagic (roadside restaurant), Lepa Brena (the front yard of a rich man's house).

the protagonists allow themselves to relax in the raucous atmosphere, or to focus on their private worries and concerns (Figure 16):



Figure 16 - Paja interacts with a majority singer at a country fair.

This stands in stark contrast to the celebrations involving the Roma, where the public nature of the event and the details of the relevant socio-cultural script necessitate a more solemn tone, the solemnity being grounded in the expression of patriotic feelings.

The wedding scene at the end confirms this division of semiotic labour. As the wedding festivities progress, the Roma orchestra are in the procession, and perform *Yugoslavia* again for the new group of solemnly appreciative guests. Importantly, and rather interestingly, the performance also serves as an ironic sonic background to the hardships that Jare's family are still facing, having just lost their home – the song rings more hollow set against a pan showing their disappointed faces, but the irony of the situation in no way stems from the specificities of the Roma performance. Couched in light visual and comedic tones, the irony is created and quickly defused via editing interventions at a higher narrative level, so the Roma retain their role as indices of socio-psychological patterns - in this case, the desirable or socially sanctioned expression of

patriotism at public events. This filmic script taps into a broader socio-political discourse that shapes national identity, and may indeed strengthen and solidify it.

4.4.2 *Fallen Headlong*

Another group of Yugoslavian film-makers, loosely referred to as The New Yugoslav Cinema, aimed to depict the social malaise that was becoming a dominant feeling in the 1980s among the portion of the populace disillusioned with the ever-increasing failures of the political system and the ensuing social frustrations. Based on a very successful 1975 television show, *Fallen Headlong* (directed by Srdjan Karanovic in 1985), it follows a group of friends who organize a reunion ten years after the events in the television show. The friends meet on a riverboat restaurant in the middle of winter, where they are joined by a Roma orchestra who perform various songs throughout the evening. As the night wears on and the emotions run high, the dinner turns into increasingly raucous displays of aggression and long-repressed desires and frustrations, until the first light of dawn, when the company of friends are forced to confront the failures that are their lives and part and parcel of their political environment.

The Roma orchestra (all-male, and ethnic Roma) play what can formally be called a more active role in these scenes – they interact with the majority as Active Topics, but in a very limited manner. Non-individuated as characters, they respond to demands and orders from the majority guests, never offering a glimpse of their own views or thoughts on the boat restaurant goings-on.

The music they perform changes in step with the increasingly raucous mood on the boat restaurant. There is a sense in which the contextually bound socio-cultural script of Celebration becomes insufficient to regulate or even indicate the socio-psychological patterns identifiable in the majority guests' behaviour. What is left is the pairing between the Roma melodies and the guests' actions / moods, in itself transitory and chaotic, and at a higher narrative level precisely an indication of the disarray in the majority characters' personal lives, and of the undeniable failure of the society they live in.

The night starts off innocently enough, as the central figure of the evening – the *gastarbeiter* ('foreign worker') Miki Rubiroza, recently returned from Germany – orders merry songs amid initial tensions among the characters. The Roma surround a protagonist's wife, and perform a personalized merry song with the chorus that runs,

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‘Why are you so sad?’, indirectly addressing in this manner the argument that she and her husband had had.

As the emotions grow intense and the mood more egotistic (e.g. Miki starts to drink; Uske refuses to light his estranged wife Goca’s cigarette), the Roma perform *Sote Da Barasa*, a merry jig in the Romani language authored by the Roma orchestra in their *extra-textual roles* as well-known performers. Considerably drunk already, Miki stands up and says, ‘We are taking over the tavern! We do what we please. Fanfare!’. The Roma comply, and play the fanfare sound as Miki and Boca bend backwards in a drunken state of broad and directionless abandon (Figure 17):



Figure 17 - Miki and Boca in a state of directionless abandon.

The Roma then turn to global music hits which accompany the protagonists as they are slowly getting out of control:

1. *The Banana Boat Song* can be heard as Miki starts to mix drinks in a large bowl.
2. This is followed by *My Bonnie*, as Miki and Boca finalize the liquor mix and start to drink.
3. The Roma perform *Love Me Tender* as Miki attempts to seduce a teenage girl who poses as Uske’s love interest.
4. Miki and Uske fight over the teenage girl to the sound of *El Condor Pasa*.

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The content of these songs is in no sense related to the out-of-control words and actions of the protagonists. In their proper indexical role, these songs mark out and trace a social and psychological space of madness, expanding beyond the physical and social space of the boat restaurant and its associated cultural scripts.

The next stage has all the majority guests in a state of utter inebriation. The Roma once again perform musical genres aiming to be satirical or irreverent, but the lyrics are directly referential, and very vulgar²⁵. Their indexical role is still operational, as they provide a backdrop to similarly vulgar and aggressive actions on the part of the protagonists, e.g. Miki and Boca cajoling the waitress into stripping, and then watching her through the keyhole.

The atmosphere on the boat restaurant reaches a crescendo of sorts just before dawn, as all the relationships come to a breaking point and the social roles reverse. One of the protagonist's children attempt to escape the emotional chaos, the Roma take part in drunken games, just as the owner of the boat restaurant dances on the pier alone, focused but utterly inebriated, to the intense shriek of the Roma violins. This is where the indexicality of the dissolution of social ties and roles takes on a notably *iconic* character – with the tempo of the music mirroring the psychological intensity of the owner's experience.



Figure 18 - The boat restaurant owner dances on the pier.

²⁵ Some of the lyrics to their songs include 'You, Miki, are a cunt!', 'Oh Bane, do you have a bit on the side to fuck?', and 'Uske, let Bora the Stain screw you!'.

In sum, the Roma in *Fallen Headlong* act as indices of the *dissolution* of socio-cultural scripts, and of socio-psychological patterns that go beyond the legitimate and then the socially constructive, ending at an intensely self-destructive point from which a sobering or a psychological collapse are the only two ways out. Their role is not to induce such states, but the degree of semantic relevance of their performances varies – from directly referential (referencing film character names and situations), through iconic/indexical (mirroring the intensity of the behaviour via the analogies of the music form), to radically indexical (where the global hits situationally point to, but do not help construct the behaviour).

4.4.3 *The Fall of Rock'n'Roll*

The Fall of Rock'n'Roll is an anthology film made in 1989, consisting of three different stories loosely connected by a meta-diegetic, comic-book-like character of Green Tooth (played by Dusan Kojic), who performs short music pieces providing general comments on the diegetic goings-on. The first story sets up a political, life-style, and artistic tension/conflict between the urban progressive and urban folk culture, as well as between the young and the old of the Belgrade of the day. The second story looks at the growing pains of a generation of young urbanites who live their lives separated from their cultural and political context. The third story, a comedy of confusion important for the present discussion, features a young Belgrade couple who are facing the challenges of living together and pregnancy, as well as an additional problem of anonymous love letters.

The Roma characters appear in the third story in their Information-Structural roles as Passive Topics and pointers to specific socio-psychological patterns. The story opens with a scene taking place outside of a birth clinic in the city centre, where a majority male character, a young father-to-be, is eagerly awaiting the news, dressed in a sports jersey and surrounded by the Roma brass band musicians (all of them adult, male, and ethnic Roma) (Figure 19).



Figure 19 - A father-to-be awaits the news, surrounded by the Roma orchestra.

When he learns from the mother of the child that it is a son, he orders the Roma to play, once again in a state of apparent excitement. The Roma start playing a merry folk jig. With a bottle of liquor in his hand, as he gets more and more excited, the father takes off and throws to the ground the Roma musicians' hats. At this point, the Roma transition into Active Topics, as they respond to the request and enter into an interaction with a majority character.

Other majority characters join in and form a ring around the Roma musicians. In a series of cuts, a number of women are shown waving to their husbands from the birth clinic windows, suggesting many similar events and responses of the fathers. The women are played by well-known Yugoslavian singers, and some of the men by Yugoslavian rock stars of the day.

Amid the general merriment, a police car arrives. The music stops. The two police officers then order – 'Play!', and the Roma musicians resume by playing *Yugoslavia*. A further cut shows the babies in the birth clinic, to the sound of the folk melody.

The space in which the socio-psychological patterns are expressed is a public space of the city, and the Roma are shown in a clearly inferior position, both economically (the majority figure requests a song), and culturally (the same character demonstrates his power by throwing their hats on the ground).

The socio-cultural script constructed here once again has to do with Celebration, only this time over the birth of a son. The socio-psychological pattern includes an implicit (i.e. bodily and gestural) expression of joy, constructed as part of a bundle of important cultural factors: the local masculine / macho culture (sports; privileging a son over a daughter; mild aggression towards the less powerful), and cultural patriotism as a legitimizing social factor, realized via the characters of the two police officers and the song performed upon their arrival. Importantly, as this is a comedy, a slightly over-the-top depiction of these scenes works to undermine or prevent an affirmative reading, but the socio-cultural script and the associated socio-psychological pattern are nonetheless efficiently constructed. The Roma have an indexical role in this script insofar as they systematically contribute content to it, and to the extent to which their music can be associated with the meaning of the script as a whole, which is especially salient in the case of the performance of *Yugoslavia*.

4.4.4 The 1980s indexicality strategies – overview

The socio-cultural scripts from this historical period largely construct Merriment as a socio-psychological pattern, but with different objects and connotations. In *The Truckers Are Back on the Road*, the Celebration script adds a distinct note of patriotism to this emotion, while *The Fall of Rock'n'Roll* acknowledges it while at the same time defusing it through the comedic tones. *Fallen Headlong* takes the same script and the emotion of Merriment, only to reveal their potential as a social diagnostic of decadence and disorientation.

The Roma in this period retain fewer Information-Structural roles – Passive and Active Topics are the only clearly identifiable ones. Furthermore, although they transition from Passive to Active Topics in all three films, their actual causal effect on the story and type of interaction with the majority is all but minimal – song requests are the only type of communication that they have with the majority characters.

The emotions depicted are largely Merriment (*The Truckers Are Back on the Road*, *The Fall of Rock'n'Roll*) and Emotional Abandon (*Fallen Headlong*). They are implicit, performative, and represented in the form of gestures, body movements, and interactions. The one notable exception is *The Truckers Are Back on the Road*, where the

unfurling of the flag serves as another type of index for the joy, solemnity, importance, and legitimacy of the celebration.

The spaces wherein the socio-cultural scripts are played out are both private and public. *The Truckers Are Back on the Road* features celebration taking place in family house front yard, and the public spaces include restaurants (*Fallen Headlong*) and the streets around public institutions (*The Fall of Rock'n'Roll*). The professional roles the Roma play in these spaces are those of musicians.

As in the previous period, the power dynamic between the Roma and the majority is based on this professional role of musician. While the *song request – compliance* pattern is present in all three films, *The Fall of Rock'n'Roll* has an instance of mild aggression towards the Roma (hats thrown on the ground), while *Fallen Headlong* shows a dissolution of the depicted social roles, including the ones that constitute the Celebration script (the Roma can be seen taking part in various games played on the boat restaurant). Once again, the adult male Roma musician seems to be the dominant mode of representation of the Roma, but this role is made more complex via semiotic operations of de-focusing (in *The Truckers Are Back on the Road*) and re-positioning (in *Fallen Headlong*).

4.5 Roma in the time of war – Indexicality strategies of the 1990s

After a decade of growing socio-political tensions and the rise to power of openly belligerent national leaders, the civil war broke out in Yugoslavia in 1991, impacting severely the entire population and with it the film industry. Although the Serbian film production was halved in the new decade, important films were made which invariably examined the dominant political and socio-cultural discourses of politics (Goulding 2002: 187-188). The renowned director Emir Kusturica re-located to Belgrade, and made two widely acclaimed films featuring the Roma in their roles as indices of socio-psychological patterns – *Underground (Podzemlje, 1995)* and *Black Cat White Cat (Crna macka beli macak, 1997)*.

As these are the only examples of such a representational strategy, it is useful to consider the possible reasons for this. There is a sense in which the Roma as an ethnicity were temporarily relegated to the backseat of history in a decade in which an openly nationalistic and xenophobic public and institutional discourse was either nurtured and

glorified, or being actively dismantled from the political centre-left, with a view to re-establishing a sober and moderate political tone. In such a climate, only a strong personal interest as well as a specific poetics would result in films that feature the Roma to the extent to which Kusturica's films do.

Building on his previous *oeuvre*, Kusturica made films in the 1990s that caused a great deal of controversy and instigated a series of academic papers investigating this world-renowned author's work. Effectively initiating the discussion, Iordanova (1999) claims that Kusturica essentializes the political problems presented in his 1995 classic *Underground*. Keene (2001) rejects this view wholesale, and puts forth a more positive interpretation according to which the very same film problematizes the narratives of nationhood, giving expression to a desire for an *exuberant* trans-national life. Ferreira (2006) offers what is more or less the same argument, observing that *Underground* is concerned with the ever-changing negotiations between the self and the narrative of the nation.

This section looks at *Underground* and *Black Cat White Cat* as films that feature the indexical roles of the Roma, and attempts to contextualize the findings within the ongoing discussion of his work.

4.5.1 *Underground*

Underground covers an entire historical trajectory of the second Yugoslavia (1943 – 1991) – World War II, the Tito-Stalin Split and the Cold War, as well as the Yugoslavian Civil War periods, tracing much of the tragic local history to the character flaws (passions, selfishness, orgiastic proclivities, hypocrisy, lust, greed, and pride) of its majority protagonists Marko and Crni (Blacky). The title comes from the fate of one of the protagonists and his faithful entourage – in order to avoid the Nazis, Crni must hide in the spacious cellar owned by the father of one of the characters, and ends up spending decades underground in fear and ideologically-motivated defiance. Crni finally re-surfaces once it becomes impossible for Marko to keep up the pretence of immediate danger, ensuring his stay in the cellar for selfish, profoundly manipulative reasons. Once out, Crni finds himself in the middle of the Yugoslavian Civil War, and joins it as a military commander. At the very end, their lives cut short or destroyed in the tragedy of the wars,

all the protagonists and supporting characters gather once more on a patch of ground, which then splits off from the mainland as they eat, drink, sing, and dance.

The Roma characters appearing in indexical roles have once again a variety of Information-Structural functions. They start off as contiguous Passive Topics (as they are associated with specific socio-psychological patterns, but do not affect the plot causally), transition to Passive Foci (i.e. as they are observed by the majority characters), then Active Foci (when the majority characters act upon their own gaze, and decide to interact with the Roma), and finally Active Topics (i.e. having a causal contribution to the plot).

This group of characters comprises Roma musicians (all of them adult, male, without speaking parts, dressed in clothes not markedly different from those of the majority) and Roma children (male and female, without speaking parts, dressed either in the majority clothes or in Oriental-style costumes).

Their social role of musicians becomes entangled / associated with a wide array of socio-psychological patterns in various textually (re-)constructed / reinforced socio-cultural scripts. The situations in which the Roma musicians perform this role are numerous:

a. The very beginning of the film has the two protagonists (Marko and Crni) on a drunken ride through the night-time Belgrade, on the eve of the German attack against Yugoslavia. The Roma musicians follow them closely while playing a furious, folk music-inspired tavern jig *Kalashnikov* (composed by Goran Bregovic), underscoring and reinvigorating thus their drunken abandon. Crni is throwing money to the Roma, and shooting his gun. At one point, he feels like 'killing the Roma' (Figure 20), and shoots at them hanging upside down from the cart. The Roma duck, but follow them on. Marko stops him every time, saying it is 'not safe.' The socio-psychological pattern that the Roma are firmly associated with here can be termed Orgiastic Merriment, different from Merriment in terms of intensity and the degree of expressed aggression.



Figure 20 - Crni trying to shoot the Roma orchestra.

b. Crni is celebrating his son Jovan's birthday - a happy event tainted by the memory of the loss of Jovan's mother Vera. Barely visible in a shallow-focus close-up of Crni, the Roma musicians follow him around the tavern, helping express via a sad tavern tune the complex emotion of Joy Punctuated by Sadness. They perform a well-known Serbian majority song written by Dragisa Nedovic (Ceneric 1967: 326):

Stop, stop, o river Ibar

Stop, stop, o river Ibar.

Where do you rush so?

I also have my sorrows.

The burden is weighing down on me.

There, where the river Ibar

Joins the Morava,

A single lonely house

Hides my darling.

There she waits for me

Almost every night.

Stop, stop, o river Ibar,

I have to go to my darling.

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c. In the same sequence as above, when Crni confronts his smuggler friends over stealing some of his goods, Marko joins the ensuing fray in an emotional abandon. The Roma orchestra stand behind him a moment before the fight begins, and the furious *Kalashnikov* replaces the mournful melody. Marko orders the Roma, 'Faster and louder!'. The fray is as much about violence as it is about uninhibited emotions, from Lust – Crni kisses a woman looking on, to Joy – Marko dances merrily while fighting and dealing heavy blows (Figure 21). If a single term is to be used to describe Crni and Marko's state of mind, it is Orgiastic Abandon, and this is what the Roma musicians can be associated with in the filmic text.



Figure 21 - Marko and Crni in a tavern brawl.

d. As Crni, Marko, and Crni's mistress Natalija celebrate Crni and Natalija's marriage, the Roma orchestra are placed around the wedding party's table on a boat restaurant. The melody that the Roma perform is a folk music-inspired *Mesecina (Moonlight)* by Goran Bregovic:

Moonlight, moonlight, is it noon?
The sun is shining, is it midnight?
From the skies a light beams,
No one knows what is shining.

The scene itself constructs a socio-cultural script of the Wedding, with the predictable locale (a boat restaurant) and emotions (Merriment), but with aggression as

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a major component: Crni sternly orders the Roma to, 'Blow that horn! I don't get married every day!', and celebrates his wedding to a woman who is tied up to a chair so that she would not escape from the festivities (Figure 22).



Figure 22 - Natalija tied to a chair at her own wedding.

e. In the same scene, the Roma play a song for Crni (the more passionate ideologue of the two) celebrating Marshal Tito titled 'Comrade Tito with a fair face'. The socio-cultural script is still the same, but the emotion is now that of Ideologically-mediated Merriment, similar in a sense to the films in the previous period - *The Fall of Rock-n-Roll*, and *The Truckers Are Back on the Road*).

f. A while later, when Crni has gone into hiding in the underground cellar, Crni and Marko start singing another song in praise of Comrade Tito (*Comrade Tito, We Swear To You*) after Marko brings a gift he claims is from Tito himself, but which he is using as a ploy to keep Crni underground. The Roma musicians (who are – rather significantly - also in the cellar!) start performing the song, which helps construct the emotion of Ideologically-motivated Patriotic Pathos. The song continues as various daily chores are performed in the hideout.

g. In the scene where Crni's son Jovan, now an adult, gets married underground, the Roma musicians join in as Petar and Marko sing *Moonlight*. The emotion is once again

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Merriment, but with a twist: this time round, Natalija joins the musicians on their improvised spinning platform, and she proceeds to hit Marko and Petar with a plank as she spins around. The initial emotion of Merriment is therefore combined again with Aggression and Frustration.

h. Lastly, the ending scene (where all the characters gather together again on a plot of land that breaks away from the mainland and is carried off downstream²⁶) reverberates with the sounds of *Moonlight*, performed by the Roma musicians in an idealized Wedding setting, with all the characters unabashedly yielding to Orgiastic Merriment. The music and the associated mood here could be construed as an integral part of an unchanging / projected / constructed / persisting image or mentality, tragically separate from the real world (Figure 23).



Figure 23 - The Roma play as the ground breaks away.

Summing up, the socio-psychological patterns associated with the Roma musicians range from privately-expressed, through collective, to ideologically-mediated. As the Roma characters are systematically linked to these patterns, the Roma may be considered as indices of socio-psychological patterns, constructing broader social associations and connections.

²⁶ Which can be interpreted as a symbolic gesture of separation from the local history, as well as a statement of emotional continuity - the never-changing emotional make-up of the Yugoslavian / Serbian people.

The fact that the Roma musicians are tied to the textually constructed / reinforced socio-cultural scripts does not mean that other Roma characters, or the self-same Roma musicians, have no markers of social status. The social status of the Roma in this fictional history of Yugoslavia is variously indicated by the maltreatment from the hands of the protagonists (Crni shoots at them in the opening scene in his drunken abandon; he throws them out of the restaurant on a whim; the orchestra is made to spin while playing at Jovan's underground wedding).

However, interesting indicators of equality are also evident in the film: as Active Topics, Roma children play, dance, sing, and discover sexuality together with the majority children in the underground hideout. This discovery comes in the form of exoticisation – as the music blares and the wedding celebration reaches full pitch, a young Roma girl is shown dancing on top of the underground tank wearing Oriental clothes as the fascinated boys look on and then quickly close the tank hatch cover above their heads.

The Roma are thus associated with emotions in more ways than one. Firstly, there is the textual indexing strategy linking the Roma to socio-cultural scripts and various intense emotions therein. Secondly, as a result of a possible interpretation of the underground metaphor, the Roma can be seen to be associated in general terms with the oppressed or repressed but totalizing orgiastic emotionality, a stance towards life and society pushed back via the machinations of political wizardry, but which does in fact fuel the ideology and thus the society as well. A more socially oriented and complementary interpretation could see the Roma as belonging to the 'lowest' social ranks, together with the poor and the politically naïve.

4.5.2 *Black Cat White Cat*

The 1997 film *Black Cat White Cat* takes up many of the topics explored in previous Kusturica's films, but re-works them into a romantic comedy of scene and spectacle, featuring Roma characters in a multitude of exuberant roles. The storyline involves financial problems in the Roma underworld as well as variegated obstacles to a marriage of the young Roma protagonists, which echoes the *Time of the Gypsies* (*Dom za vesanje*, dir. E. Kusturica, 1988) in terms of narrative structure and thematic motifs; however, the genre switch pushes *Black Cat White Cat* towards a happy ending and a greater focus on the characters themselves.

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The characters are portrayed with a level of exuberance and excess that has an adverse effect on the plot dynamic. The protagonists and supporting roles are all Active Topics as they interact with the majority and/or drive the story forward. A number of supporting and minor characters (the Roma orchestra; various friends and family) are Passive Topics with differing contributions to the narrative. Further, as most Roma characters are afforded a high narrative status, their personal perspectives are expressed via the gaze-response sequences, where they are Perceiver Topics.

The Roma brass and string orchestra have what is by far the most complex Information-Structural role. They start off as Passive Topics in the hospital scene: the Roma orchestra steal in to visit the life-loving Roma patriarch Zarije, but are in fact playing a tune as they are moving in. The music picks up and transforms into *Ladybird* (*Bubamara*), featuring a dialogue involving a 'pixie girl' who does not want to get married, (composed for the film by the majority musicians Dr Nele Karajlic, Dejan Sparavalo, and Vojislav Aralica), as they surround Zarije in his hospital bed. Zarije wakes up and says, 'Music!'. Zarije gets up and leaves, saying that he will not stop drinking even though 'his liver has gone to pot.' A nurse storms in and attempts to stop them, but fails. Zarije questions her right to be angry, and reverses social roles by giving her a 'tip', and kissing her hand. The Roma group leave the hospital as *other patients dance to the music* (Figure 24).



Figure 24 - Zarije leaves the hospital to the sound of Roma music.

Once on a boat with the Roma orchestra, Zarije cries out, 'What a wonderful life!' to the background sounds of *Ladybird* played by the musicians in the boat. When he finishes the conversation with his son Zare, he exclaims, 'Musicians! Aggression!'

The Roma orchestra music becomes inseparable from this mood of celebration, and turns the orchestra into an index of emotion (Merriment). The cut that follows the scene above changes the status of the orchestra to Frame Setters²⁷.

The Roma orchestra have two more appearances in their roles as indices of Merriment. During the riverside celebrations, they are placed in a tree (a humorous analogy with the spinning wheel in *Underground*) and start performing an up-tempo folk song as the gathered people (Roma and the majority) make merry. The same orchestra perform *Ladybird* at the wedding of the Roma girl Aphrodita, to an atmosphere of exuberance and behavioural excess in eating, drinking, and dancing.

Although the Roma orchestra perform songs that clearly help construct the socio-psychological pattern identifiable as the emotion of Merriment, the socio-cultural scripts are more difficult to pinpoint. The two final appearances of the orchestra are tied to the context of celebrations, but the socio-cultural norms are violated (or rather, re-constructed) through excess. On the other hand, the hospital scene features the signature verbal (Zarije overtly committing to a life of pleasure), gestural, bodily, and interactional markers of Merriment, but in a socio-culturally highly unusual context – that of the hospital corridor. This is due in part to Kusturica's poetics and philosophy of film, and in part to the genre conventions – they are all expressions of a defiant *joie de vivre*.

4.5.3 Kusturica as a social engineer – An overview of indexicality in the 1990s

The two films by Emir Kusturica making up the third and final period where indexicality is found as a representational strategy construct a theoretical space of socio-cultural patterns centred around the emotion of Merriment, but with a variety of manifest forms: *Underground* attaches a certain Orgiastic, Abandon-like note to the depth and manner of the emotion expression, also weaving into the pattern elements of Ideology / Patriotism (understood here as the love for President Tito and the Communist Party). *Black Cat White Cat*, on the other hand, seems to strip the patterns down to their basic

²⁷ More on the Frame Setting role of this song in chapter section 6.5.

element – an expression of Joy / Merriment, an emotion that creates its own socio-cultural script in places that are not associated with a normativized expression of such emotions (e.g. hospital; river bank). Quite like *Black Cat White Cat*, *Underground* places its socio-psychological patterns in the recognizable contexts of the Wedding script, while utilizing the marked, symbolism-imbued space of the underground, and thus effectively *simulating* the scripts typically found in the society at large.

The wide variety of Information-Structural roles that the Roma have in this period is once again complemented by a single professional role – that of the adult male Roma musician. The power dynamic that regulates the relationship between the customer and the musician is either brought to its behavioural extreme (Crni shooting at the Roma orchestra who obediently follow the two majority characters) and thus negated, or reversed for comedic purposes (Zarije tipping the nurse at the hospital, or requesting songs from the Roma).

What seems peculiar about such a representational technique is its potential for reifying as a permanent or stable mentality trait an otherwise fundamentally socio-cultural category – emotions. Importantly, however, Kusturica does in fact contextualize and implicitly evaluate such socio-psychological patterns: in *Underground*, he links the *personal* emotionality and expressions thereof to the *socio-political* sphere, and posits the relation of causality between the two; in *Black Cat White Cat*, he describes (in comedic overtones) a rather dark and troubling *social sphere*, and finds a solution in *personal exuberance and behavioural excess* as constructed and represented via music. The Roma musicians are in both cases essential vehicles of emotion construction, expression, and action.

4.6 Indexicality from 1945 to 2010 – Conclusions

Indexicality as a representational strategy appears in three different groups of films in the corpus: in the early period adaptations, in the comedies and social dramas of decadent socialism, and during the Yugoslavian Civil War. The periods in which such representations seem to be altogether missing are the 1960s and the first decade of the twentieth century, likely for very different reasons. The 1960s in Yugoslavian film featured a very complex representational landscape which was affected, in addition to personal views, interests and preferences of the film-makers, by a pool of stylistic and

thematic norms that favoured experimentation and open interrogation of the dominant socio-political discourses. In such an intellectual climate, indexicality might have been seen as too indirect or inefficient a semiotic tool for challenging the viewer.

Similarly, the early 2000s placed centre-stage the issues of the legal status and legitimacy of the social position of the Roma in the Serbian post-war society. Films in this period, responding to a broadened socio-political context and greater pace of change of the political landscape, brought about by the EU integration-related processes, focused largely on a careful dissection of the actual or symbolic marginalization of the Roma. In such a new socio-political context, representational strategies that employed the Roma for a semiotic purpose that lay outside the ethnic group itself were likely less than appropriate as tools of constructing new, or exposing old, socio-political discourses.

On the other hand, in the three periods analysed in this chapter, indexicality served two useful purposes: it either contributed to the pool of local, contemporaneous film-making norms, or helped construct new discourses of socio-political identity. In the early period, films such as *Sofka* or *Legends of Anika* marked a clear break from the Social Realist doctrine, and the narrow circle of thematic concerns that foregrounded largely ideological content. The primary socio-psychological pattern of Being Lovelorn from this period could be said to have enriched the pool of themes and concepts surrounding male-female relationships, as well as the stylistic devices used to represent them.

The second period – the 1980s – tackled the burning issue of the socio-political identity of a country heading towards political destruction. The Roma characters employed in the indexical representations in this period helped construct the socio-psychological patterns of Patriotic Merriment, aiming to re-constitute the political discourse of unity based on a common symbolism; rather as a diagnostic tool, alternative socio-psychological patterns in this period effectively dismantled the very notion of stable common sociality, and indicated the political end of the road through the patterns of (Self-)Destructive Merriment.

Lastly, the third period, largely arising out of the poetics and philosophy of a single film maker, employs the Roma as indices of socio-psychological patterns to engage with the phenomena of history and society, finding rather inconsistently (or incoherently!) in excess and exuberance both the culprit and the saving grace of the Yugoslavian and Serbian socio-political sphere.

Chapter 4 – Roma as indices of socio-psychological patterns

The Roma characters employed in the indexical representational strategy vary in one – semiotic - sense, and remain quite stable in another - narrative: the first period brings individuated characters in complex socio-logical relations with the scripts and patterns they help construct. The second and third periods largely divest the Roma of any individuality, and turn them into efficient means of other-identity representation. On the other hand, the narrative role of the Roma remains largely that of musicians, establishing a potential textual type for this specific representational strategy.

5 ROMA AS INTERACTANTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter uses as an analytical starting point the Information-Structural roles of Active Topic/Focus and Perceiver Topic. The *Active* feature is defined as denoting *initiating* diegetic interaction with the *majority* (representatives), responding to attempts at interaction by the majority representatives, *or* initiating diegetic action(s) that belong(s) to the causation chain of events constituting the plot or subplot. Depending on whether the Roma character or character detail in question is an object of another (often majority) character's gaze, a further distinction is made between *Active Focus* (object of gaze) and *Active Topic*. Linked to this is the notion of *Perceiver Topic*, which denotes a diegetic character whose perceptions of the world are provided via a point-of-view shot, subjective shot, or over-the-shoulder shot. As pointed out in the Chapter 3 (Methodology), these notions are used as *ideal types* that actual formal narrative patterns adhere to in varying degrees.

The Information-Structural tools have helped identify a total of 24 films (out of 35 in the corpus) that feature the above representational patterns. A further Narrative-Semiotic analysis has been applied to these films with the aim of identifying broader as well as smaller-scale narrative patterns, themes, and characterization strategies employed to depict the Roma in the instances of complex diegetic interactions that include both the Roma and majority characters.

The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first, four films from two period groups are examined as examples of *ideologized representations*. The remaining twenty one are analysed as examples of *socially-critical* interpretive takes on the former-Yugoslavian and Serbian societies, and are presented chronologically, divided into period-group-based subsections.

5.2 Ideologized representations of the Roma

As an instrument of analysis and description of social phenomena, ideology has had a complex conceptual history, due to which any attempt to deploy it as an analytical tool may result in crippling ambiguities and conceptual confusion (Corner 2016). This is

why ideology is operationalized in this chapter section via a fundamental distinction between *discourse* and *medium*: discourse is construed here as the body of fully contextual (i.e. unfolding in a physical spacetime and within a specific socio-political space) and normativized (i.e. value-based) social practices through which a social hierarchy of political identities is created, maintained, and/or challenged. These practices include *meta-representational* ones – such practices that *aim* to construct or enshrine other (*object*) practices in a specific *medium*. Medium is understood here as both a physical platform used for representation (e.g. paper, book, personal computer) and a symbolic/communication system (e.g. a natural language, film, computer game) within which the representation is couched.

Ideology is then understood as a concept with inherent *meta-representational* aims: on the one hand, it refers to a type of ‘totalizing’ (Corner 2016: 267) discourse that takes the entire society it is articulated within as a set of *object* practices, normativizing them in order to regulate and control the creation and expression of any political identity; on the other hand, an ideology can in fact be couched in a specific medium, and is thereby of necessity re-shaped within a specific communication system and via a particular physical vehicle of expression.

Ideology in film can therefore be said to intersect with two sets of medium constraints – the *physical medium* of film delimits the ontology of the expression of ideology to *images* and *sounds*, whereas *narrative* as a type of symbolic/communication system imposes further constraints on the content of ideology, re-shaping it into (or mapping it onto) stories involving human action. There is a sense in which narrative (especially in specific genres as its distinct, historically stable forms) can be said to be ideological in and of itself (Altman 1984; O’Beebee 1994) inasmuch as it contains structuring categories such as, for instance, *hero*, *anti-hero*, *love interest* etc. While a structuring effect is undeniable, it should not be construed as *inherently* ideological. If this were the case, then all natural language concepts could also be seen as instances of ideological structuring, and thus the very notion of ideology would become too general to be useful²⁸. Rather, bearing in mind the helpful distinction between *narrative role* and the *exponent* of a narrative role (e.g. ‘hero’ vs. the character who has that specific role), evaluating the ideological scope and reach of a film narrative should be based on

²⁸ Which fact Corner draws attention to as well (Corner 2016: 268).

both/either an inter-textual comparison of medium-specific discourses, and/or an intra-textual comparison of relevant narrative elements. In both these types of analyses, the aim is to establish if the film narrative performs major simplifying interventions in the repertory and particulars of the depicted socio-political identities. This aim rests on an assumed social ontology of heterogeneity and change - what ideologies essentially attempt to do is control the former and direct the latter.

This section looks at four films: two films from Period 2 are concerned with the 1941 massacre in the town of Kragujevac - *The Roll-Call of Form 5-3* (*Prozvan je i V-3*, Milenko Strbac, 1962) and *A Bloody Tale* (*Krvava bajka*, Branimir Tori Jankovic, 1969); two further films look at World War II and its immediate aftermath in Yugoslavia / Serbia – the Period 2 film *The Demolition Squad* (*Diverzanti*, Hajrudin Krvavac, 1967) and the Period 5 *Onward We Go* (*Idemo dalje*, Zdravko Sotra, 1982).

