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THE EIGHTIES IN CROATIAN LITERATURE AND FILM FROM A SOCIO-POLITICAL AND GENRE ASPECT

In the 1980^s, Croatian literature and cinema were significantly influenced by European and American (postmodern) movements which reevaluated the notion of genre. Until that period, genre was often marginalized and considered a product of commercial usage and, therefore, inferior to „serious“ works of art.

In this decade, Croatian writers and film directors embraced a new attitude towards genre by exploring various marginalized genres such as science-fiction, horror and melodrama. The works of some authors were strongly influenced by postmodern strategies, while others, despite the exploitation of some of the postmodern features, also accentuated relation to social and political context. Writers like P. Pavličić and G. Tribuson or directors like Z. Tadić, Ž. Tomić and D. Šorak were amongst those authors who made a notable career as genre authors whether using a socio-political context or an escapist approach in their works.

Keywords: genre, postmodernism, film, literature, socio-political context

INTRODUCTION

The 1980^s in Yugoslavia were marked by economic, social and political crisis. Writer Maša Kolanović calls this period the period of „decadent socialism“ (Kolanović, 2011a: 165–193). It was a time when conformist behavior and consumerist lifestyle supported by Western credit caused a crisis of faith in the bright future. Researcher Igor Duda describes the emerging problems of citizens' everyday life and the symptoms that arose from the economic crisis:

At the beginning of the 1980^s, the stabilization policy prompted a change in politics and the cancellation of many loans, while restrictions caused fear among people: ‘All this, (...), will significantly affect the

standard of the population, which in previous years was already used to a rule: spend today, return tomorrow' (...) (Duda, 2010: 158).

Economic and political circumstances have also left their mark on Croatian literature. In her work *Udarnik! Buntovnik? Potrošač...*, Kolanović refers to the last decade of Yugoslav socialism, focusing on popular culture and Croatian novel. The author studies popular literary form termed „jeans prose“¹ which depicts consumer culture, intellectual and social life of Yugoslav population. In addition to „macho“ views in the works of the male writers of „jeans prose“ (Zvonimir Majdak², Alojz Majetić...), Kolanović refers to social lifestyle from the perspective of female authors, such as Irena Lukšić, whose works *Konačište vlakopravnog osoblja* (1981) and *Traženje žlice* (1987) describe preoccupations related to fashion (shopping in Trieste, fashion magazines), music (popular Beatles, Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, etc.), American products (Coca Cola), etc. Alongside many benefits that came from the Western culture, Lukšić also mentions a decline in lifestyle caused by the inflation:

The newspapers discreetly announced the increase in the price of gasoline and similar products. Due to market supply disruptions, it has been a rarity for months to come across a box of detergent or a bag of coffee. In recent days, there is no oil, sugar, some textiles, birth control pills, southern fruits and more (Kolanović, 2011b: 295).

Crisis was also felt in film production. Ivan Velisavljević gives a brief introduction to the economic circumstances in which genre film of the 1980^s appeared. He mentions „the issue of sustainability of the production model in cinema“ (Velisavljević, 2012: 80) and reductions in film budget due to the inflation:

¹ Kolanović explains that the „jeans prose“ of the 1960^s and 1970^s shows practices of „resistance to ideological structures and traditional values“, in contrast to the prose of the 1980^s, which is symptomatic of the period of economic crisis and decadent socialism (Kolanović, 2011b: 290).

² Kolanović tries to explain the practice of „decadent socialism“ in Yugoslav society by pointing out two novels written by Zvonimir Majdak: „This is the case, for example, in the novels *Gadni parking* and *Lova do krova* in which the *structure of feelings* of the so-called decadent socialism is shaped by the themes of everyday life (...) filled with the attempts to improve living standards in times of crisis (...) while the attempts of the resistance are of the secondary importance. The characters speculate about the collapse of the state and the end of socialism (...), as their leisure time, as the main mode of behavior, is being filled with sports betting, exchanging foreign currency for black money, brokering fictitious loans, smuggling, etc., in short, everything that Katherine Verdery calls the so-called secondary economy in socialism and the *black market* as its sub-branch“ (Kolanović, 2011b: 290).

In that period, the discourse of the crisis thoroughly affected not only the political and media spheres, but also high and popular culture. (...) cinema tickets were cheap and inflation was high, so, despite the increased number of films that were produced during the 1980^s (far more than in previous decades), the film budget was declining (...) (Velisavljević, 2012: 80).

In his book *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience, 1945–2001*, Daniel J. Goulding concludes that despite economic and socio-political situation, the idea of co-production between the Yugoslav states was very much appreciated and popular until the collapse and disintegration of Yugoslavia. In this way the production costs were shared and the same policy was applied to actors and film staff who came from different republics. Directors like Živorad Tomić, Dejan Šorak, Petar Krelja, Branko Ivanda and to some extent Zoran Tadić were among the ones who applied this policy. Film critic Jurica Pavičić comments on the subject of film collaborations:

In the 1980^s, filmmakers secured the budget through permanent co-productions; for example, Rajko Grlić found a Belgrade producer for the film „U raljama života“, as well as Dejan Šorak for the film „Najbolji“, which was presented as the „Top Gun“ of Yugoslav Army.³

Film theorist Nikica Gilić describes the limiting conditions in which genre authors operated, which almost certainly affected the quantity, but also the quality and diversity of genre films. According to Gilić, „the Croatian cultural, socio-political and film elite (...) didn't feel the need or didn't see the point in financing genre films that weren't propagandist/communistic“ (Gilić, 2010: 124).

