



THE REPRESENTATION OF THE TURK IN YUGOSLAV FILMS

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Abstract: The Ottomans were a constant presence in Southeast Europe for a better part of five centuries and thus established strong roots in the area. Their influence is still felt in numerous ways, even though the Empire ceased to exist a century ago. This influence was expressed, in all sorts of media in numerous countries, of the region. One of these countries was Yugoslavia, whose movie industry was one of the most eminent in Southeast Europe and Europe in general. As far as the historical movies, made by the Yugoslav film industry, they were primarily focused on the events of the Second World War. The Yugoslavs still produced other historical films and some of them were focused on the period of the Ottoman Empire. The two types of films did cover different time periods, but with the same objective; to represent the Yugoslav peoples in a favourable light. Either by showing the 'heroic' resistance of the Yugoslav Partisans or the 'oppressive' Ottoman times. More or less both pictures generated by the films, were embellished. And the best way to enhance how good one side was and to demean the 'other' in the case of this paper - the Ottomans or the Turks as they were being called in Yugoslavia. Numerous films that were made, had a propagandic purpose and this was epitomised in the 1989 movie *Battle of Kosovo*, which was in a way a prelude to the Yugoslav wars of the 90s and the treatment of the 'domestic Turks' which is how they were derogatorily called as a Muslim population. This paper will cover and compare films such as *Lažni car* (1955), *Nevesinjska puška* (1963), *Hasanaginica* (1967), *Derviš i smrt* (1974), *Boj na Kosovu* (1989), and *Nož* (1999). These films were chosen because they represent a notable example of Yugoslav cinema, and the actors who played the main roles were for the most part well renowned.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Films, Ottoman Empire, Representation, Propaganda

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Introduction

The Ottoman Empire first came into contact with Southeast Europe in the middle of the 14th century with the Battle of Demotika in today's Greece. The battle took place between the Byzantine dynasties of Palaiologos and Kantakouzenos. In this Byzantine civil war, the Ottomans took the side of the Kantakouzenos who won the Battle of Demotika but lost the war. Nevertheless, the Ottomans won their first territories in Europe near today's Gallipoli (Fine & Fine, 1994). These new European territories enabled the Ottomans to directly threaten the region. In the late 14th century, there was an escalation and numerous battles occurred between the Ottomans and other European countries, in the region. Three major battles occurred: the Battle of Maritsa in 1371, the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, and the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396. These battles were either Ottoman victories or in the case of Kosovo a draw, but the end result was in the favour of the Ottomans (Inalcik, 2001). Out of these three battles the battle of Kosovo is the most famous one, especially in Serbia. The reason for this is that there wasn't a clear winner since both sides suffered great casualties and their leaders died during the battle.² Nevertheless, seeing that the Ottomans had a greater military potential and were able to restore their strength, as well as the fact that a new Sultan came to power almost instantly, meant that the future conquest of Europe was not hindered.

The Ottoman advancement into Europe was halted in 1402 after their defeat at the Battle of Angora, present day Ankara, by the Timurid empire. The result of the battle was a decisive defeat of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the capture of the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid I. With his capture started the Ottoman interregnum, which lasted up until 1413. In 1413 Sultan Mehmed I emerged victorious in the Ottoman civil war and the conquests to expand the empire started again (Goffman, 2002). He and his descendants were able to conquer almost all of Southeast Europe in the next hundred and fifty years, which was part of the Ottoman Empire up until the 19th century. This means that, the different parts of Southeast Europe were under the Ottoman Empire for almost four hundred years.

During its long history, the Ottoman Empire had a constant relationship with Europe and during the centuries the manner in which the Ottomans were represented changed with the passage of time. These narratives shifted depending on the needs of Europe, as well as the current socio-political state in both Europe and the Ottoman Empire. In the early days of the

² The Ottoman sultan that died in the battle was Murat I, while the Serbian ruler was Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović.