5.2.1 The Kragujevac Massacre and its depictions in film

The Kragujevac Massacre refers to the mass execution of men and boys in the Serbian town of Kragujevac, perpetrated on 21 October 1941 by the Nazi occupying forces. Historical sources trace the motivation for this action to an attack in early October against a company of German soldiers near the town of Gornji Milanovac (Jorgic 2013: 80). The attack was carried out by forces of the Yugoslavian Partisan Liberation Movement and the Serbian nationalist military groups. According to the official report of the German army, a total of ten German soldiers were killed and 26 were wounded (Slijepcevic 1978: 338), but what further exacerbated the situation was the fact that the German regional military command learnt that the bodies of German soldiers had been severely mutilated. As a result, a decision was taken that as many as 100 Serbian men would be shot for each dead German soldier, and 50 for each wounded. The soldiers started rounding up men and male secondary school students on 20 October 1941, and the executions began on the morning of 21 October. Sources differ on the overall number of deaths, but a consensus among scholars seems to be that *at least* 2,300 people were killed (Manosek 2007: 165; Slijepcevic 1978: 344; Tomasevich 2010: 83). At least one German soldier was executed alongside the local population, for refusing to participate in the mass murder (West 1995: 112).

The local Roma were executed in the massacre as well. Importantly, the Yugoslavian and Serbian historiography has determined that many Serbian collaborationist forces provided direct assistance in rounding up the Roma and handing them over to the German army. A number of local elderly Roma, some of them immobile, were forced into the execution compound by a local volunteer collaborationist group on the first day of the massacre (Manosek 2007: 165). Furthermore, the commander of the pro-Nazi Fifth Regiment of the Serbian Volunteer Command, Marisav Petrovic, rounded up 200 Roma who were passing through the municipality, brought them before the Germans, and exchanged them for local Serbs. The Roma were subsequently shot in the massacre (Slijepcevic 1978: 343; Manosek 2007: 165, footnote 44).

Much is made in the popular discourse and films of the young Roma children who were executed in Kragujevac. However, the official reports do not specify precisely what happened to them and why. One of the very few sources making mention of Roma children in the Kragujevac Massacre is Stanisa Brkic, the curator of the *October 21* Museum in the town of Kragujevac, who specifies in his overview that ‘there were about forty 12-15 year-old children among those shot, mostly Roma boys, the little shoe-shiners.’ (Brkic n.d.).

5.2.1.1 *The Roll-Call of Form 5-3* (Strbac, 1962)

Considered inferior in Serbian film scholarship in terms of style and concept (Volk 2001: 367), *The Roll-Call of Form 5-3* depicts the events immediately preceding and during the 1941 Nazi massacre in Kragujevac. The primary ethical opposition is set up at the very beginning of the film, with the intertitles claiming to quote messages of hate from what is labelled as “The ‘Instructions’ for the Occupying Forces”. The on-screen text effectively establishes a contrast between the German occupiers as absolute villains and the Serbian population as absolute victims, and uses this to claim the ethical validity of the filmic text:

‘... This film is based on true events [... It is dedicated to] ... all the students who never completed their education ... It is therefore pointless to explore how similar its characters are to any other – living or dead – whether deliberately or by accident ... ‘

The plot centres around the transformation of the mundane concerns of the local secondary school teachers and students into the tragic fate of the entire local populace. The Roma characters include Shtula ('crutch' or 'stilt' in Serbian), a secondary school student of about 13 years of age, who walks with the help of a stick, and can be classed as one of the protagonists; Shtula's mother, an elderly woman in the role of a supporting character; and little Roma boys, supporting characters of about seven years of age.

Shtula is likely played by a Romani actor²⁹, and speaks only the standard form of the Serbian language, without a regional or ethnic accent. His clothes are the same as those of the majority students, and he is fully accepted by his classmates as well as the majority population. As an Active Topic, Shtula interacts with everyone freely and extensively. However, there are a number of structural contrasts, indicators of difference to be subsumed into the basic ethical opposition of the film, and therefore by the text-instantiated ideology of equality: Shtula is depicted as living in a Roma part of town, also barely visually identified via old and slightly dilapidated houses (Figure 25).



Figure 25 - Shtula arrives in the Roma part of the town

Further, he plays cards at the desk in the bottom of the classroom, which is a socially significant place in a Serbian classroom environment, often reserved for unruly children

²⁹ No information on the Roma characters is available for this film.

or those struggling with the workload; this is underscored by the fact that Shtula is engaging in this activity with a majority *repeat* student.

As the realities of the war slowly enter the stage, a similar semiotic strategy can be identified in the new environment. A relevant instance of visually foregrounded unity takes place days before the actual massacre: when the secondary school students oppose the head teacher in a demonstration of solidarity, Shtula is part of this unified front, represented in a gaze – point-of-view – response sequence, with the students depicted in a long shot, immovably facing the teacher in unflinching defiance (Figure 26):



Figure 26 - The class presents a unified front

In the new environment, however, Shtula must wear an identifier armband with the word ‘Gypsy’ written on it – a new marker of difference, visually highlighted in the film, and thus interpretable as a textual technique of maintaining the difference necessary for enhancing the primary ethical opposition. The difference is dissolved in a symbolic gesture in the execution hangars. As he is awaiting execution alongside the students and other locals, the Head Teacher rips off Shtula’s armband in an overt instantiation of the ideology of equality through tragedy.

Shtula’s mother, likely played by a Serbian actress, also only speaks the standard form of the Serbian language, without a regional or ethnic accent. As a housemaid working for a majority family, she is depicted as using learned vocabulary sporadically intermixed with a folk-sounding turn of phrase:

‘Well, *lady*, I keep telling that to my son as well.’ ‘[...] Now is not the time for your son to be engaging in various *caprices*.’

As a housemaid, Shtula’s mother interacts with her employers on an equal footing, which makes her an Active Topic. In addition, when all the mothers gather in the streets as the men and boys are being taken away to the execution hangars, her narrative status is further elevated to that of the Perceiver Topic: in an emotionally charged sequence fragment, wherein the sadness and despair felt by the women is skilfully represented as a gaze shot without the point-of-view / response counterpart, she is also afforded the gaze shot alongside the majority mothers.

Similarly to the character of Shtula, the supporting characters of little Roma boys are likely played by Romani non-professional actors. They are dressed in slightly more ragged clothes than the majority children of the same age in the film, but are afforded the status of Perceiver Topics as they observe and listen to the quotidian goings-on in the city (in parallel with the majority students). Once the mass executions begin, they are depicted as visibly frightened by the distant sounds of the massacre as they play in a field outside of the town. The perspective that they are afforded humanizes them, assigns them a higher narrative status, and provides a local interpretive (emotional) framework for the tragedy.

Generalizing from the above analyses, it can be concluded that the homogenizing effects of the employed representational strategies lie predominantly in the general alignment between the Roma characters’ speech and physical appearance on the one hand, and those of the majority on the other. On the other hand, the contrasts that identify the Roma in the film are twofold: *implicit* identifiers (the desk in the back of the classroom; the Roma part of town; a folk-sounding turn of phrase; slightly ragged clothes; lack of adult supervision in the children’s play) maintain what could be termed a *minimally necessary* textual difference; on the other hand, enforced identifiers (the armband) help maintain the primary ethical opposition between the Nazi villains and the local victims. Both identifiers are removed at the end of the film – the enforced ones are taken off physically, while the implicit ones are negated by indiscriminate violence, subsuming the Roma into the ‘in-group’ of victimhood. The maintenance of minimally necessary differences requires blunted contrasts based on cultural specificities – a separate (but not necessarily inadequate or even different) living space, a subordinate

social role of Shtula's mother (but free of want and suffering), as well as barely intimated Shtula's learning and discipline issues (but stripped of associated stigma and disrespect).

At the inter-textual level, the film narrative modifies and omits important elements in the chain of historical events – the Roma shoe-shiners are re-worked into metonymic embodiments of fear, and the morally unacceptable exchange between the Serbian collaborationists and the German soldiers is not mentioned. The 'historico-politically correct', sanitized representational differences persist in the text precisely so that they can be rendered irrelevant in one fell homogenizing swoop, subsumed into the "common tragedy of the Yugoslavian people".

5.2.1.2 *A Bloody Tale* (Jankovic, 1969)

A Bloody Tale is concerned with the same historical event as *The Roll-Call of Form 5-3*, but the aesthetic focus and ideological underpinnings are slightly different. The plot revolves around the town of Kragujevac children, majority and Roma, living a precarious life together during the occupation and in the run-up to the massacre. Their days are spent out in the streets, in various attempts to earn an additional income and ensure their families make ends meet. Tensions rise as the children split into a faction that is ready to shine the Germans' shoes to survive, and those that refuse as a matter of principle. The massacre that ensues kills almost all of them, as they refuse to shine the shoes of the executors. The last shots of the massacre foreground one of the Roma boys and a discarded pair of crutches. The slightly rhetorical note of that scene carries over into the final recitation of the names of all the children killed.

The film features a complex ensemble of Roma characters. A group of Roma boys, aged about seven, are played by ethnic Roma. One of the boys' grandfather, a stately man of about 60 on crutches, is also played by a Romani non-professional actor³⁰. The character of Kum ('godfather' or 'best man' in Serbian), is played by a well-known majority actor (Mija Aleksic). Lastly, the wedding party consists of minor characters played by Roma non-professional actors. All these characters engage in complex and causally efficient interactions amongst themselves or with the majority, and can therefore be considered Active Topics. All the Roma characters speak only Serbian, some with a

³⁰ The name of the non-professional actor is unavailable from the official film records.

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barely perceptible ethnic accent, in terms of phonology and turn of phrase. Their clothes appear to be more worn out than those of the majority characters, and they live in a Roma shantytown.

As in *The Roll-Call of Form 5-3, A Bloody Tale* also uses intertitles at the beginning, which foreground a different representational aim than in the former film - that of factuality:

‘In this story, nothing is made up. It all happened in Kragujevac, in 1941, during the German occupation.’

The basic ethical/visual *contrast* is then set up between the Germans, depicted as cold and brutal, accompanied by eerie non-diegetic music, and the local population, who take part in various life-affirming activities (e.g. weddings), and either perform or dance to merry diegetic music. Further, an ethical/visual *parallelism* is set up between the local majority and Roma populations: both populations are depicted celebrating a wedding, and are represented using a variety of techniques enhancing and enforcing a sense of directness, immediacy, abandon, and intensity: close-ups and extreme close-ups, lower-angle close-ups, hand-held camera, rapid succession of shots, and focus on identical details, e.g. images of feet dancing (Figure 27):



Figure 27 - The Roma wedding

Interestingly, in the case of the Roma wedding, the festivities and popular spirit are also aligned with the official Yugoslavian Communist war narrative and its interpretation of the historical events: after an abrupt zoom-out into a long shot of the wedding, the festive crowd (the character of Kum being the loudest) cries ‘Better a war than a pact!’, an allusion to a well-known slogan used by the crowds protesting against the signing of the Vienna Protocol on the Accession of Yugoslavia to the Tripartite Pact on 27 March 1941. Moreover, Kum and the Roma grandfather both express their contempt for and defiance against Hitler.

All the children in the film are local interpretive ‘filters’ – as Perceiver Topics, they provide the viewer with their perspective and responses to plot developments via the gaze – point-of-view - response sequences. These sequences are accompanied towards the end of the film by the non-diegetic sounds of the heartbeat racing when the children are faced with the horror of the massacre. This technique can be said to serve largely the same purpose as the scenes of Roma boys crouching in fear in *The Roll-Call of Form 5-3* – humanizing but also mythologizing (in the sense of establishing clear ethical oppositions!) a social tragedy.

The dynamic between Roma and majority children is very complex. On the one hand, all the children engage in the same activities in their attempts to survive – they beg, steal coal, carry luggage, and shine shoes. On the other hand, structural features of the narrative introduce differences along ethnic lines: two camps form when some of the children refuse to shine Germans’ shoes. These rifts and tensions are particularly salient as both camps have Roma and majority children, but the leaders are majority characters. Moreover, the boy-girl relationship as an element in the narrative involves two majority children.

Both children’s camps receive daily orders from their leaders, and the children engage in celebrations closely resembling their adult counterparts (performing music, ring dancing). At the end of the film, both leaders and many children die in the massacre, and this motif can be interpreted to have a number of symbolic functions: the children’s harmless games are violently stopped, which underscores the tragedy and inhumanity of the massacre. A further parallel is established between the children and the Yugoslavian / Serbian society at large, as the children and adults alike love life, and are too proud to yield to the occupying forces (Figure 28).



Figure 28 - The children refusing to shine shoes

Lastly, a still further parallel can be established between the children and the Yugoslavian Communist Resistance Movement - both children's camps die eventually, which can be interpreted as an implicit criticism of the 'compromise' camp, lending indirect support for the Yugoslavian Communist Resistance Movement's self-declared uncompromising struggle.

Importantly, the film does in fact portray Marisav Petrovic, commander of the Fifth Regiment of the Serbian Volunteer Command, and the exchange of the 200 Roma for the local Serbs. More generally, a greater variety of historical facts are used in the film to model a more complex, but nonetheless ideologically aligned narrative of common views, struggle, and tragedy. The equalizing representational stance finds similarities of general attitude (to life and the German occupation) and specific suffering (in the massacre) among the differences of the characters' backgrounds. Furthermore, military organization and defiance are foregrounded skilfully from their organic context (the children mirroring the events around them), and become something of a prescriptive allegory of ethically necessitated resistance. Having said that, the differences between the Roma and the majority in terms of their structural positions in the narrative can be hypothesized as symptoms or unintended reflections of the differences in their contemporary social status: the role of leaders or love interests in the story world belongs to the majority characters, and the Roma are used as vehicles for the occasional dissemination of the ideological messages of resistance or war pathos. The representational differences in this film can be said to be at the same time directive

(aimed to be neutralized in the common tragic outcome) and reflective (of the narratively formally absent, implicit social hierarchy, placing the Roma in an inferior position to the Yugoslavian majority).

5.2.2 The *Partisan*³¹ Film

As the Yugoslavian economy was beginning to grow again after the 1948 political trauma of the Tito-Stalin split, the focus of the Communist Party's ideological machinery shifted towards the film industry (Pavicic 2016: 38). A new meta-genre was slowly taking shape, termed the *partisan* film by film historians (Horton 1987; Volk 2001; Goulding 2002; Pavicic 2016), aimed at depicting the struggles of the Yugoslavian Communist Resistance movement during World War II and/or its immediate aftermath, and thus at providing a founding myth for the new Yugoslavia. Various classifications of the meta-genre have been proposed, but the most detailed one is developed in Pavicic (2016), which distinguishes between the early partisan film, focused on the collective destiny of the Yugoslavian peoples and the legitimation of the newly-formed Communist regime; the socialist *noir* and *Western* of the 1950s, reflecting the ideological disorientation following the Tito-Stalin split by focusing on 'personal dilemmas, individual destinies, and psychology' (ibid: 46), or on the taming of the wild as the metaphor for the establishment of the new ideology (ibid: 50); the liberalization of the Yugoslavian society in the 1960s brought the polemical partisan film, which questioned the official war narrative (ibid: 52), as well as the partisan exploitation film, spectacle-oriented and iconographically repetitive (ibid: 53); the 1970s brought a crisis of the Yugoslavian identity and with it the need for great partisan epics, aimed to enshrine the Communist myths of World War II history (ibid: 54-61); lastly, as the Communist ideology was on the wane alongside its originating political movement in the 1980s, the meta-genre was living its last days and slowly disappeared by the end of the 1980s.

This section looks at two partisan films featuring Roma characters: the Period 2 *The Demolition Squad* (*Diverzanti*, Krvavac, 1967), classified by Pavicic (2016) as a partisan exploitation film, and *Onward We Go* (*Idemo dalje*, Sotra, 1982), one of the last films to depict the post-World War II era.

³¹ 'Partisan' as a term in the Serbian language denotes a member of the Yugoslavian Communist Liberation Movement armed forces in World War II.

5.2.2.1 *The Demolition Squad* (Krvavac, 1967)

This action drama is set during World War II, and tells the story of a Yugoslavian Partisan demolition squad on its way to a local Nazi airfield in Bosnia. Their task is to blow up all the airplanes and so save the bulk of the Yugoslav Partisan forces and their wounded. After many trials and tribulations, including rifts between the soldiers in the squad, they manage to complete the mission, but at a great cost in lives.

The only Roma character in the film is referred to as Gavran ('Raven' in Serbian), a man in his thirties, dressed in a uniform. He is played by a Serbian actor famous for Roma roles (Jovan Janicijevic). He speaks Serbian throughout the film, but with a detectable, though not exaggerated Roma accent, in terms of the phonology and an occasional case form error. The 'folksy' sound thus contributes to the depiction of a 'simple man of the people'.

In narrative terms, a general contrast is set up in the story world's past between the treatment of the Roma by the Germans and the Yugoslav Partisans: Gavran tells the tale of how the local Germans, considered friends and customers by the Roma, started killing the Roma that they had known at the outbreak of World War II. In contrast, the Partisans saved Gavran from certain death, treated his wounds, and included him in their ranks, assigning him to various sensitive missions. The contrast thus establishes a polarized world wherein the Yugoslav Liberation Movement is unambiguously ethically superior, which makes the set-up of the binary opposites Fascist-Communist essentially ideological.

Mirroring this opposition at the level of character and ethnicity, a parallelism is set up between the fates of the character of Doctor (a Jewish explosives expert and resident engineer, played by Rade Markovic) and Gavran, both of whom had suffered persecution and family losses at the hands of the Nazis. These narrative details are rooted in the historical facts regarding the persecution of the Jewish and Roma populations in the occupied Serbia (Slijepcevic 1978: 339; Manosek 2007: 162), but a further contrast is inserted in the narrative: unlike Gavran, the Doctor is educated, cool-headed and rational, and indisputably essential for the mission.

A further complex opposition is established between Gavran and the character of Sarac (both 'dappled horse' and 'heavy machine gun' in Serbian), played by the Serbian

actor Ljubisa Samardzic. They are both portrayed as emotional and impulsive, but Sarac's antagonistic nature is substantially more useful for the mission – he carries the most dangerous weapon in the squad, and his resilience to hierarchies results in successfully stalling the advance of German soldiers in one of the scraps the squad goes through on its way to the airfield.

In the portrayal of Gavran, the film makes plentiful use of the culturally available stereotypical notions of the Roma:

- In Gavran's own words, before the war Gavran and his family lived on the road, in a caravan, earning a living palm-reading and fortune-telling.
- While running away from a German motorcade at the start of the mission, Gavran goes back to fetch his cigarette pack. Towards the end of the mission, as the squad is travelling in disguise on a train full of German soldiers, Gavran asks for a cigarette, and is the only one who smokes while handling explosives. All these examples demonstrate his lack of impulse control and a degree of recklessness.
- While the squad are running from the German soldiers through a privately-owned corn field, Gavran is the only one to take a few corns, promising a feast afterwards. This action relates the character of Gavran to the stereotypical notions of the Roma as thieves.
- Sarac uses a caricatured Roma accent and a humorous word for male Roma to joke around with Gavran.

The central relationship that Gavran has is with his partisan comrade Ivan, a Serb who had saved his life after the Germans attacked his family. As he owes Ivan his life, Gavran is portrayed as very emotional, devoted to Ivan, and loyal to him the point of self-sacrifice. His emotionality in friendship sets him apart from both Ivan and almost all his other comrades, who display rational planning behaviour, and make sober assessments.

When at one point Ivan is wounded and cannot proceed with the mission, the squad thinks he should be left behind in a cave. Ivan then commits suicide in order not to burden and endanger the mission. In this important story event, in addition to being an Active Topic, Gavran is assigned a very complex role of a Perceiver Topic, first responding to his friends' conversation and then, after Ivan's suicide, lashing out at the group. The

first part of the interaction is shown as a standard gaze (a close-up of Gavran) – point-of-view (a long shot of the other mission members) - response (a close-up of Gavran) sequence. However, after Ivan's suicide, the shots are set up to convey a clear sense of conflict, disorientation, and emotionality.

Gavran is shown in a mid-shot in a very agitated state, which sets off a complex gaze - point-of-view - response sequence, in which Gavran is both a Perceiver Topic and an Active Focus. In line with this, the point-of-view section takes the form of a tracking shot showing close-ups of Gavran's comrades (as both Active Foci and Perceiver Topics), closely resembling a panel.



Figure 29 - The squad members confronting Gavran

In a sense, the scene indicates confrontation, and represents an attempt to appease Gavran and regulate his unruly behaviour. At the peak of the crisis, with Gavran shown in close-ups and mid-shots only, the mission leader must resort to physical violence to make Gavran snap out of his emotional state. Once Gavran changes his attitude and re-joins the planning, the mission can continue. Once at the airfield, the squad destroy the airplanes, but the majority (Gavran included) die in the ensuing clash with the German forces.

Generally speaking, Gavran's ethnicity is constructed by means of the culturally available and textually realized stereotypes (personal history, impulsivity and emotionality in interactions, theft), but for ideological purposes. A Roma man is once again the perfect vehicle for the textual dissemination of ideological content, in two different senses: as a victim of the Germans, he is saved by the Partisans, but as a soldier, he embodies extreme forms of camaraderie and loyalty that stand in the way of organized

collective action and devotion to the collectively sanctioned goal. The implied social hierarchy is at play in this film as well – the narrative makes structural distinctions between the majority soldiers who are dedicated to the mission (even when they are themselves impulsive, as is the case with Sarac), and a Roma man, whose ethnically stereotyped character facilitates the depiction of weakness and the need for ideological (re-)education, but at no cost to the projected image of the Yugoslavian Partisan masculinity, rationality, and resolve (all the more pertinent given the genre of the film).

It is in this context that Partisan morality can be said to be played out in full: individual emotions/tragedy must be subjugated to the collective decisions/welfare, and a Roma character is the safest ‘trainee’ in this sort of ethics.

5.2.2.2 *Onward We Go* (Sotra, 1982)

Sotra’s film *Onward We Go* was made when the partisan film meta-genre was in a crisis, and beginning to disappear – the Yugoslavian Communist Party was weakened after President Tito’s death in 1980, the Communist ideology and its myths were believed in and subscribed to less and less (Horton 1987: 25), and various financial scandals had plagued the film industry players involved in the making of some of the last partisan films (Pavicic 2016: 62).

Onward We Go was successful at the international scene, winning the silver medal at the Moscow International Film Festival in the category of children’s films (Volk 2001: 239). Based on a popular television series, the film is set in the northern Serbian provinces after World War II, telling the story of a member of the Yugoslavian Communist Party Armed Forces, who arrives at a small village in need of a primary school teacher. In a string of loosely related narrative episodes, the film then follows the teacher and his students through the many temptations in the post-war Yugoslavian province: the ritual punishment of the German prisoner-of-war working as a janitor at the school; post-war trials of the Serbian collaborationists; the purchase and slaughter of a pig; the search for missing relatives; an abandoned baby; the return of the local men from concentration camps, etc.

In its sentimental and slightly melancholy tone, *Onward We Go* can be termed ‘soft ideology’, a sanitized representation of the post-war period of healing wounds and re-organizing the society. The Roma depicted in the film are two Roma twins, boys about

seven years of age, and students at the primary school where the Partisan protagonist teaches. They speak only Serbian, without a trace of a Romani accent³², and are dressed in clothes similar to those of the majority children. As they take up a significant amount of screen time and engage in complex interactions with the other characters, they can be considered protagonists as well.

In terms of character portrayal and their textual roles, the Roma boys seem on first glance to be fully integrated into the majority. They are Active Topics throughout the film, interacting freely and abundantly with the majority characters. In addition, as they observe many characters and provide comments on their behaviour and character traits, they are also afforded the status of Perceiver Topics. The constructed equality of these characters can be seen in the following aspects of the plot/filmic text:

- a. Their experience in the historical context seems identical to that of the majority, whether they are given an opportunity to point out the family loss that had befallen them, or whether they observe the Communist Party-organized trials together with the principal majority figures.
- b. Their emotionality is depicted as equally important, e.g. when their teacher is leaving, everyone – the majority and Roma characters alike – are shown crying.

However, there seems to be a slight imbalance in the structure of the narrative. On the one hand, the Roma boys are presented as fully integrated equals in the local context; on the other, they are the only ones who self-identify as Roma, and draw attention on a number of occasions to their ethnicity and, by implication, to the tragedy of the Roma people during World War II. For instance, when the German janitor distributes food to the children, the Roma twins insist jokingly that he should give them - ‘the Zigeuners’ - more, and when the janitor refuses, one of them mocks the German’s ethnicity (Figure 30).

³² The Romani boys are not listed in any film databases containing actor information, so no information is available as to their names and ethnic origin.



Figure 30 - One of the Roma twins asking the German janitor for more food

Furthermore, in a scene where the janitor is making repairs, the children gather around him and start to mock and tease him, but the twins lead again, calling him a 'Zigeuner'.

This sort of ideological intervention is more benign than any other discussed in this chapter section, and boils down to narrative sanitization and pedagogy – once any ethnic tension is removed from the narrative present, the narrative past can be acknowledged from both a realist perspective (e.g. the German janitor is ritually pelted with mud by way of punishment for Nazi crimes) and a more humane perspective (whereby the crimes against the Roma are indirectly recognized and foregrounded in the actions of the Roma twins).

Onward We Go is the last film in the corpus to feature the Yugoslavian Communist ideology overtly or implicitly, and so makes a fitting end to the partisan film genre approach. The ideology contained in its narrative is non-aggressive and largely positive in its obvious focus on integrationist levelling of the socio-ethnic tensions in the Yugoslavian society.

5.2.3 Ideologized representations of the Roma – an overview

The central conceptual relationship in the four films featuring ideologized representations of the Roma is between the ideological dictum of *equality* and the textual deployment of *difference*. In *The Roll-Call of Form 5-3*, the differences in the depictions of

the Roma and the majority characters are logically necessary to make possible the ideological operation of the establishment of equality (in fate and therefore in political identity). Given the logical necessity of difference, the maintenance of representationally minimized differences is what is required for the ideology to operate in the filmic text.

In *A Bloody Tale*, the structure of the film narrative reflects an unresolved tension between equality and difference (visible in the assignment of hierarchically lower narrative roles to the Roma characters), while in the portrayal of the run-up to the massacre and the massacre itself, the differences in the characterization are resolved through the equality of life-affirming stances and the tragic fates of both character groups.

The Demolition Squad seems to configure the opposition between equality and difference in ways similar to *A Bloody Tale*. The collectivist, goal-oriented Communist ethos is contrasted with a non-collectivist, personal ethics of a Roma character. The structural inequality of role assignment (majority squad leader / majority gunman / Jewish expert vs Roma soldier) is complemented by the differences in characterization and, unlike in *A Bloody Tale*, these differences are resolved through an ideological intervention in the diegesis and, ultimately, common death. This gives *The Demolition Squad* a distinctly pedagogical note.

The last film posits equality as a governing principle in the structure of the narrative, and deploys difference as a reminder or acknowledgement of the crimes committed against the Roma in World War II. The obvious gap between the first three films and the last, 1982 film, can perhaps be explained using the historical approach. The 1960s in the Yugoslavian film were a complex decade that featured both challenges to the official ideological narrative, and films that were aligned with the narrative in various ways. As Yugoslavia was slowly entering a period of deep political identity crisis at the beginning of the 1970s, if there was going to be an ideological film, it was likely to attempt to enshrine the heroes and epic battles of the Yugoslavian history, so the times can be said to have worked against Roma representations. By the 1980s, the political crisis was developing dangerous economic aspects as well, and the ideology was being challenged in all quarters. In such circumstances, ideologized Roma representations served few socio-aesthetic purposes, and were therefore few in number before eventually disappearing altogether.

5.3 Socially-critical representations of the Roma

Unlike the ideologized representations of the filmic Roma, through which the film narrative-based ideological discourse of the Yugoslavian Communist Party constructs or maintains the desired hierarchy of socio-political identities, the socio-critical representations of the Roma are deployed to interrogate and sometimes undermine varyingly totalizing social discourses. These discourses may aim to limit the freedom of the individual within a specific collective, define various group identities, or conceptualize the life of a society in its entirety (as is the case with the Yugoslavian Communist ideology). This chapter section traces the development of such socially critical representations of the Roma in the seven periods of the thematic-stylistic history of Yugoslavian and Serbian film, providing an account of the systematic changes in the focus and scope of the social critique.

5.3.1 Early re-presentations (1945-1960)

The establishment of the Yugoslavian Communist Party rule in the wake of the Second World War was marked by a tension between the Communist Party's project of building a new society and the inertia of the old social organization. The Party legislators introduced a number of laws, regulations, and policies aimed to modernize Yugoslavia, ranging from the reconstruction of roads and railways to literacy and the rights of women. Some of the new laws were directly relevant to the Roma of Bosnia and Serbia: The Law on Prohibiting the Niqab and Burka was passed in the Federal Unit of Bosnia on 27 September 1950, and had a sweeping effect on the culture of everyday life across Yugoslavia, affecting the Muslim Roma as well as the other minorities in Yugoslavia, and resulting in a secularization of the style of dress (Pavicic 2016: 38). The process was not rapid, however. When Nanovic's *The Gypsy Woman (Ciganka)* was made in 1953, a socio-conceptual conflict between the old and the new was still very much at work in the social life of the then Federal Unit of Serbia.

As an adaptation of Borisav Stankovic's play *Kostana*, *The Gypsy Woman* addresses the social issues in the south of Serbia at the turn of the nineteenth century, and situates a specific kind of unbridled emotionality in a deeply restrictive social setting. The Roma girl Kostana's sensual singing at a local tavern becomes a cause for concern for the town

authorities and many townswomen, and once an influential local man murders his own son over her, she is imprisoned and forced to marry within the Roma community.

All the Roma characters are played by Yugoslavian majority actors/actresses. Among them, Kostana and her parents are Active Topics proper, in that they exert a causal influence on the plot via the interactions with the majority characters. It is through them that the social critique is expressed.

Kostana's parents are presented as articulate, sober-minded, and socially integrated (i.e. acting in accordance with the majority norms). Dressed in more prominently Turkish-style clothes, they stand out visually, but are well-adjusted to their socio-political context. As the Roma community in the film are performers and entertainers, Kostana's mother Aisha is portrayed as appreciative of the social consequences of sexually provocative conduct in performances, even when requested by the majority clients. Once the family faces social difficulties over the local men's enchantment with Kostana, her father declares that he is 'going to get drunk', and this is the only 'semi-reference' to the stereotype of the supposed Roma abandon and wildness of emotion.

Kostana herself does not seem to embody a stereotypically untamed and unrestrained spirit either. Refusing local youth Stojan's naïve and aggressive marriage proposals, she is playful but respectful, and describes herself as 'born to sing, a Gypsy, not cut out for a Haji's life'. She refuses material gifts of any kind, but makes a concession when she has to decline Stojan's father's advances, accepting the gift of a necklace. As pointed out in Section 4.3.1, these acts of self-description, social awareness, and compromise come of *choosing* the structural position of the tavern singer, rather than being helpless or unrestrained in its inertia.

Kostana is feared by the town authorities, and hated by the townswomen. The former call for her to be murdered as a 'dangerous temptation', banish her, and finally imprison her; the latter, represented as old, lifeless, asexual, and monastic, aim their superstitions at her, linking her to the droughts that have been plaguing the area. Therefore, it is not the Roma as a group that causes major concerns. Rather, it is the *life-affirming femininity of a specific Roma woman*, and its perceived *incursion* into the male-dominated social order (populated by the fully controlled/restrained women) that is feared to wreak town-wide havoc. Haji-Toma is a case in point. Initially angrily dismissive of the Roma ('Under the Turks, we used to quarter them!'), he concedes that Roma women

are ‘... a passing source of pleasure, good for sowing your wild oats’; once he finds himself in the company of the abducted Kostana and her fellow Roma, he demonstrates a more tolerant attitude (‘I have nothing against you. You can sing.’). Finally, he falls under the spell, and offers his love and his wealth to Kostana.

As a de-inhibitor of socially potentially dangerous emotions, Kostana is arrested and forced to marry. Importantly, the Roma community gladly accept the arranged marriage, revealing themselves to be a community like any other, deriving much of its power and identity from restricting and channelling individual desires. The social critique the film voices lies precisely in this area – in general, sociality tends towards increasing restrictiveness; in particular, the depicted Serbian society is harmfully restrictive as a result of being male-dominated.

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Vladimir Pogacic’s 1954 film *Legends of Anika* (*Anikina vremena*) makes a similar point. Also making use of a literary source (the 1931 short story by the Serbian novelist Ivo Andric), the film is set in a town in Bosnia in the early nineteenth century, and tells the story of the town beauty Anika and her traumatized rejection of social norms of propriety and sexual/romantic moderation as a result of being rejected by the man she loves.

In addition to the Roma musicians who help construct a specific type of emotionality, the character of Anika’s maid Jelenka has the formal roles of the Active and Perceiver Topic in the constitution of the film’s value system and ethical framework. The ethical framework can be better understood if the basic narrative situation of the film is schematized in the following manner:

The male protagonist Mihailo’s *overgeneralized fear and mistrust of women*
and their perceived *diabolical, ambivalent sexuality*
results in

his rejection of love and Anika,
which results in

Anika's frustration and anger,
which results in

Anika's uninhibited sexuality
which results in

either a moral panic or uninhibited sexuality of men
in the majority environment.

Both Anika as the town 'harlot' and Mihailo as the town 'alien' and 'hermit' are outside the family-oriented social norms policed by town men. In this sort of environment, the Romani maid Jelenka is Anika's confidante, courier, and emissary. Jelenka is also an outsider - when the news of her employment in Anika's household spreads through the town and the local area, one of the male characters in the film explicitly rejects her as a 'Gypsy woman', associating the Roma with the deviant social margin, and female promiscuity with the demonic that must be eliminated by work or, failing that, by a weapon.

As an outsider, Jelenka keeps the communication lines open between Anika and Mihailo. Loyal to Anika, she is irreverent towards the patriarchal norms and figures of authority, as well as towards the unfettered promiscuity of the town men. She treats the men with humour, scorn, and impatience, often driving them away from Anika's home. In various social occasions, she dances, openly provokes, and teases the men about their sexuality, their perceived right to social domination, or the misogyny and hypocritical disparagement of female promiscuity. Yet, in a conversation with Anika, Jelenka confronts her regarding her apparently dangerous anti-social behaviour, demonstrating a keen awareness and interest in the consequences of a woman's socially deviant lifestyle:

'Anika, why are you doing this? You'll be alone for the rest of your life.'