This was a time that called for revisions of the revolutionary Yugoslav past, where, according to Goulding, the „ineradicable and intangible contours“ of Yugoslavia's past were explored, as well as its „ambiguities and contradictions“ (Goulding, 2004: 156). The themes mainly covered the course of the Second World War and the post-war period. Here Goulding singles out the authors that attended the famous FAMU⁴, a filmmaking school in Prague, such

³ Polimac, N. „Knjiga Jurice Pavičića 'Postjugoslavenski film – stil i ideologija': Zašto će nas srpski film uvijek zanimati više od bugarskog“, *Jutarnji list on-line*. (Available at: <http://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/knjiga-jurice-pavicica-postjugoslavenski-film-stil-i-ideologija-zasto-ce-nas-srpski-film-uvijek-zanimati-vise-od-bugarskog/1636968>, 18. 1. 2023).

⁴ The full name of Prague film academy is *Filmová a televizní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze*.

as: Lordan Zafranović (*Okupacija u 26 slika*, 1978), Srđan Karanović (*Petri-jin venac*, 1980), Slobodan Šijan (*Ko to tamo peva*, 1980), Rajko Grlić (*Samo jednom se ljubi*, 1981) and Emir Kusturica (*Otac na službenom putu*, 1985). Film critic Diana Nenadić describes the common features of filmmakers:

(...) instead of ideological heroes and stereotypes that prevailed after the confrontation with the ‘black wave’, they bring everyday life and ‘ordinary’ people to screens, and instead of pathos, black and white formulas and dilettantism, their films are dominated by humor, irony and craft skills.⁵

These authors presented a unique poetic model in which they combined genre codes and their stylistically and esthetically defined vision of film art.

GENRE LITERATURE AND FILM

In the 1980^s, genre became a generally accepted phenomenon in literature and film. Literary theorist Boris Škvorc believes that this was a time of the „disintegration of the ruling socialist ‘moral paradigm’“ i.e. the period of „pluralization of worldviews and authorial voices in postmodernity“ (Škvorc, 2012: 67). This was manifested through the acceptance of foreign influences in domestic literature, especially in the genre of crime prose; Škvorc cites Umberto Eco, Michel Butor and Jorge Luis Borges as the bearers of the „postmodernity of the ‘new’ form of crime prose“ (Škvorc, 2012: 85).

The revitalization of genre was preceded by the spread of popular culture in the 1980^s⁶; relevant magazines, such as *Polet*, commented on and wrote about film, comics, photography, new trends in music etc. In his dissertation entitled „Flight from Youth Activism to Political Escapism (1976–1990)“, Željko Krušelj notes that the 1960^s and 1970^s in Yugoslavia were marked by the implementation of Western values, especially music and film, into socialist lifestyle, which is why some critics sarcastically called this period „Coca-Cola Socialism“:

⁵ Nenadić, D. „Praška škola filma“, *Kinotuskanac.hr*. (Available at: <http://kinotuskanac.hr/article/praska-skola-filma>, 13. 12. 2022).

⁶ Kolanović describes the ’80^s in Yugoslavia: „The eighties are known, in the wider cultural consciousness of the participants of these spaces, as the years of the Universiade, the founding of Youth Radio (Radio 101), the first gay film festival, etc., which legitimized the symbolic space of Yugoslav socialism as a pluralistic space“ (Kolanović, 2011b: 288).

It was no secret that young people increasingly identified with Western media culture, especially music and film (...). Along with a critical review of the inconsistencies in the theory and practice of proclaimed self-governing socialism, *Polet* became a Croatian and Yugoslav media phenomenon (Krušelj, 2015: 59).

At that time, on the pages of *Polet*, one could find texts that affirmatively referred to Western ideas and worldview. Krušelj describes the atmosphere that prevailed among the writers of *Polet*, which can be reflected on Yugoslav society as a whole, especially the younger generation:

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, the Italian hit film that was playing in Croatian cinemas in those years, was much more interesting to the editors than the stiff-necked Party and youth leaders at all levels who were always preoccupied with the same demagogic promises (Krušelj, 2015: 455).

In the 1980^s the generation of Croatian genre authors (mostly Tadić, Tomić, Šorak), inspired by the renowned directors (Hawks, Clouzot, Lang) and supported by the critics, began to shoot genre films. But firstly, this period of pluralization of styles affected the literature, enabling different attitudes and understanding of this period; some writers experimented with various postmodern strategies while others experimented more with genre codes.

POSTMODERNISM IN CROATIAN LITERATURE – THE SPREAD OF POPULAR CULTURE

Postmodernism in Croatian literature of the 1980^s brought a multitude of styles and a revival of trivial genres with the aim of re-attracting the readers with intriguing and popular content after the incomprehensible elitist (modern) literature.

In the article „Postmodernizam i hrvatska književnost“ („Postmodernism and Croatian Literature“), Krešimir Nemec mentions „global postmodernist culture, aesthetics and sensibility“ (Nemec, 1993: 260) which he finds in Croatian literature of the '80^s.⁷ In that period, Croatian poetry, prose and dra-

⁷ Nemec describes different postulates in literature of the '80^s: „The avant-garde ideal of the always new, original, unrepeatable and artistically provocative fell into an obvious crisis: the literary eighties were also marked in Croatian literature by a typical postmodernist phenomenon of explosion of forms, integration of all possible styles and their peaceful co-existence. The boundaries between elite and trivial literature were erased, the hierarchy of

ma shows a tendency towards eclecticism, anti-intellectualism and aesthetic populism. Nemec notices changes in novel production that were a clear sign of postmodernism:

The Croatian novel of the 1980^s is more stratified than ever, adapted to the democratic reception and market demand. Within this genre, a real postmodern 'egalitarian strategy' prevails: highly aestheticized codes are mixed with procedures characteristic of a trivial, non-canonized novel, the boundaries between fiction and faction are erased, techniques from other media (film, video, comics) are introduced (Nemec, 1993: 261).