Ottoman conquest, they were represented as barbaric conquerors, savages, and in other similar negative portrayals. This was mostly present since the Ottomans conquered two of the most important cities in Christianity. First Constantinople and then Jerusalem. Also, the Ottomans started to overpower Christian states in Southeast Europe and even threatened Wien and Italy (Malcolm, 2019). As time passed on and the strength of the Ottoman Empire started to dwindle, the European perception of the Ottomans began to change. The primary narrative in Europe regarding the Ottomans changed, from the barbaric strength of the “new heathen conquerors” to rather their newfound weakness and cultural backwardness (Jezernik, 2010). These portrayals of the Ottomans and the Ottoman Empire served a purpose of propaganda in the era in which the Ottoman Empire existed and was active in the world of European politics. The Europeans portrayed their enemy in a manner that would suit them best. There are numerous reasons why these countries did this: they either wanted to rally their own populous against the Ottomans or to seek allies in their fight against the Sultan. Later when the Ottoman Empire was starting to collapse these countries used this propaganda as a way to justify their claims on Ottoman territory. Since Socialist Yugoslavia was established long after the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist, and it did not have a direct relationship as a country to the Ottoman Empire, we need to ask ourselves a question: what influenced the way the Ottomans were presented in Yugoslav films?

Similarly, as earlier, the manner in which the Ottomans were presented, depended on the situation in Yugoslavia and the world when that particular film was made. There was one major difference between the manner in which the Ottoman Empire was represented in Yugoslav films. The difference was that the Ottoman Empire and the Socialist Yugoslavia, were not contemporary since the Ottoman Empire dissolved in 1922, while the Socialist Yugoslavia was established after the Second World War. This meant that, the representation of the Ottoman Empire was a metaphor and a metonymy. The way the Ottoman Empire was represented in films, did not show the true face of the Ottoman Empire, but rather the contemporary view in Yugoslavia of either the Ottoman Empire, the Muslims in general, or an international threat. The role of the Ottoman Empire in the relationship was taken up by the different Muslim countries, especially those who were part of the Non-Aligned movement and the native Muslim population in Yugoslavia. Another group, which took up the role of the Ottoman Empire, were the foreign powers which were interested in Yugoslavia after the war. Similarly, the view on the Ottomans changed from the first and the last Yugoslav film.

Yugoslavia's films and the Turks

The first era

The first full feature Yugoslav film in which the Ottoman Empire and the Ottomans were represented was the film *'Lažni car'* (1955) or *'The False Emperor'*. This film follows the accession to power of Šćepan Mali or Stephen the Little who was the first and only "tsar" or "emperor" of Montenegro. He lived in the 18th century from around 1739 up until his death in 1773. When he emerged in Montenegro, he was presented as the late Russian emperor Peter III in exile. The majority of his life remains a mystery and the film *'Lažni car'* is mostly based on the literary work of the prince-bishop of Montenegro Petar II Petrović Njegoš called *'Lažni car Šćepan mali'* or *'The False Tsar Stephen the Little'*, published in 1851. In the work Šćepan Mali was portrayed as an imposter and a fake, but also as a reformer and the creator of the modern national identity in Montenegro (Filipović, 2020). This view is also conveyed in the film where Šćepan Mali, played by the famed Yugoslav actor Rade Marković, is shown as a strong ruler and a kind-hearted leader who is fighting for the Montenegrins against the Ottoman Empire, in the film called the Turks, and the Venetian Republic. The Turks are represented in the form of a certain Beylerbey, in the film simply called the Vizier. He was shown in the film as a potbellied and overweight individual. Besides his appearance, the Vizier was presented as an arrogant and temperamental oppressor calling not only for the capture of Šćepan Mali, but for his torture and impalement. On the other hand, the Venetians and the city of Dubrovnik were shown as sophisticated and cunning accomplices to the Turks. In this case, the Venetians represent the contemporary European powers, especially Italy, after the Second World War, who were only interested in their own agenda. The view of the Venetians in the film is such for the most part, because of the Italy-Yugoslav crisis over Trieste, which started in 1953, two years before the film was made and only formally ended in 1975 with the Treaty of Osimo (Zaccaria, 2020). The crisis started over the disputed territory of Trieste which was claimed by both countries (Croci, 1992). One other similarity shown between the Venetians and contemporary Italy and their allies, is that they continually had secret meetings in which they discussed the fate of Šćepan Mali, in the film, or Yugoslavia in real life. In the film, the secret meetings were held between the Venetians and the Turks, while in the real world they were held by members of NATO.