In addition, she seems not to object to Mihailo and Anika's relationship, which aligns her with a sort of mature, non-subjugated femininity that 'dares speak its name'.

In light of the above character traits and behavioural patterns, it could be argued that Jelenka's role is in fact that of the (Shakespearean) Fool (such as Falstaff from *Henry*

IV, or *The Fool in King Lear* and *Feste in Twelfth Night*). Jelenka subverts and ridicules the predominant norms, and she often does that via public performances and intentionally naïve stances. She challenges the protagonists regarding their views and conduct, and detects and vicariously expresses the protagonist's feelings – all of which has been used to describe the role of the Jester/Fool in various art forms (White 1998: 34).

The cinematography and the *mise-en-scene* underscore Jelenka's elevated narrative status. She is afforded a number of close-ups in the same spaces that the majority and the protagonists occupy, with each close-up associated with a different Information-Structural role: either as an Active Topic indicating her own heightened emotional state (as when she defends herself against accusations of disloyalty, and when she is assigned the role of Anika's spokesperson confronting a hostile crowd), or when as a Perceiver Topic she observes one of the guests in the household with suspicion.

Overall, Jelenka as Fool critiques in various ways individual excess as a consequence of oppressive patriarchy, and stands implicitly in favour of a rational view of the individual and a balanced sociality. The last film of the period elevates such a stance to the level of polemic.

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Isak Samokovlija, a well-known Bosnian writer and author of the short story *Hanka* (1954), adapted the short story to a screenplay that the Serbian director Slavko Vorkapic turned into his only feature film *Hanka* in 1955. As pointed out in chapter section 4.3.3, the film is peculiar for its historical period in that it focuses on Roma-community-internal socio-ethical issues, and is concerned with the reach and limitations of female empowerment in an oppressive patriarchal society.

The film tells the tale of a young Roma woman Hanka, who is pressured to marry the son of the local Roma community patriarch but refuses to do so, and marries instead Sejdo - a young Roma man who she loves. The couple become alienated once Sejdo is released from prison after having been framed by the patriarch. Sejdo then enters into a extra-marital relationship with a Roma widow Ajkuna, and only attempts to rekindle his relationship with Hanka when he realizes that Ajkuna is interested in another man. Hanka dies at Sejdo's hands after a tragic misunderstanding of a conversation between Sejdo and Ajkuna.

The film focuses on the Roma-community internal power and identity clashes, but does in fact situate the community within a larger socio-political context. The Bosnian majority is represented through the local authorities, police officers, and local salesmen, all of whom exhibit some form of prejudice against the Roma:

- The local authorities use condescending ethnic terms (e.g. the humorous local equivalent of ‘Gyppo’).
- All parties demonstrate greater adherence to the legal procedures in dealing with the Roma traders;
- Local salesmen openly voice their suspicions that the goods sold by the Roma might be stolen.

In contrast, once personal interest is a factor in the dealings with the Roma community, the local authorities do collaborate with the Roma patriarch in order to strike a mutually beneficial trade deal, effectively framing Sejdo. Additionally, they treat Ajkuna, the Roma widow of a majority Bosnian leader, with respect that allows her to get away with the murder of her estate overseer in this way.

The Roma community is organized as a sedentary tribe, living in a settlement closely resembling the majority settlements in Bosnia. The patriarch is authorised to impose his personal decisions on the entire community, especially with regards to controlling the women and their choice of mates. Very much like in *The Gypsy Woman*, the other female characters have internalized this specific social order: as she chides Hanka and Sejdo upon their reunion, Hanka’s mother acknowledges that they are both proud and stubborn, but insists that ‘... [Sejdo] is your husband!’.

Furthermore, the female protagonist Hanka is described by many as proud and stubborn, which stems from her unwillingness to marry or behave in accordance with the patriarch’s or any other man’s wishes. Not interested in material possessions, she refuses material gifts as tokens of affection or instruments of courtship. The other important female character, Ajkuna, demonstrates the same sort of independence from male control, but with two important differences: she is outside the Roma social order, and has a keen interest in material wealth. This interest translates into her treatment of Roma men as a temporary décor in her life in the Bosnian capital.

The main male characters, Sejdo and the patriarch's son Musan, both seem impulsive, impetuous, and not averse to physical violence; however, in contrast to Musan, Sejdo is shown as possessing an active personal ethics when he defends the weaker Roma against Musan's temper, but also seems self-righteous and rigid.

A two-way semiotic contrast can be set up based on the portrayals above, between the following parameters:

Social Norm Excludes Choice	:	Social Norm Admits of Choice
Pursuit of materialism	:	Rejection of materialism

This contrast regulates the two-stage narrative conflict: Hanka and Sejdo's resistance to oppressive social norms results in an alienation from the broader community on the one hand, but it brings them a fulfilling relationship on the other. Their relationship faces a crisis precisely because Sejdo succumbs to the social norms regulating female behaviour (disallowing Hanka from singing in a tavern; gazing at female dancers while at a club with Ajkuna before their affair starts), and to the pursuit of materialism once he starts the affair with Ajkuna. Hanka's decision to sing in a tavern presents a further step in the social polemic that the film constructs – although financial difficulties force her to accept precisely the role for Roma women that is preferred and maintained by the majority population, she demonstrates independence of motivation and decision-making, and does not yield either to sexual excess or to greed.

The postulated semantic oppositions above do not fully constrain the depiction of the Roma characters' emotionality. In addition to their *role* in the *contextually* constructed representations of emotion (discussed in greater detail in chapter section 4.3.3), the main characters' *direct* emotion expressions are presented as strong and often comparatively excessive: Sejdo engages in fights, and ends up stabbing Hanka in a fit of jealousy; Hanka herself exhibits violent emotions when she misunderstands the conversation between Sejdo and Ajkuna as romantic, and then lies about being pregnant with Musan's child out of revenge; lastly, as she is dying, Hanka's final words to Sejdo are, 'You do love me!', which associates love and anger/violence in a recognizably stereotypical depiction of the Roma.

Generalizing from this, there is a sense in which a narratively universal story (a pair of lovers vs. the society; a faithful woman and a treacherous man; love vs revenge) is

told with the help of *partially* stereotypical representations of the Roma couple in order to stage a polemic about the limits of female empowerment. Ajkuna is not constrained by the local mores, but this position has been afforded to her by marriage, i.e. by an external power structure. Hanka, on the other hand, remains within the local Roma order, essentially because the married couple have both internalized the local mores, admittedly in varying degrees.

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The social critique evident in this period and stemming from Roma representations largely revolves around the individual and the oppressive society. While in *The Gypsy Woman* Kostana's life-affirming femininity is constrained by the social pressures, *Legends of Anika's* Jelenka identifies a marriage of personal choice and social norm as the rational solution to the issue of individual freedom. *Hanka* then manages to outline a broader space of phenomena linked to individual freedom, notably the external power structure as a context for achieving it, and internalized socio-cultural patterns as factors imposing severe limitations on it. Depicting issues embedded in specific socio-cultural contexts, the films and the functions that the Roma characters have in them are nonetheless generalizable to all socio-cultural contexts with power-related inequalities among various social groups.

The Roma representations themselves can be understood as *typed*, but in different ways. *The Gypsy Woman* features a thoroughly *re-conceptualized stereotype* of a wild and passionate Gypsy, while *Legends of Anika* employ the *archetype* of The Fool. *Hanka* stands apart in this group inasmuch as it employs a *recognizable stereotype*, but situates it within a polemical discourse aimed to foreground a number of social limitations.

The next historical period changes the focus of social critique, shifting it and zooming in on the Yugoslavian Communist vision of a superior society in the making.

5.3.2 Interrogating representations – *Yugoslavian New Film* (1960-1970)

The 1960s in the former Yugoslavia were a decade of sweeping social and political changes. The introduction of a new form of governance – self-management – in the country's political system had resulted in decentralization and democratization of power

at all levels (De Cuir 2012a: 406). By the start of the decade, the film industry landscape was beginning to change as well: a greater regional autonomy in Yugoslavia led to the opening of independent film production centres in each federal unit. As a result, film production was on the rise, peaking between 1967 and 1969 (Goulding 2002: 62-63).

Hailed as the harbingers of Yugoslavian New Film, a new generation of film makers debuted in this fertile decade, followed closely by sympathetic film critics and journalists. Three centres of activity formed fairly quickly – Belgrade (Serbia), with authors such as Dusan Makavejev, Aleksandar Petrovic, and Zivojin Pavlovic; Zagreb (Croatia), where some of the most important authors were Krsto Papic and Vatroslav Mimica; and Novi Sad (Vojvodina), the base of operations for the documentary and feature film director Zelimir Zilnik. Whether or not they constituted a movement or even a loose ideological front is a point of contention among film historians and film makers alike. Zelimir Zilnik is of the opinion that the Yugoslavian New Film authors indeed were a film movement (De Cuir 2012b: 83), while his fellow director Zivojin Pavlovic seems to think that interpreting the 1960s Yugoslavian film history in this manner blurs the foundational contributions of mutually very different poetics (Jovanovic 2011: 164).

Leaving aside issues of blanket classifications, Yugoslavian New Film took its cue for some of its thematic preoccupations and stylistic features from the French *nouvelle vague*, the Italian neorealist cinema, and especially the Czechoslovakian and Polish new waves (De Cuir 2012a: 420). In terms of themes, distinctly political issues such as the Yugoslavian Communist Revolution, World War II, and post-war politics were examined from a consistently critical perspective. In addition, a focus on the individual produced a number of intimate stories of urban alienation and relationship failure. Importantly, a greater interest in wider societal issues resulted in films that looked at the social margin, often to the chagrin, frustration, and anger of the state and regional authorities. As a thematic preoccupation, the focus on characters from the urban periphery, isolated (rural) communities, and disadvantaged or maladapted individuals made it possible for the life of the Roma population in Yugoslavia to be addressed in film. Although the constitution of the Socialist Yugoslavia protected and guaranteed the rights of nations and national minorities, the status of the Roma was not at all clear: they were granted the legal status of an *ethnic group*, and whether or not this also entailed the status of a national minority remained an unresolved legal issue (Ackovic 1992: 23). The prejudices against them isolated them further, and relegated them to the socio-economic periphery.

This section looks at four films by prominent Yugoslavian New Film authors: *When I Am Dead and Pale* (*Kad budem mrtav i beo*, Zivojin Pavlovic, 1967), *The Dream* (*San*, 1966) and *The Morning* (*Jutro*, 1967) by Purisa Djordjevic, and *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (*Skupljaci perja*, Aleksandar Petrovic, 1967). All these films feature Roma characters as Active Topics/Foci and/or Perceiver Topics, and all take a critical stance towards the socio-political realities of the former Yugoslavia.

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When I Am Dead and Pale, a 1967 film by Zivojin Pavlovic, paints a bleak picture of the Yugoslavian society's periphery. The rejected, disabled, mocked, and underappreciated live lives of alternating joys and sorrows, affected by the echoes of 'high politics': an uneducated and inexperienced 'soldier of the Communist Party' gets the job of newspaper editor; workers on strike anger a local official by saying that the authorities have built 'political factories'. Amid what seems like a far cry from a projected Communist idyll of social justice and happiness, the majority protagonist, Jimmy the Dinghy (Dzimi Barka; played by a well-known actor Dragan Nikolic), floats unanchored through his life, unable to hold down a job, keep a relationship, or steer a course with a clear sense of purpose or even a semblance of realistic goals. After a string of loosely connected episodes in what seems like a road film, he fails at a singing competition in the Yugoslavian capital, and then dies in an equally disgraceful and abrupt manner, at the hands of an angry former boss who discovers that he had been duped by Jimmy and his partner, and decides to shoot him as Jimmy is using an outhouse facility.

The Roma in the film are played for the most part by non-professional actors (the one exception being a professional actor of Romani origin, Branislav Ciga Milenkovic, who stars in a number of other films in the present research film corpus), in minor character roles. When they do speak, they speak Serbian with a hint of the Romani accent. Depicted as part and parcel of a broad picture of the Yugoslavian society, the many groups of the Roma appear in a total of three narrative episodes:

1. The Roma shanty town: The majority protagonist's mother lives in the shanty town alongside the Roma and other poor majority characters. The Roma households are shown as dilapidated, and the Roma themselves (one adult female and four children, all dressed in shabby clothes) are presented in a long shot, observing Jimmy and his female friend as

Chapter 5 – Roma as interactants

Perceiver Topics. This fact is not symbolically significant; rather, it serves to establish the social milieu and psychological state of the protagonist, as well as a first indication of the Roma characters' equal status in the implicit value system of the film.

2. A hotel in a village: An adult Roma male musician, dressed in shabby clothes, frightens Jimmy by pretending to be the police knocking on the room door, and then jokes around with him and his partner.

3. A small town tavern: A Roma orchestra who work at the tavern have to endure the verbal abuse of the majority head waiter, who asks them to either order a drink or go out, as per the new owner's policy. They are defiant and sing a mocking song, upon which the head waiter throws them out, telling them that 'he is sick and tired of Gypsies and whores!' Once outside, the Roma and the local majority interact on an equal footing, indicating that what they have in common are their poor social standing and a life on the road.

In sum, the minimalist representations of the Roma in the film have largely social undertones. Many Roma characters are individuated, and those who are not (as Perceiver Topics) are clearly professionally or socially profiled, without a discernible attempt at symbolization. Their profession is not a result of stereotyping; rather, it is a natural narrative consequence of the majority protagonist's choices and interests. As an equally important element in this bleak, critically realist depiction of the periphery of the Yugoslavian society, they seem to suggest that the goals of integration, elimination of inequality and injustice, and full realization of all human potential are a distant ideological dream.

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The thematic variety and innovation of the Yugoslavian New Film period is also apparent in the works of another Serbian director – Purisa Djordjevic. His war tetralogy - *The Girl (Devojka, 1965)*, *The Dream (1966)*, *The Morning (1967)*, and *The Noon (Podne, 1968)* – is a 'surrealist-inspired' study of the realities of war, revolution, and the post-war period (Goulding 2002: 73). As they feature an important Roma character (played by a

well-known Serbian actor Mija Aleksic), the three last films can be considered a trilogy within the tetralogy. These three films redistribute their character roles, with the same actors playing different roles in different films, having different names, or being called by their real-world names. The Roma protagonist's name is not given in the first film (he is referred to as The Gypsy), but the character is assigned a single identity via inter-textual references to the other films in the trilogy, and further developed under the name of (Captain) Straia in the last two films.

The first film in the trilogy focuses on the start of the Second World War and the Yugoslav Revolution, the second is concerned with the immediate aftermath of the revolution, and the third with the post-war period (specifically the realities of the Tito-Stalin Split in 1948); they all challenge in various ways the common discourse and high rhetoric of the war and Socialism.

In the 1966 *The Dream*, a story is told of the liberation, protection, and abandonment after a military defeat of the territory in the west of Serbia comprising the towns of Cacak and Kraljevo. The Roma character, referred to as The Gypsy, joins the Yugoslavian Partisan Army, takes part in the cultural life of the liberated area, and eventually dies in a hail of bullets during the retreat of the Partisan forces. With complex Information-Structural roles (Active Topic; Active Focus when he is engaged in a conversation playing the double bass; Perceiver Topic in a number of situations where he is observing the majority characters' actions), the Roma man is regularly challenging and undermining the War and Communist Revolution discourse, the former by irreverent or provocative comments, and the latter by his own actions. In a contrast between the high ideological rhetoric and mundane but unavoidable social patterns, he first takes off an arm band from the arm of a fellow Roma man as the Partisan Army enters the town of Cacak, only to declare the reformist goals of the Communists by saying that '[...] the band is no longer valid, we are all equal now. We'll make a Partisan star.' He then engages in stereotypical behaviour, asking for money from his fellow citizens, which provokes a local barber to use offensive Roma stereotypes against him (e.g. calling him 'You dirty Gypsy!').

The Roma stereotypes are foregrounded in another scene towards the end of the film, as the Germans are mounting an attack against the liberated territory. A majority villager asks a Partisan leader when the Partisans would finally leave; he adds that now that the Partisans have lost the fight and are retreating, 'even the Gypsies will be throwing stones at you!'. The words imply a low social status and contempt directed at them by the

majority population. Upon overhearing the conversation, the Roma man shakes his head in mock-disapproval.

The contrasts undermining the ideological discourse abound: as a military operation proceeds, the Partisans enter the town of Kraljevo, and notice signs prohibiting entry to the Roma into Serbian towns and cities. These signs serve as reminders of the historical facts of World War II, but they are not treated with reverence and solemnity in the film narrative. On the contrary, the very preceding scene shows the Roma man making out-of-place jokes with the other Partisans as they are planning the next action: 'In order to catch a German, we can first catch two, and then let one go!'

The full complexity of the Roma man's status in the new movement/budding society can be seen in the scene at the theatre in the liberated town of Cacak, where the Roma and other Roma musicians are rehearsing *The Lambeth Walk* for a concert to be attended by the members of the British military mission. The Roma man resists the conductor's attempts at regimenting his behaviour and attitude, couched within the naïve but intrusive discourse of internationalist civic elitism (as a *contemporaneous* off-shoot of the Yugoslavian Communist worldview):

The conductor: Comrades Gypsies, this is not a tavern gig. Look at the notes, they are your future! The notes and the conductor. No more cheap songs like *The March to the Drina*³³. We will only be playing the classics after the war. Those who can't play those tunes will have to re-train and change profession.

The Roma man: I don't like playing those Capitalist ditties.

The conductor: Do you not see the pictures of Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt on the wall?

The Roma man: I feel Saint Sava's disapproving gaze here. I used to perform a religious hymn to Saint Sava in this very room.

The conductor: Well, we want to avoid Churchill's disapproving gaze, and this is why we are rehearsing *The Lambeth Walk*. Captain Hudson from the British Mission will be in attendance.

The Roma man: That tall guy, looks like a chimney? I used to perform *The March on the Drina* for him!

A voice from the off: You performed it while you were with the Serbian Nationalists - the Chetniks!

³³ The March on the Drina is a well-known Serbian national song.

The Roma man (mockingly): I was ignorant of the ideology then!

With his irreverence and pragmatism, the Roma mocks and debunks the blind idealism, new elitism, and group-think, and the tone of mockery is maintained throughout the film. Finally, as he is shot, he exclaims, ‘This is not my dream!’

In sum, the Roma man is represented as a psychologically complex character whose character traits are devices for film narrative-level debunking of the form and content of the Yugoslavian Communist ideology and war-time military activities. To a degree, his role can be interpreted as Fool-like, but this symbolic role does not have the full narrative scaffolding in the form of a figure of power, unless the entire power structure of the new society is interpreted as having that narrative function.

*

Djordjevic’s 1967 *The Morning* picks up the story of World War II and the efforts of the Yugoslavian Communist Party to engineer a new society from *The Dream*, situating it towards the end of the war, in a *liminal* space between the violence of battle and the codified routine of peace. Djordjevic programmatically re-distributes the names and roles of most characters, and the ensuing continuities and discontinuities illustrate more efficiently the extent of the paradoxes of the era. The Roma character is a case in point: he is played by the same actor, but has a name now – Captain Straia. The discontinuity of The Gypsy’s death in *The Dream* is counterbalanced by the direct references to the past experiences that the two characters share.

The film looks at the efforts of the Yugoslavian Communist Army soldiers to resolve the issue of collaborators, an enterprise shown to be less than perfect amid the majority characters’ internal struggles with the appropriacy of the steps taken, as well as the effects on their mission of the relationships old and new. The film features additional Roma characters – Straia’s wife and a number of Roma children living in a Roma shanty town. The children are minor characters, but Straia’s wife is afforded the role of the Perceiver Topic in a scene that illustrates the differences from *The Dream*:

When Captain Straia goes back to the Roma shantytown, he is greeted by the Roma as a victor amid a sea of signs celebrating the Communist triumph. He delivers a highfalutin speech, addressing the crowd as ‘Ladies and Gentlemen’, all the while being

observed by his Roma wife, who does not hesitate to show open mockery in her posture and facial expression. The crowd cheers as he spurts out slogan after slogan, but fails to understand his bookish expressions. Straia then explains in a tone of humorous complaint that political work is impossible with such 'backward people'. As he attempts another slogan-like statement - 'We will change the face of our country. We will change the souls of our people!' - he discovers that his wife has had another, fair-haired son. When confronted, she readily says the boy is 'Hitler's'. Straia's wife is not fully individuated, but certainly helps re-affirm the contrast between ideas and realities of war/peace in an essentially ironic tone.

The tone of humour and irreverence is not lost in Straia's conversation with majority protagonists either: in a conversation with a majority protagonist as irreverent as Straia, he explicitly claims that the new society will fail to shield him from old prejudices such as bears and thefts, and that the job of a musician 'may be the safest bet'.

As in *The Dream*, Straia is still aware of the discrepancy between ideals-driven posturing on the one hand, and urgent war practices in a sort of a liminal space at the border between war and peace. His tone is still mocking, but he appears calmer and perhaps more serious. The seriousness transforms into a sort of resignation and melancholy in the last film of the trilogy, running in parallel with a change in Straia's formal narrative status – in a switch to a Frame Setter, he acquires a meta-textual role (discussed in detail in chapter section 6.2).

*

The last film in this period, Aleksandar Petrovic's 1967 feature *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, stands out in many different ways. It won the Special Grand Prize of the Jury and the FIPRESCI Prize at the 1967 Cannes Film Festival, and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film and for the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Furthermore, it is the first film in Yugoslavia to feature dialogues in Romani, and a narrative focus on the cultural details of various Roma communities.

The film depicts the life of the Roma in the 1960s Serbia. The plot centres around the attempts of Beli Bora ('Bora the White'; played by Bekim Fehmiu), a local goose dealer in the muddy northern plains of Serbia, to make ends meet and also win Tisa (Gordana Jovanovic), a young Roma girl living in a local Roma shanty town. As he becomes

entangled in a conflict with another local tradesmen, Mirta, for both personal and business-related reasons, Bora eventually kills Mirta and flees. The Roma community close ranks and refuse cooperation with the Yugoslavian police in their attempts to investigate the murder.

The Roma characters in the film range from the protagonist/antagonist pair (Bora and Mirta), through the supporting characters (Bora's friends Pista, Sandor, the local tavern singer Lence), to minor characters (Lence's younger brother Jurica, who lives in Belgrade; Bora's and Pista's wives and children; the local Roma orchestra; and the Roma shanty town population).

In a bold and innovative directorial move, the Roma characters speak a mixture of Romani and Serbian, often switching to Romani when arguing among themselves. They are predominantly played by Roma non-professional actors, with the exception of the protagonist/antagonist pair: Bora is played by a well-known professional actor of Albanian origin, and Mirta by a well-known Serbian actor.

The Roma characters have a variety of Information-Structural roles. As most of them are rounded characters interacting with the majority or carrying out causally efficient, plot-progressing actions, they are predominantly Active Topics. When perceived by the other Roma or the majority, they become:

- *Active Foci* - Bora and Tisa, as observed by the taxi driver at the beginning of the film; Tisa, as Mirta (as the Perceiver Topic) is about to attempt to rape her; a number of the Roma living in the shanty town and the surrounding area, as they are questioned by the police at the end of the film. All the Perceiver Topics in these cases represent local interpretive filters – semantic perspectives on what is being observed: the taxi driver's look reinforces a sense of distance and mistrust; Mirta's the sexualisation of his step-daughter and an efficient way of characterizing Mirta; and the look of the police officers an attempt to penetrate the Roma community. The last instance of the Perceiver Topic / Active Focus pair is important as it makes use of the subjective shot, which *confronts* the viewer with *what* the police are seeing as well as *how* they are seeing it (Figure 31):



Figure 31 -The police are questioning the local Roma.

- *Passive Foci* - the shanty town Roma, as observed by Tisa (as the Perceiver Topic) from a window, suggesting how she sees and experiences her surroundings with respect to her desire to go to Belgrade). This is another important example of the Perceiver Topic / Passive Focus coupling, as Tisa projects onto what she sees her own very subjective impressions and musings. In the overwhelming majority of instances of Perceiver Topic / Focus pairings in the corpus, the conceptual spaces involved are causally and formally consistent and coherent, and therefore not *formally* salient. Here, on the other hand, the two Type 1 conceptual spaces (image and sound combined; sound causally linked to the images, and synchronous) overlap: the space that Tisa physically occupies and the space of her perceptions/cognitions share the physical features but diverge in terms of activities – the people in it are presented as dancing a caricatured, animated-quality folk dance to the sound of folk music – a direct echo of Tisa’s desire to go to Belgrade, which she sees as the locus of modern, music-oriented youth culture and freedom (Figure 32):



Figure 32 - Tisa's perceptions of the rural environment

The representations of the Roma in the film are socio-culturally rich, and foreground the lives of poverty, prejudice, and disadvantage. The taxi driver warns his customers Bora and Tisa not to 'carry out as you do in a brothel!' as he observes them with mistrust, and a local police officer tells Bora that, 'with you [Gypsy] people, either we arrest you, or we drink with you!' A local judge asks Bora in a court of law, 'How long will I have to deal with you Gypsies?', and Tisa is raped by foreign truck drivers and left for dead in the mud by the road.

As pieces in the Yugoslavian social mosaic, and in light of the contrasts and parallelisms between the Yugoslavian ethnicities featured in the film, the Roma should not on any account be seen as *standing for* any of these ethnicities, or for the Yugoslavian society as a whole. The Roma can be business-oriented, calculating, and manipulative, but the representatives of the majority and the other minorities are depicted as sharing this attitude (e.g. the majority Christian nun negotiates deals and returns favours; the majority Christian Orthodox priest sells feathers from his late or disrobed brethren's bedlinen; and ethnic Slovak tradesmen and farmers exhibit a cold calculating spirit in their dealings with both Bora the White and Pista). Furthermore, the Communist Party regime is addressed *directly*: in a scene in which the majority art dealers visit Pista's home in order to purchase illegally owned art work, Pista comments in passing that he does not

have to join the Communist Party as ‘shady business over here or over there comes down to the same thing.’

Importantly, the characters seem divided into two groups based on whether or not they behave in a self-destructive manner: Bora, Mirta, and Pista drink themselves unconscious, and in what is now the most famous scene in the film, Bora injures himself hitting shards of glass with his bare hands in alcohol-induced abandon (Figure 33):



Figure 33 - Bora smashes a glass bottle with his bare hands.

In parallel to this, other ethnicities (including the Serbian majority) engage in the same sort of behaviour: majority guests smash glasses on the floor, one of the guests bangs his head against a tavern table, and the women cry out in dismay and fear.

In contrast to Bora, Mirta, and Pista, other Roma characters are not shown habitually acting in this manner. Although many of them are brutal, cruel, or desensitized to the hardships around them, some of them explicitly reject the self-destructive behaviour (e.g. Bora’s elderly wife), and others seem to successfully resist it (e.g. the tavern singer Lence and her brother). When Lence learns that Tisa wishes to go to Belgrade, she offers her view on Roma life: ‘If her life is gonna go into a nosedive, let it be city-style, not this seedy and horrible Roma way!’

A number of visual and auditory contrasts in the film help to set up some of the important semiotic distinctions:

- The dreamy chanson heard on the car radio stands in stark contrast with the drab and rain-soaked plains sporadically dotted by villages, which the taxi transporting Bora and Tisa is travelling through in the beginning of the film.
- The sacred solemnity of the many inserts of fresco images contrast sharply with the base realities of the conduct of the nuns and the priest, as well as their social position.
- Bora's striking white suit strikes a discordant note against the ubiquitous northern mud.
- Tisa's perceptions of her environment (as what looks almost like a folk tale parody) contrast tonally with the images of Belgrade's pop bands performing in the streets.

In a general sense, the film contrasts the social limitations and deep psychological constraints with any high rhetoric, whether Communist or Christian. It is precisely in this context that Bora's behaviour should be interpreted: his ambition of becoming a man of independent means, coupled with his dangerous self-destructiveness (gambling, self-injury, throwing feathers out of a truck), indicate in a psychologically powerful way a person with behavioural issues stemming from his unrecognized/unnamed desire for beauty/freedom from the stifling context. When asked by the impatient local judge why he threw feathers out onto the road, he says, looking distractedly at the window:

'I was drunk and... that's what the Roma are like. Those feathers flew like they had wings. There is nothing more to say.'

Bora's words in the narrative situation described above foreground the issue of Roma stereotypes, pointing to a socially relevant process of selective self-identification. Presented in a narratively functional way (i.e. in a logically sound and psychologically convincing sequence of events), the words also help establish the personality of this character. The motif of the unrecognized desire for freedom and beauty can be identified in the scene with Tisa re-imagining her environment, only with the narrative-wide irony the clearer - Tisa's perceptions and projected desires result from observing not the

realities of the Yugoslavian capital in the 1960s, but a projected image in its own right, a picture of an idealized, constructed environment.

The Roma characters depicted are epistemically provocative, psychologically rounded, and socially contextualized Roma individuals. When coupled with the non-diegetic Roma music (esp. the title song, the Roma anthem *Gelem Gelem*) as a meta-textual intervention in the film narrative (elaborated on in chapter section 6.2), linking the specific socio-economic circumstances of the Roma to the phenomenology of loss and wandering, these representations can be said to also point to the ‘failures of the race’ - the fundamental limitations of the human lived experience.

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The central concern of Yugoslavian New Film can be summarized as the *discrepancy* between the new society’s *ideals* and *realities*: *When I Am Dead and Pale* paints a bleak picture of Serbia’s social mosaic in critical realist tones; the two films by Purisa Djordjevic add to the analyses a more direct political critique, couched in an irreverent, derogatory language by a character that comes close to the recognized archetype of the Fool; lastly, Petrovic’s *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* develops a detailed critically realist depiction of Serbia’s social mosaic into a lyrical meditation on the limitations of freedom and individual expression.

While the Roma representations in the first film do not overlap with any stereotypical notions of the Roma, and the second and third recruit such stereotypical notions for the purposes of a self-aware, humorous social criticism, *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* seems to be in the greatest danger of reiterating or re-inventing Roma stereotypes: as the narrative transforms some of the Roma characters’ experience into an expression of an existential stance, the associative link between the character’s ethnicity and the symbolic power of their stories may in effect be modifying the already available stereotypes (of the Roma as free, untamed, rebellious, passionate, impulsive, etc.) into an admittedly more complex but still reductive representation of the Roma in the social imaginary.

The next period moves in the representational terrain outlined in the first two periods, and provides a social commentary on both the failures of the new society and the darker aspects of the local mentality.

5.3.3 Socialist drama and melodrama – the films of the 1970s

As the 1970s wore on, the radical social and political critique of the 1960s Yugoslavian New Film slowly transformed into a more cautious commentary on the increasingly complex socio-political conditions in the Socialist Yugoslavia. The return of nationalism in Croatia (the so-called Croatian Spring) in the early 1970s, and the deep rifts between the Yugoslavian Federal Government and Serbia's comparatively progressive new Communist Party establishment resulted in a country-wide political crisis that was resolved by drastic measures – the removal of the top echelons of both Croatia's and Serbia's Party officials, and the re-instatement of the cadres loyal to President Tito (Levi 2009: 83-85).

The political crises had an adverse effect on the film industry. With finances 'in disarray, and its domestic audiences dwindling' (Goulding 2002: 143), it only started to recover in the latter half of the 1970s, with the new generation of film makers – the so-called Czech School. Educated at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague, they brought a fresh critical perspective on the Yugoslavian social and socio-political milieu – less direct and radical than in the Yugoslavian New Film, but equally insightful and diagnostically precise.

The socio-critical representations of the Roma are found in three films of the period: Goran Markovic's *Special Education* (*Specijalno vaspitanje*, 1977), Slobodan Sijan's *Who Is Singing Over There* (*Ko to tamo peva*, 1980), and Purisa Djordjevic's *Eight Kilos of Happiness* (*Osam kila sreće*, 1980).

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In *Special Education*, a majority boy arrives at a Junior Detention Centre near Belgrade after years of living in a broken home and committing petty crimes. A new detention centre teacher arrives on the same day. The film follows the lives of the detention centre minors as they commit increasingly serious crimes, attempt to integrate into the society, or interact with brutal and hypocritical centre staff. After an incident in which a detention centre minor loses his life due to the stereotypes associated with children and youths from such social institutions, a genuine connection is forged amid a clear institutional failure between the majority boy and the new teacher as individuals.

The Roma in the film are minor characters (a Roma boy, aged about 13-16; other Roma boys of various ages; the Roma orchestra - all adult males), appearing either in the detention centre or in the local tavern. The Roma boy speaks only Serbian, without an accent. All the Roma characters are played by ethnic Roma non-professional actors.

The Roma boy is an individuated Active Topic as he initiates interactions with the majority characters. He is depicted as integrated in his social environment, joining in the group activities such as games, protests, and planting trees in the detention centre courtyard. The other Roma boys can be classified as non-individuated Active Topics, as they take part in the detention centre-wide food-related protests and fights with the local youths. Lastly, the Roma orchestra perform at a local tavern, and respond to the requests of the majority characters, which makes them non-individuated Active Topics as well.

Broadly speaking, the (non-)individuated Roma in the film are presented as belonging to the socio-economically marginalized social groups, and as such are used to develop a critically realist depiction of the periphery of the Yugoslavian society. In terms of poetics, these representations are aligned with the Roma representations in Zivojin Pavlovic's film *When I Am Dead and Pale* from the previous historical period, and seem also in an aesthetic dialogue with the distinctly unromantic, realist aspects of the Roma representations in *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*.

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The second film in this period, the 1980 feature *Who Is Singing Over There* received wide critical acclaim, and has been gaining in popularity to the present day. The story follows a group of passengers on a bus travelling from the Serbian provinces to Belgrade on 5 April 1941, one day before the 6 April Nazi bombing of Belgrade and the start of World War II in Serbia. Very much a road film and a study of local mentalities, the film consists of skilfully woven narrative episodes culminating in the arrival in Belgrade moments before the bombing. As the bus stops and the majority characters are engaged in an attempt to beat up the Roma passengers for the pickpocketing the Roma are not in fact guilty of, the bus suffers a direct hit and only the Roma passengers survive.

The Roma characters – a boy and a young man – are musicians travelling to Belgrade to earn in living playing in taverns. They only speak Serbian, with a hint of a Romani accent, and are played by ethnic Roma non-professional actors. They step into a

non-diegetic Frame Setting role (discussed in greater detail in chapter section 6.4) a total of four times in the story – at the beginning and end, as well as at two narratively relevant points. The diegetic time is then suspended, and the Roma perform looking into the camera.