This was an era of unprecedented thriving of genre prose; Nemec noticed that the popularization of the trivial novel was embraced by the audience, but also by the critics, which prompted „more conservative“ authors to try their hand at genre literature.⁸

The postmodernist style in Croatian literature was primarily carried out through genre hybrids in the works of Vesna Krmpotić, Neda Miranda Blažević, Marina Šur-Puhovski, Željko Kipke, etc. (Nemec, 1993: 265). However, Nemec also enlists the typical postmodern categories found in the works of that period: „abyeme effects, ironic play with narrative constructions and genre conventions (novel in novel, drama in drama)“ (Nemec, 1993: 266). Among the works that use different postmodernist strategies, Nemec includes Dubravka Ugrešić (*Štefica Cvek u raljama života*, 1981, *Život je bajka*, 1983), Ivan Kušan (*Prerušeni prosjak*, 1896) and others (Nemec, 1993: 265). The author notes that within Croatian literature there are clear indications of the postmodern style in various strategies that show „authorial self-awareness“ (Nemec, 1993: 265):

In the novel, for example, the logic and hierarchy of narrative instances is disrupted and the storytelling is influenced by the procedures of permutation, combination, substitution, collage, montage, etc. Other

genres was abolished, a lively dialogue with tradition was established, old literary projects were renewed“ (Nemec, 1993: 260).

⁸ Nemec comments on different poetic strategies on both „serious“ and trivial writers: „Therefore, even 'serious' authors are happy to experiment with various forms of trivial prose: detective, adventure, boulevard and pornographic novels, science fiction, horror, etc. It is characteristic, however, that such works often include codes and procedures which usually belong to the so-called high, that is, canonized art. But the reverse is also true: ambitious serious prose is renewed with elements taken from trivial literature. In such cases, one should see a typically postmodern demand for an aesthetic revaluation of entertaining literature“ (Nemec, 1993: 262).

postmodernist effects and ‘tricks’ are also common: duplication and multiplication of actions, multiple coding etc. (Nemec, 1993: 266).

Except the typical postmodern strategies used in literary works of this period, another group of Croatian writers focused on marginalized and trivial genres making very popular works in, mostly, crime genre.

Literary authors – the use of genre and/or socio-political context

In the '80s, genre was no longer on the margins of literature: criminal and love novels, thrillers, and even science fiction novels were finally coming to the center of literal interest. After experimenting with prose under the influence of J. L. Borges and magical realism, Croatian fiction writers embraced the genre, mostly in a form of crime novels. According to the research of Antonio Juričić and Boris Škvorc, the second generation of writers of crime novels (Pavao Pavličić, Goran Tribuson, Ludwig Bauer) is accountable for the revival of popular literature. Film and literary critic Jurica Pavičić analyses the characteristics, inspirations and social elements in these novels:

About twenty crime novels written by these three writers in the eighties and nineties show relatively traditionalist, classicist and naturalistic features. They largely border on social novels (Lj. Bauer, Tribuson), even social satire (Lj. Bauer), inspired more by classics like Simenon (Pavličić) or Chandler (Triuson) than by postmodern prose. The only exception from this matrix are Pavličić's fantastic novels with detective elements, which he persistently wrote until the end of the century. But even they do not show anti-naturalistic or ironic-meta-genre characteristics (Pavičić, 2000: 36).

The most productive fiction writers, such as P. Pavličić and G. Tribuson, have very successfully replaced poorly read erudite fiction with popular genre literature. Literary critic Borislav Pavlovski sees the fantastic fiction writers as „an interlude for shaping genre-marked production of prose“ (Pavlovski, 1995: 130). It was the writers of fantastic fiction who, in the late '70s, „began to question the modernist paradigm“ because, in the words of Boris Škvorc, they used „contradictory merging, interweaving of the incompatible: fantasy and social criticism“ (Škvorc, 2012: 89).

In Pavličić's works⁹ *Večernji akt* (1981) and *Slobodan pad* (1982), Boris Škvorc sees the erasure of the border between elite and trivial literature and playing with genre patterns „in which one goes from genre to fantastic literature and from fantastic literature to criminal fiction“ (Škvorc, 2012: 87). The author believes that some writers who continued to engage in literary production „first played with, and then accepted the crime poetics as the dominant narrative“ (Škvorc, 2012: 83)¹⁰.

The crime genre proved to be the most popular genre model in Croatian literature. In a review of the Croatian crime novel from the late 1970^s to the late 1980^s, Boris Škvorc summarizes common themes of the most productive Croatian crime writers, Pavličić and Tribuson. He categorizes their works in several groups; thrillers that deconstruct social relations through a seemingly trivial pattern, thrillers that depict the transition „from late socialism“ to the so-called „Tycoon period“ and thrillers that combine a „crime plot with fantastic elements of Borges' prose“ (Škvorc, 2012: 68).

The second generation of crime authors introduced a depiction of social reality, which is analyzed by Lana Molvarec. She believes that by „incorporating the motifs of everyday life and social reality into their works“ the novels became close to American hard-boiled prose but avoided „creating a gloomy image of a deeply corrupt society ruled by well-organized mobsters and gangsters (...)“ (Molvarec, 2011: 34).