On the other hand, the other European power that was represented in the film was the Russian Empire. The Russians were shown as keen supporters and eager to help the Montenegrins fight the Turks, but on one condition. The Montenegrins had to expel Šćepan Mali from Montenegro. Šćepan Mali, seeing that the Russians would not help otherwise, had a confrontation with the Russian delegation where he confessed that he is not a Tsar, for the sake of military assistance from Russia in their fight against the Turks. In the end, the Russians accepted Šćepan as the ruler in Montenegro and the delegates showed their respects to him, bestowing numerous gifts and the rank of officer and “ruler of the land”. This is a metaphor and allegory, which represents the contemporary relationship between the Socialist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The two countries were allies in the Second World War, but the Yugoslavs were subordinate to the Soviets.³ After the war in which the Yugoslavs were able to successfully resist the Axis powers and to establish their own country, they were not keen to maintain the subordinate relationship with the Soviet Union and did not want to become just another satellite state of the Soviets. In 1948 there was a famous Tito-Stalin split after which Yugoslavia was ostracised from the socialist world and the relationship between Yugoslavia and other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, worsened to the point of hostility (Dizdarević, 2018). The relationship started to gradually change for the better after the death of Stalin in 1953. Seeing that the film came out in 1955 the scene between Šćepan Mali and the Russian delegates could be viewed as a start of reconciliation between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

After Šćepan received his honours from the Russian delegates, he returned to his house where he was murdered by his servant, an assassin sent by the Turks and the Venetians. As the exchange between the Russian delegates and Šćepan Mali could be interpreted as a turn in the relationship of the two contemporary countries, the assassination of Šćepan Mali can be viewed as a collusion between the domestic collaborators and the foreign enemy which are intent in destroying the unity in Yugoslavia by killing its leaders. The film for the most part is just a reflection of the contemporary state in which Yugoslavia found itself, since it was un-aligned in the conflict between the Soviet Union and the USA (Petkovska & Dimitrovska, 2018). Another compelling argument, besides the representation of the different characters, is that the film was primarily focused on representing the various

³ While Yugoslavia did not exist during the Second World War the leaders of the resistance against the Third Reich were the Partisans which were led by the Communist Party and its leader Josip Broz Tito. The Yugoslav communists followed the instructions given by the Soviets



relationships between the countries, entities, groups, and people, and not the military part of the conflict between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire.

The next film explored for this article is called '*Nevesinjska puška*' (1963) or '*Thundering Mountains*' and was made nine years after the film '*The False Tsar Stephen the Little*'. This film depicts the Hercegovina Uprising (1875-1878), an uprising which was against the Ottoman Empire, and it marked the end of their rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Radušić, 2020).⁴ While there were numerous important figures in the uprising, this film follows Mihajlo Ljubibratić, one of the leaders of the uprising. He is portrayed by Miha Baloh who achieved fame not only in Yugoslavia, but also in the rest of Europe, acting in more than fifty films across Europe, while the director was Živorad Mitrović, who became famous with his documentaries and Partisan films. As previously mentioned, the film follows the activities of Mihajlo Ljubibratić, before and during the Hercegovina Uprising. Like Šćepan Mali, Ljubibratić was shown as a compassionate and charismatic leader, who was more interested in fighting the Ottomans, again called the Turks, instead of gaining power, influence, or money. The main theme of the film is not about the struggle in the uprising against the Turks, but rather about the fighting between the different leaders of the uprising and the relationship between the rebels and neighbouring countries, most notably the Austro-Hungarian Empire simply called the Austrians, the Principality of Serbia, and the Principality of Montenegro. In the film, the Turks were only shown in two short instances, the first one when they seized a monastery where they tortured and killed its inhabitants, after which they impaled their heads on spikes. The Turks were soon overrun by the rebel forces, and they were either killed or captured. After the defeat of the Turks, some of the rebels wanted to execute them, but Ljubibratić opposed this and by doing so, saved their lives. The second instance was a battle between the outnumbered rebel forces and the Turks. In the end, the battle was won by the rebels and the Turks were shown running and retreating. Both of these events were somewhat over exaggerated in the film. Firstly, the act of impalement was actively reported on and talked about in western newspapers during the Herzegovina Uprising, even though there was no concrete evidence to substantiate these claims. By doing so the newspapers were able to show the "backwardness" of the Ottoman Empire and this narrative gave the European powers the pretext to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina (Radušić, 2019). In the