The Roma have an important role in the diegesis as well. They are rounded as characters, and placed in a socio-cultural and socio-economic context as travelling musicians with a marginal professional position and concomitant social status. Consequently, they tend to keep away from the majority characters in the film, and only join in their activities when invited or forced. Their conspicuous absence from the group activities may be further interpreted as a salient and ethically relevant character contrast. For example, they do not join the party of male passengers and local villagers who secretly observe a young married couple making love during one of the breaks on the journey. This contrast is further underscored by the ending, where the Roma are the only survivors after an airplane bomb hits the bus. They are referred to as ‘Gypsies’ by one of the passengers (an otherwise arrogant and dictatorial person with a bias for Germany and Germans) in an overtly negative response to their presence. All the other characters, however, seem tolerant of them until the very end.

The older Roma character openly mocks the dubious talents of a majority singing hopeful on one occasion during the journey. On another, he is shown making the sign of the cross in amazement at yet another hindrance on their trip to Belgrade. At the very end, as the passengers are beating him and the boy mercilessly, he screams insults at the singer. In contrast, the Roma boy is silent throughout the film.

In terms of Information Structure, as the Roma man initiates interactions with the majority, he should be considered an Active Topic. Additionally, he becomes a Perceiver Topic in the three scenes above. The Roma boy retains his Passive Topic status, while both of them act as Foci (Active and Passive, respectively) when they are being observed by a number of majority characters. The sheer number of Information-Structural roles indicates their complex narrative status and function.

As a whole, the film can be construed as a study of the local customs and mentality. What it offers to the viewer is an *object of comparison* with the conditions in the Yugoslavian and Serbian society, demonstrating how deep anti-Roma sentiments harboured by a specific type of personality may result in a violent attack of the majority in favourable circumstances. Namely, towards the end of the film the passenger who is

strongly suspicious and disapproving of the Roma (based on their ascribed proclivity to thievery and lack of hygiene) manages to manipulate the other passengers into believing that the Roma have stolen another majority passenger's wallet. In a convincing depiction of the dynamics of mass psychology, the majority is shown to quickly become both aggressive and susceptible to manipulation/submissive to a self-imposed authority - prodded on by the suspicious passenger, they engage in a ruthless beating of the Roma. A female passenger attempts at one point to stop the others by crying out 'Stop beating the child!', but she fails to make an impression. In and of itself, her plea is socially very interesting. It does not seem to challenge the overall logic of the violent response but only its unnecessary indiscriminateness. The majority are shown moving from bare tolerance or suspicion to outright blind violence.

In sum, the Roma are presented as complex characters in a specific socio-historical context. The very socio-historical context is also a *differentia specifica* of the film, as what is problematized are issues of the local mentality as well as generalizable social patterns, and not the Yugoslav Communist or any other ideology.

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Eight Kilos of Happiness, a 1980 feature directed by one of the most prominent authors of the Yugoslavian New Film, tells the story of a Yugoslavian Partisan fighter (played by the Serbian actor Dragan Maksimovic) who meets a Roma girl (played by the Serbian actress Maja Lalevic) on the way back to his military unit. The film hints at desertion and disillusionment as the reasons for his absence from the military activities of the Yugoslavian Communist Army. After the Partisan and the Roma girl develop feelings for each other, the Roma leave their camp in order to escape the Germans. A while later, the Partisan finds the girl, and attempts to recruit her for the Partisan cause. When the Germans discover them, she sacrifices herself for him.

The film has a non-linear structure, with a great number of fragments and defamiliarizing shots. Montage is used liberally, and together with juxtaposed fragments sets up a series of contrasts and parallelisms. This often makes it difficult to distinguish between the diegetic and non-diegetic roles of the Roma in the narrative. The Roma

characters in the film fall into three major groups: Iedjupka³⁴, the Roma girl dressed in clean and colourful clothes, wearing a bandanna, speaks in an urban, fashionable Serbian accent throughout the film. When she starts the relationship with the Partisan, a series of conversational fragments that follow reveal how she challenges the Partisan's views and exposes his hidden prejudices:

- She mocks the ethnic majority's prejudices against the Roma, e.g. that the Roma steal children.
- She criticises the Partisan's description of the imagined post-war period as happiness. She explicitly says that 'the happiness in the new state will mean much unhappiness for the Roma' – as 'they' would 'ban non-sedentary living, make the Roma learn the alphabet, or even make them go into factories'.
- She describes in poetic tones the life of the Roma, re-imagining thunder as candlelight, snow storms driven away by kisses, and singing as food.
- She mocks the Partisan's fear of the war, his lack of critical awareness and inconsistencies, e.g. his offer to pay when she rejects his sexual advances.

Finally, when the Germans discover them, at a point when both could have accepted imminent death in a punitive execution of the local population, Iedjupka demonstrates character superiority and personal courage, and sacrifices herself.

As the Partisan is also a psychologically rich character, experiencing lust, fear, and a sense of fatigue over the war and revolution, a series of oppositions between the two characters help structure the ethical framework of the film:

Fear	:	Courage
(Ideological) Belief	:	Critical Awareness
Posturing	:	Authenticity
Constraint	:	Freedom

In a sense, Iedjupka is minimally textually Roma in order for these contrasts to provide a critical perspective on a set of historical experiences (war, nationalism, post-war

³⁴ Which means 'Gypsy girl' in archaic Serbian.

planning, social conservatism). The minimal Romani-ness is thus semantically very different from the formally similar strategies employed in ideologized Roma representations (elaborated on in chapter section 5.2).

The non-individuated Roma that Iedzupka lives and travels with are all played by non-professional Romani actors, many of whom are children. They wear modern but slightly ragged clothes, and speak Serbian amongst each other, with what sounds like a genuine Roma accent. In the first song and dance scene in the film, they participate in performing in Romani.

Their exact formal Information-Structural role is difficult to pinpoint due to the structure of the film. Individual characters are often shown in static images (close-ups and detail shots), or with staple markers of the filmic Roma identity (bear, caravan). When in groups, they go about their everyday business (picking firewood, drinking, sleeping). These kinds of images likely represent a visual shortcut, efficiently foregrounding and enhancing the contrasts between the value system typically associated with the film or literature Roma, and the (failures of) war, history and the majority ideology. As such, they can be interpreted as Passive Topics in the Information-Structural terms. The Roma children also help bolster the ethical viewpoint of the film: the aerial long shot of them dancing in concentric circles and singing (the second song and dance scene) is preceded by intertitles showing the Romani lyrics for the children's song. The lyrics contrast the happiness of freedom in nature with the death of Roma children (as a Frame Setting representational strategy, this motif is analysed in greater detail in chapter section 7.4).

Lastly, the character of Mariola (played by the Serbian actress Milena Dravic) for the most part speaks Serbian without a Romani accent. Her character appears to be living with the Roma, in a caravan with a television set, and is highly educated and political. She sings in Romani in the first song and dance scene, but the film does not clarify whether she is to be construed as a Roma. In the experimental narrative of the film, her role can be summed up as undermining the very idea of a coherent temporal or ethnic *identity*.

In sum, the film makes no attempt to provide a critically realist depiction of the socio-historical conditions that the Roma (used to) live in; rather, the film narrative is a formal space where the contrasting images and ideas point out the realities of psychology in history, sometimes with comical or tragic overtones.

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The three films of the 1970s complex film landscape articulate three different strands of social criticism that pick up and develop some of the historically preceding critical positions. Specifically, *Special Education* signals through the picture of the Yugoslavian society that it paints that the socio-political project of Yugoslavian Socialism suffers from severe institutional flaws, of which the depicted position of the Roma is but one result. On the other hand, *Who Is Singing Over There* makes use of a different approach, linking as it does the flaws of the local mentalities with the treatment of the Roma, and situating these flaws within a larger socio-historical context. The former film thus continues the critical realist tradition of Pavlovic's *When I Am Dead and Pale*, and the latter, in its portrayal of the cruelty and brutality of prejudice, can be seen as developing and re-historicizing the broad socially critical picture of an oppressive society that emerges from the early representations films such as *The Gypsy Woman* or *Legends of Anika*.

With its experimental narrative and critical assessments of the actors and implementers of the Yugoslavian Communist Revolution, *Eight Kilos of Happiness* continues the overtly politicised critical stance that the director took in his 1960s Yugoslavian New Film features, employing the Roma representations as textually necessary exponents of the articulated socio-political critique.

5.3.4 The economic decline and political decadence – 1981-1990

The political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia deepened in the 1980s. After President Tito's death in 1980, the country's system of governance was no longer stable, and as a result a crisis of national identity ensued, with cultural elites becoming disillusioned with, or abandoning altogether, the founding myths of the Socialist Yugoslavia.

The film industry was thriving, however. The production rose to 25-30 features a year, and a new generation of film makers was attempting to critically assess the revolutionary past as well as the drab present. The new tendencies did not coalesce into a movement, or even a general platform, but some commonalities can be discerned. The

New Yugoslav Cinema, as it is sometimes called³⁵, was far less confrontational or didactic in its evaluation of Yugoslavian society. Furthermore, as the Yugoslavian society was plunged in the mid-1980s into what turned out to be a prelude to the 1991 civil war, the films from the period shifted their focus to the representations of social malaise, anxiety, alienation, and aimlessness. In addition to the Czech School, many independent voices appeared as well, bringing diversity to the cinema landscape (Goulding 143-149; Volk: 172-182).

The Information-Structural roles of Active Topics contributing to a critical evaluation of social or political issues can be found in three films of this period: *The Cool Guy* (*Smeker*, Zoran Amar, 1986); *Guardian Angel* (*Andjeo cuvar*, Goran Paskaljevic, 1987); and *Time of the Gypsies* (*Dom za vesanje*, Emir Kusturica, 1988).

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In its linear narrative and complex character psychology, Zoran Amar's urban drama *The Cool Guy* problematizes the position in the Yugoslavian/Serbian society of the politically (the pro-Stalinist families) or culturally (the Roma) marginalized groups. As the economically deprived and socially vulnerable majority live side by side with the Roma in the same fringe area of Belgrade, the socio-political picture that emerges is oftentimes dark: the characters that enter and exit the narrative are petty criminals, travelling salesmen, aspiring pin-up stars from the outskirts of the capital, or disillusioned bitter cynics. The protagonist, a majority character by the name of Pavel, abandons his post in the Yugoslavian National Army to attempt to resolve a relationship crisis. As he succeeds, the Army Police catch up with him at the wedding of his best friend, and take him back.

The Roma characters in the film include Pavel's best friend - a Roma man by the name of Sukrija (played by the Serbian actor Ratko Tankosic) - and Sukrija's family and friends who attend the wedding at the end of the film. In terms of Information-Structural roles, Sukrija is an Active Topic, as he is shown participating in the life of the local community, and lending support to Pavel in dealing with his personal problems.

The complex psychology of the characters is revealed in their musings on the nature of romantic relationships. Their experience of living on the social margin notwithstanding, both Pavel and Sukrija exhibit tell-tale signs of patriarchal prejudice,

³⁵ Most notably in Daniel Goulding's 2002 study of Yugoslavian cinema *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience*.

evident in their assumption that violence towards women can be justified and even necessary. When Pavel asks Sukrija why then he did not physically punish Pavel's girlfriend as soon as he had word of her infidelity, Sukrija explains that he refrained from this disciplinary matter-of-course because he is Romani:

'I'm a Roma, buddy, the most beautiful one. Everyone would've jumped at my throat. They all think Sukrija is a piece of shit.'

This awareness of the social prejudice against the Roma is a narrative fact that adds relevant information to the depicted socio-economic context, but does not have any further narrative consequences, as no other character is seen expressing or acting on a Roma-related prejudice.

The scene that ends the films – Sukrija's wedding – adds more detail to the depicted social fabric. With the Roma and majority guests sitting together at the table in the courtyard, the picture that appears is critical of the Yugoslavian society, but the critique is not radical in tone – the powerless and the marginalized live a melancholy life of neighbourly relations in a world confined to the echoes of the great political conflicts of the 1940s and 1950s. There is a sense in which Sukrija's character is further fleshed out in a sort of a dialogue with the narrative tropes of filmic Roma representations: as the wedding festivities start, he sings a song in Romani accompanied by the Romani musicians. Not reductive in scope or identifiable purpose, this feature of his character nonetheless links him back to the many characters of Roma musicians in Yugoslavian literature and film.

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Goran Paskaljevic's *Guardian Angel* (1987) and Emir Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies* (1988) are concerned with the same historical event – the trafficking of Roma children from Yugoslavia to Italy in the latter half of the 1980s - but they provide different treatments of this social issue. *Guardian Angel* sets up and maintains a narrative tension between the Roma and majority communities, which plays out along a number of narrative-semiotic dimensions. As the story traces the efforts of a well-intentioned Serbian journalist, Dragan (played by Ljubisa Samardzic) to help a Roma boy who is sold

into a mafia ring in Italy, the distance between the Roma and the majority is constructed by means of gaze, direct assertions about the Roma nature, and a pervasive mistrust on the part of the majority characters. For instance, a juvenile centre employee helping Dragan with the story is shown on a number of occasions observing the Roma as Active Foci with an expression of fatigue, resignation, or alienation on her face. These non-verbal means of creating distance are complemented by the employee's direct assertions such as 'Theirs is a world completely different to ours!' Dragan himself, although depicted as caring and genuinely involved in the problem that the Roma community are facing, often voices a general suspicion of the Roma and the truthfulness of their accounts of the economic injustices that they suffer.

A sense of the foreign or alien is also constructed by visual and auditory means. The film as an *encounter* with the exclusionary Roma community is intimated in the opening sequence and reiterated in the closing sequence. The camera zooms in from an aerial shot of the Roma shanty town in the opening, only to zoom out at the end, once Dragan has been murdered by the local Roma criminals as a punishment for exposing them and their lies about the trafficking of children. Furthermore, in Dragan's visits to the Roma shanty town, the visual and auditory excess of the constructed Roma socio-cultural specificities – the everyday scenes accompanied by a myriad of shanty town noises (but *reduced* to a *state of abandon or agitation* by means of merry non-diegetic music³⁶) is a complex sequence of Passive Foci, presented for Dragan's disoriented gaze. These scenes are by no means idealized, pastoral depictions of the Roma life, but remain at a distance from the protagonist, and the contrast seems exaggerated and even unnecessarily lush.

The Roma themselves are presented in a range of succinct character profiles, and special attention is given to self-victimisation as a self-identification strategy: the Roma criminals present themselves as victims of the general socio-economic conditions in the former Yugoslavia and the constant suspicions on the part of the prejudiced authorities. While this is an important contribution to the filmic conceptualisations of the life of the Yugoslavian Roma, the counterbalancing scenes of successful contact between the majority and the Roma (as for example, in the sequence in Venice, where Dragan takes the Roma boy Sain and his girlfriend on a walk around the city and a visit to a theme park)

³⁶ Elaborated on in chapter section 6.5.

seem contrived and sentimental, which only adds to the alienating quality of the Roma representations in the film. When Dragan is killed by the mafiosos that he is on the point of exposing, and the camera zooms out of the shanty town, the entire suite of Roma representations results in an exoticisation of the Roma community rather than of all the individuals within it, and a sort of a deep cultural pessimism that appears rhetorical and programmatic more than anything else.

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Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies* takes a different approach to the same social issue. The picture it paints is that of the Roma community as it struggles with its own demons, and the majority (whether in Serbia or Italy) remain at the narrative periphery. The story follows the young Roma man Perhan (the Bosnian actor Davor Dujmic), who lives with his grandmother Hatidza, his sister Danira and his uncle Merdzan. Once the mother of the Roma girl he likes (by the name of Azra; played by the Macedonian actress Sinolicka Trpkova) refuses his marriage proposal, and faced with his sister's health issues and his uncle's habitual gambling, Perhan leaves the shanty town with Danira and a Roma criminal Ahmed (played by the Serbian actor Bora Todorovic) in the hope of helping his sister and earning enough money for a decent life. Ahmed convinces Perhan to come with him to Milan, where he joins Ahmed's criminal ring. When he visits home for the first time, he discovers that Azra is pregnant and that Ahmed has double-crossed him – Danira is forced to beg somewhere in Italy, and the house Ahmed promised has not been built. In the remaining part of the film, Perhan re-unites with his son Perhan (who Ahmed had sold as well), manages to find Danira in Rome, and kills Ahmed using his telekinetic powers. Ahmed's new wife then kills him, and Perhan's son is shown in one of the last scenes of the film stealing the gold coins from his father's eyes at his funeral.

In a dialogue with *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, and in acknowledgment of Aleksandar Petrovic's critical-poetic vision of the Roma community, *Time of the Gypsies* abounds with intertextual references to the former film: in the landscapes dotted with free roaming geese, men are pushed on carts in a state of inebriation; a wife accuses her husband of ruining her; angry gamblers fight over the daily takings; and Merdzan's compulsive gambling resembles Beli Bora's self-destructive character trait. The references conjure

up a specific view of the Roma – generalizing Petrovic’s psychological observations into the statements on the Roma life and mentality.

Having said that, Kusturica does manage to paint a complex picture of the socio-economic conditions of the Roma without falling into the trap of didacticism or exoticisation-by-alienation. On the contrary, the Roma character’s motivations are varied, and the depiction of the Roma community is largely in line with the cultural specificities of the Yugoslavian Roma: important festivities such as the Feast of St. George (or *Ederlezi* in Romani) are presented with an eye for socio-cultural detail, and the social power structure is also preserved, with elderly women such as Perhan’s grandmother Hatidza enjoying a considerable degree of power and influence.

The gender division in the film seems to carry a signature of the complex authorial poetics. The female characters are ethically superior to all the male characters (the latter being depicted as either anti-social, weak, or in the process of becoming so, like Perhan). Furthermore, the female characters are associated in the axiological structure of the film with the ethically transcendent vertical dimension: the famous scene in which Perhan explains to Azra how lime is made has the camera move through a stone furnace and up into the air, where it shows the two innocent characters standing on top of the structure; further, Hatidza is presented as visually associated with the Milan Cathedral; Perhan’s telekinetic powers are employed to lift up material objects, either as innocent demonstrations or ethical interventions in the story; and Azra herself floats in the air during child birth – in what can be called a point of sacrifice in the narrative - when Perhan finally accepts her love and their son.

The telekinetic powers that Perhan has are but one narrative form of misalignment with the narrative world’s physics. The film has a number of defamiliarizing motifs: characters move through physical space in cardboard boxes, and Perhan’s turkey (a gift from Hatidza, described as the ‘*sun-bird*’ by Perhan) seems omnipresent in his dreams and waking experiences. The role of such cinematic techniques can be argued to be a sort of a displacement of the characters’ emotional states into material objects or animate things, contributing to the complexity of the narrative and ensuring an effect of narrative estrangement.

And this is precisely where the possible after-effect of exoticisation lies: as the film tells the story of a Roma community, such defamiliarizing representational techniques need to be used cautiously to avoid stable but reductive associations with the ethnicity in

question. However, Kusturica does not stop at creating a complex, socio-economically relevant diegetic landscape. In a diegetic monologue by Merdzan at the end of the film, and in a meta-textual intervention at the beginning (discussed in detail in chapter section 6.5 as situated within the history of such representational strategies), he has the Roma characters foregrounding emotionality, irrationality, and spiteful independence as the features of their Romani-ness – the kind of values or existential stances that effectively reduce the complexity of the narrative and exoticise the Roma by *rhetorically essentializing* them and their lifestyle. In the final analysis, these values and views are offered in their concretized form as a diagnostic of an *unidentified* socio-political referent, grotesque in description and ironic in tone.

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All three films featuring socio-critical representations of the Roma in this historical period offer psychologically complex characters situated in specific socio-economic circumstances. *The Cool Guy* continues the tradition of Zivojin Pavlovic's *When I Was Dead and Pale* and Goran Markovic's *Special Education*, portraying a failing socio-political project that seems unable to integrate all social groups into the envisioned social fabric of Yugoslavian Communism. While both address specific socio-historical and socio-economic circumstances of the Roma, Paskaljevic's *Guardian Angel* exoticizes the Roma by providing *alienating*, distance-increasing representations, and Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies* exoticizes them by *essentializing* and rhetorically abstracting their lifestyle from the specific historical circumstances. In the latter case, a sort of an archetype is produced, which can be said to become stereotypical in the historical period that follows.

5.3.5 The war and the carnivalesque – Roma representations in the 1990s

After a decade of increasing political tensions, re-grouping along ethnic lines, and a deepening economic crisis, the Yugoslavian civil war broke out in 1991, and plunged the region into an economic and political chaos. The film industry suffered greatly, but the efforts and persistence of both the young and established film makers, public intellectuals, and industry players kept the industry afloat in Serbia, and resulted in a number of important films (Goulding 2002: 186-195). The Roma issue was temporarily

backgrounded due to a spreading discourse of nationalist fervour that necessitated a thoughtful artistic response. There are two films that feature Roma representations, and both comment on or develop Emir Kusturica's work in the previous period: *We Are Not Angels* (*Mi nismo andjeli*, Srdjan Dragojevic, 1992), and *Black Cat White Cat* (*Crna macka, beli macor*, Emir Kusturica, 1998).

*

Srdjan Dragojevic's debut *We Are Not Angels*, made amid an escalating war in Croatia and Bosnia, is an urban romantic comedy with fantasy elements (i.e. the characters of the Devil and the Angel) that thematizes the coming of age and emotional maturation of the two majority protagonists and their close friends.

The Roma characters seem³⁷ to be played by the ethnic Roma. Both of them teenagers, they speak Serbian with a slight Romani accent, and are presented twice in the film, in short open-air sequences. Shown in long shots, they do not interact with any other characters and have no causal effect on the plot, and can therefore be considered Passive Topics.

Both sequences where the Roma appear take place on the outskirts of Belgrade, after the male majority protagonist's (played by the Serbian actor Nikola Kojo) drunken sexual encounters with women from the social margin (specifically, a failed yet overambitious model with less than perfect manners, and a public toilet attendant). The fact that the Roma share the same social space as the majority characters *from the margin* can be construed as an indicator of their social status. This is further enhanced by what they are shown to be doing – they are pushing waste paper carts, a low-status activity associated with the Roma community in Serbia.

Their vignette-like appearances are given more depth via intertextual references: they sing *Ederlezi*, the song used in Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies*; moreover, in their first appearance, one of them complains to the other that 'Kusta³⁸ [has stopped] filming in America', at the other Roma boy replies, 'Damn!' In the second appearance, a while later, the first Roma enthusiastically announces that, 'Kusta has resumed filming in America,' to which the other Roma replies, 'Great!' and gives him a high-five.

³⁷ As this information cannot be verified in the available sources.

³⁸ 'Kusta' is short for Kusturica, a popular way of referring to Emir Kusturica in Serbia and Bosnia.

As the film is a comedy, caution should be exercised in identifying salient aspects of the Roma boys' two appearances. However, the humorous approach and vignette-like characters do not take away from a potentially socially-diagnostic and meta-filmic readings: living on the social margin, the two Roma find some consolation in the fact that Kusturica puts the Roma centre-stage in his films; furthermore, the fact that the Roma in *We Are Not Angels* look forward to more of globally successful Roma images such as those in *Time of the Gypsies* can be seen to point tongue-in-cheek to the constructed nature of the Roma identity.

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A few years later, Emir Kusturica tackled the issue of Roma representation again in his 1998 feature *Black Cat White Cat*. The film is a romantic comedy of scene and spectacle, featuring Roma characters in a multitude of roles. The storyline involves financial problems in the Roma criminal underworld on the Serbian-Bulgarian border, as well as variegated obstacles to the marriage of the young Roma protagonists (Ida and Zare), which echoes *Time of the Gypsies* in terms of the narrative structure and thematic motifs. However, the genre switch pushes the film towards a happy ending and a greater focus on the characters themselves.

The protagonists and supporting roles are all Active Topics as they interact with the majority and/or drive the story forward. A number of supporting and minor characters (the Roma orchestra; various friends and family) are Passive Topics with differing contributions to the narrative. Further, as most Roma characters are afforded a high narrative status, their personal perspectives are expressed via the gaze-response sequences, where they are Perceiver Topics. The protagonists are played by Serbian actors (Dadan the gangster, played by Srdjan Todorovic; Ida the 'Ladybird', played by Branka Katic) as well as actors of Roma origin. The languages spoken include Roma, Serbian, and Bulgarian.

The characters are portrayed with a level of exuberance and excess that has an adverse effect on the plot dynamic. Their physical appearances vary considerably, from garish garments to presentable but worn-out clothes, but they are all in one way or another excessive with respect to how the majority is expected to dress. This is due in part to Kusturica's poetics and philosophy of film, and in part to the genre conventions.

No Roma character in the film has what can be termed a mainstream occupation, with some being smugglers and gangsters, others wandering tavern musicians, and a small number bar owners and housemaids.

The film builds its diegesis and characters in a web of intertextual references: *Time of the Gypsies* and *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* seems to supply a model for a card game from the beginning of the film, and a no-good father/man of the family; *Time of the Gypsies* is referenced in the telekinetic powers of the male protagonist, the river bathing rituals, characters moving out of sight under a cardboard box, the bridal veil fluttering in the breeze, and tears of the elders upon the parting of the younger generation; geese seem as ubiquitous in this film as they are in both *Time of the Gypsies* and *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*; and Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* seems to supply an endless array of direct and indirect quotes.

Importantly, although the character portrayals are exaggerated and carnivalesque, they are not invariably positive. On the contrary, the pendulum of excess swings in the direction of dark emotions as well – Ida puts people in harm's way by shooting from a rifle; Dadan and his gangster crew hang a customs officer on a pole; and Dadan slaps Ida violently when she calls his sister Aphrodite a 'Smurfette'. Such scenes have the power to change the tone of the film and affect the narrative profoundly, blurring the genre conventions and putting most of the focus on character rather than plot.

Going back to the issue of character construction, there is a sense in which the many intertextual references (be it to Kusturica's previous films or films by other authors) serve to construct a coherent but self-consciously fictional story world that multiple films are situated in. Furthermore, some of the Roma characters can be said to be *meta-character types* precisely in the way that Burdus (*Burdus*, M. Popovic, 1970) is a *meta-character* – illustrating the process of character construction via references to similarly-disposed Roma characters in other films. It could be argued that in addition to the Roma orchestra as an instance of the archetype of the 'Roma musician as a commentator' or 'index of socio-psychological patterns', there are a number of other Roma character types that populate the world of Kusturica's Roma films, e.g. the sly yet violent gangster, the unruly girl/woman, and the incompetent father. All these character types should on no account be seen as ambitiously constructed positive or negative types; they are in fact archetypes in the making, with the power and potential to be re-used *across new films*, standing as they do for a specific view/attitude/or approach to life.

Roma self-identification in the film stays within the confines of the complex genre – a number of Roma characters recognize their Romani origin, but play with it in a mock-display of aggression. One of the moneyed Roma characters, Grga the Great, drives a begging Roma family away with the words ‘Piss off, you bloody Gypsies!’; similarly, Dadan accuses in jest his majority escorts for Roma hatred, and throws both the escorts and his Roma friends out of his limousine with the words ‘Get out, all of you! I’m a man with no racial prejudices!’

In conclusion, the topics that Kusturica seems to be dealing with in most of his mid to late films are present in this film as well – crime, *excess* as a preferred solution for any form of social oppression, and Roma culture - but they are refracted in a new sort of genre mix, and help create a standalone fictional world.

5.3.6 Roma representations in the period of transition – 2001-2010

After the 5 October nation-wide protests and the toppling of Slobodan Milosevic’s regime in 2000, the Serbian society faced a number of challenges substantially different from those in the past. Significant efforts were put into the reconstruction of the civil society and the recovery of its collapsed institutions. The development of a legal platform for the recognition, support, and collaboration with the ethnic minorities constituted a large part of this process. The Roma were formally recognized as a *national minority* in Serbia (McGarry 2014: 766), and their legal status was regulated by the *Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities* (passed in 2002; followed in 2009 by the *Law on National Councils of National Minorities*) (Beretka and Székely 2016: 12). Unfortunately, the legal quagmire, the state-sanctioned forced displacement, and widespread prejudice against the Roma did not stop (Rakić-Vodinelčić and Gajin: 2009). The films of the first decade of the 21st century were made in a social context in which the discourse of ethnicity-centred hatred was at near-constant loggerheads with the legally supported discourse of tolerance and integration.

This period features five films with the Roma characters as Active Topics: *Thunderbirds* (*Munje*, Radivoje Andric, 2001); *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* (*Guca!*, Dusan Milic, 2006); *Kenedi is Getting Married* (*Kenedi se zeni*, Zelimir Zilnik, 2007); *Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies* (*Hamlet, ciganski princ*, Aleksandar Rajkovic, 2007); and *Skinning* (*Sisanje*, Stevan Filipovic, 2010).

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The first film in the last historical period, *Thunderbirds* by Radivoie Andric, is an urban comedy set in the late-twentieth century Milosevic's Serbia, and tells a coming-of-age story of a number of Serbian teenagers as they face the corruption, violence, and criminality of the Milosevic regime. The Roma appear in one brief scene, as Active Topics in minor character roles, but the depiction contributes a significant amount to the pool of the representational strategies.

The Roma characters are played by ethnic Roma actors of various ages. They speak Serbian with a mixture of a Romani and urban lower-class accent, and are dressed in urban, lower-class sports clothes – tracksuits and sneakers. The scene in which they make their brief appearance features a majority couple who are watching a Bruce Lee film in a second-rate film theatre in Belgrade notorious for showing martial arts films. One of the adult Roma is re-telling and explaining the film to a Roma boy while two other Roma men are elbowing and pushing each other in a mock-display of aggression. The Serbian girl is disturbed by the noise that the Roma are making, and when she complains, the Roma jump from their seats and threaten her in a caricatured, overacted manner. Her boyfriend does nothing; instead, a local gangster jumps in, causing a violent (and perhaps too filmic) reaction on the part of the Roma. They respond by loud expletives and a display of martial arts weapons. When the local gangster's tall and heavy thug friend stands up, the Roma sit down immediately and cease to make any noise. The gangster looks at them contemptuously and says, 'Blackies!'

The Roma are identified in the scene with the martial arts film sub culture, and particularly with the image of Bruce Lee, linking them to the film *We Are Not Angels* (S. Dragojevic, 1992) in terms of the references to film characters in general, and *Gucha – Distant Trumpet* (D. Milic, 2007), in terms of the specific (but marginal) references to Bruce Lee. Although it is humorously exaggerated in line with the film genre, the depiction of the Roma is socio-culturally relevant, as on the one hand the Roma occupy a low social position in the Serbian society, and on the other the majority express their prejudices towards them openly and contemptuously.

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Zilnik's 2007 feature *Kenedi is Getting Married* tells the story of Kenedi, a young Roma man trying to earn enough money to repay the debt he made while building a home for himself. He is forced to go into the escort business, and enters into a relationship with a German man when he learns that the liberal European Union laws would allow him to get married to the man and thus to stabilize his finances. However, the German man catches him red-handed with a Serbian woman and ends the relationship. Kenedi then tries to establish contacts with his uncle in Istanbul, but fails, and then wanders aimlessly, only to disappear in the Istanbul crowd.

This feature film was made as a sequel of sorts to two documentaries starring Kenedi Hasani, an actual Roma person deported from Germany in the early 2000s (a fate common to many Roma who had fled to Germany either to escape from the Yugoslavian civil war or to earn a decent living; as many of them were unable to secure a legal residence in Germany, they were forcefully repatriated in the early 2000s). The Roma characters in the film are all non-professional ethnic Roma actors, mostly young men in their twenties. They speak in a mixture of Romani, Serbian, and German (as many of them actually grew up in Germany before deportation). All the Roma in the film are Active Topics, and a number of them Perceiver Topics and Active Foci, in gaze-response sequences featuring the Roma and various majority characters (Serbian and German).

The narrative is organized around Kenedi's attempts to earn enough money to repay his debts, but the main story is intercut sporadically with scenes of Roma teenagers engaging in playful activities (dancing, singing, rapping) on a river bank in the Serbian North (some of them are featured in other parts of the film as Kenedi's friends or acquaintances). There does not seem to be an overarching symbolic purpose to these scenes other than a direct demonstration of the Roma life in the 21st century Serbia. The camerawork in the film seems to support this claim – it is invariably the hand-held camera, which creates a sense of immediacy, veracity, and individuality of experience.

Importantly, the Roma are not shown being discriminated against. The film is largely centred around the impact of the new settings - political (EU vs. non-EU countries and citizens) and economic (capitalism and its effects on the ethics of human interaction) - on the socially marginalized characters. Kenedi performs various menial tasks for small amounts of money, which includes sexual favours to both Serbian women and Serbian and German men. His goal is simple – to make enough money to have a decent life, and he

seems to approach his various ‘deals’ without ‘malice aforethought’. What the film does is skilfully illustrate the conflict between *agency* and *social structure* or system, and how individual behaviour is constructed at the point of contact between the two.

The fact that prejudice against the Roma is not explicitly thematised in Zilnik’s film should not be taken to mean that the film does not address it. On the contrary, and similar to *Gucha – Distant Trumpet*, *Kenedi is Getting Married* also re-positions the Roma body within systems of social values, but it does so in a far more radical manner. It effectively transforms it into a political statement as well as a comment on the social prejudice against the Roma. Kenedi’s sexual encounters are shown in explicit scenes with both a Serbian woman and the German man, but they never become voyeuristic or pornographic; rather, they seem to suggest that Roma bodies are no better or worse than the majority bodies that they share the frame with – both are commodified and commodifiable in the new liberal economy and the strict and exclusionary political system.

The film ends on a symbolic note – after a failed plan to marry the German man and so secure an EU passport, Kenedi roams around Istanbul. At one point, after a dispirited visit to a mosque, he disappears in the crowd. The scene is fully motivated in the narrative, but takes on a deeper symbolic meaning - political (i.e. one of many such people) and poetic (one of many such stories), in a landscape of new political and economic boundaries.

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Skinning, a 2010 film by Stevan Filipovic, shifts the focus of socio-political criticism to the Serbian-society-internal dynamic of identity and boundary construction. As a socio-political study and a psychological drama, it maintains a distinct pedagogical note throughout the narrative.