⁹ Škvorc finds a postmodern example of combining crime genre with fantasy elements among former fantasy artists who became representatives of popular genres (Pavličić, Tribuson). Here, Škvorc comments on Pavličić's novel *Večernji akt*: „That text inaugurated the ludic type of postmodern writing in Croatian literature, the framework for the possible transmission of identity, and it also opened up a whole series of other, albeit fragily based, interpretation possibilities that such novels place in the center of reader's attention. By the way in which the crime genre is grafted into a fantastic text with artistic pretensions (...) this novel fits into postmodern European trends (Calvino, Eco's historiographic metafiction). On the other hand, at the same time, it functions in a completely rounded way as an 'ordinary' crime story. This will later be repeated in some of Pavličić's novels, some elements of this statement will be used by Goran Tribuson, and even Stjepan Čuić in his socially based novel *Orden* (1981), and a similar procedure will be visible in Barbieri's *Epitaf carskog gurmana* (1983)“ (Škvorc, 2012: 87).

¹⁰ Škvorc mentions the most popular writers of crime fiction: „There is the already mentioned Pavao Pavličić with his first two novels, written before his detour into the 'fantastic', which consistently follow the pattern, announcing social criticism in the first novel (*Plava ruža*, 1977) and the possibilities of mixing styles and paradigms in the second (*Stroj za maglu*, 1978). Followed by Goran Tribuson, who started with Borgesian intoned novels, and then followed the pattern of crime novels, with a series of novels about inspector Nikola Banić; first as a member of Yugoslav militia (*Zavirivanje*), and then as a policeman of post-communist Croatia (*Noćna smjena* and *Bijesne lisice*, for example).“ Ibid, 89.

In her study „Grad i urbanitet u kriminalističkoj prozi Pavla Pavličića“ („City and Urbanism in Pavle Pavličić’s Criminal Prose“), Lana Molvarec finds that Pavličić’s crime novels were inspired by the works of „English classical whodunit and European crime novel with a more noticeable social dimension“ (Molvarec, 2011: 34). Still, Molvarec explores a different function of the city in Croatian prose; in this, very urban prose, localities and recognizable surroundings (districts of the city of Zagreb)¹¹ are evoked and city ceases to be a „backdrop“ in front of which crimes take place (like in the „golden age“ of British novels) (Molvarec, 2011: 35).¹²

In Pavličić’s crime novels¹³, the crime is solved by the police inspector Šoštar, with the help and cooperation of the journalist Ivo Remetin. In addition to journalists, Molvarec also names amateur detectives who come from various „ordinary“ professions: „professors, lawyers, waitresses, craftsmen, retirees“ (Molvarec, 2011: 40). Common topics, according to Molvarec, are: „illegal construction, intolerance, opposition between province and city, opposition between north and south, etc.“ (Molvarec, 2011: 40). These police cases are not a part of a powerful and elaborate conspiracy but are committed out of passion or instinct by ordinary men. Also, the investigation itself is not based on science and modern technology, but on the protagonist’s intuition and life experience. Pavličić formulated his knowledge of crime fiction into a book called *Sve što znam o krimiću* (*Everything I know about crime fiction*), in which he categorizes the characteristics of a crime novel.¹⁴

¹¹ Molvarec points out that Zagreb is the referential city in most of Pavličić’s novels: *Plava ruža* (1977), *Stroj za maglu* (1978), *Umjetni orao* (1979), *Pjesma za rastanak*, *Čelični mjesec* (1985), *Rakova djeca* (1988), *Pasijans* (2000), *Tužni bogataš* (2002), *Zmijaska serenada* (2005), *Žive igračke* (2009) and collections of short stories *Dobri duh Zagreba* (1976), *Radovi na krovu* (1984), *Skandal na simpoziju* (1985) and *Otrovni papir* (2001) (Molvarec, 2011: 39–41).

¹² Molvarec explains the function of the city in Croatian crime prose: „On the one hand, there is a visible aspiration for social recognition, representativeness, (...) while on the other hand, this aspiration for documenting, mimicking and referring to the real city is overcome (...) and a suggestive, distinctive image of the city with its own separate set of meanings is created“ (Molvarec, 2011: 35).

¹³ In Pavličić’s short stories and novels, Molvarec observes a more realistic approach to the description of the city, crimes, perpetrators and detectives, without hyperbolic descriptions of society; dangerous milieu, pathological criminals or god-like detectives: „The city is no longer terrifying, but benign and common, reduced to the measure of the main characters who live in it. The main characters are almost without exception ‘average people’ who do not stand out from the majority in any way – this applies to both perpetrators and crime solvers. And crimes seem tame (...) the motivation for the crime is ‘human’, understandable, personal.“ Ibid, 40.

¹⁴ More in: P. Pavličić, *Sve što znam o krimiću*, Ex libris, Zagreb, 2008.

Pavličić is the author of an impressive opus whose works, in addition to being widely read, also became popular as films. In collaboration with director Zoran Tadić, he tried his hand at screenwriting and participated in almost all of the director's projects (except for the film *Čovjek koji je volio sprovode*). Even after the 1980s, he continued to work on film scripts (*Vukovar se vraća kući*, 1994, *Putovanje tamnom polutkom*, 1996) and wrote crime novels (for example, *Crveno pile*, 2015) with Ivo Remetin as his central character.

Goran Tribuson's literature is the result of the author's postmodern aspirations, i.e. his tendency to mix elite and trivial literature. His fantastic prose features horror, eroticism and grotesque (*Praška smrt*, 1975, *Snijeg u Heidelbergu*, 1980), and his later works include elements of autobiography, humor (*Povijest pornografije*, 1988) or travelogue (*Made in USA*, 1986). Tribuson switched to his next phase, genre novel, when he wrote *Ruski rulet* (1982). His crime novels were modelled after the world-famous hard-boiled prose writers (for example, Chandler's Phil Marlow). In these novels, his protagonist (Nikola Banić) leaves the police job and opens a private detective agency. Alongside his work as a private detective, Tribuson also shows his personal problems (alcoholism, divorce), as well as his hobbies and sensibilities (love for jazz).