The plot revolves around a Serbian teenager Novica (played by Nikola Rakocevic), whose transformation is traced from a talented secondary school student with an unfavourable family situation into the radicalized member of a Neo-Nazi group manipulated by hawkish Serbian intellectuals. The central event of the film is the murder of a Roma boy that Novica commits in an attempt to prove his worth in his new group. The police investigation that follows results not only in the breaking apart of the Neo-

Nazi group and Novica's arrest, but also exposes the pervasive corruption and a network of economic interests behind radical political groups.

All the Roma characters are played by ethnic Roma non-professional actors, and have supporting or minor character roles. The portrayals of the Roma characters are psychologically and socio-politically complex: at the beginning of the film, the Roma boy who Novica murders is shown among a group of hooligans in the stands at a football match, cheering along. He also takes part in a subsequent attack on Novica and his love interest in the film, which prompts Novica to wreak vengeance on him by brutally murdering him. Situating a Roma character in the social context of football hooliganism and radical social groups puts forward a provocative narrative claim - that the aggressive in-group/out-group dynamic runs deeper than the ethnicity-based dividing line.

Once the news of the murder reach the police, the chief inspector of the local police force says to his colleagues that a 'Gyppo' body has been discovered, and that he cannot investigate the case further as this would entail going to the Roma town, where 'it stinks a lot.' The police investigation is launched nonetheless, and a junior police inspector visits the Roma shanty town with another police officer. The Roma are shown to be watching the visitors with apparent distrust, and the police officer returns the gaze of slight unease. The conditions in the Roma town are poor, with homes made out of cardboard in an improvised and illegal settlement. The people's clothes are visibly more ragged than those of the majority.

The police inspector is polite, using respectful language when addressing the Roma, and strikes up a conversation with a little Roma boy. The boy is playful but asks for money in exchange for various services (smuggled branded clothes; enacted scenes of poverty to be used on television) and information. As he is leading the two officers to the scene of the crime, the boy uses respectful ('Sir') language speaking to the male officer.

The chief inspector remains dismissive of the whole case and the Roma ('They probably have no ID. Leave me the f*** alone with the Gypsies killing each other over junctions and long red lights!'). The majority protagonist, now turned skinhead, leads an attack against the Roma shantytown as a 'den of plague and filth'. When the police round the attackers up and take them to the police station for questioning, the chief inspector informs the leader of the skinheads that the killed Roma man was in fact a student of architecture living in Vienna, and that he had come to Belgrade to visit his grandparents.

In Information-Structural terms, as they interact with the majority, the murdered Roma teenager and the Roma boy are Active Topics. The Roma shanty town people are either Passive Topics (with their day-to-day existence depicted in long shots, mid shots, and close-ups, with a hand-held camera, contributing a sense of proximity, directness, and documentarity), or Perceiver Topics / Passive Foci during the visit of the police. During the attack, the Roma boy is afforded an even more elevated narrative status as he watches the reflections of flames coming from the fire the attackers started, helping to visualize thus the experience of terror, and conceptualize the ethical implications of the scene. Screams can be heard, and people seen crouching or being brutally kicked; family photographs are shown burning.

The pedagogical note/aim of the film is noticeable in modelling Novica's transformation, which is presented as a gradual but psychologically straightforward response to personal frustration, and could be said to be a simplistic expression of a constructivist approach to human drives and emotions. The contrast is even sharper in light of the comparatively complex social picture that emerges from the portrayals of the Roma characters. Furthermore, the conversations that the young hooligans have with the public intellectuals attempting to sway them towards rallying around a nationalist cause also seem caricatured: the intellectuals' pro-nationalist ideas sound largely as boilerplate summaries of the commonalities of various nationalist programmes, while their attempts at manipulation may strike one as rather cartoonish.

In contrast, the Roma depictions go far beyond the politically correct discourse of minority rights and majority oppression. Firstly, the Roma boy reveals in his conversation with the police officers the socio-economic reality of the Roma population in Serbia – his financial offers are less a Roma stereotype than an efficient shorthand for a micro-economics of deprivation and marginalization. This concise description is further underscored in the openly prejudicial remarks of the Serbian chief inspector. But, what is most important and innovative in this set of representations is the fact that the murdered Roma man was in fact a member of a radicalized group of football supporters, and that he took part in rather aggressive acts against the majority characters. This textual motif seems to suggest that the social picture the film puts forward is anything but simple, and seems to stem (if perhaps not always in psychologically very convincing ways) in equal measure from vulnerable personalities (i.e. the male protagonist who turns from a model student into a radical skinhead in the context of a family trauma) and the calculated

actions of major political players (i.e. the hawkish public intellectuals who incite the radical groups and prod them on to action for self-serving reasons).

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The last two films in this historical period make use of a similar starting point in representing the Roma, but end up at very different conceptual and representational positions.

Gucha: Distant Trumpet, a 2007 film by Dusan Milic is a romantic drama comedy about Romeo, a Roma trumpet player, and Juliana (played by Aleksandra Manasijevic), the daughter of a Serbian trumpet player, who need to overcome Juliana's parents' prejudices against the Roma to be allowed to become a couple. The Roma are played by non-professional ethnic Roma actors, and are assigned a number of roles – the protagonist Romeo (played by a well-known Roma trumpet player Marko Markovic), supporting characters, as well as minor and minor characters. The Roma speak Romani among themselves and Serbian in their interactions with the Serbian majority; with the exception of the minor characters in the Roma community, all of them are Active Topics, interacting as they do with the majority characters and progress the plot in the process.

Crucially for the representational strategy employed to depict the Roma, the story is loosely based on Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, but has a happy ending instead, and is considerably simpler in terms of the number of characters and their functions. The Roma protagonist needs to win in a well-known trumpet players' contest in the south of Serbia (called *Gucha* after the town where it is taking place) in order to earn the respect of a conservative and prejudiced Serbian *pater familias* and his equally hostile wife, and thus to have the hand of their daughter. After a number of plot twists, and once Romeo outperforms the father at the contest, Romeo and Juliana re-unite.

The Roma in the film interact with the majority characters in the common socio-economic sphere, and are no different from the majority characters in terms of their psychological make-up – they are rounded in varying degrees, but with distinct personalities, ambitions, and ethical viewpoints. The humour in the film sometimes stems from a reference to the available Roma types, e.g. the mention of the young male Roma as martial arts and Bruce Lee aficionados. On the other hand, the Serbian family is depicted as rural and very conservative through recognizable markers of traditional, typed

‘Serbianness’ – the central-Serbian rural home, traditional clothes, furniture, and devotion to the family priest of a purportedly benevolent Serbian Orthodox Church.

The social prejudice against the Roma is thus placed firmly in the family feud and professional competition contexts, linking it to the original story and romantic comedy/drama comedy conventions, and taking the edge off the social ramifications. Once the narrative conflict is resolved according to the conventions of the genre, the couple’s re-uniting amid the festival celebrations can be seen as predominantly an affective counterpart to a positive social programme. In addition, this positive social programme entails a fundamentally different view of the Roma body – as a body well worth the romantic and sexual desire (aligning *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* with Zilnik’s *Kenedi is Getting Married*).

Active Topics are not the dominant broad structural-narrative roles that the Roma are afforded in the film. There are a few instances of Perceiver Topic and Active Focus roles, invariably in gaze-response sequences involving the Roma and the majority characters, ranging from positive (Romeo and Juliana observing each other) to negative (Juliana’s father closely watching Romeo, establishing thus the visual equivalent of a local interpretive framework and, by extension, a political perspective on the Roma).

Furthermore, and very importantly, with the character of Romeo afforded a number of *voiceover* sequences in the film, the Frame Setting representational strategy and self-characterization by means of verbalized internal monologue could be said to be the focus of the film, with the narrative providing a sort of scaffolding for the refined meditations on the nature of music, social prejudice, and love³⁹.

In conclusion, the modified literary template that the film makes use of offers a socially positive inflection of the Roma representations and a positive social programme of integration; further, it reinforces the *archetype* of the Roma musician, and experiments with character narration, further elevating the narrative status of the Roma.

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Similar to *Gucha: Distant Trumpet*, Aleksandar Rajkovic’s 2007 feature *Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies* is also an adaptation of a William Shakespeare play: the literary

³⁹ The voiceover sequences are elaborated on in chapter section 6.6.

original that the film makes use of is *Hamlet*. The film remains largely faithful to the original in terms of the characters and character functions, but with many portions of the original text excised for brevity. Significantly, the context is changed to a landfill outside present-day Belgrade, with the Roma featured as *dramatis personae*.

The roles of Hamlet and Claudius are played by Serbian actors (Igor Djordjevic and Petar Bozovic, respectively), and all the other characters are played by non-professional ethnic Roma actors. The characters speak Romani, but Serbian is heard on occasion, used mostly by the added character of The Fool, who is presented as an adult male Serbian with the symbolic roles of the commentator bookending the film.

The story largely adheres to the original, but is far more crass and oriented towards the physical. The majority of the monologues have been removed, which only leaves the textual bare bones: the family betrayal; revenge; doomed love; death. The characters are placed in a new context, and obtain slightly different social roles – many of them are members of two warring Roma mafia groups, organized around economic interests but overtly separated by religion (the main characters bear Christian names while their competitors bear Muslim ones). They live in a world depicted as void of abstract considerations, filthy, and trapped in a vicious circle of violence motivated by greed.

The Fool opens the film with an in-your-face direct address to the camera, in which he accuses the Roma of stealing and thus being the reason why ‘they’ (i.e. the Serbian majority) are also seen as ‘Gypsies’, and why the state is collapsing. This majority character is deployed as a Frame Setter to provide a hint towards the broad referential potential of the film as an allegory of the Serbian society as a whole.

Hamlet is portrayed as pensive and disoriented, but the depiction is rather crude, e.g. he is shown being late for a meeting with Horatio (i.e. Dragan) due to bowel movement problems. Gertrude (i.e. Jelena) defiantly admits to Hamlet that he was born of a drunken mistake with Hamlet’s father (i.e. Djura), and that she truly loves Claudius (Jova), who happens to be the mafia boss. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (i.e. Gane and Mija) are local gangsters who attempt to kill Hamlet at Jova’s bidding, and are only stopped from doing so by the actions of the rival Roma gang. The troupe of actors from the original play is represented as a Roma bear-handling group, and they perform a play within the play at Hamlet’s wish, in a portion of the text that seems the least integrated into the story line.

Importantly, the landscape is an essential means of constructing the tone of the film: there are many inserts of the landfill long shots, with enormous piles of rubbish and flocks of birds flying overhead. The sheer length of these scenes and their position in the narrative testify to their symbolic importance – they help reinforce a sense of desolation, depravity, and economic marginalization. Furthermore, Hamlet references Belgrade as the symbolic paradise in this *mise-en-scene* as an imaginary place where ‘people don’t work, they just stroll around and do nothing.’ As he is dying from Laertes’ (i.e. Zoran’s) hand, he whispers that all of them should be ‘taken to Belgrade’.

The characters are portrayed as psychologically complex and contributing to the story line in significant ways, which makes them Active Topics. Their individual perspectives are sometimes relativized by the gaze of the Fool, whose baffled responses to the criminal goings-on provide a bizarrely defamiliarizing perspective on what becomes the diegetic social norm in the course of the film. As the film ends, the Fool is seen leaving the landfill following the bear handlers, to the sound of a diegetic Roma song.

Although it is firmly set in a recognizable, socially marginal space, the film’s aim does not seem to be to draw attention to the realities of the Roma life in Serbia. The network of broad semiotic relations constructed in the narrative could also profitably be mapped onto a similar set of social relations on account of the use of the landscape, the references to Belgrade, and The Fool’s intimations on how the Serbs are *perceived*:

<i>The landfill</i>	<i>Belgrade</i>	<i>The Roma</i>	<i>The Fool</i>
<i>Serbia</i>	<i>The projected social ideal / Europe</i>	<i>The Serbian majority</i>	<i>The popular discourse of identity in Serbia</i>

Therefore, this is the one film in the corpus where the critical notion of the Roma as metonyms or allegories for the Serbian population in its complex relationship to Europe and the neoliberal economic context is given an identifiable textual manifestation.

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The Roma representations in the 2001-2010 period of transition problematize a number of socio-political issues: both *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* and *Skinning* are concerned with social prejudice against the Roma in Serbia, but the conclusions they reach are

diametrically opposite: the former offers a possibility of reconciliation and integration, while the other sees prejudice as an unavoidable result of personal aggression and social manipulation. *Thunderbirds* acknowledges and thematizes the prejudice against the Roma within the constraints of the comedic genre, producing in the process a humorous depiction of a positive type of the Roma as a *martial arts aficionado*.

Kenedi is Getting Married and *Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies* provide a broader context for the socio-political critique: the former portrays the Roma as concretized, particular elements in the new Serbian and European political and economic context, and the latter constructs an allegory of the relationship between the Serbian and European political and economic contexts via the similar relationship between the Roma and majority communities in Serbia.

In addition to *Thunderbirds*, both *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* and *Hamlet, Prince of the Gypsies* feature well-established literary templates, and deploy them as means of directing and outlining a socio-political critique.

5.3.7 Socially-critical representations of the Roma – an overview

The analyses of the six different groups of films discussed in this chapter section reveal a number of patterns as well as a broad developmental trajectory. The films from the 1950s employ Roma representations to foreground a conflict between the *individual and the oppressive, male-dominated society*. The Roma are depicted in specific sets of social circumstances, but the depictions are generalizable to any social manifestations of inequality. The 1960s brought a filmic clash between *the ideals and the realities* of the new Yugoslavian society, and the Roma are depicted in the majority of cases as embedded in the socio-political landscape whose ideological form is subjected to the critical assessment. The 1970s pick up the trends from the 1960s, but couch the critique in more cautious tones, giving more weight to either the political or the broader social aspects of the Yugoslavian crisis. The 1980s once again provide an analysis of the *failing Socialist society*, focusing on the specificities of the Roma situation. The 1990s introduce intertextuality in Roma depictions, and the 2000s foreground either the genesis and dangers of *the social prejudice against the Roma*, or they *problematize the new European context*. The latter strategy indicates problems in the new European context either by

acknowledging the particularity of the Roma position, or by using the Roma as allegories of the Serbian majority's attitude to Europe.

In terms of the textual types employed, the dialogue with and creative re-working of the available Roma stereotypes seems to describe well the generalities of the six periods: the Period 1 films from the 1950s re-work the stereotype of the wild and passionate Roma, and make use of the textual type of the Fool. The Period 3 films from the 1960s recruit some features of the character of The Fool, and re-symbolize the stereotype of the impulsive and passionate Roma. Period 5 ushers in the exoticisation of the Roma, a trend that lasts well into the 1990s, which also introduces said intertextuality in Roma representations. Lastly, Period 7 features a new urban type in Roma depictions, as well as two literary templates mapped onto the Roma representations.

Furthermore, in all but two films (*Black Cat White Cat* and *Gucha: Distant Trumpet*), the Roma characters are presented as *victims* of social circumstances and various injustices. Importantly, the occupations of the Roma characters afforded the roles of Active Topic and Foci reveal a significant pattern as well: *Roma musicians/performers/entertainers* are found in 12 out of 20 films, and the depictions range in narrative importance from an added detail in *The Cool Guy* to the central narrative motif in *Gucha: Distant Trumpet*.

6 META-TEXTUALITY IN ROMA REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Character representations can stand in various kinds of logical relations to film narratives as wholes. A conceptual tool that allows the investigation of such logical relations is referred to herein as *meta-textuality*, and is construed as addressing (referring to) and interpreting (reflecting on) the full set of conceptual spaces contained in the film narrative. Importantly, meta-textual representational strategies do not entail positive representations of social groups; rather, they are invariably *signals of narrative import*, and only indicate elevated *narrative* status and role.

The Information Structure Analysis method employed in this study operationalizes the notion of meta-textuality into the category of Frame Setting, which explores *formal relations* between (aspects of) Roma representations and the film narrative. The frame setting function is a mapping relation between these (aspects of) Roma representations, and two or more target conceptual spaces. Procedurally, once the Frame Setting analysis is complete and all Frame Setters identified, a narrative-semiotic analysis is conducted, aimed to develop a more comprehensive picture of Frame Setting spaces, as well as to determine whether there are any other forms of meta-textuality that the ISA does not see via its conceptual grid. This analytical ‘step two’ takes into account all *salient* features of meta-textual *content* – cinematic, narrative, and semiotic (with a special focus on *types of meta-textual content* which are identifiable in the corpus).

The results of the analyses presented in this chapter demonstrate that out of 35 films in the corpus, 16 employ meta-textual strategies. These strategies are discussed below, in sections organized around historical and stylistic-thematic criteria, tracking changes in form and use via the notion of narrative norm and norm history. Wherever suitable, the discussion is supplemented by a consideration of concurrent (and therefore only *possibly* effectual) socio-historical and industry-related factors. The last section of the chapter is divided into three sub-sections, each providing a comparative summary of an aspect of the meta-textual strategies identified in the analyses. The chapter ends with a discussion of a possible archetype employed in meta-textual narrative interventions.

6.2 Yugoslavian New Film

The first instances of meta-textuality in Roma representations appear during a period in the history of the Yugoslavian cinema known as Yugoslavian New Film. In addition to significant thematic innovations (elaborated on in chapter section 5.3.2), the Yugoslavian New Film authors engaged in extensive stylistic experiments in their films. A number of shared formal features notwithstanding, the film narration styles these authors employed were not uniform. Rather, two broad approaches can be discerned: on the one hand, directors like Zivojin Pavlovic and Krsto Papic embraced classical narrative models, often with a naturalistic perspective on social phenomena; on the other, Dusan Makavejev, Zelimir Zilnik, and Lazar Stojanovic engaged in bold experiments with filmic form (Cook 2016: 516). These experiments included the frequent use of contrastive, Soviet-style editing, montage sequences, and blending of genres such as documentaries, features, and visual essays. Furthermore, breaking the fourth wall (i.e. directly addressing the ‘camera’ or the ‘viewer’) was often employed as a defamiliarisation technique, and the boundaries between character and actor were intentionally and effectively blurred, especially in the works of Dusan Makavejev (Volk 2001: 166).

This section attempts to clarify how the thematic concerns and formal experiments of Yugoslavian New Film are refracted in the *meta-textual* representational strategies employed to depict the Roma. A detailed formal analyses is provided, as well as systematic comparisons between the following films: Aleksandar Petrovic’s *Three, I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, and *It Rains in My Village*; Purisa Djordjevic’s *The Dream* and *The Noon*; and *Burdus* by Mica Popovic.

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Aleksandar Petrovic’s film *Three (Tri, 1965)* is the first film of the period and the very first film in the corpus that features the Roma as *meta-textual devices*. *Three* is an anthology film consisting of three World War II stories linked by the protagonist, a Yugoslav Partisan Milos Bojanic (played by the majority actor Velimir Zivojinovic). In the first story, Milos witnesses the execution of a passenger at a train station; the second follows Milos and a fellow Partisan as they try to escape the Nazi soldiers pursuing them; and in the third, Milos is faced with an ethical dilemma as a Partisan Army commander – how to punish the Nazi collaborators.

The meta-textual role of the Roma in this film is set up in the bear-handling scene (featured in the first story), when a Roma man responds to calls from the soldiers on the train to ‘show them what the bear can do.’ The soldiers are amused as the bear is made to dance to the sound of the drum played by the Roma. The abundant use of close-ups, zoom-ins, zoom-outs, and medium shots creates a sense of dynamism and a deeper significance of the dance. As the train prepares to leave, more Roma men from the same group approach the train, and perform ‘Gelem Gelem’ (‘I travelled, I travelled’), a song considered an unofficial Roma anthem⁴⁰. The images of the Roma and the soldiers are then crosscut with the images of the bear on a leash, with the muzzle on. The music picks up as the train is leaving, and at this point the story is temporarily halted into a salient Roma performance.

The scene helps establish a set of textual associations, but the one that is most relevant to the meta-textual strategy links the sound of the drum to the spectacle of the muzzled bear on the leash, and thus also to social control and socially-sanctioned violence. This is an interesting textual take on the symbolic potential of the Roma, whose tragic history as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world stands in stark contrast to the fact that it is precisely them who *use and control the bear* in the scene.

The first instance of a meta-textual strategy in this film is Frame Setting, and it occurs after the suspicious stranger is summarily shot at the train station by a soldier patrol. As the stranger’s body is being dragged away and out of the frame, the sound of the Roma drum is heard again. The Roma man does not in fact play the drum at that specific point in the story, so the sound of the drum should be interpreted as a *disparately diegetic* Frame Setter, i.e. a *subset* of the same conceptual space, located in a different portion of space and time, and brought to the fore for the purposes of being assigned a specific textual function. In this particular case, the textual function is that of *association*, offering a parallel between the handling of the bear and the execution of the stranger. Once established, this Frame Setting link lends itself to various culture-specific associations and interpretations, tapping into the more sinister historical experiences, e.g. stories or memories of town criers’ drums announcing war, or ritualistic, group-sanctioned violence in smaller communities. It is through such textual and contextual links that the sound of the drums provides an experiential grounding for the act of

⁴⁰ The section on *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* below provides an in-depth discussion of ‘Gelem Gelem’ in its historical context and as a meta-textual element.

summary execution of the traveller, framing it in terms of social control, persecution, and violence.

The *disparately diegetic* Frame-Setting sound of the Roma drums appears two more times in the film. In the second story, Milos and a fellow Partisan are being hunted down by a group of Nazi soldiers in a rough, mountainous terrain. The sound of the drum is heard at the very beginning, as the German soldiers are shown running by with dogs on the Partisans' trail. The drums establish links to the previous story, whereby the manhunt under way is semantically generalized as yet another instance of persecution and violence. Towards the end of the second story the two comrades separate, and Milos is forced to watch, hidden in tall grass, as the Germans capture and execute his friend. The sound of the drum re-appears when the Partisan is forced into a hay hut by the soldiers, and then burnt alive and shot. An important further Frame Setting dynamic is introduced in this scene: the sound grows weaker when the Partisan *turns around to face the soldiers*, and stronger as the soldiers force him to look away. Furthermore, the sound disappears completely when the Partisan *looks away at the grass* gently swaying in the wind. Based on such story details, these drops in the intensity of the sound could be interpreted as corresponding to a variously motivated and expressed desire for freedom, i.e. resistance to violence.

The sound of the drums is used in the third story as well. Milos is now a Partisan commander who needs to make a decision regarding the fate of a group of local Nazi collaborators, including a young woman who he seems to be attracted to. Once again a *disparately diegetic* Frame Setter, the sound is first heard as Milos is pacing around the room, feeling the weight of the ethical problem he is faced with. A dynamic similar to the one in the second story is at work here as well: the sound disappears when objects referencing the actual, or connoting possible, acts of kindness/humanity are shown - a melon that Milos decided would be offered to the young woman at the prompting of an elderly villager; a pitcher of water that the young woman had a sip from; or the visual details revealing how the collaborators *as individuals* deal with their plight. The sound re-appears in step with the Partisan's harsher words and rigid stance towards the social transgressions within the Communist ethos/practice. This can be interpreted as drawing a provocative, Communist ideology-undermining parallel between the execution at the hands of the Royal Yugoslavian, Nazi, and Yugoslav Partisan armies.

The final instance of auditory Frame Setting is implemented after the collaborators have been taken away (presumably to their deaths). A new, melancholy song, ostensibly sung in Romani, can be heard as Milos walks out of the military camp. It is not possible to determine whether the song originates from the same conceptual space, and should therefore be treated as either a *non-diegetic* or *disparately diegetic* Frame Setter, framing the outcome of the protagonist's decision both in terms of general tone (melancholy) and mood (Milos looks dejected)⁴¹.

Petrovic makes use of the Roma motifs in a similar fashion in his next film, *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (*Skupljaci perja*, 1967). As meta-textual devices, the Roma in the film are employed three times. In the first such scene, which has become one of the most iconic in the film, the protagonist, Bora the White, cuts open sacks full of goose feathers, and starts throwing them out onto the road from a truck, mesmerized by their dance in the air and light. As an act, this is first and foremost a characterization, an action stemming from a fully fleshed-out motivation – Bora is depicted as occasionally erratic and irrational; moreover, in the preceding scene, he has a trying conversation with his competitor Mirta about Tisa, a Roma girl they are both interested in. As he happens to be in a drunken state as well, a self-destructive act such as throwing out his one source of income comes as no surprise.

This moment of irrationality is then given depth by means of Frame Setting. As Bora is throwing feathers out, a rendition of the Romani anthem *Gelem Gelem* starts. It is difficult to determine whether it should be treated as a *non-diegetic* or *disparately diegetic* Frame Setter. The same song is indeed performed in a previous tavern scene by the diegetic Roma orchestra, but in an entirely different style, and with a female singer. This rendition, however, is instrumental only, played on tambourines, and far more restrained than any of the tavern performances (to which it is nonetheless linked syntagmatically, establishing a film text-wide web of meaning via melody identity). This warrants an analysis under which the Romani anthem is a non-diegetic Frame Setter located in a distinct, Type 4 conceptual space (the sound track), associating the elements of the target conceptual space with its formal (melodic), syntagmatic (textual), and paradigmatic (cultural) features. Taken together with the act of throwing the feathers out, in the

⁴¹ The terms *tone* and *mood* are employed in Gorbman (1980) as part of the discussion of the role of music in film narration.

physical space composed of the open road and soft light, it seems to lend itself to symbolic interpretations that go beyond characterization and individual destiny, and come close to an existential stance.

The general purpose of the song is clearer in the final scene, which features the second instance of non-diegetic Frame Setting. Bora has in the meantime killed Mirta because of Tisa, and is on the run from the police. The local Roma community close ranks, and refuse to cooperate with the state authorities in the investigation of the murder. The final shots consist of close-ups of the Roma children and adults, followed by scenes of endless open roads, coupled with another rendition of *Gelem Gelem*, this time including the lyrics.

The *Gelem Gelem* lyrics were written in the twentieth century by Zarko Jovanovic, a well-known Serbian Romani musician and activist, to an old Romani folk song. The new version spread quickly around the world, and was adopted by the majority of the Roma communities in Eastern and Southern Europe. Quite in line with Jovanovic's activist views (Kalezic n.d.), the lyrics are a mixture of references to the Roma lifestyle and tragic historical experience, and an optimistic call for unity and political action aimed to improve the Roma position in the world:

Gelem Gelem – Translation into English (source: Malvinni 2002: 205)

I went, I went on long roads,

I met happy Roma.

O Roma where do you come from,

With tents on happy roads?

O Roma, O fellow Roma

I once had a great family,

The Black Legions murdered them

Come with me Roma from all the world

For the Romani roads have opened

Now is the time, rise up Roma now,

We will rise high if we act

O Roma, O fellow Roma.

Interestingly, Petrovic chooses to keep only the sections in bold above, eliminating the references to the historical experiences of the Roma as well as the overt political tones. This is a telling strategy, as it zooms out of the specific socio-political circumstances depicted in the film, and establishes a musical link to Bora's moment of 'madness'. In addition, the final shots in the film are subjective shots suggesting the *experience* of travelling down the roads, resembling in terms of the visual style the objective shots of Bora throwing the feathers out of the truck. This simplified version of *Gelem Gelem* helps wind down the plot of the film to a melancholy conclusion while at the same time arguably creating a *phenomenology* of the (tragic) open road existence, opening up the semantic space for broader symbolisms beyond those tied to the Roma.

The third instance of Frame Setting is a song sung by Sandor, an older male Roma character in the film. When Tisa is assaulted by Mirta and is forced to flee her family home, the tavern singer Lence helps her make the trip to Belgrade. As Tisa is leaving for Belgrade, Sandor starts to sing the song about the loss that the Roma suffer:

The Gypsies have suffered a loss,
The best hen has died.
The old Gypsy woman grieves over it.
[A number of tongue-twisters]
'With you I would celebrate my saint's day,
O my best hen!'⁴²

The song would appear to be a traditional Northern Serbian / Eastern Croatian ditty, listed in Franjo Kuhac and Slavko Jankovic's collection *Popular Songs 1601 – 1800* (Kuhac and Jankovic 1953), but no further information is available regarding its origin and alternative/additional lyrics. In the film, the song starts off as fully diegetic, and then transforms into a *disparately diegetic* Frame Setter, as it can be heard continuously over a succession of scenes: Tisa being helped by relatives; Roma shantytowns surrounded by mud, geese flocks, and poverty; and lastly the face of an elderly Roma woman, seen peering through a hut window. In themselves a humorously-intoned look into the everyday life of the Roma, the lyrics take on a deeper significance coupled with the

⁴² All translations of the song lyrics into English are by the present author, unless specified otherwise.

carefully edited sequence above. The song makes an addition to the pool of Roma-related imagery in the film while also associating the visual images with the *evaluative* notion of loss, both personal and collective. The explicit use of this notion completes the overall Frame Setting strategy: as much a characterization as a meta-textual meaning-regulation technique, it links the depicted socio-historical specificities of the Roma with a more general *experience of loss*, textually tied to the images of open roads and travels.

In line with the general tenor of his poetics, in the two films discussed so far Petrovic makes use of *Roma(-performed) disparately diegetic* or *non-diegetic music*. These Frame Setting devices create a simple system of values regulating textual motifs and linking them to the broader cultural context. Petrovic uses the same technique again in his next film, *It Rains in My Village* (*Bice skoro propast sveta*, 1968), but expands it to a point where it becomes a dominant method of creation and modification of film meaning.

In *It Rains in My Village*, a young swineherd Trisa (Ivan Paluc) defends and befriends an intellectually disadvantaged village girl Goca (Eva Ras) somewhere in the rural Serbian North just before the 1968 Soviet intervention in Prague. After a conflict with the local tavern keeper Joska (Mija Aleksic), Trisa is manipulated by Joska into a marriage with Goca. A politically ambitious female teacher Reza (Annie Girardot) arrives in the village to teach women painting. Trisa initially serves as her model and lover, but Reza becomes attracted to an airplane pilot, and leaves the swineherd. Trisa murders his wife in anger and frustration. His father takes the blame for the crime, admitting the truth in a confession before he dies in prison. After lush political celebrations and speeches by Reza, the townspeople brutally punish the swineherd.

The Roma in this political *film noir* study of mentalities are non-individuated musicians played by non-professional Roma actors. They perform songs in a local tavern in a variety of traditional folk styles, and do not take an active part in the sinister goings-on. Their songs originate in the same conceptual space (of type one – figurative content and causally linked sound) in which the plot of the film unfolds, and their meta-textual use as Frame Setting devices is twofold:

- (1) The songs are either *heard as disparately diegetic* Frame Setters, or
- (2) The Roma orchestra are actually *seen* in a *foregrounding* process, whereby a close-up shot, mid-shot, or an American shot of the Roma performing is inserted into a

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plot sequence, interrupting the flow of events to establish an often humorous, sarcastic, or cynical interpretation of the goings-on. Also a subset of the originary conceptual space, these Frame Setting instances are temporarily recruited from the superset elements to semantically regulate the adjacent scenes or the entire film narrative.

There does not seem to be a difference in purpose between these two techniques. The use of one or another is dictated by considerations of form and visual style wholly separate from the semantic regulation afforded by Frame Setting.

As Frame Setters, the Roma comment on the plot, characters, ethical dilemmas, and the socio-political and cultural context of the film. The dominant musical form recruited to this end in the film is the *bećarac* /be-‘tcharatz/. *Bećarac* is a short folk song originating from northern Serbia and north-eastern Croatia (Leskovac 1958: 13), consisting predominantly of 10-syllable couplets with a caesura (pause) after the fourth syllable in each line. The most frequent rhyme scheme is AA, followed by AB with a Leonine (internal) rhyme, and other, less frequent rhyme structures (Zganec 1962: 515). The instruments used to perform the *bećarac* included the pipe and the bagpipes, but by the nineteenth century and the advent of Yugoslavian Romanticism, the tambourine had made its appearance, and is now the dominant instrument (Leskovac 1958: 12). Throughout the twentieth century, *bećarac* was sung by the majority youth duets or choirs at various social occasions in the originating areas, although it has been pointed out that it was featured prominently at wedding festivities (Zganec 1962: 514). Also performed by Roma orchestras, it thematises largely male-female relationships (from the standpoint of both genders), but it does not eschew more general social issues, habits, or customs. These topics are never given a sentimental or melancholy undertone; rather, the *bećarac* provides a good-natured, tongue-in-cheek, or even lasciviously humorous take on them (Leskovac 1958: 10-12).

The Roma perform a variety of folk or authored popular songs in *It Rains in My Village*, but the humorous, irreverent, tongue-in-cheek attitude of the *bećarac* is maintained as a tonal background to the film. As Frame Setting interventions, these performances have five different but related functions:

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Evaluating	(1) Characters' actions (2) The local mentality (3) Yugoslavian socialist politics
Indicating	(4) Characters' psychological states (5) Plot developments

Although formally not a *bećarac* (as it has 2 x 8 syllables), the *titular song* sets the general tone of the film – humorously nihilistic and joyfully critical all at once:

The end of the world is coming, [*also the title of the film in Serbian*]
Let it collapse, 'tis no loss!

This song bookends the film, and as a humorous rejection of any overt social optimism (including the provincial complacency of the villagers), it is by extension also a comparatively open rejection of the Communist regime and the ideological optimism associated with it (which is the principal reason why Petrovic was banished from Yugoslavian social and professional life for many years - De Cuir 2012a: 408).

The titular song is also strategically positioned at the narratively salient and ethically important points in the story, maintaining its general role in setting the tone of the film: the tragic turn that the events in the film take when Trisa the swineherd starts to lust after the village teacher Reza and rejects his wife Goca is underscored by the immediately preceding performance sequence. The song then marks and puts in perspective the concomitant ethical issues. It is heard as a *disparately diegetic* Frame Setter as Trisa's father is being taken away by the police after taking responsibility for Trisa's crime. Lastly, it is used in the same manner when Joska the tavern keeper reads the Czechoslovakian newspapers bringing the news of the 1968 Prague Intervention, heard as it is over a montage sequence of the clashes and destruction in Prague in the imperialist attack of the Soviet Union.

Another song with a number of semantic functions is the majority traditional song *Divan je kićeni Srem / The Bedecked Srem*⁴³ *is Beautiful*. This song is first performed by the

⁴³ Srem is an administrative district in the northern Serbian autonomous province of Vojvodina.

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Roma orchestra as the opening credits roll and a northern Serbian village exterior is shown in the image track:

The bedecked Srem is beautiful,
Life in it is sweet,
A girl as healthy as can be,
Her kiss is sweet.

The bedecked Srem is beautiful,
Life in it is sweet.

When a Srem man goes off to work,
To dig in the vineyard,
He brings with him a litre or two,
O Srem girl, give me a kiss.

The bedecked Srem is beautiful,
Life in it is sweet.

I have travelled through both villages and towns,
I haven't found her yet.
And now I'm on my way to Srem,
Hopefully my darling is there.

The bedecked Srem is beautiful,
Life in it is sweet.

In this instance, the song establishes links to the socio-cultural milieu and local traditions (musical as well as local mentality-related), which opens up the possibilities for variously intoned socio-psychological commentary. This is precisely what happens when the song is heard next – after Trisa marries Goca at a local, dilapidated, church at night, the Roma orchestra are seen on the following day riding their bicycles around the ruins of the church, accompanied by the *disparately diegetic* Frame Setting rendition of the first two

stanzas of the song. An ironic distance is forged via the *contrast* between the self-congratulatory song lyrics on the one hand, and the drunken nocturnal wedding as well as the ruins of the church, on the other. A similar sort of contrast is established in a tavern scene, where Reza offends Trisa, calling him a fool who ‘blabs too much around the village’. In this instance, the song is performed without words, strummed as a reminder of the discrepancy between the bucolic image of the regional mentality and the reality of the social interactions.

The self-congratulatory tone of the song has a slightly different textual function when the song is performed towards the end of the film. Retaining its *disparately diegetic* Frame Setting role, the first two stanzas of the song run in parallel with the images of the Socialist Parade prefacing the local Communist Party elections – a stream of flags and vehicles in a neat formation covering a field near-by. The juxtaposition of the two can yield a number of possible semantic *parallelisms*, e.g. between similarly embellished social spectacles, narratives, or images of the self. The melody of the song appears again in the Party elections scene, where disabled locals show up to cast their ballot. The extremity of the scene provides thus another fundamentally ironic take on the self-image of the ruling ideology, region and, by extension, nation.



Figure 34 - The Roma musicians perform in *It Rains in My Village*.

A number of smaller Frame Setting pieces performed by the Roma orchestra *comment on and evaluate the majority characters' actions*. For instance, when a migrant

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worker sexually abuses Goca at the beginning of the film, the following lines can be heard in the background:

And what have I done to her,
If I have kissed her?
No one needs to know that,
Just myself and her mother.

The song sets up a stark contrast with the severity of the worker's actions and, as the scene transitions to the local tavern at line three, showing the majority villagers in close-ups, allows a generalization regarding the behaviour of the entire populace. The 8-syllable song thus *indirectly* establishes a moral code in conjunction with the concurrent images.

Furthermore, when various characters in the film act dishonestly, inhumanely, or indecently in their romantic relationships, the orchestra sing these well-known *bećarac* lines:

Trust a dog, but not a womanizer.
A womanizer's faith is like that of a dog.

To a lady's man that I am,
To cheat on a young girl is nothing at all.

(The Serbian original quoted in Leskovac 1958: 122)

The Roma are heard or seen performing either the whole song or the first stanza when the tavern owner Joska comes back from the forest, where he too had abused Goca; the song appears again when Trisa throws Goca out of his house in a lust-driven rage; when Reza and the pilot openly flirt in front of Trisa; and lastly, when the pilot refuses to commit to Reza and reveals that he is married. The interplay between the third and first persons may be seen to set up a contrast between the film narrative-level take on the morality of the characters' actions, and their self-perceptions with respect to the committed act.

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Interestingly, modifications are made to the *bećarac* original when the Roma orchestra perform a piece that can be heard as Reza and the pilot arrogantly demand of Trisa to leave them alone. The original runs:

Yesterday I was asked by a non-entity
O fair lass, would you like to make love?

Get away, you non-entity [implied in the Serbian original to be *male*],
You've asked me this already.

(The Serbian original in Leskovic 1958: 36)

The film version has 'My Reza' instead of 'O fair lass', inserting thus a *direct reference* to the target conceptual space character in an ironic reconstruction of Reza and the pilot's attitude.

As the scene unfolds, two more *bećarac* pieces indirectly characterize the actions in the target conceptual space as vulgar, and link them to a fundamental notion in the ethical system of the film – that of the *image*. As Reza and the pilot continue talking (without sound), the following *bećarac* can be heard:

I have a girl who is as beautiful as an *icon*,
And not all icons are like that.

(The Serbian original in Leskovic 1958: 60)

(Then, as Reza seems to disappear below the camera line:)

O did I stuff myself with candy,

(As Reza comes back into view with the pilot's helmet on her head:)

From my fellow's blue pants.

(The Serbian original in Leskovic 1958: 31)

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The songs performed by the Roma orchestra can also be *humorous or biting comments on the local mentality*. As the tavern owner Joska abuses Goca in the forest, the following *bećarac* establishes yet another contrast between the self-image and the reality of individual behaviour:

Hey, there is no mud on this road,
Only now and when it rains!

(The Serbian original in Leskovac 158: 56)

The same song is also performed when Trisa and Joska almost have a knife fight over Goca, emphasising further the above contrast.

Similarly, the Roma orchestra are shown (in a long shot, with the cello player approaching the camera in a resultant American shot that transitions to a close-up of the cello) performing a traditional majority song after the scene in which Joska and his unruly tavern friends mock the stubborn and overly defensive Trisa about his involvement with the village simpleton Goca:

We are the Northerners/Srem men, our blood is hot!
We smash glasses and kiss wenches,
Our blood is hot!

This song helps dismantle the majority self-image as well.

In a more humorous vein, the *bećarac* below can be heard in the background as a villager is walking past the ruins of the church, his stomach protruding from under the carelessly donned regional majority costume:

This fellow is walking by,
With his pants pulled up.
That's how you do it,
So that you don't get mud on them.

(The Serbian original in Leskovac 158: 56)

The Roma in the film also perform pieces that approximate two important aspects of narration – *indicating the characters' psychological states and plot developments*. Both types of Frame Setting functions should be understood as *based on inference*, given that what the Roma orchestra perform is only indirectly relatable to the target scene(s) via salient analogies. As the Roma orchestra perform the song below while the village teacher Reza wistfully looks out her window waiting for Trisa, the song can be said to be describing Reza's psychological state⁴⁴:

Why do these thoughts of mine strain so,
My experience tells me not to talk.
Fie upon you both,
Let my heart speak!

Trisa is seen in her room in the next shot, which is when the melody is backgrounded and then foregrounded again as they begin to make love:

The first look of your eye,
Like the shining sun,
Had taken my heart and
Enthralled it.

That I love you, O, my only one,
I will tell the whole world,
I will keep this secret, O my beloved one,
From you alone.

The narrative function of the song is complemented by ironic overtones - the historiographically confirmed genuine feeling behind it on the part of the author sets up yet again a stark contrast with the disingenuousness and subsequent vulgarity of Reza's

⁴⁴ The lyrics for the song were written by the Serbian Prince Mihailo Obrenovic (1832-1868) for Kleopatra Karadjordjevic, daughter of Aleksandar Karadjordjevic, a Serbian monarch from the rival dynasty. The music was composed by the Czech pianist Alois Kalauz (Kalauz 2003).

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treatment of Trisa. Furthermore, the very act of love-making unconstrained by deeper emotional considerations remains a far cry from the emotion as represented in the song – powerful but also kept away from its object.

A further indirect report on the characters' psychological states is found in the scene where the pilot informs Reza that he is married. The Roma can be heard performing the following folk song, in which the first stanza can be seen to identify Reza's state of mind and the reasons for it:

*A girl's heart is bleeding,
Young men won't marry.*

In order for girls not to grow old,
A tax is levied on ladies' men.

If lads won't do it willingly,
They should be made to marry by force.

At line one the scene transitions to the airplane about to depart from the air field, and at line five a camera pan reveals the Roma musicians playing at the pilot's send-off. The contrast between the song and image remains a source of irony.

Expanding the specifically *narrative* role of the Roma orchestra, the songs also announce *plot developments*. For example, as Goca dances at a wedding with a veil on her head at the beginning of the film, and the guests look at her with interest or mockingly, the Roma are shown performing the following traditional song:

An old Gypsy woman once lived in a village,
And had a beautiful daughter.
She loved her daughter more than the whole wide world.

A young lad lived in the village,
And had a beautiful household.
The Gypsy woman told her daughter
Do not go to that household.

Both stanzas can be understood to make indirect references to Goca's fate as Trisa's wife who will end up being murdered. Further, the possibility of an analogy between Goca as a majority character and the Roma girl in the song introduces a culturally-based parallelism between two kinds of social marginalization – the rejection and persecution of the disabled on the one hand, and of the Roma on the other.

Further, when Trisa actually murders his wife, as she is shown lying dead on a bench, the Roma orchestra can be heard singing the following *bećarac* piece with a Leonine rhyme:

The rosemary bends all the way down to the guards,
O lady's man, you sly dog, the cops are looking for you!

(The Serbian original in Leskovic 1958: 35)

The second line of the song can be understood as indirectly referring to Trisa and the coming police investigation of the murder that he has committed.

In the latter half of the film narrative, a more direct socio-political commentary can be identified in the Frame Setting conceptual spaces. The first such openly political narrative intervention frames the events at the pilot's send-off. On this occasion, Reza delivers an impassioned but stereotyped, ideologically intoned speech on progress and modernity in the new Yugoslavian society. As she wishes the pilot luck and happiness, and skips over his less than dignified arrival and conduct in the village, the Roma orchestra burst into song, which takes on the auditory features of a non-diegetic Frame Setting performance. The orchestra provide a rendition of a patriotic song whose lyrics were written by the Serbian priest Vasa Zivkovic in praise of a leading nineteenth century Serbian intellectual Svetozar Miletic, a vociferous advocate of the liberation and independence of South-Slavonic nations (Nenin 2013: 51):

Glory be to the Serb!
The eagle cries from overhead
To be heard from the depths.
Not to worry, grey bird.

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We're with you, our Svetozar Miletic!

As the plane takes off, and the people celebrate, the second stanza can be heard:

Glory be to the Serb!
We have been slaves for too long,
And now we are free.
Not to worry, grey bird.
We're with you, our Svetozar Miletic!

When the hour comes,
You call, and we will come!

A long shot of the Roma orchestra is shown, transitioning into the image of the airplane disappearing:

Glory be to the Serb!
Svetozar, you son of Serbia,
You are the pride of us all.
Not to worry, grey bird.
We're with you, our Svetozar Miletic!

The contrast between the high rhetoric of patriotic pathos and the personality and conduct of the pilot creates an almost parodic take on national politics centred around political hero-worship. As such, this scene can be interpreted as indirectly calling into question the cult of Communist personality and leadership.

A further example is provided in the scene that follows. Revealing deep economic frustrations and personal ambitions, the local crowd complain about the poor state that they are in, only to demand an actual airplane for the village. The Roma orchestra are heard then performing the following *bećarac*:

The wind is blowing, and the plums are falling on the ground.
The wretched poor always suffer.

Importantly, line two of the original is modified from ‘I like a pair of blue eyes’ (The Serbian original in Leskovic 1958: 88) to ‘The wretched poor always suffer’ – a telling and rather provocative statement that has implications for the purported success and feasibility of the Communist Party’s vision of the new Yugoslavian society. The same song can be heard after the police trick Trisa’s father into a mock-confession which reveals the truth about the murder that Trisa committed.

The last few Frame Setting instances tie the personal, the socio-cultural and the political together: as discussed above, the parade and Party elections are framed via the traditional song about the Srem and the mentality of its people; this Frame Setting arrangement is followed by two further salient scenes. In the first, the Roma can be heard performing two *bećarac*-style couplets as Reza interrupts and disorients the local priest delivering a sermon on the demons that have possessed the villagers:

I have a devilish fawn,
Winking at me even at church.

I have devilish eyes,
They would bring a priest out from behind the altar.

In the final scene, as the Roma are shown in a long shot riding through the village on a hearse carrying violin cases, they perform a *bećarac*-style five- and seven-syllable song:

Johnny’s made a car without wheels,
And drives it every day, always drunk.

The end of the world is coming,
Let it collapse, ‘tis no loss.

The song makes a tongue-in cheek, ambiguous statement that can be interpreted as profoundly political in aim and effect, with ‘Johnny’ and ‘car without wheels’ lending themselves to allegorical interpretations, referencing the Communist leadership and the

state of their making. The film ends on the second couplet, which reiterates the tone of merry nihilism with regard to both the socio-cultural and socio-political context.

In sum, the narrative interventions that the Roma characters make frame the film plot and characters *indirectly* by means of folk or authored songs. The *organization* and *evaluation* of the target conceptual space is based on narratively salient contrasts and analogies with the Frame Setting conceptual space content. In the cases where there is a contrast between the narrative and meta-narrative levels, it is invariably between *social facts* and *images or discourses*.

The film utilizes two socio-cultural givens – the fact that Yugoslavia had Roma orchestras (Radovanovic and Knezevic 2014:76), and that they performed *majority* folk songs at taverns and other public spaces (Van de Port 1999: 297). The semantic functions that the Roma orchestra have in the film do not therefore take as their input the socio-political specificities of the Yugoslavian *Roma*. Rather, the entire film can be conceptualized as a carefully crafted and (sometimes brutally) ironic commentary on the wider socio-political realities of Socialist Yugoslavia. To further bolster this interpretive perspective, the Roma as non-individuated characters are presented in a second-person configuration (i.e. facing the ‘camera/viewer’), often in a mid-shot or close-up (Figure 34). This defamiliarizing performative aspect of Frame Setting, as well as the orchestra’s culturally non-neutral physical appearance, mark off the Frame Setting space and make it more prominent in the narrative.

A small number of these meta-textual semantic functions have in fact been pointed out in the relevant literature on the Roma representations in the Yugoslavian cinema. For example, Mijic (2003) uses the term *ancient Greek chorus* to characterize similar roles of Roma. As *It Rains in My Village* is the first film to construct for the Roma a complex Frame Setting role that combines image with music performance, it may be useful to assess these observations here. While the broad semantic function of commentary is indisputable, there are reasons to qualify this observation and avoid using the term *ancient chorus*. For one, *commentary* is insufficiently nuanced or explanatorily adequate to describe and explain the exact set of semantic functions that the Roma have as Frame Setters. As these functions range from mood-setting devices through to actual narration, the term ‘commentary’ can be misleadingly simplistic. Furthermore, *ancient Greek chorus* is not appropriate for two main reasons:

- (1) The form and function of the ancient Greek chorus changed a number of times in literary history: in Aeschylus' plays it is a character on a par with all other characters, in Sophocles' it provides commentary on the actions of other characters, while in Euripides' plays it seems to have a predominantly lyrical role.
- (2) Further, the chorus is entirely diegetic in nature – it *interacts with* and is *perceived* by other *dramatis personae* (Foley 2003). This is not the case with Frame Setting as conceptualized in the present thesis – Frame Setters can enter into a range of logical relations with the narrative as a whole, but they never become fully formally and functionally diegetic.

If one were to commit to the use of the term *ancient chorus*, this concept could force the formal analysis into locating analogies between Greek drama and modern film, in search of theoretical justifications rather than a model that fits the data best. The notion of Frame Setting, on the other hand, allows a nuanced analysis based on actual film data.

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Purisa Djordjevic's war tetralogy *The Girl* (Devojka, 1965), *The Dream* (1966), *The Morning* (1967), and *The Noon* (1968) provides significant contributions to the formal variety and innovation of the Yugoslavian New Film. The three films share many features of form: the editing is fast-paced, and employs *montage* techniques, with mutually very different images juxtaposed for the purposes of setting up salient semantic contrasts. In addition to editing and provocative imagery, dialogue, humour, and irony are also used in these non-linear narratives to challenge the common discourse and the high rhetoric of war and Socialism.

There are two meta-textual devices in the trilogy, both of which function as Frame Setters. The first can be seen in *The Dream*: at the beginning of the film, a vulgarized ideological discourse is used as a platform to play out inter-group tensions in a scene in which 'The Gypsy' and a number of ethnic Serbs exchange abusive comments. The following scene unfolding in the same conceptual space shows an armed conflict between the Yugoslav Partisans and Germans. The Frame Setter shot is inserted between these two diegetic sequences, and consists of an image of a Roma boy, shown smiling, dressed in

rags, standing in front of a map of Europe showing all countries marked with the swastika. As no continuity is established with the previous and following scenes, and as the Roma boy makes no other appearance in the film, the image can be classified as part of a distinct, type two conceptual space, with figurative image content functioning as a *non-diegetic* Frame Setter, apparently contrasting the *sinister* and the *innocent*. Naturally, as a visual sign without verbal scaffolding, it remains constitutionally ambiguous but also sufficiently suggestive to provide a connotative frame to the diegesis.

The second instance of Frame Setting in the trilogy can be found in *The Noon*, and is achieved via individuation. In this film The Gypsy is referred to as Straia, a rounded character whose *specific personal experience* puts into perspective the social context and system of governance that he is living under. Straia has the role of Frame Setter a total of three times – twice in a direct address to the camera, and once in a voiceover detailing his innermost thoughts about the Communist Revolution in Yugoslavia. In the direct address to the camera, as the causal link between the originary and Frame Setting conceptual spaces is broken, the two spaces ought to be understood as overlapping, i.e. sharing the physical space and all the elements therein, but with independent timelines. The resultant Frame Setting space is a type one conceptual space (images and causally linked sounds). The voiceover, on the other hand, is a distinct, type four conceptual space (non-diegetic sounds), consisting of verbalized character thoughts framing the type one target conceptual space.

Straia breaks the fourth wall in the very first shot as he addresses the camera and updates the viewer on his current status – he is no longer the exuberantly ironic Captain Straia of *The Morning* after the Revolution. Rather, he is a lowly Belgrade shoe shiner in an apparent Communist idyll:

I'm Straia, a shoeshiner in the capital of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Belgrade. Straia - that's my name. The City President is my war buddy. For my box, my shop, he's given me the most beautiful spot in the city. [Cut]

[Voiceover over aerials shots] The square is called Slavija. Behind me is the Slaviya Cinema. I can hear the noise when a film is being screened. But I don't care much for the live image. I am not used to looking up. I mean – up at the screen. [Cut]

[A customer says – Come on, shine those shoes, don't *sing*! Straia looks at the camera again] I'm no braggart [Looks up at the customer] Witness the scars from the war. I like to talk while I work. And when I talk, I always stray a bit from the topic. I draw attention to my commendable deeds.

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That's how it is, when you don't have friends, you have to sing your own praises.



Figure 35 - Straia shown addressing the camera.

Straia's tone is very different from the tone in the previous films, and ranges from helpless sarcasm to silent resignation. In the example above, Straia's words ring ironic when he says that his shoe shining job was secured by his war comrade (in an implicitly *lofty* but non-existent capacity in the contemporaneous administrative hierarchies). The conspicuous Communist iconography can be seen in the frame behind Straia, who is shown from a *low* angle in an American shot. As he describes the space around him, the scene cuts to *aerial* shots of the Belgrade city centre, shown to Straia's ongoing speech about him not being used to *looking up*. No sooner does he say those words than he corrects himself - an attempt to cancel the politically dangerous play on words whose transparency only puts more emphasis on the criticism behind it. It can be concluded that the *up-down* spatial dimension is used here to develop an important narrative-wide conceptual metaphor: differences in the social status persist in a purportedly classless society (shoe shiner vs. President of the City), and are mirrored in the image juxtaposition (the high-rises vs Straia's position presented from a low angle). The implied social differences gain in importance further on in the film, when the plot events start to cluster around deep divisions and dangerous political rifts.

Furthermore, the fact that Straia then distances himself from the 'live images' and insists on past achievements (which seem largely useless in the new 'scheme' of things)

introduces a frequent motif in Yugoslavian New Film – a discrepancy between the past and the present, and between images and facts.

The relationship between the diegetic and Frame Setting spaces becomes more complex halfway through the monologue because Straia is interrupted by a customer demanding a shoe shine and rebuking him for *singing*, which presses home the causal separation between the two conceptual spaces. Djordjevic maintains a formal play of the textual and the meta-textual in the scenes that follow: a number of characters in the film introduce themselves as actors in a quick succession, breaking the filmic illusion. Importantly, the character of Straia does not do so – he remains an essential meta-narrative regulator of meaning, which role would not be possible if he too were to engage in meta-fictional undermining of the narrative itself.

As regards the formal semantic functions that the Frame Setting space has in this instance, Straia seems to explicitly *organize* the causal chain in the target conceptual space (i.e. set up the past and present), and then *refer to* and *evaluate his own* status as a target conceptual space character. His direct addresses to the camera can therefore be interpreted as instances of *character narration*. Straia's voiceover retains its narrative function when the character narration scene cuts to the aerial shots *within* the Frame Setting space.

As the events in the film unfold, and the Tito-Stalin split pushes the Yugoslavian society into a crisis, Straia is shown walking down the riverbank contemplating the conflict in a voiceover:

I thought that the first day of peace was the most important day of my life.
But, a day has come that has put fear in my heart. That we are no longer
friends with the Russians. What kind of a day are you, 28 June 1948?

His train of thought identifies his intimately held political views, and rounds him off as a character. The characterization has a further Frame Setting role – it can be said to introduce the paradoxical opposition between *peace* and *fear* in the new society.

Straia re-dons his uniform and joins old friends hoping to participate in the goings-on on an equal footing. However, as they start exhibiting excessive distrust and cruelty in their dealings with the suspected pro-Russian 'elements', Straia leaves and goes back to his shoe box. The ensuing scenes of collective ideological pathos in the streets of Belgrade, accompanied by the official radio news voiceover, are intercut with a shot of Straia looking

straight into the camera in silence. The film's ethical stance is completed via this Frame Setting technique. Straia's views (ironic or not) structure the ethical space of ideological practice. His direct addresses to the camera serve to invite and confront the viewers in a second-person Frame Setting configuration, reminding them of the paradoxically exclusionary nature of the new Yugoslavian society – its inability to eradicate old social differences or to accept and accommodate new ones. It is precisely in this liminal space that the Yugoslavian social system reveals its shortcomings.

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One of the most innovative experiments in the Yugoslavian New Film period comes in the form of *Burdus* (1970), directed by the Serbian painter and film maker Mica Popovic. *Burdus* was based on a ten-part television series *The Musos* (*Muzikanti*, dir. Dragoslav Lazic, 1969). The character of Burdus (played by the Serbian actor Jovan Janicijevic) in the television series was presented as a mixture of Roma stereotypes (a shrewd businessman who is nonetheless very emotional, impulsive, and righteous) and catchy personal details (Burdus's wife Raika left him for a local Serbian tinsmith, which sets Burdus on a road of self-pity, and makes many of his performances distinctly emotional). The series also tackles some of the politically sensitive issues of the day, but in a cautious, limited, and humorous manner.

The film makes use of Burdus's background as a television character only to *expand* and *deconstruct* it thoroughly. The narrative is non-linear and often changes pace. The editing systematically contrasts diverse images, situations, and characters, and makes plentiful use of collage, combining archival footage with fictional or fictionalized segments. Burdus goes on a journey of self-discovery, contemplating the contradictions of the Yugoslavian society, most importantly the important contrast between the new social order and urban life style on the one hand, and a more colourful rural culture on the other. A parallel story line follows Burdus's attempts to re-unite with his estranged musician friends and wife.

The meta-textual representational strategies in the film take two forms:

- Frame Setters (Burdus and Raika, played in the film by the Serbian actress Seka Sablic)

- Meta-character (Burdus), understood as a type of character whose very fictional nature and processes of construction are addressed in the filmic text.

These are discussed in turn.

The Frame Setting techniques in the film take complex forms in the interactions between the image track and sound track. At the beginning of the film, Burdus's voiceover runs in parallel with two scenes: the first is reconstructed from the television series, and shows the musicians and former friends on a merry-go-round; in the other, Burdus is shown walking slowly carrying his double bass. As Burdus's facial expressions appear to be intermittently correlated with the content of the voiceover, it can be safely assumed that the voiceover is in significant part a representation of his train of thought. The Frame Setting technique can therefore be formally identified as the mapping between a distinct, type four conceptual space of Burdus's thoughts onto the target conceptual space wherein the plot unfolds:

And so, these troubles of ours have passed too. You see, my brother, no one gave a damn about us. Weddings and country fairs, mud and poverty. People likes [*sic*] to humiliate, what can you do... And afterwards these TV folks came by, that Zika Lazic⁴⁵, and so all of us told it like it was, to feel better, and have a good time, over a brandy. Swear to God. And then, they start praising us - the bitter cake that I worry about every morning when I wake up. Not likely that the Communism I imagined will be realized - friends all, and no suffering in the cold, alone. As soon as you worry that Communism isn't here ... Yes, it's true, we had a hard time when we were penniless - Raiko⁴⁶, Cane, and myself, but still - we were OK. And Cane... when you're all set, you can't move a leg, like someone had hammered you to the ground with nails. And so nothing, nothing comes of Communism. We have left the bear behind, thank God, but there's likely no escape from my troubles now. This TV thing and the folks following us like they would a bear, the folks that separated the three of us, have put a veil over us for the rest of our lives. I'm going now, even if it's to Germany. So what? True, the Krauts shot my children, but those were Fascists, damn them all! Now things are different. Now there's peace and order in Germany.

⁴⁵ Zivorad Zika Lazic was in fact the scriptwriter for the television series *The Musos*. 'Zika Lazic' makes one more appearance as an in-joke and extra-textual allusion in this film - in the fight scene at a local tavern, the tinsmith introduces himself as the *son of the late Zika Lazic*.

⁴⁶ As a majority character, Raiko is a musician friend of Burdus and a former member of their orchestra.

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This Frame Setting space provides a wealth of information about Burdus and his life, rounding him off as a character and thus providing a personal perspective on the social issues that are addressed in it. Conceptually, Burdus establishes and *organizes* the plot timeline, setting up a contrast between the narrative past and present along a number of semantic dimensions: firstly, Burdus provides a personalized *evaluation* of the success and general feasibility of the project of Yugoslavian Communism:

... Not likely that the Communism I imagined will be realized -
friends all, and no suffering in the cold, alone...

This diagnosis is tightly linked to the problem of the *image* of the Roma:

We have left the bear behind, thank God, but [...] This TV thing and
the folks following us like they would a bear, [...] have put a veil
over us for the rest of our lives ...

What seems to have changed between the narrative past and present is the nature of the image that anchors the Roma to a specific position in the social fabric: while the dancing bears are things of the past, a new, television- and, consequently, image-saturated, culture has arisen, exerting an equal amount of pressure in both the Roma and majority characters' lives⁴⁷. In Burdus's interpretive intervention, the new Yugoslav Socialist society still maintains a stratification based on celebrity and an old/new fascination with material values.

The entire voiceover is broad in interpretive scope, and resembles a meditation on social issues in which the Roma and their specific position in the Yugoslavian society seem a legitimate starting point. The direct address to the 'listener' ('You see, my brother') from the beginning of the voiceover constructs a second-person conceptual space configuration, adding to the dynamism of the message, and blurring further the distinction between the character's train of thought and a Frame Setting intervention in the overall narrative space.

⁴⁷ Cane is Serbian in both the television series and the film.

Burdus's estranged wife Raika effects the second Frame Setting intervention after she meets with Burdus in the target conceptual space to borrow money. In the scene on the marsh water edge, she confirms she is in a relationship with the tinsmith, and defends him as he only gives her 'a clip round the ear once a week'. As she runs away along the water edge, a *voiceover* is heard:

[Raika shown running along the water edge in a marshland] Us traveller women are always on the move. I loved you, Burdus, while I loved you. But you weren't able to keep me, to not give me away. [Cut to Burdus and a friend in the city] The tinsmith is a well-off repairman. I draw little flowers on the tin sheets, and paint them red, blue, and yellow. [Cut to Raika, shown in an American shot, facing the camera] Then he cuts them with them scissors, and decorates verandas and gates. Wherever we go, I see my tin flowers. [Raika looks into the camera, and says, What did you mans [sic] want? in a harsh voice. Voiceover continues. Camera slides to the water in front of Raika, showing her reflection] Strong when a woman is looking at you from way away. And then the same old thing, when there's nothin' you can do, you hit. Is that fate, is this how things have to turn out when the song and cuddles are over?

This is a very complex Frame Setting instance in terms of narrative form. It starts off as a distinct, type four conceptual space (non-diegetic sound), mapping onto the target space of the plot without a correlation between the image track and the sound track (which is clear from the scene with Burdus and his friend resting in the city - an insert edited into this sequence). When Raika stops and addresses the 'camera', the target space transitions into a type one Frame Setting space with the second person configuration, overlapping with the target conceptual space in terms of physical space and character. Lastly, as the camera slides down towards the water, both the target conceptual space and the type four (voiceover) Frame Setting space resume.

The Frame Setting instance above also helps round off Raika's character as well as effecting an intervention in the narrative space. In her defence of the tinsmith, Raika seems to have fallen prey to just the material values that Burdus passionately argues against in his Frame Setting monologue. Further, she seems to identify with a Roma community-internal social type, justifying thus her affair with the tinsmith:

Us traveller women are always on the move.

Halfway through the Frame Setting instance, it becomes clear that this is also a contribution to the discussion of the local mentalities: Raika looks provocatively into the camera and openly challenges a possibly critical take on her behaviour by the hypothetical viewer. In sporadically ungrammatical Serbian, she also addresses and *evaluates* the presumed violent streak in (Balkan) men, surfacing once the men gain access to women. As a Frame Setting intervention, this is all the more important as it sets up a stark contrast with the views of Raika as a character in the target conceptual space, where she justifies and defends the tinsmith physically abusing her.

In more general terms, both Burdus and Raika organize and populate the target conceptual space timeline, while at the same time tackling socio-cultural issues, and evaluating them in terms of the Yugoslavian society's inability to truly change for the better. In addition, a more direct commentary is provided by Burdus regarding the reach and success of the political sphere projects. Both characters address the 'viewer' and thus increase the complexity and consequent dynamism of the Frame Setting communicative technique.

As a *meta-character*, Burdus problematizes further the role of the *image* in the socio-political sphere. He appears in a fully intertextual segment of the film, wherein his memories of the war (mentioned briefly in the television series and in the Frame Setting instance at the beginning of the film) are *constructed* by means of short segments from two other films starring *the same actor* – *The Demolition Squad* (*Diverzanti*, 1967, dir. Hajrudin Krvavac) and *The Tough Ones* (*Delije*, 1968, also directed by Mica Popovic). In the former, one of the protagonists, Raven (Gavran), is a Yugoslav Roma Partisan whose entire family was executed by the Germans, and who is now on a mission to destroy a German air field⁴⁸. In the latter, a majority Yugoslav Partisan is portrayed as traumatized by his brother's execution of a Nazi soldier. This intertextual segment in *Burdus* is intercut with images of Roma children running around in a desolate area to the sound of machine gun fire, and German soldiers advancing. Interestingly, the majority character of Doctor from *The Demolition Squad*, played by the same actor (Rade Markovic), also appears in the target conceptual space of *Burdus*. The Doctor is now a taxi driver, taking Burdus to the airport on his journey to Germany, and the two have the following bit of dialogue:

⁴⁸ For a detailed discussion of the film and the character of Raven (Gavran), see chapter section 5.2.2.1.

- Raven, what do they call you now?
- Now they call me Burdus.

There is a sense in which in this meta-textual strategy the social myth of Burdus (Volk 2001: 394) is forcefully deconstructed into an interplay of media discourses in the context of the expanding landscape of Yugoslavian traditional media: film and ideology shaping collective memory, actors reduced to established images, and physical spaces to imaginary ones. Moreover, the strategy presses home the point that Burdus is indeed a *construct*, while at the same time putting the films and their characters into an overt inter-textual web of associations.

At the end of the film, as Burdus is about to board a train, the train ticket inspector praises *his TV performances*. In its self-referentiality (i.e. featuring a musician-turned-celebrity character, and pointing out in this manner the fact that the actor Jovan Janicijevic had become strongly identified with the character of Burdus), this scene completes the deconstruction of the *image* of Burdus as well as the consideration of the *impact of images* on the society at large.

*

In its thematic and formal experimentation, Yugoslavian New Film challenged the prevalent Communist discourse as well as its array of socio-political identities firmly rooted in images. The Roma meta-textual roles in this period brought to the fore the darker aspects of human psychology, a frustrated desire for freedom, and a direct socio-political critique that juxtaposed the social realities and the illusion of images. Similar techniques and strategies can be identified in the work of New Film's fellow travellers.

6.3 Narrative experiments on the periphery: New Film fellow travellers

Even though his *oeuvre* is not typically classified as part of Yugoslavian New Film, the Serbian director Dragoljub Ivkov's feature *I Am Poor But Angry* (*Siroma' sam al' sam besan*, 1970) employs narrative techniques and strategies that fall squarely within this innovative, filmic experiment-inclined movement.

Ivkov embarked on a film career at the famous Kino Club in Belgrade in the late 1950s, at a time when some of the club regulars included the future New Film luminaries, e.g. Dusan Makavejev, Zivojin Pavlovic, and Kokan Rakonjac (Volk 2001: 384; Goulding 2002: 60). This loose group of film-makers authored a number of short films and documentaries which 'eschewed aesthetic conformity and experimented with a wide variety of themes and styles' (Goulding 2002: 61). The bold new political stance and non-conformist poetics quickly attracted the attention of the Yugoslavian authorities, leading to the banning of some of Belgrade Kino Club's output.

First and foremost a production designer, Ivkov made his feature debut with *Send A Man At 1:30* (*Posalji coveka u pola dva*, 1967). Numerous provocative close-ups notwithstanding, the story in this film is told in a linear, classical story-telling style. It was not until 1970 and his second feature *I Am Poor But Angry* that Ivkov employs the full range of experimental narrative techniques now considered staples of the New Film movement. These narrative techniques cluster around a single character – a Roma man referred to as Cajkas (conversational northern Serbian and Eastern Croatian for 'performer of folk melodies'; played by Branislav Milenkovic).