In his novels, Tribuson tends to dissect current social and political reality. This is seen through a wide range of events set mostly in the nineties: the first Croatian democratic elections, renaming of the partisan streets and squares, adapting the communist system to the new, capitalist one, the appearance of golden youth, strikes, war profiteers, false patriots and tycoons.

Another writer, known for his crime novels, is Ludwig Bauer. Being an author of popular children's literature, Bauer changed his genre preferences out of a bet, receiving high praise and a vast popularity among readers of crime fiction. He was known as a writer who, in addition to knowing the codes of a given genre, is able to significantly enrich the given narrative pattern and meet the expectations of the audience. The author of the text „How we read Bauer (...)“ Lidija Dujić writes about his knowledge of genre theory and the potential „to move its rigid and given symmetry to the local setting and make it a good literature“ (Dujić, 2012: 179). Dujić cites a research done by writer Stjepo Mijović Kočan who analyzes Bauer's use of traditional genre procedures. Kočan states that, in addition to the inspiration he found in the crime literature (his role model was Agatha Christie), Bauer also showed innovation in his approach to the genre:

(...) it really is a crime story in the best sense of the word that holds the reader's attention from beginning to end, it is read in one breath. Situations change in a flash, the turns are unpredictable, but logical, and there is no lack of tension ... everything is just right! (Dujić, 2012: 179).

In the eighties, the romance novel was also an important part of genre literature. Author Maša Kolanović examines the popularity of romance novel which, thanks to the well-known author Ana Žube, was experiencing „high circulation and a wide circle, especially of female readers“¹⁵.

Ana Župan, under the pseudonym Ana Žube, published over 1,500 love novels inspired by the lives of real women with whom she came into contact. In her thematically diverse romances¹⁶ as well as in her two published novels (*Divlja loza*, 1982 and *Ne traži me u sebi*, 1985), she showed a preview of Western lifestyle to her public. Ante Bašić in his research on the works of Ana Žube writes about the relevance of Žuba's stories in documenting Yugoslav reality.¹⁷

Science-fiction works, which became popular in the seventies, still attracted a lot of attention in the '80s. SF magazine *Sirius*, which was published from 1976 to 1989, marked a „golden age“ of science fiction in Yugoslav literature.¹⁸ *Sirius* published works of authors such as Zvonimir Furtinger, Predrag Raos, Branko Belan, Branko Pihać etc.¹⁹, in addition to publishing

¹⁵ Kolanović, M. (2005). „Presvlačenje naslovnica; Vizualni identiteti romana ‘Štefica Cvek u raljama života’“. *Zagrebačka slavistička škola*. (Available at: <http://www.hrvatskiplus.org/article.php?id=1906&naslov=presvlačenje-naslovnica>, 21. 11. 2022).

¹⁶ Sanja Grgurević describes the thematic range of the author's opus: „Žube cherishes the form of a short story in which she presents a wide range of love themes: from those that are typical for the formation of a trivial plot; such as a sudden meeting at the airport during a fog (*Otkazani let*), internal conflicts in which the heroine has to decide between two men (*Utkani snovi*), youthful infatuation (*Prva školska ljubav*), quarrels between young spouses (*Prvi godišnji odmor*), women who faces her husband's infidelity (*Misliti ću sutra*) or lack of respect from her spouse (*Igra istine*), through a woman burdened by a former marriage (*Ne živi se od prošlosti*), an idealized love that is realized only through letters (*Piši mi*), problematic relations between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law who wants to keep everything under control (*Dan bez suza*), all the way to past loves of which only memories remain (*Sjećanja*) or fatal encounters that determine the heroine's entire future life (*Cijeli život u slučajnom susretu*)“ (Grgurević, 2015: 46).

¹⁷ To show how much her works were welcomed by the public, Bašić cites Igor Mandić's preface to Žuba's book „*Sjene na suncu*“: „Emotions and social reality are the main feature of these stories, and at the same time the main obstacle to their evaluation by the usual meter. These stories are almost factually documentary (...) – and at the same time richly imaginative. The phrase ‘literary (non)pretension’ makes it extremely difficult to judge stories by classical standards: they are exposed to the evaluation of a wide range of readers. IN BRIEF: they are ours, Yugoslav, they came from our soil and from our people and mentality and they cannot remain unnoticed, which is also confirmed by the fantastic – not only for our circumstances – number of loyal readers“ (Bašić, 2011: 122).

¹⁸ There is also the influence of TV and other SF literature (for example, the magazine *Galaksija*).

¹⁹ After the successful two-volume novel *Brodolom kod Thule* (1979), a genre mix of space-opera, social utopia and techno-thriller, Predrag Raos returned in the eighties with another

critical analysis, theoretical articles and translations of renowned world authors (Clarke, Asimov, Heinlein, Bradbury). Author Želimir Košćević made a classification of Yugoslav science fiction that was published in *Sirius*. In addition to themes representative of this genre (robotics, time travel, encounters with other species), Košćević also notices subgenre categories such as westerns or horror novels.

In film art, the '80s were marked by the „new genre“ film, which was how the film critics termed this period.

NEW GENRE FILM – PLURALISM AND REVALUATION OF MARGINALIZED GENRES

The 1980s brought a significant change in Croatia cinema after modernist and socio-critical films which conveyed stylistically very self-conscious and politically engaged poetics. The generation of Croatian genre authors, mainly Zoran Tadić, Živorad Tomić and Dejan Šorak, who were relying on the classical narrative tradition (Howard Hawks, Claude Chabrol, Fritz Lang) began to produce genre films, supported by the young film critics. Although the break from modernism was already signaled in the works of the directors who studied at the Prague film school (for example: Lordan Zafranović, Rajko Grlić, Goran Marković etc.) they did not consider themselves genre authors and, for the most part, spoke negatively about the values of genre film.