The film opens with a young barber by the name of Sava (Ljubisa Samardzic) arriving in a village in the Serbian north, and taking over the business at the local barber shop. In the ensuing parallel plot lines, he strikes a deal with a local Party official, and seduces a number of village girls. When the deal falls through, and one of the seduced girls dies, Sava leaves the village with the tavern singer, disillusioned but hopeful.

In the interactions with the Serbian and Hungarian villagers, Cajkas is largely teased, offended, or kept at a distance by the two majority populations. However, as a self-declared village buffoon, he is also assigned a very complex Frame Setting role for a total of 16 narrative interventions. He is a rounded character in the Frame Setting space, and often speaks and sings from the first-person perspective in his interventions. The analysis of the form of these interventions yields the following Frame Setting conceptual spaces and narrative strategies:

1. Distinct type four conceptual space (non-diegetic music, with or without lyrics, sung by Cajkas).
2. Overlapping type one conceptual space, wherein Cajkas *invariably* constructs a second-person configuration by directly addressing the 'viewer', i.e. by looking at

the camera and using the 2nd person pronoun ‘you’ as well as verbs marked for 2nd person plural. Importantly, the Frame Setting space here shares everything but *sound* with the target conceptual space. For example, at the beginning of the film, Sava passes by Cajkas on a horse-drawn sleigh, and *nods in greeting* while Cajkas is performing a Frame Setting song on the subject of the new barber’s arrival.

3. Type four and type one conceptual spaces can run in parallel, each performing a separate Frame Setting function. For example, the independent non-diegetic sound of the tamboura can accompany Cajkas as he comments on the target conceptual space goings-on.
4. Type four conceptual space can transition into a type one conceptual space. For example, Cajkas is heard performing a song *while being shown* in the *target conceptual space* engaged in a different action. Cajkas then finishes the song by actually articulating the last few words in the type one Frame Setting space.
5. The most complex Frame Setting strategy involves the synchronization of type one and type four conceptual spaces. For example, Cajkas is shown in type one conceptual space singing a Frame Setting song while taking a walk, catching pigeons, or fishing. The music for the song, however, comes from a type four conceptual space, containing the non-diegetic song melody performed on the tamboura.

This Frame Setting complexity is counterbalanced in the film by a fairly straightforward target conceptual space plot line, which is fully causal and linear, and featuring no instances of psychological content representation (i.e. no conceptual spaces containing trains of thought, emotions expressed via inner speech, or dreams).

The semantic functions that the Frame Setting strategies have in the narrative are as complex as their formal features. Below is a break-down of these functions:

Indicating	(1) Characters’ psychological states
	(2) Future events
	- <i>Anterior narration</i> ⁴⁹

⁴⁹ As Frame Setting spaces are causally (and therefore temporally) separate from the target conceptual space, the notions of *anterior* and *ulterior/simultaneous* narration should be taken to mean ‘already presented in the narrative’ and ‘being presented’ / ‘to be presented in the narrative.’

Most of the Frame Setting intervention types are instantiated here. Firstly, Cajkas calls himself a fool, which links his non-diegetic character role in this film to the long-standing tradition of literary Fools, as well as to earlier instances of Roma as Fools in the present research (e.g. Jelenka as a diegetic Fool in *The Legends of Anika*⁵¹). As a result, this statement fixes the tone and mode of address in the other Frame Setting instances as well.

The story is then contextualized regionally, and the region characterized in terms of local mentality traits and typical activities. As the new barber passes by, Cajkas wonders who he is, but in light of the following verse it is clear that this should be understood as a narrative ‘hook’ of sorts, a question that sets the story in motion. The meta-narrative aspect of the question is then underscored by an instance of *ulterior narration*, where the plot event time and Frame Setting time diverge: Cajkas says, ‘That’s how it *started*, I say!’, overtly positioning the film plot *outside* the Frame Setting space, and implicitly identifying himself as a *reliable* and *knowledgeable* narrator. The Frame Setting instance ends on a note of irreverent irony regarding the socio-political conditions, with Cajkas looking at the ‘camera’ (or rather, ‘viewer’), and establishing a second-person configuration in the Frame Setting conceptual space.

The film also ends on a Frame Setting note. As the barber leaves behind the village and with it his dreams of riches and quick success, Cajkas is shown looking at him and the tavern singer. To the sound of type four conceptual space tamboura, he says the following:

Every winter has its end,
Winter has passed, and so has the story.
Well then, so long!

The lines above *organize* the target conceptual space timeline, but the mention of ‘story’ is far more important semantically. It is via this term that the plot events may be understood as fictional, and the Frame Setting intervention as an instance of non-self-referential meta-fiction (i.e. because Cajkas does not also identify *his own* Frame Setting interventions as *fictional*).

The sound of the tamboura accompanying Cajkas’s Frame Setting interventions is closely associated with Cajkas, but has a related independent role as well. In the total of

⁵¹ Analysed in greater detail in chapter section 5.3.1.

three Frame Setting instances, a melody is performed on the tamboura that is clearly identifiable as a northern Serbian folk piece. It appears during the opening credits and initial scenes, moments before the barber embarks on another romantic adventure, and finally in the last scene, running parallel to Cajkas's monologue. In its Frame Setting role, it *associates* the target conceptual space identity with, and underscores it by means of, the corresponding regional sonic background.

As a Frame Setter, Cajkas also indicates characters' psychological states. For example, as the barber slowly becomes part of the village community, Cajkas asserts that,

The village accepts our barber,
But *wants to frame* him...

Further, when Sava learns from a customer that the woman he is interested in has a violent boyfriend, Cajkas intervenes:

Likely jealous, the heart burns,
No objection, or excuse...

Although all the Frame Setting interventions are authored by Ivkov (who is the script-writer as well as the director of the film), some of them closely resemble the folk musical tradition of the *becarac*. For instance, when an ethnic Hungarian girl, Marika, rejects Sava's forward advances, Cajkas comments:

Last night, my flirt took me home,
And kissed me three times at my door.

*Had he waited, he would have had it,
This kid has ideals.*

[Spoken] Eventually, she would have let him have it.

This Frame Setting instance resembles the Roma orchestra inserts in Aleksandar Petrovic's film *It Rains in My Village* in terms of both form and method. The song's first couplet has the form of a *becarac* (whereas the second does not, as the verses have eight

syllables each), and the indication of the character in question's psychological state is provided indirectly, via a song that also helps maintain a distinctly regional 'feel' of the story.

What is most striking about Cajkas's Frame Setting interventions are his pointers to events in the narrative future. In addition to the *ulterior narration* in the first Frame Setting instance, there are as many as three different types of *anterior narration*, each with a different communicative strategy. At crucial points in the narrative, Cajkas announces adverse turns of events that the barber would have to suffer through:

- (1) ...You'll see! [used twice]
- (2) ...But fate has something else in store for him!
- (3) ...He's in for it!

In the first type, he creates the second-person configuration in the Frame Setting space, speaking from a position of narrative authority. The second type makes use of a rhetorically more complex announcement and avoids the pseudo-dialogic form. The third is conceptually the simplest yet pragmatically the most direct, close as it is to an excited exclamation of an on-looker. Adding more complexity to his narrative interventions, Cajkas also *references* preceding narrative acts as a whole. When Marika rejects the barber at the church again even though she still loves him, Cajkas sings the following song, inserting a spoken question to that effect:

Will she, or won't she –
Their flowers will wither.
[speaking] *What did I say?*
Fly, dove, and take my barber's letter,
That I am forever yours
My love guarantees.
Fly, fly, let the whole world know.

Past and present actions and events receive a conceptually more complex treatment. When the barber spends the night with Marika's sister, Cajkas is shown at daybreak, sitting on a roof sweeping the chimney and singing:

An entanglement, a complication,
I did not expect that.
Poor lad, he's in deep.
Male flirts sow wild oats,
And then they cry.

This Frame Setting intervention is interesting because it combines a rhetorical personalization trick, whereby Cajkas seems to step out of his role as an all-knowing Frame Setter, and express surprise at the plot events. Needless to say, this device only contributes to the dynamism and an almost conversational flow of the intervention. More importantly, Cajkas uses direct reference ('he') and indirect proverbial form ('they') to *evaluate* Sava's actions.

A similar Frame Setting instance takes Cajkas closer to the domain of socio-political commentary. Towards the end of the film, as the factory deal falls through, the villagers start to mock Sava's political engagement, and Marika's now ex-boyfriend makes his reconciliatory move. Cajkas sings:

Who engages in politics takes a risk -
Where two fight, the third person profits.

Cajkas also captions local customs represented in the image track. As a local winter ritual is being performed, Cajkas is seen in a tree, above the people involved in the festivities, identifying the goings-on:

It is an old custom to bid farewell to the old God's year.

As Marika dies and the film transitions into a tragedy, Cajkas's Frame Setting becomes decidedly more philosophical. Marika's family combines her marriage ceremony and burial in order to avoid the social stigma of extramarital pregnancy and death from the woes of love. Cajkas recites from the freshly dug grave:

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All that lives has an end.
What comes goes.
The wedding is but a custom,
Two lives, minus one.
The bride is gone, leaving the boy,
May she rest in peace! Amen.

And finally, when Sava's barber shop is set on fire, and he is forced to leave, a song is heard performed by Cajkas, wherein he references Sava's pipe dream of developing a 'wireless hair dryer':

Like a soap bubble, life bursts a hole.
Trouble bursts, and chokes.
Everyone has their own wireless hair dryer.

The formal and semantic complexity of the Frame Setting procedures in this film are reflected in the complexity of Cajkas as a character in this narrative role. Not only does he self-classify as a village Fool, but he also correctly recognizes his out-of-place position in the local community ('a female postman, a vulture with a domain'), and his active marginalization by the two majority groups. These observations are few, but sufficient to establish a form of self-categorization. For example, when Cajkas is thrown out of Marika's father's backyard, he looks into the camera, and says, 'Destiny!'. This word may have wider connotations in a society depicted as bucolic but also very focused on preserving the boundaries of its moral order.

Taken together, the Frame Setting interventions in *I Am Poor But Angry* largely focus on formally complex ways of telling the story, and paint a rich picture of the local customs and mentality. Although present, politics takes the backseat to narration and film ethnography, and is rarely addressed in any detail.

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By employing the Roma as meta-textual devices, the authors of the Yugoslavian New Film effectively changed the contemporaneous film making practices in their culture

of origin. While these new representational strategies and concomitant forms of expression were by no means binding, they formed a complex landscape that allowed other authors to engage with it and modify it further, in a process best understood as the creative transgression of norms (Bordwell 1988: 24).

As one of the most versatile anticipators of the New Film movement (Goulding 2002: 59), Fadil Hadzic experimented with a wide variety of genres, narrative patterns, and cinematic techniques (Volk 2001: 370; 372; 389), invariably re-interpreting them in innovative ways. In his experimental comedy *As Days Go By* (*Idu dani*, 1970), the Roma minority is represented in a manner that reflects but does not mirror in full the meta-textual interventions used by his contemporaries.

The film does not have a classical plot structure; rather, in an *hommage* to *Waiting for Godot*, discrete sequences featuring various extraordinary characters and surreal events follow one another in quick succession, always centring around a majority protagonist who is caught in the existential situation of waiting at a crossroads. The Roma make a total of three appearances. The characters are in fact members of an orchestra and have *no formal* Frame Setting roles. However, their on-screen musical performances resemble closely the similar motifs in A. Petrovic's *It Rains in My Village* and D. Ivkov's *I Am Poor but Angry* with respect to scene composition and song content.

The orchestra perform songs for the protagonist-turned-viewer (and customer) in the first two appearances, in a *tableau* format recognizable from Petrovic's film (i.e. with the musicians lined up and facing the 'camera').



Figure 36 - The Roma orchestra perform in a *tableau* format.

The music for the first song was authored by the Serbian composer Vojislav Kostic, and the lyrics written by the short story writer and humourist Brana Crncevic. The lyrics include opaque coinages and seem to express a quiet existential anxiety that complements well the general tone of the film:

Life has sent friends
Far and wide,
As days go by.

While at night darkness is born,
And ships sink at sea,
Days go by.

The *moto* is *motoing*,
And the *oto* is *otoing*⁵²,
As days go by.

Milk is singing in cows,
And burning on the stove,
As days go by.

The cat cries over her kitten,
And the mother over her child,
As days go by.'

The main orchestra vocal is a woman (played by the majority actress Ljiljana Cincar-Danilovic, who uses a highly idiosyncratic voice and mannerisms in this role), which makes *As Days Go By* stand apart from most films in the corpus⁵³.

⁵² The Serbian original uses the same root of these words, which are in themselves meaningless and thus open to free association.

⁵³ Interestingly, one of the musicians happens to be played by the same ethnic Roma featured in Petrovic's *It Rains in My Village*. In a sense, even actor identity helps establish a meta-textual landscape in this corpus subgroup.

The orchestra perform for the protagonist in their second appearance as well. The piece was also composed by Vojislav Kostic, but the lyrics belong to the corpus of Yugoslavian Roma oral poetry⁵⁴. The second performance is therefore closer to an instance of film ethnography than to a *pseudo*-Frame Setting technique, contributing an ingredient into the complex societal mix of characters and backgrounds that the film constructs:

I have put up a swing in a plum tree,
And the child feels well.

The rain falls, and bathes him,
The leaves rustle down, and cover him,
A goat passes by, and nurses him,
The wind blows, and cradles him.

Sleep peacefully, my son,
Do as your mother says, and do not cry.

Hadzic does not engage in socio-political commentary in these film segments. The Roma offer the two performances that adhere to the target conceptual space logic, and only resemble Frame Setting in terms of the performance format and the content of the first song. Hadzic can therefore be said to have creatively modified the pool of available Roma representational norms and roles, combining a fully diegetic performance with Frame Setting content.

As Days Go By is also the last film of the decade to feature the Roma in anything resembling a Frame Setting intervention. In Yugoslavia the political climate was changing rapidly in the early 1970s, with deep political conflicts resulting in the fault lines along which Yugoslavia would break apart a decade later. Between 1967 and 1971, Croatian nationalism re-asserted itself, followed by a settling of accounts with the new generation of Serbian communists. When the 1974 Constitution of Yugoslavia was issued, devolving many state-level powers to individual federal units of Yugoslavia, the economy was

⁵⁴ Collected, translated into Serbian, and later published by Rade Uhlik and Branko V. Radicevic (Uhlik and Radicevic 1982).

stagnating, the military was quickly acquiring the role of the unifying power in the construction of Yugoslavian political identity, and negative selection reigned in the institutional sphere (Cox 2002: 108-109).

The Yugoslavian film industry did not fare any better. Between 1973 and 1977 Yugoslavian film production reached its lowest point since 1960, with no more than 20 features made annually. After the formal experiments and thematic audacity of the 1960s, with many New Film authors now in exile or marginalized, predictable 'heroic Partisan films, light comedies, action-adventure films, and historical dramas' dominated the market (Goulding 2002: 143). It was not until the late 1970s that Yugoslavian cinema, and with it experiments with Roma representations, began to be revitalized.

6.4 New Yugoslav Cinema and the 1980s social malaise

As the political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia deepened in the 1980s, a new film making front was developing. In addition to the re-orientation to the themes of social malaise and anxiety⁵⁵, The New Yugoslav Cinema, as it is sometimes called⁵⁶, brought the Czech School of authors' narrative distance and irony in the story-telling methods, and the formal daring of many independent voices (Goulding 143-149; Volk: 172-182).

Some of the Yugoslavian New Film authors were still active on the eve of the new decade. The first instance of meta-textuality in Roma representations in this period is a Frame Setting device in the 1980 film *Eight Kilos of Happiness (Osam kila sreće)* by Purisa Djordjevic. The film is concerned with a relationship between a majority Yugoslav Partisan and a Roma girl during the Second World War. It is told in a non-linear fashion, employing a number of narrative techniques largely associated with the 1960s New Film, e.g. montage sequences and documentary footage. The Roma feature as a group in a variety of roles, but the Frame Setting devices in fact consist of a single important image combined with a song sung by Roma children. Reminiscent of *The Dream* by the same author, the image is of a red surface with an inscription in Romani and Serbian:

⁵⁵ Analysed in greater detail in chapter section 5.3.3.

⁵⁶ Most notably in Daniel Goulding's 2002 study of Yugoslavian cinema *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience*.

Happy when I'm in the forest,
Next to the fire⁵⁷,

followed by the text in Serbian:

Sang a Gypsy song
the children who were murdered afterwards.

As such, it is a type three conceptual space (non-figurative visual content), and is meant to operate in unison with the song sung by the Roma children. The song starts off as a type four conceptual space (non-diegetic sound), but then transforms into a full type one, distinct conceptual space, with children seen singing the song in Romani standing in concentric circles. The two Frame Setting spaces are synchronized meta-narratively with respect to the verses shown and sung; they *classify* via description the life-style of the caravan Roma in the film. The bit of text in Serbian has one more function – announcing the murder of the children could be argued to reference the crimes committed against the Roma during the Second World War, as well as to sensitize the viewer to this fact by foregrounding it visually and aurally. Within the narrative, it builds a context around the depicted Roma community and with it an *evaluative* ethical framework.

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Around the same time Purisa Djodjevic made *Eight Kilos of Happiness*, a member of the new generation of film-makers, Serbian director Slobodan Sijan, engaged with the micro-domain of Roma representational norms and strategies in stylistically and thematically innovative ways. In his feature *Who Is Singing Over There? (Ko to tamo peva?*, 1980), set on the eve of the April 6th Nazi bombing of Belgrade, a group of passengers travel to Belgrade by bus through rural Serbia. Their typified quirks and flaws are efficiently diagnosed and add up to a sweeping portrayal of the local mentalities set against the tragic historical circumstances. The two Roma musicians featured in the film

⁵⁷ The origin of the song could not be established. Given its motifs and melodic structure, it could be a folk Roma song.

are rounded characters, with complex interactions with the Serbian majority⁵⁸. In addition, the Roma have prominent meta-textual roles as Frame Setters in a small number of important narrative interventions. These Frame Setting interventions take two forms:

- (a) The Roma perform a total of four times in *overlapping, type one Frame Setting spaces*. These spaces are causally separate, but retain the general physical configuration of the target conceptual space. Furthermore, the transitions between the two types of spaces are seamless – the characters stop, perform in a causally separate timeline, and then resume their target space activities.
- (b) As the two Roma are musicians who play the accordion and the mouth harp, the non-diegetic melodies performed on the latter instrument at a number of points in the story should also be considered as Frame Setters. They are located in *distinct, type four Frame Setting spaces*, and operate as tone-regulators.

The first three Frame Setting interventions in the type one spaces have the *tableau* format known from the works of A. Petrovic and F. Hadzic. The Roma stand facing the ‘viewer’ and perform different parts of the song (the lyrics for which were written by the scriptwriter Dusan Kovacevic, and the music composed by Vojislav Kostic) whose content maps onto the target conceptual space.



Figure 37 - The Roma perform in a *tableau* format.

⁵⁸ Analysed in greater detail in chapter section 5.3.3.

The first appearance has the Roma in a mid-shot, their walk to the bus stop interrupted for the following performance:

Dawn is breaking, on a Saturday,
The day is flying in from afar.
The local poor await the sunshine.

To Belgrade,
With *Kerstich and Son*,
The folks are ready to travel,
With all the good reasons,
But mayhap with no luck.

I have been an unfortunate man
From a very young age,
My troubles are the reason I sing songs,
O Mother dear, I would like all this
To be a dream.

The target space timeline is *organized* in the first two stanzas, which set the scene for the story, and contain many *direct references* to other elements of the target conceptual space. Line 3 of the first stanza hints at socio-political commentary, grouping the passengers with the less fortunate portions of the local populace. The second stanza additionally *indicates* the characters' psychological state (i.e. whether or not they are aimless in their travels), hinting as well at the tragedy awaiting them in the end, and *organizing* thus the future portion of the target space timeline.

The third stanza switches to the 1st person singular, and individualizes the Frame Setting procedure. As the narrative intervention is in fact a song, it is by no means clear that the 'I' of the song refers to the Roma man himself. The ambiguity of the personal pronoun in this context results in the potential for metaphoric interpretation – the lyrical subject blends with all possible 'experiencers' of the tragedy of local history.

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The second performance takes place at a cemetery, during the funeral of a local teacher murdered in a feud with a powerful family. The Roma are shown in a long shot as they sing:

A gun goes off from a hidden place,
Our teacher is gone.
It is the spring of 1941,
And evil is brewing.

O Mother dear, what is happening?
I feel like playing a sad song.
Death has come to get its due,
There will be no peace here.

I have been an unfortunate man
From a very young age,
My troubles are the reason I sing songs,
O Mother dear, I would like all this
To be a dream.

In this part of the song, the first stanza fixes the target conceptual space content, and provides more information regarding the historical context. The use of the possessive 'our' in line 2 *minimally* implies a *pro-formae* group membership status, but it may also be signifying varying modes of identification with the narrative, the historical situation and its participants (in line with the extensions of the lyrical 'I' above). In the other two stanzas a strong sense of doom and personalized tragedy is reiterated.

The third part of the song is performed at night time, when the young and intellectually disabled bus driver returns to his father and the passengers as a new army recruit. The scene is presented in a long shot and is carefully constructed: the Roma are shown on the left-hand side, with a howitzer and the bus driver to the right of them. The bus driver is standing at attention, with a rifle on his shoulder, silhouetted against the glow of the fire. The Roma sing:

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Over the fields a raven flies,
And gathers together his flocks.
This bird of evil omen
Feels that war is coming.

The Fritz is riding a black horse,
All of Europe is shaking,
Our army is awaiting the attack,
Its small cannon at the ready.

I have been an unfortunate man
From a very young age,
My troubles are the reason I sing songs,
O Mother dear, I would like all this
To be a dream.

In an instance of *indirect organization* of the target conceptual space timeline, the first stanza employs images that once again address the issue of the coming war. The second stanza works alongside the spatial arrangement in the Frame Setting space, and underscores the symbolic nature of the scene: ‘small canon’ and ‘our army’ link up to the image of the howitzer and, in particular, the bus driver turned soldier. This parallelism, adding up to a sort of a filmic genre scene, gives socio-psychological depth and a brutal sense of irony to the tragedy of the historical circumstances.

The last type one Frame Setting intervention takes place at the very end of the film. The passengers have arrived in Belgrade, and their attack against the Roma is thwarted by the bombing. The bus suffers a direct hit, and all the passengers die except for the two Roma. The Frame Setting intervention starts as they crawl out from under the rubble, in a very wide shot during which the Roma slowly walk over to the ‘camera’ and end up in a mid-shot, singing the following verses:

The Fritz spent a long time preparing
This crazy, terrible flight,
To destroy mankind,

And build a new world.

The earth is shaking,
Everything is collapsing,
Sunday is gone too.
The angry Fascist beasts
destroy all below them.

I have been an unfortunate man
From a very young age,
My troubles are the reason I sing songs,
O Mother dear, I would like all this
To be a dream.

The narration (i.e. the references to the target conceptual space, e.g. ‘this ... flight’) seems *simultaneous / ulterior* as the attack finishes moments before the Roma initiate the Frame Setting intervention. This performance establishes the moral code and so *evaluates* the target space events (‘... *crazy, terrible* flight; ‘*destroy* mankind’; ‘*angry* Fascist *beasts*’) via what may be construed as an individualized response behind the verse. The performative aspect of the Frame Setting space is enhanced by means of movement towards the ‘camera’, which may result in a sharper, more visceral perception of the tragedy of the scene and film, via physical details such as soot, dust, and physical injuries.

The non-diegetic sound of the mouth harp, heard many times in the film, fits well in this tonal landscape. The melody played is the main theme, and can be *impressionistically* interpreted as creating a sense of the rural yet strange and grotesque. The mouth harp is sometimes combined with the pipe, and the rhythm of the melody picks up in more dynamic scenes (e.g. the blindfolded drive through the Serbian wasteland, and the beating up of the Roma at the end of the film).

Overall, the tone of the Frame Setting in the film is lyrical, and the tenor as much personal and experiential as it is general and observational. What is reiterated is a sense of personal tragedy, and the lyricism of that perspective on history is precisely what constitutes Sijan’s contribution to the Frame Setting stylistic domain.

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Frame Setting interventions couched in a lyrical tone, with backgrounded socio-political commentary, are characteristic of another film made in the 1980s – *Fallen Headlong* (*Jagode u grlu*, 1985). Directed by one of the most ‘consistently original and cinematically inventive’ film makers of the Czech School – Srdjan Karanovic (Goulding 2002: 154) – *Fallen Headlong* features Roma musicians who perform at a reunion of majority friends in Belgrade during which all their personal failures and shortcomings are revealed, exposing in the process the failures of decadent Yugoslavian Socialism as well.

The musicians are played by ethnic Roma, and are presented as rounded characters with complex interactions with the Serbian majority. As Frame Setters, they are featured in two segments, both of which mark off crucial elements in the story. The first narrative intervention takes place when one-time young lovers meet again at the reunion in their middle age. As they look at each other, the Roma orchestra – grinning knowingly – play the opening theme from the original television series. The camera moves to the left and brings the Roma into focus, and the mood is set – the past is beginning to come back to life amid new relationships and tables laden with local dishes. The melody continues for a while to the scenes of dinner table conversations.

Formally, this Frame Setting instance is very complex. A chain of signification is created in an *overlapping type one Frame Setting space*, which shares with the target conceptual space the physical space and all the characters, but remains causally separate (i.e. the former lovers and other characters do not hear the music). Based on the melody that the Roma perform, the chain of signification consists of the following links:

1. An *intertextual* link to...
2. ... an *extra-diegetic* element of the television series (the opening theme), which is used as...
3. ... an *index* of the relevant element (the love affair) in the television series’ *diegesis*, and which is...
4. ... placed into the film *narrative*.

The Roma cannot know anything about the characters’ past relationship nor could they perform the melody as diegetic characters given that it is extra-diegetic with respect to

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the film narrative. Therefore, they *indicate (classify)* the emotions of the protagonists and their common past, as well as setting the general mood of the scene. As scenes of casual dinner conversation replace the images of the Roma, the non-diegetic melody now occupies a type four Frame Setting space (non-diegetic sound), and provides an associative backdrop to the on-screen content.

The second instance of Frame Setting takes place at the end of the film narrative. The company of friends, drunk and exhausted, have dispersed. Some of them are still on the boat restaurant as dawn breaks over the river, and others have found themselves roaming the surrounding area in a desperate attempt to resolve family disasters. Their sense of loss, their cynicism, faint-heartedness, and disorientation are also a sort of diagnosis, a personal failure that traces the failure of an entire society. It is at that point in the film that the Roma perform their song. The song was written by a Croatian singer-songwriter Arsen Dedic, and is given an intense emotionality in the film rendition:

You have given away, and stolen too,
And you have been unfaithful.
No, you have not given me too much,
O youth, o my youth!

That meagre sun that has sunk,
The wretched love, the brief dreams,
Too little for memories,
O my youth!

Stop for a moment, and give me strength
To at least say good-bye to her,
And for my friends to finish their song,
And for the glassful to be drunk.

Still brimming with hope, what am I to do?
We are only half way through,
But on this morning others are already young –
O youth, o my youth!

So long then, and treat others better,
And give them more tenderness,
Because what I lose is nothing –
O my youth!

Stop for a moment, and give me strength
To at least say good-bye to her,
And for my friends to finish their song,
And for the glassful to be drunk.

The song is clearly situated in the target conceptual space at the start of the scene. However, the shots of the musicians are juxtaposed via editing with the shots of the majority characters, melancholy and motionless in the bluish light of dawn. This foregrounds the act of singing, and makes it especially salient for the scene as well as the entire film narrative. Further, the scenes inside the boat alternate twice with the scenes in the surroundings, and this sequencing culminates at the very end, when the unanchored boat restaurant sails off downriver to the last notes of the song. The Roma, therefore, *occupy a subset* of the target conceptual space, and Frame Setting is realized via an alternation between *diegetic scenes* and *disparately diegetic sounds*. The Roma musicians never face the 'camera' - rather than constructing a *tableau* Frame Setter, Karanovic makes plentiful use of close-ups and mid-shots at varying oblique angles, which narrows down the performance space and underscores the emotions contained in the act of singing.



Figure 38 - The Roma orchestra perform in a *non-tableau* arrangement.

The song reinforces the sense of loss and disorientation, and can be interpreted as not only a poetic analogy fixing and summarizing the condition of the characters' lives, but also, inasmuch as the characters themselves are reflections of the social anxieties and problems, as a metaphor for the 'lost youth' of the Yugoslavian society – well 'past its prime' and deep in decadence and an increasingly ominous crisis. Karanovic thus contributes two things to the pool of Frame Setting representational strategies – a *meta-textual device par excellence* in the form of the reference to the opening theme for the television series⁵⁹, and a Frame Setter that combines the diegetic content and the disparately diegetic sound into a lyrical take on the personal and socio-political collapse.

6.5 On the wane: Minor Frame Setting strategies, 1985-1998

In the late 1980s, prominent authors of *New Yugoslavian Cinema* Goran Paskaljevic and Emir Kusturica happened to tackle at approximately the same time one of the burning issues in the life of the Yugoslavian Roma – the illegal trafficking of Roma children between Italy and Yugoslavia. As a result, two very different films were made, with very different takes on the Roma community. In *Guardian Angel* (*Anđeo čuvar*, 1987), Paskaljevic stages an encounter between the majority Yugoslavian institutions and the

⁵⁹ In which the Roma do not appear.

exclusionary, at times even hostile Roma community. In *Time of the Gypsies* (*Dom za vešanje*, 1988), Kusturica paints a very rich portrait of the Roma community from within, having embarked as an artist on a path of character type construction that would culminate in *Underground* (*Podzemlje*, 1995) and *Black Cat White Cat* (*Crna mačka beli mačor*, 1998).

Guardian Angel does not employ Frame Setting extensively – there are two instances of non-diegetic music used for these purposes, both at salient points in the story. Formally, both instances are situated in *distinct type four Frame Setting conceptual spaces*, featuring melodies that are associated with the Roma textually – similar instrumental music is played throughout the film by the target conceptual space Roma characters.

The first instance of Frame Setting takes place when the Serbian journalist Dragan arrives in the Roma settlement to start the investigation about the Roma child trafficking. The scene as such is an embarrassment of riches, with people walking, lying on the ground, or standing; animals on leashes and in cages; carts; barbecues; bedding and furniture; children sitting, eating, running, screaming; mothers nursing; women laughing out loud; and elderly men and women watching the goings on. Non-diegetic quick-tempo brass music can be heard throughout, and what is especially important is the stark contrast between the poverty, disorder, and squalor of the settlement on the one hand, and the merry and sensuous performance on the other. In a sense, the music builds an emotional profile of the Roma, and *reduces* the complexity of the Roma sociality to *a state of emotion*.

The second instance is quite similar: following the leads from his investigation, Dragan arrives at the Roma trailer park in Italy, to the sound of a merry non-diegetic melody played on the trumpet. Once again, there is a contrast between the austerity of the environment and criminal activities on the one hand, and the tone of the song. It is not at all clear that the filmic text offers redeemingly ironic interpretations so, even though the Frame Setting interventions map *associative content* onto, and thus interpret, the Roma, this particular Frame Setting perspective seems to essentialize the Roma as a complex social group.

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Emir Kusturica's film *Time of the Gypsies* builds a more community-internal picture of the Yugoslavian Roma. Its focus is on the efforts of a young Roma man called Perhan to find his sister Danira in Italy, where he is involved in criminal gang activities. As in *Guardian Angel*, the Frame Setting interventions also map onto the Roma, but the perspective they construct seems to also be shedding a different light on the majority Yugoslavian values.

The first instance of Frame Setting takes place at the very beginning of the film. As a Roma wedding unfolds at Perhan's original Roma settlement, in an environment laden with intertextual references to A. Petrovic's *I Even Saw Happy Gypsies*, a Roma man faces the 'viewer' and delivers the following monologue:

Phoo, they'd drill my life, jab me in the brain! I'm not an idiot to say yes to that. They're urging me, 'Take powders, swallow probes!' I'm not swallowing any probes! They tie up my soul, and show it around the village like a bear! I'm not a dancing bear! They want my wings, and what good is my soul without wings? My soul takes flight. It cries, it sings, and laughs of its own accord. When God was down below, he couldn't handle us Roma, so he had to go back up. It's not my fault!

As a Frame Setting instance, the monologue is situated in the *overlapping, type one conceptual space*, sharing physical space and characters, but not the timeline of the originary/target conceptual space. A short piece, it seems to centre around a particular individual's view of life: the paranoid fear of medical treatment, resistance to perceived social control, and exaggerated notions of individuality. And yet, the values underlying the monologue – irrationality, emotionality, and spiteful independence – provide a perspective from which to re-interpret the characters and plot events, both in terms of their self-perceptions and the narrative structure of meaning. The powerful emotions that a number of characters experience are thus given more interpretive depth, but the Frame Setting instance is not contained entirely within the bounds of the film text. There is a sense in which it also constructs an independent evaluative platform, which will be re-used in *Underground*⁶⁰ and *Black Cat White Cat*.

⁶⁰ Chapter section 4.5.1 provides a detailed analysis of the emotionality in *Underground*.

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Another important Frame Setter, located in a *distinct, type four conceptual space*, is the Balkan Roma folk song *Ederlezi*. Originally a celebration of the coming of the spring, it was arranged for the film by the Bosnian musician Goran Bregovic, and performed by the Romani singer Vaska Iankovska from Macedonia:

All my friends are dancing the oro
Dancing the oro, celebrating the day
All the Roma, mommy
All the Roma, dad, dad
All the Roma, oh mommy
All the Roma, dad, dad
Ederlezi, Ederlezi
All the Roma, mommy.

All the Roma, dad, slaughter lambs
But me, poor, I am sitting apart
A Romany day, our day
Our day, Ederlezi.

They give, Dad, a lamb for us
All the Roma, dad, slaughter lambs
All the Roma, dad, dad
All the Roma, oh mommy
All the Roma, dad, dad
Ederlezi, Ederlezi
All the Roma, mommy.

(The translation into English quoted from Ramus 2016)

Ederlezi marks the crucial points in the film narrative: Perhan's dream of the spring festival celebration and the connection to Azra, the Roma girl he has feelings for; Azra giving birth and dying; Perhan's killing of the gangster Ahmed; Perhan's death; and his funeral. Less about the lyrics than a musically intimated atmosphere (especially given

Bregovic's rich orchestration), it seems to *associate* target conceptual space scenes with emotion and mystery. Kusturica will return to this Frame Setting strategy in Roma representations, but not until 1998 and *Black Cat White Cat*.