Genre film was in the core of public and critic interest from the very beginnings of the Yugoslav film industry. Although, there is quite a difference in the way genre was used in the films of the '50s and '60s in comparison to the films in the eighties. Directors such as Branko Bauer, Nikola Tanhofer, Žika Mitrović (...) who worked in the '50s, used genre as a learning tool in order to gain insight into the norms of the classic narrative style, genre codes, dramaturgy, populism, etc.

In addition to the most popular and valued Yugoslav genre – partisan film, the '50s and '60s were known for a variety of different genres: comedies, children/family films, action films, melodramas, thrillers etc., although not all of those genres had a same status. In this period, film art had to fulfill different functions; its aim was to entertain, but it also had to serve as educational tool

science fiction novel, *Mnogo vike nizašto* (1986). Branko Belan, in addition to many stories published in *Sirius*, also published a dystopian novel *Utov dnevnik* in 1984. Branko Pihać wrote a collection of SF stories *Perpetuum mobile* (1986), in which a story entitled *Pro-metheus* stands out as the most significant one. It is also worth mentioning Damir Mikuličić, based on whose template, i.e. the story *Morska zvijezda*, one of the rare SF films in Croatian cinema was filmed – *Gosti iz galaksije* (1981).

i.e. propaganda. Consequently, only the genres that could convey the needed (political) message were considered desirable.

The eighties brought a different attitude concerning genre film, in accordance with postmodernist tendencies towards pluralism, stylistic and thematic varieties and genre mixture. This period of „new genre“ film was significant for a group of educated film directors – Zoran Tadić, Živorad Tomić, and Dejan Šorak, whose film opus is the most diverse in terms of genre. Petar Krelja, Branko Ivanda and Dušan Vukotić also contributed to this period. These authors approached the genre in a similar manner; with distinctive visual style, poetics and more or less obvious citations/allusions to prominent film authors. According to Velisavljević, the authors also had a tendency to „enrich film material with other genres such as thrillers, science fiction and horror (...)“ (Velisavljević, 2012: 79). With the emergence of new genres, notably crime film and its subgenres (detective, gangster film and thriller), these directors found their poetic preferences and used the genre knowledge to produce, in terms of Yugoslavian cinema, a variety of new or rare genre films.

The attitude of film authors towards the genre in the '80s is a clear indicator of the change in the approach and evaluation of the genre. The authors of this decade who experimented with genres did so following the example of new tendencies in European and American film (French New Wave or New Hollywood). These directors consciously appropriated and applied in their films both generational (Scorsese, Spielberg, De Palma, Carpenter, Chabrol) and poetic (Ford, Hitchcock, Hawks) influences. As a result, similar dramaturgical formulas, motifs and character typology can be found in their films and in the foreign films they refer to. Just as the filmmakers of New Hollywood initiated the revitalization of trivial genres, the dominance of story over form and populism over incoherent art structure – same did the „new genre“ authors who embraced the same norms. In addition to corresponding with European and American stylistic and poetic tendencies, this generation openly celebrates its role models. For example, in film *Čovjek koji je volio sprovode*, Tadić partially takes over the poetics of Chabrol (who, in turn, often quotes Hitchcock), in *Treći ključ* he follows Carpenter (*Someone's Watching Me!*, 1978), while his film *Osuđeni* is reminiscent of *Cape Fear* (J. Lee Thompson, 1962). In *Diploma za smrt*, Tomić is inspired by Brian De Palma's film (*Scar Face*, 1983), who in turn quotes Howard Hawks (*Scar Face*, 1932). In his film *Vrijeme ratnika*, Šorak cites Walter Hill (*Southern Comfort*, 1981), who finds inspiration in *The Lost Patrol* (John Ford), etc. This change of attitude towards the genre, which occurs with the arrival of postmodernism, results in production of films that have more obvious or more conscious intertextual connections with the film heritage.

Film authors – the use of genre and/or socio-political context

Tadić, as an undeclared „leader“ of a „new genre“ film, is also its most productive member. Tadić's films, stylistically and genre-wise, are predominantly thrillers, often involving fantastic elements (*Ritam zločina*, 1981, *Treći ključ*, 1983) and social motifs (*San o ruži*, 1986, etc.). Also, Tadić often uses genre codes of detective film (*Čovjek koji je volio sprovode*, 1989, *Orao*, 1990) and film noir (*Orao*, *San o ruži*) in his thrillers. The essential elements of Tadić's thrillers are social and/or political motifs, although the socio-political context is never explicitly shown. In his first thriller *Ritam zločina*, the suspense is triggered by the unusual newcomer who finds patterns in the criminal activities throughout the city. Here Tadić uses surreal motifs (predicament of the future murders) to enrich his crime story. In his next film, *Treći ključ*, he uses fantastic elements through the occurrence of the mysterious envelopes with money that the young, financially troubled family find in their mail box. Furthermore, Tadić here for the first time explores the social dimension, having presented a young couple who is struggling to earn enough to provide for the basic needs. In his third thriller *San o ruži*, he continues to dissect everyday life of a socialist worker who becomes an eyewitness to the murder. Tricked into a game of cat and mouse with the criminals, he becomes a murderer himself at the end. His following film *Osuđeni* (1987) was made in a genre of western. Interestingly enough, Tadić wasn't a pioneer of this genre. Authors like Žika Mitrović and Hajrudin Krvavac made their mark in the '50s by making a Yugoslav version of that genre, the so called „partisan western“. Tadić upgraded the genre by having a socially engaged story of a falsely accused and imprisoned protagonist who seeks revenge from the corrupted individuals. In his film *Čovjek koji je volio sprovode*, socio-political element is suppressed by the mysterious deaths that shatter a small community. Tadić here combines the elements of film noir (femme fatale, detective's investigation, internal monologue) and typical genre motifs (obsessive jealousy, stalking, infatuation with a woman) often found in the works of, for example, Claude Chabrol or Alfred Hitchcock. The last Tadić's thriller, *Orao*, is a whodunit combined with elements of film noir. Here, a story is revealed piece by piece, told from different points of view of four narrators who try to find and punish a man responsible for the death of their friend.