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As the 1980s came to a close, civil war broke out in Yugoslavia and the political, cultural, and film industry landscape changed completely. Serbian film production sank to less than half in comparison with the 1980s, and yet paradoxically Belgrade remained a vital centre of film making (Goulding 2002: 188). Kusturica continued his work in the new circumstances, and made two critically acclaimed films – *Underground* and *Black Cat White Cat*. The latter closes this period with two examples of minor Frame Setting interventions.

Very much a comedic counterpart of *Time of the Gypsies*, *Black Cat White Cat* features similar textual motifs (e.g. a double cross on the part of a supposed friend; looking for and finding a bride; looking after one's sister, etc.), but couched in a light-hearted, quick-tempo, narratively rich plot, with characters and situations that may seem to often undermine the cohesion of the narrative.

There are two minor instances of Frame Setting in the film. The romantic up-tempo song *Ladybird (Bubamara)*, consisting of a dialogue involving a 'pixie girl' who refuses to get married, and a presumably male voice fascinated by the girl and the ritual of marriage, was authored for the film by well-known majority musicians Dr Nele Karajlic, Dejan Sparavalo, and Vojislav Aralica, and is performed twice with a Frame Setting function:

Ladybird

Everyone is asking,
Ladybird why are you so tiny?
Oh God, oh God I love her.
Ladybird, I will pay anything for you.

Hey folks listen,
Sweet beautiful children,

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Ladybird, little girl,
You are great, the greatest song.

Jinji rinji, Ladybird
You, tiny beauty.
Go away man, I'm not marriageable.
Children, folks,

Everyone is asking,
And mother is serving beans,
Oh God, oh God, everything has been eaten,
Ladybird can't wait.

Hey folks listen,
Sweet beautiful children,
Life is a merry-go-round,
God bless husband and wife.

Jinji rinji, Ladybird
You, tiny beauty.
Go away man, I'm not marriageable.
Children, folks,

Hey folks listen,
Sweet beautiful children.
Ladybird, little girl,
You are great, the greatest song.

The song is performed by the diegetic Roma orchestra: first, for one of the protagonists in a scene celebrating life, bleeding over into subsequent scenes showing the female protagonist Ida firing her rifle at one of the neighbours, and then arriving on a scooter at a local pleasure park; and second, at the very end, with the song marking a happy resolution of marital and financial problems. In both instances it *associates* target

conceptual space scenes with an unbridled *expression of emotion*, as well as *indicating indirectly* via the lyrics the psychological state of the heroine. In formal terms, the song is *disparately diegetic* and therefore located in a *subset* of the target conceptual space.

The second Frame Setting instance is effected in an *overlapping Frame Setting space*. When it transpires that his grandson Zare does not want to get married, Zarije looks at the ‘camera’, whispers, ‘I know what I have to do,’ and winks. The Frame Setting here is far more localized compared to other such interventions - a sort of one-off character narration, suggesting to the ‘viewer’ in a second person configuration the playful action or trick that will ensue. Having said that, this Frame Setting strategy makes no lasting change in the fabric of the narrative; rather, it is a narrative expression of character exuberance and, as a scaled-down version of the monologue from the beginning of *Time of the Gypsies*, seems to undermine the cinematic illusion by the sheer force of its screen appearance. Narrative and cinematic effects aside, this example also marks the beginning of a long pause before the next Frame Setting instance, to once again appear in changed socio-political and film industry circumstances. The reasons for the pause are difficult to fathom, but the ebb and flow of film poetics, pulling film authors and audiences away from the radical innovation of the Yugoslavian New Film, might go some way towards explaining the reasons for this stylistic hiatus.

6.6 *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* – The functions of the voiceover

Dusan Milic’s 2006 film *Gucha: Distant Trumpet (Guca!)* in 2006 features a re-working of Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, but the diegetic story in the film, however socio-politically relevant to the time of its making⁶¹, could be said to be a sophisticated narrative scaffolding for the Roma protagonist’s meditations on the nature of love, music, and relationships in general.

The Frame Setting narrative strategy re-appears in this film after a considerable ‘hiatus’, and includes an extensive use of the *voiceover*. Voiceovers have a long and venerable history in Yugoslavian cinema, and have been used in a number of ways: in *The Lake (Jezero)*, R. Djukic, 1950), the voiceover represents the protagonist’s interior monologue as she reads an important letter. Film narration as a function of voiceover

⁶¹ The socio-political context and the links to the diegetic story are analysed in greater detail in chapter section 5.3.6.

appears in *The Girl and the Oak* (*Devojka i hrast*, K. Golik, 1955), where an omniscient narrator frames the film story. Character narration is introduced in *Captain Lechi* (*Kapetan Lesi*, Z. Mitrovic, 1960), and further illustrated in Kusturica's *When Father Was Away on Business* (*Otac na sluzbenom putu*, 1985), and *Tito and Me* (*Tito i ja*, G. Markovic, 1992). The voiceover appears very rarely in the corpus of films that employ Frame Setting strategies – aside from Milic's film, there are two instances in total - Popovic's *Burdus* and Djordjevic's *The Noon*.

Frame Setting in *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* takes three forms. Firstly, non-diegetic trumpet melodies can be heard on a number of occasions, regulating by *association* the pace of the story and the target space on-screen content. The score for the film was largely authored by the Serbian composer Dejan Pejovic (with one contribution by Nikola Pejakovic and two by Markovic's father – the Roma trumpet player Boban Markovic; the score also includes a number of majority traditional melodies). The score is used as a Frame Setter a total of five times in the film, and is located in a *distinct* type four conceptual space (non-diegetic sound). The melodies are tightly linked to Romeo, as he either features in the target conceptual space scene, or meditates on music in parallel from a contiguous Frame Setting space. The pace of the trumpet melodies is slow if it complements Romeo's refined meditations or sets the frame for target space melancholy and frustration over thwarted love. Conversely, the pace is quick and lively when the melody sets the frame for scenes of chase or excitement (e.g. when Romeo is running away from Juliana's father, or when Romeo and Juliana elope on a bus).

Secondly, the character of Romeo has a many *voiceover* sequences in the film (all of them in Romani, and from a *distinct* type four conceptual space), with two broad semantic functions – representing internal monologue and Frame Setting. The internal monologue sequences represent Romeo's thoughts at specific times in the story. The image of Romeo invariably accompanies the voiceover, and the voiceover itself consists of present-tense, often fragmented speech. As Romeo walks away from the boat restaurant after a performance failure, the voiceover details his inner response:

What's all of it good for now? Shall I jump into the water and drown? It's embarrassing to live after this! If I can't play music here and prove myself, what could I do at Gucha? I've given Sandokan [Romeo's stepfather] an easy choice now.

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Importantly, in a few instances the voiceover takes on the features of Shakespearean monologues, and makes direct references to *Romeo and Juliet*, the play that the film is loosely based on. For example, as Romeo wades his way through the woods, he spots Juliana for the first time. What he says at this point bears a distant resemblance to Act II Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* (the orchard scene):

O Sun, shine brighter,
Warm me with your rays,
and fill me up with breath.

[Sees Juliana]

Stronger, o Wind, pull leaves apart,
And let the sun shine on her face!

When they kiss, Romeo's voiceover references a famous bit of dialogue from Act I Scene 5:

Your lips took sin from mine!

Lastly, thinking about the hurdles to their love, Romeo's words reference another famous bit of dialogue on the issue of names (Act II, Scene 2 in the play):

I detest my face, and would tear it apart,
if it were a drawing.

On one occasion in the film, the voiceover is coupled with the *subjective shot* of Romeo as he is tormented by his conscience:

It's still not too late to stop. I still haven't poured it, and he still hasn't drunk it. A couple more steps, and I will have to make the decision.

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Such voiceovers achieve a narratively and politically very important function – they flesh out the character and present his point of view in detail. It is in this sense that the characterization cannot ever be *completely* disassociated from Frame Setting in any of the voiceovers – the target conceptual space is given depth via a personalized character perspective.

The voiceovers with a *predominantly* Frame Setting purpose have a number of functions of their own. More often than not, they provide narratorial information, and so *organize* the target space timeline (often making use of the past tense):

So that was why I broke the rule and played with a different band that night. To make money for the monument to the trumpet player.

Sometimes the information that Romeo as a Frame Setter *gives describes* his own psychological states as a target conceptual space character. When he sees Juliana, the next prose voiceover details his feelings:

I shook with excitement. Her beauty pained me. I almost started crying. If I was to blow into the trumpet now, I would burn down.

Evaluations of characters and actions (Romeo's own or other characters') are also provided in the voiceovers. Romeo's musings on the nature of right and wrong in the context of his own misbehaviour construct an ethical framework for the entire film:

When you do a wrong, then you suffer for it. Framed by your best friend, as it often happens. No one can do this better than your nearest and dearest.

Romeo evaluates Sandokan's character as well:

Sandokan may be just, but he doesn't have to make a just decision. When troubled, he only thinks of himself.

The *meditations* on the nature and role of art and brass music make up a significant portion of Frame Setting in the film. Romeo's image does not invariably accompany these voiceover sequences. In a sense, the meditations also help characterize Romeo further, but their primary role is to construct a *system of values* that maps onto the target conceptual space and thus helps reconceptualise the target space conflict between the two families:

When you blow through the pipe, you come out at the other end as the emotion that you carry within yourself, and which becomes music. My real father used to say – When breath dies, tone is born.

The father taught the son how to play. He instilled in him the love of the trumpet. As the son was getting better and better, a day came when they said, "The son is better than the father." [*underlined by GS*] The father admitted to this with pride.

The trumpet and the trumpet player as one. They touch each other's lips, and the breath like a soul comes out through the metal and becomes alive
[...]

The system of values behind the voiceovers above regulates the transposition of the socio-political conflict between two ethnic groups into an issue of accepting the *value of music and performance*, and the consequent outcome of an *intergenerational contest around these values*. When Romeo triumphs over Juliana's father at the Gucha Festival of the Trumpet, it is through the undeniable value of his music that the family feud is mended and a new family created. The Frame Setting strategy thus forms the *evaluative* basis for this didactic textual move. The voiceovers bookending the narrative make said values explicit:

[To the *opening* scene of fireworks in Gucha] This is Gucha! The biggest trumpet festival in the world. You play here and become a man [*underlined by GS*], so they say. For us trumpet players winning the

Golden Trumpet at Gucha is a life-long dream. You win and become part of history. That's why I need to be here too!

[Over the *joint performance* by Romeo and Juliana's father]: They say that when you perform and win at Gucha, that is forever. You leave a mark, a monument in time. But this monument is not the graveyard, material one; it is a spirit [*underlined by GS*].

In addition, the voiceovers reflecting on music (together with the target space plot) seem to link the target and Frame Setting representational strategies into a unified *Roma-as-musician* archetype.

The last type of Frame Setting is once again a one-off technique⁶² that seems to create a second-person configuration in the Frame Setting space. In a sequence showing first Juliana and then Romeo looking at the sun and putting their hands against it, Romeo turns around and looks at the 'camera'. Located in an *overlapping* type one conceptual space, this Frame Setting intervention may be understood as a narrative element increasing the dynamism of the scene by recruiting the 'viewer'.

In sum, the bulk of the Frame Setting interventions in *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* introduce a system of values that helps transpose the basic plot conflict into a more socially and textually benign one. Personal perspective notwithstanding, they can therefore be considered as a tool in a largely didactic enterprise, with a single obvious representational benefit – all the verbal Frame Setting interventions are in the Romani language.

6.7 Cross-corpus comparisons – Roma as meta-textual devices

The analysis of the corpus has revealed that there are 15 films which feature Frame Setting meta-textual techniques, and one that makes use of meta-characters. This section provides a comparative overview of the formal and substantive features of these meta-textual strategies.

⁶² Along the lines of Kusturica's *Black Cat White Cat* scene, where Zarie looks into the 'camera' and speaks.

6.7.1 Meta-textuality: features of form

The methodological framework employed in this research distinguishes between four types of conceptual spaces and three *relevant* types of logical relations between them. The table below summarizes the Frame Setting strategies identified in the corpus in terms of these formal narrative distinctions:

Type/relation per film	CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4
Subset – disparately diegetic	5/15	/	/	/
Overlapping	8/15	/	/	/
Distinct	1/15	1/15	1/15	11/15

Table 6 - Types of conceptual spaces used for Frame Setting interventions

What the table shows is that type four *distinct* conceptual spaces (non-diegetic sound), and type one *disparately diegetic* (asynchronous sound and/or foregrounded image) and *overlapping* spaces (images and sounds causally separated from the target conceptual space) seem to dominate the corpus. These three types of Frame Setting spaces are evenly distributed across the relevant period (1965 – 2006), and therefore no major tendencies can be discerned regarding changes in preferences.

Orthogonal to this classification are complex narrative operations involving *transitions* between different Frame Setting conceptual spaces. A total of four films feature these sorts of operations⁶³:

⁶³ Although *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* includes contiguous Frame Setters, there is no sense in which these are semantically correlated to form a single interpretive whole, unlike e.g. *I Am Poor But Angry*.

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<i>Burdus</i> (1970)	<i>I Am Poor But Angry</i> (1970)	<i>Eight Kilos of Happiness</i> (1980)	<i>Fallen Headlong</i> (1985)
CS4 -> CS1 -> CS4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CS4 -> CS1 2. CS4 CS1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CS3 CS4 2. CS4 (CS3) -> CS1 	CS1 -> CS4
Raika's voiceover	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cajkas heard performing and then seen speaking. 2. Music heard while Cajkas is seen singing to it. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Text shown while correlated singing is heard. 2. Children first heard and then seen singing the same song. 	Musicians seen performing a melody, which becomes non-diegetic as the on-screen image changes.

Table 7 - Transitions between Frame Setting conceptual spaces

Such transitions are largely associated with Yugoslav New Film authors and their fellow travellers, and the narrative operations in question can be considered an integral part of the experimental narration repertory typical of the movement.

Insofar as they are part of the formal category set of Information Structure Analysis, and to the extent to which they reveal what can be construed as film narration techniques, the semantic functions should also be considered as formal Frame Setting features. The table below provides a break-down of the relevant semantic functions identified in the corpus, presented *per instance* rather than per film. Importantly, *direct reference* is left out as it is invariably incorporated into other, more comprehensive, functions:

Association	Classification	Evaluation	Organization
12	3	20	12

Table 8 - Semantic functions, presented per instance

The findings suggest that the primary role Frame Setting has is *evaluation*, followed by an equal number of instances of *association* and *organization* (the latter being narration proper - including manipulations of the target space timeline). Simple (non-evaluative) *classification* is rare, and seems to be associated with *descriptions* of the Roma life-style

(*Eight Kilos of Happiness*) and ethics-independent *indications* of characters’ emotions (*Fallen Headlong*).

6.7.2 Meta-textuality: aspects of content

The Frame Setting interventions in the corpus consist of a number of content types. The table below provides a break-down of these types and a summary *per film* of their use in the corpus. Importantly, these types are predicated on *one or more contiguous and coordinated* Frame Setting spaces, acting as *interpretive wholes*⁶⁴:

Music	Music + Lyrics	Image	Image + Music	Image + Music + Lyrics	Speech	Speech + Image	Image + Music + Lyrics + Speech	Text + Music + Lyrics
6/15	6/15	2/15	1/15	6/15	3/15	4/15	1/15	1/15

Table 9 - Content types in the Frame Setting spaces

Standing at six out of fifteen, the three most frequent types include instrumentals, songs, and characters performing songs. The first two could be said to be staples of *film structure* across cultures and time periods (which is reflected in the frequency of the corresponding Frame Setting uses, but does not take away from their importance for the process of Frame Setting). The formal variety underlying the third most frequent content type is considerable: from conceptual space subsets (e.g. *It Rains in My Village*), through essentially diegetic performances with Frame Setting functions (e.g. *As Days Go By*), to overlapping spaces (e.g. *Who Is Singing Over There?*). What the content type implies is a Roma character or characters shown performing a song for the purposes of framing the target conceptual space, which is especially relevant to the discussion further below on (stereo-)typing in Frame Setting representational strategies. What is also noticeable is that the use of this content type is evenly spread across the first 11 film in the corpus. The last film to use it is *Fallen Headlong* (1985). The reasons for this are likely manifold, but what is probably the case is that the more challenging, in-your-face sort of provocative

⁶⁴ Excluding once again *Gucha: Distant Trumpet*, as well as all other films where two or more Frame Setting spaces are contiguous but not interpretively coordinated/-able.

experimental narrative techniques originating in the Yugoslavian New Film poetics had run their course and were being replaced with old/new narrative procedures in the ever-changing pool of narrative norms. Further, in the last four films in the corpus, the Roma are not used as *mouthpieces* for socio-political commentary, which renders the Image-Music-Lyrics content type less useful for the narrative purposes at hand.

Closely tied to this is the issue of the origin of Frame Setting music/lyrics. A summary of findings regarding this parameter is provided below, organized *per film per source*:

Only Romani	Only majority	Combined
3/15	6/15	3/15

Table 10 - Origin of Frame Setting music performed by Roma

The Romani sources are largely folk traditionals or poems from the Roma oral tradition. Authored pieces are rare, and include *Gelem Gelem* lyrics written by Zarko Jovanovic and part of the score for *Gucha: Distant Trumpet*. The ratio of ‘Romani only’ vs ‘majority only’ music is an important indicator of the role of ‘Romani-ness’ in the Frame Setting space, and is discussed in greater detail in the section concerned with (stereo-)typing. No obvious tendencies are discernible other than those to do with authorial preferences: the directors that make use of Romani sources (only or combined with majority sources) are A. Petrovic, P. Djordjevic, and E. Kusturica.

The parameters of Roma character portrayal and the forms of self-identification in the Frame Setting space loom large in the study of Roma representations. The Frame Setters among the Roma *characters* in the corpus have the following gender, age and occupation structure (presented *per character group* – one instance suffices to mark the presence of a group per film, e.g. a *single adult* female or male Roma in the role of the Frame Setter is sufficient to establish that a particular film makes use of *adult* Roma Frame Setters):

Gender		Age		Occupation		
Male	Female	Adult	Child	Musician	Shoe-shiner	Unspecified
13	2	13	3	10	1	2

Table 11 - Gender, age, and occupation breakdown in the Frame Setting space

The table clearly indicates a predominance of adult male characters in the role of Frame Setters. The category of musician cuts across these boundaries and, as there is a single instance of a child playing the part of a musician in the Frame Setting space (*Who Is Singing Over There?*), it is safe to claim that an *adult male Roma musician* should be hypothesized as a favoured textual type, i.e. archetype in the Frame Setting representational strategies.

The forms of self-identification flesh these distinctions out further. Self-identification is comparatively rare in Frame Setting, and takes two forms – direct and indirect. *Direct* forms of self-identification can be found in verbalized ascriptions of Romani-ness: in *Time of the Gypsies*, the Roma man who delivers a Frame Setting monologue at the beginning of the film sees himself as a member of the Roma ethnic group; also, in *Gucha: Distant Trumpet*, Romeo calls himself a Roma, only to reject what seems to him to be an obstacle to his relationship with Juliana. In contrast, *indirect* forms of self-identification are based on *culturally-informed inference*, and appear in the following forms:

1. *Song*: in *Three and I Even Saw Happy Gypsies*, the song *Gelem Gelem* contains a 1st person identification that maps onto the target space characters (and especially Bora); further, in *As Days Go By*, the second performance by the target space Roma (*The Plum Tree* song) describes a life out in the open often associated with the Roma across European cultures.
2. *Occupation*: in *The Noon*, Captain Straia self-identifies as a shoe-shiner – an occupation often associated with the Roma in the Yugoslavian culture; further, in *Burdus*, the protagonist says at one point that ‘[...] We have left the bear behind, thank God [...]’, from which his Roma identity can be inferred for the Frame Setting space.

The relative sparsity of self-identifications is tied to the degree of individuation, the role of Romani-ness, and the nature of the narrative interventions effected in the Frame Setting space – the factors discussed in the final section below.

6.7.3 Meta-textuality: Romani-ness and filmic text

The Frame Setting and meta-character narrative strategies offer broad means of shaping and re-interpreting target conceptual spaces. This section looks at the role of the psychological and socio-historical specificities of Roma representations in these textual processes. The findings suggest a broad division of the corpus into five groups, based on the following parameters:

1. *Socio-political commentary (SP)*: Meta-textual interventions focus largely on elements of the socio-political sphere, i.e. Yugoslavian / Serbian society.
2. *General reflections on the human condition (G)*: Meta-textual mappings provide conceptual and value systems that generalize target conceptual space events and actions into reflections on humanity.
3. *Roma specificities employed? (+/-R)*: This parameter concerns the question of whether or not a Roma socio-psychological perspective is used to complete the two kinds of meta-textual interventions above.

The table below summarizes the results:

SP - R	G - R	SP / G - R	SP + R	G + R	SP / G + R
It Rains in My Village (1968)		I Am Poor But Angry (1970)	The Dream (1966)	Three (1965)	I Even Met Happy Gypsies (1967)
		Fallen Headlong (1980)	The Noon (1968)	Time of the Gypsies (1988)	As Days Go By (1970)
			Burdus (1970)	Black Cat White Cat (1998)	Who Is Singing Over There? (1980)
			Eight Kilos of Happiness (1980)		Gucha: Distant Trumpet (2006)
			Guardian Angel (1987)		

Table 12 - The role of Romani-ness in meta-textual strategies

The column ‘General reflections couched from a non-Roma perspective’ (G – R) remains empty, which is in itself an interesting finding, but also one difficult to account for. One distinct possibility is that the reason is primarily narrative-semiotic, i.e. that a Roma-related vehicle of expression (i.e. a ‘signifier’ of sorts) is too stylistically marked, and therefore narratively discordant or inefficient with respect to the general content it is supposed to carry (i.e. a ‘signified’ in this scheme).

The first column, ‘Socio-political commentary couched from a non-Roma perspective’ (SP – R), features only one film – A. Petrovic’s *It Rains in My Village*. The Roma in this Frame Setting space are non-individuated, and their narrative interventions do not rely on their Roma identity and experiences. Rather, they *perform* the socio-political commentary on broader social domains represented in the film text – the local mentality and Socialist Yugoslavia. As such, this is a rare occurrence and a result of a highly idiosyncratic poetics.

The third column, ‘Socio-political commentary or general reflections, couched from a non-Roma perspective’ (SP/G – R), contains two films from different historical periods. The socio-political commentary in the Frame Setting space is either presented *alongside* more general reflections on the human condition (in *I Am Poor But Angry* Cajkas sets the frame for political conflicts in the village, and then goes on to discuss the transient nature of human efforts and the world), or is constituted via the general reflections on the human life via analogy (in *Fallen Headlong* the non-individuated Roma orchestra perform a song whose mapping onto the target conceptual space can be extended to the depicted socio-political context). Importantly, the specificities of the Roma perspective are absent (with the possible minor exception of Cajkas’s self-categorization as a village fool, which is more pertinent to the analysis of this character in the target conceptual space of the film).

The column ‘Socio-political commentary couched from a Roma perspective’ (SP + R) lists the films in the corpus which rely on Roma experiences in their Frame Setting and meta-character interventions. *The Dream* and *Eight Kilos of Happiness* make use of the tragedy that befell the Roma in the Second World in order to establish a system of values and conceptualize thus the target space goes-on (whereas *Guardian Angel* uses Roma-associated music reductively – narrowing down the depicted Roma world to a state of emotion). In contrast, the meta-textual interventions in *The Noon* and *Burdus* use the position of the Roma at two stages in the development of the depicted Yugoslavian society

as indicators of that society's inability to live up to its own ethical and political standards. In doing so, these meta-textual interventions do not reduce the Roma characters to a metaphor or metonymy. Rather, the individuated Roma perspectives constitute indispensable parts of the depicted social mosaics, and function as *proofs* and not *metonyms of socio-political failure*.

The column 'General reflections couched from a Roma perspective' (G + R) utilizes the Roma experience as a *starting point* in a construction of a broad socio-psychological metaphor. In *Three*, a specifically Roma activity (bear handling) is placed in a Frame Setting space, and expanded semantically to conceptualize larger issues in the ethics of human interaction. On the other hand, in the two Kusturica's films, the Roma experiences and self-perceptions presented in the Frame Setting space serve as cornerstone elements in the construction of a strongly value-driven view of ethics and human sociality that places undue emphasis on emotion, imagination, and individuality.

Lastly, the 'Socio-political commentary or general reflections, couched from a Roma perspective' (SP/G + R) column consists of a number of very different films which do share a common Frame Setting strategy. In *As Days Go By*, the two performances of the Roma orchestra offer separately a take on the human condition and a depiction of the specifically Roma experiences as part of their open-air lifestyle and connection to nature. *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* positions the socio-historical circumstances of the Roma (i.e. vagrancy) and the specifics of an individual character's actions as having the potential to metaphorically conceptualize the broadest patterns of Yugoslavian sociality as well as the human condition. *Who Is Singing Over There?* provides a lyricized perspective on a specific historical experience involving the Roma, in a narrative intervention that goes beyond its Roma originators and the depicted context of expression, and comes close to formulating the universal tragedy of history. Finally, *Gucha: Distant Trumpet* transposes a local socio-political conflict between the Roma minority and the Serbian majority into a more general, inter-generational and artistic one, in a rare programmatic intervention with implicit didactic aims.

The table above suggests that a non-Roma perspective in engaging the socio-political domain or the general human condition is far less frequent than a Roma perspective, with the ratio of one to the other standing at 3 to 12 films. This is likely to do with the narrative-semiotic reasons mentioned above.

Chapter 6 – Meta-textuality in Roma Representations

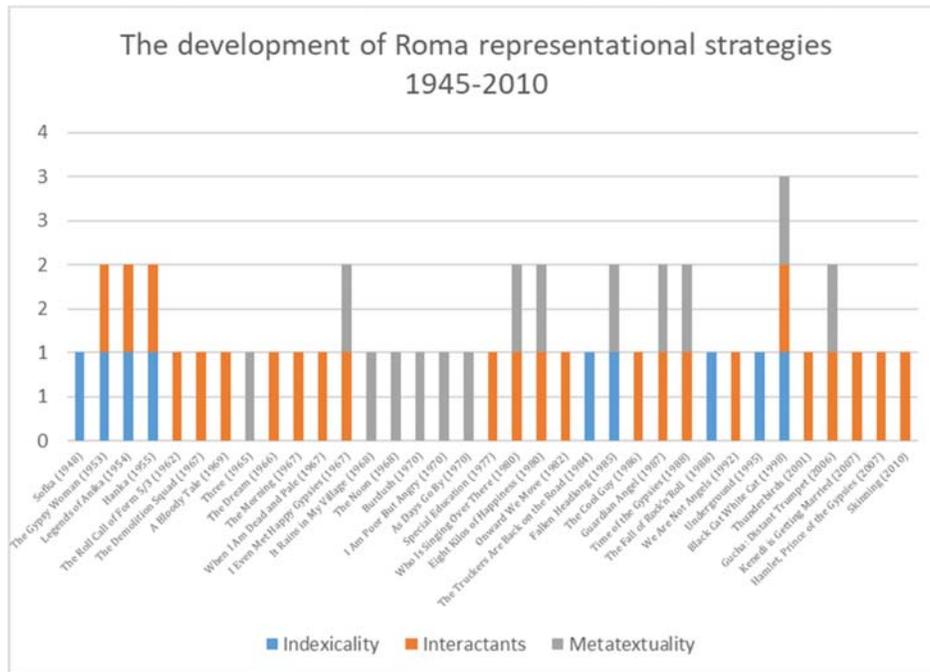
In conclusion, what the results seem to suggest is that the most frequent meta-textual interventions take the following two forms:

1. Adult male Roma musician(s) placed in an overlapping type one Frame Setting space, and performing non-Romani songs which provide socio-political commentary on the target conceptual space.
2. Roma-performed non-Romani music (with or without lyrics), placed in a distinct type four Frame Setting space, which has a variety of meta-textual functions – from mood-setting *associations*, through *narrative organization*, to *evaluative* socio-political commentary.

Based on all the findings and given its frequency, the first form can be posited as an *archetype*, with a stable set of formal features and narrative roles/values across the meta-textual representational strategies in the corpus.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a broad-strokes comparative summary of the results of the present research project. To this end, the chart below condenses the developmental trajectory of the employed Roma representations, focusing on the predominant / most salient representational strategies in the corpus of films:



As a predominant strategy, *indexicality* is the least frequent (nine films out of 35) and seems to correlate with two different socio-historical variables. On the one hand, Period 1 (early adaptations) Roma representations contributed to the expansion of the thematic concerns and stylistic norms amid the profound social upheaval of the Tito-Stalin Split (1948) and the engineering of a new Yugoslavia; similarly, Period 5 (Socialist decadence) representations helped construct new discourses of socio-political identities at a time of major political and economic crises which would eventually result in the Yugoslavian Civil War. In contrast, Period 6 (the civil war) representations seem to reflect Emir Kusturica's authorial poetics and a deeply personal view of human emotionality and sociality.

Meta-textuality in Roma representations enters the stage with Yugoslavian New Film (five films) and resonates as a film technique with later film authors as well (nine

films), decreasing in number and eventually becoming associated with a personal authorial poetics (Milic's *Gucha – Distant Trumpet*). As a powerful means of structuring filmic narratives, this strategy retains its relevance to the social and political context. For the most part, the Roma representations employed to this narrative end help evaluate the deficiencies and excesses of the Yugoslavian Communist Revolution and post-war 'nation-building', whether from a general or distinctly Roma perspective. The focus changes in the later developmental stages, reflecting once again the personal concerns and preoccupations of the two authors: individuality and emotionality in Kusturica's films; and music and the nature of relationships in Milic's film.

Roma as *interactants* are the most numerous representational strategy (24 films in total) and can be said to either consolidate or challenge the dominant socio-political narratives in Yugoslavia and Serbia. The ideologized representations of the Roma in the 1960s deploy minimized representational difference to underscore equality as a direct product of the work of ideology. Conversely, in socially-critical representations, the particularity of the Roma position is acknowledged and used as an indicator of either a failing sociality (e.g. in Period 1 films which contrast the individual and an oppressive society), or society (the majority of films signalling the failures of Yugoslavia and Serbia).

The representational strategies are combined in a number of films (11 out of 35), for different reasons and with different effects. The Roma representations in Period 1 adaptations help situate the emotional or behavioural excess of the majority within a strict and controlling sociality or suffer through its oppressive practices themselves. In contrast, the meta-textual representational strategies span a number of periods and combine with interactant representations largely as a result of the initial expansion of the pool of stylistic norms and the consequent practice of undermining the traditionally construed diegesis. As rhetorical interventions in the filmic text, meta-textual strategies could arguably be said to have also been a convenient means of conveying a more complex discourse of social and political critique. Lastly, as the only film where all three representational strategies are combined, *Black Cat White Cat* stands apart as a manifestation of Kusturica's complex authorial vision.

The Roma characters in the corpus indicate a peculiar dynamic in the construction of space, corporeality, and gaze. The spaces that the Roma occupy in the analysed film narratives are largely liminal or peripheral. The depicted Roma settlements at the edges of towns and villages form a natural kind with the caravans, landfills, and the political and

economic margin, all of them situated far from the centres of power and the mainstream of social life. Importantly, the Roma are granted access to various types of social festivities, but these social occasions are themselves liminal, marking as they do major transitions in the life of the individual (e.g. weddings), or experiences external to the structured social routine (e.g. the tavern). Further, the Roma do not have unlimited access to such spaces, as theirs is largely the role of the musician or entertainer, facing the majority but not belonging to it.

These issues are refracted in the depiction of the Roma corporeality as well. Largely ignored in the corpus of analysed films, the Roma body does in fact undergo a representational transformation from Period 1 (early adaptations), through Period 5 and 6 (Socialist decadence; the civil war), to Period 7 (the transition). Period 1 films only feature the majority male characters observing Roma women, which introduces a gender imbalance in the representations of the Roma. Kusturica's films change the landscape dramatically, offering positive depictions of bodily experiences in a carefully constructed ritualistic context (e.g. Perhan's dream in *Time of the Gypsies*; or the sunbathing scenes in *Black Cat White Cat*). A proper shift in perspective only comes in Period 7, where ethnic Roma male nudity is offered in a non-voyeuristic, documentary fashion (in *Kenedi is Getting Married*), and the Roma are presented as romantic partners of majority women (in *Gucha - Distant Trumpet*).

Occupation has proven to be a very important factor in the corpus of Roma representations, relevant to the issue of typing as well. An overwhelming majority of the Roma characters in the analysed films are adult, male, and musicians/entertainers/performers by profession. This holds for all three representational strategies, and justifies the conclusion that in addition to the fairly frequent depictions of the Roma as literary Fools/Jesters, *Roma musician* should be postulated as the archetypal representation of the Roma in Yugoslavian and Serbian film.

Clear-cut cases of stereotypes have not been detected in the corpus. A broad array of psychologically complex individuated characters, as well as neutral to positive typed characters have been identified in the film narratives, but the Roma characters that could be seen as lending themselves to subtle stereotyping processes fall into two categories: Beli Bora from *I Even Met Happy Gypsies*, and the characters from Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies* and *Black Cat White Cat* could be identified with particular existential stances, bringing these depictions close to the social stereotypes of the Roma as passionate,

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irrational, mysterious, prone to crime, and impulsive; on the other hand, *Guardian Angel* constructs an image of the Roma culture as exclusionary and unperturbed by higher ethical concerns, which again echoes the social stereotypes of the Roma as mysterious and prone to crime. Importantly, although stereotyping is not a significant representational strategy at the level of character, the narrative structures of the analysed films position the Roma in a large number of cases as *victims* of various social ills and injustices. This passive role can be posited as a further *narrative-structural Roma stereotype*, re-iterating by narrative means the decidedly marginal position of the Roma in the Yugoslavian and Serbian society.

In sum, the Roma representations in the Yugoslavian and Serbian film are varied and narratively rich, yet systematically related to the representations of specific social and socio-political issues. The Roma are depicted as discrete elements in the broader Yugoslavian/Serbian social fabric, and their varying detailed particularity is employed to indicate, diagnose, or evaluate the success of the society as a whole.

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