Živorad Tomić approached his two films in a same way – mixing genre with subgenre. In Tomić's whodunit *Kraljeva završnica* (1987), director's approach results in an alternative presentation of the love triangle between the central characters; instead of apostrophizing adultery and consequences of divorce, which would suggest drama, Tomić introduces new characters and a

shocking plot twist (rape) that transforms the protagonist from an inert spineless individual into a determined avenger.²⁰

Tomić's second film, *Diploma za smrt* (1989), is a crime film that uses the elements of two sub-genres: gangster film²¹ and film noir. Some of the motifs that Tomić uses to suggest certain genre/sub-genre are: distinctive locations – underground bars, restaurants, meeting points, typical characters – criminals, racketeers, femme fatale, techniques – chiaroscuro etc. This film corresponds to popular American films of the '70s that mark the revitalization of the gangster genre – Coppola's *The Godfather* franchise (1972, 1974 and 1990) or De Palma's interpretation of *Scarface* (1983). In his film, Tomić emphasizes fraud and corruption that are deeply rooted in society; from petty theft by employees to tax evasion and falsification of documents by the executives. Film critic Tomislav Čegir comments on author's interesting combination of these two sub-genres in terms of socio-political circumstances in the state:

(...) in Croatia, *film noir* appears as a consequence of state insecurity after the death of Yugoslavian president Josip Broz Tito and the noticeable political and economic crisis, while the gangster film is conditioned by marked disorder and dizzying inflation and the inefficiency of the ideological system, but it is equally an indication of possible capitalism (Čegir, 2012: 41).

The author who is by far most known for experimenting with genre is Dejan Šorak. His first film *Mala pljačka vlaka* (1984) is a western comedy about two groups of people on the opposite side of the law and their adjustment to the new socio-political context (the transition from Austro-Hungarian Empire to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). As mentioned before, „partisan westerns“ were already known in the Yugoslav cinema. Directors Žika Mitrović and Hajrudin Krvavac transferred the iconography of classic westerns (John Ford/ Howard Hawks) into the partisan/Yugoslav context. In Šorak's case, the quotes and allusions²² aren't subject to ideology (unlike the

²⁰ The protagonists of crime films are often avengers who correct the injustice done to those close to them. Juraj Kukoč provides an interesting overview of the vigilante characters in Tadić's films: „In fact, all of Tadić's vigilante characters are people who consider their lives ruined. None of them is satisfied with their work and career achievements, nor with their sexual and love life. All of them, instead of feeling happiness and satisfaction with life, feel anxiety and helplessness. Unable to accept their own responsibility for the situation they are in, they look for scapegoats to blame for all their life's misfortunes (...)“ (Kukoč, 2006: 60).

²¹ The gangster film was not popular for objective reasons – the concept of organized crime was foreign in that period. This film will prove to be indicative of the years ahead, i.e. the '90s.

²² In his title, Šorak alludes to Edwin S. Porter – *The Great Train Robbery*, 1903.

works of '50s and '60s) which is one of the main characteristics of the „new genre“ film.

His second film *Oficir s ružom* (1987) is a war melodrama. Melodrama, a marginalized genre of Yugoslav cinema until the 1980s, was experiencing a comeback in this period. This happened partly due to the revaluation and revitalization of the genre in the 1970s led by the German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Spanish author Pedro Almodóvar, who both used the genre codes of melodrama to dissect socio-political context within their community. The genre was treated in a similar way in Šorak's melodrama but also in Rajko Grlić's *Samo jednom se ljubi* (1981). Both melodramas describe the political and social atmosphere in post-war Zagreb, just after the end of the Second World War. The central heroes of both films have to choose between a marriage with a middleclass woman (a liaison which was considered forbidden as they are class enemies) and their partisan ideals of revolution and socialism, i.e. the loyalty to communist ideology.

In his next film, *Krvopijci* (1989), Šorak uses codes and iconography of both horror and comedy, thus making a parody on a theme of vampirism. Šorak contrasts humorous and ironic dialogues with the ominous atmosphere surrounding a 16th century vampire who threatens the main characters. As with his earlier genre films, here author continues to experiment with genres that were considered trivial and/or subversive. Horror films were practically banned in the '50s and '60s due to the fact that the political system feared the authors would show a certain criticism of the government/institutions (for example, political or social repression) through the social satire.

Šorak also tried his hand at military drama *Najbolji* (1989), finding inspiration in American blockbusters such as *Top Gun* (dir. Tony Scott, 1986) or *An Officer and a Gentleman* (dir. Taylor Hackford, 1982). Lacking in action scenes, dramatic tension and more inspiring plot twists, *Najbolji* did not achieve immense popularity and cult status as its foreign models. Also, the film critics considered it a work of propaganda, with the main ambition of popularizing JNA (Yugoslav National Army) among the younger audience.

Šorak directed one of the most acknowledged examples of the „new genre“ action film – *Vrijeme ratnika* (1991). The film focuses on two old friends, a legionnaire and a partisan, who become a prey on a seemingly ordinary fishing trip, when a group of unidentified individuals threaten their lives. The plot was again influenced by American masterpieces with the similar concept concerning theme, style and approach to genre, such as John Ford's *The Lost Patrol* (1934), John Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972) or Walter Hill's *Southern Comfort* (1981).

Alongside the most significant authors of the „new genre“ film – Tadić,

Tomić and Šorak, there were at least three more directors who used the same poetics – Dušan Vukotić, Branko Ivanda, and Petar Krelja.

Dušan Vukotić gave his contribution to the Yugoslav science fiction genre in a SF parody *Gosti iz galaksije* (1981), made in a collaboration with Czechoslovakia. In the film, Vukotić ironizes SF classics of the 1950^s and 1960^s, which popularized UFO themes about a threatening superior force from outer space. Vukotić also uses genre codes and iconography of comedy and horror in creating a family of aliens whose interaction with the human race is both disastrous and hilarious. Vukotić's choice of genre is invaluable, since science fiction was avoided in the circle of film directors in the '50^s and '60^s. The political structure did not allow surreal elements and phantasmagoric visions in films; themes had to remain in the interest of the state's national policy (revolution, economic progress of the country etc.) or they had to be traditionally rooted in society (portrayal of traditions, folklore, historical events etc.).²³

Ivanda's film (*Zločin u školi*, 1982) is another example of the popular crime genre. Here, author uses elements of both thriller and detective film in which the protagonist is forced to take on the role of a detective, trying to solve a particular case in which he is involved. Ivanda's whodunit follows the same paradigm which is an essential concept of the „new genre“ film – the emphasis is on genre (crime story) rather than on social critique although there are allusions to the political/social context (student demonstrations).

Film author of yet another marginalized genre in Croatian cinema is a documentarist, director and film critic Petar Krelja. His *Stela* (1990) is a road movie, in which protagonists change different types of transportation (car, bus, train) in order to reach their destination. The genre formally began in the late 1960^s with the films *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969), although examples that can be classified as road movies (or proto-road movies) can be found in earlier Yugoslav genre films (Nikola Tanhofer's film *H-8...*, 1958). While Tanhofer's film is both a thriller and a disaster film, Krelja's *Stela* is a social drama about the lives of delinquent youth whose destinies are marked by family tragedies and insensitive law officers.

²³ There have been a couple of attempts at feature films, i.e. TV adaptations, based on the literary templates of fantastic writers such as Ksaver Gjaliski (*San doktora Mišića*, 1973, dir. Branko Pleša or *Nocturno*, 1974, dir. Branko Ivanda). Fantasy was also used in children's film *Sedmi kontinent*, 1966, dir. Dušan Vukušić and SF horror *Izbavitelj*, 1976, dir. Krsto Papić.

CONCLUSION

In this brief overview of the genre tradition in literature and film art of the 1980^s, an attempt was made to evaluate and analyze the status of genre in the context of increasing influence of the postmodern style. In both literature and film, the production of trivial and marginalized genres (melodrama, western, horror, science fiction), points to the revitalization, revaluation and popularization of the genre.

Furthermore, literary and film authors approached the genre in a similar way; both with the knowledge of how to use the codes of the given genre, and with clear indication of who their role models were. Therefore, the most popular Croatian genre writers such as Pavao Pavličić or Goran Tribuson who tried their hand at hard-boiled crime stories, modeled their work after G. Simenon or R. Chandler, while film directors referred to the authors of French New Wave (Henri-Georges Clouzot, Claude Chabrol) or New Hollywood directors (John Carpenter, Walter Hill, Brian De Palma). The common characteristic of these two arts is also the avoidance of escapism, a feature close to postmodernist poetics of the '80^s. In contrast, the authors keep in touch with social-political reality, showing in their works some of the social anomalies (corruption, smuggling, bribery, social injustice). Exceptions to this rule are the works of Dejan Šorak and Dušan Vukotić who, by exploring satirical and ironical attitude towards genre through parodies, distance themselves from socio-political settings.

Overall, in the 1980^s the status of genre changed and many authors pursued in making a genre related novel/film, which was widely accepted by both the public and the critics. Popularization of genre meant not only the erasure of its degrading status but also marked a new kind of production mode where citations, allusions and references were a legitimate source of inspiration.

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Jelena GRGIĆ

OSAMDESETE GODINE U HRVATSKOJ KNJIŽEVNOSTI I FILMU SA SOCIO-POLITIČKOG I ŽANROVSKOG ASPEKTA

Hrvatska književnost i film 1980-ih godina pod značajnim su utjecajem europskih i američkih (postmodernih) poetičkih struja koje pristupaju autorском radu miješajući visoki i niski stil, odnosno kodove „ozbiljne“ književnosti sa žanrovskom književnošću, koja se, do tada, vrednovala kao komercijalni, niževrijedni proizvod. U ovoj dekadi, pisci i filmaši osnaženi novim pogledom na žanr i njegovom revalorizacijom, okušavaju se u različitim, do tada rijetkim, zabranjivanim ili ignoriranim žanrovima, tvoreći zavidan autorски opus.

Književnici poput Pavličića ili Tribusona, odnosno redatelji poput Tadića, Tomića ili Šorka koriste žanrovske kodove po uzoru na strane autore, na koje aludiraju u manjoj ili većoj mjeri. U ovom se periodu u djelima nekih autora može osjetiti jači utjecaj postmodernističkog stila (posebice po pitanju eskapističkog odmak od stvarnosti), dok se u drugim radovima, unatoč poigravanju s postmodernističkim značajkama, zadržava odnos s društvenom zbiljom.

Ključne riječi: *žanr, postmodernizam, film, književnost, socio-politički kontekst*