⁴ The Ottoman rule in Bosnia formally ended in 1908 when Bosnia was annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire which had a mandate to occupy and govern Bosnia and Herzegovina after the end of the Herzegovina Uprising in 1878.



context of the film the impalement also served the purpose of showing the Turk as barbaric and savage. Especially since their victims were unarmed men of God living in a monastery. While on the other hand the rebels, particularly Ljubibratić, behaved virtuously and ethically. This scene gave the viewer a clear comparison between the righteous rebels and the oppressive Turks, who killed and maimed innocent civilians. The battle also had similarities with the Partisans during the Second World War, since the rebel forces were outnumbered against the Turks, which meant that the rebels had to rely on guerrilla tactics just as the Partisans did. Another important scene was the mustering of the soldiers before the battle. This scene, similar to the scene in the film *'The False Tsar Stephen the Little'* shows the unity of the Slavic peoples against the Turk. In the scene we can see different regiments that came from Russia, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, as well as parts of the Western Europe. This unity does not only show the connection between Yugoslavia and Russia, but also the strong connection between the Southern Slavic people. This was especially prominent in a speech at the end of the film, made by Ljubibratić. There he talks about the solidarity and unity, which is needed to continue the fight for independence. This is highly similar to the motto of the Socialist Yugoslavia which was 'brotherhood and unity'.

Similarly, to the film *'The False Tsar Stephen the Little'* the main emphasis was not on the Ottoman Empire or the Turks, but rather the struggle for independence and sovereignty. It is of no surprise, then that the Turks were given little to no attention, and when done so they are portrayed either as corpulent and unpleasant individuals or as barbaric hordes who murder everything in their path. In these two films the Ottomans were shown as the adversaries two different conflicts. The other two films *'Hasanaginica'* (1967) and *'Derviš i smrt'* (1974) are completely different, since they explore the different aspects of the Ottoman society, not from the outside, but from within the society.

The second era

As previously mentioned, the next two films are *'Hasanaginica'* and *'Derviš i smrt'* or *'The Death and the Dervish'*. *'Hasanaginica'* is a popular ballade which was passed verbally up until the 18th century when the Italian ethnographer and writer Alberto Fortis wrote the ballade down. Soon enough, this ballade caught the attention of world-renowned writers, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin who



translated '*Hasanaginica*' into their native language. The ballade follows the fate of Hasanaginica, or the wife of Hasan-aga and the ballade starts with the revelation that Hasan-aga was wounded in battle and that his mother and sister came to visit him on his campaign (Jones, 2010). Even though his mother and sister visited him, his wife Hasanaginica did not do so, which angered Hasan-aga who then banished his wife from his house and estate; and by doing so he divorced her. Soon after this, Hasanaginica remarried and after the ceremony passed by her old home, where her former husband and children waited. Hasanaginica stopped to give gifts to her children, but following a comment made by Hasan-aga in which he implied that Hasanaginica did not love her children and abandoned them she fell and died on the spot. This is also the synopsis of the film, in which the role of Hasanaginica was played by Milena Dravić and the role of Hasan-aga by the aforementioned Rade Marković.

Of course, there are differences between the ballade and the film, especially since the ballade is rather short and the film is more than an hour and twenty minutes long. The film introduced new characters and added dialog, while also expanding the role of other characters such as that of Pintorović-bey, who was the brother of Hasanaginica. In the ballade we do not know that much about him, but in the film, he is shown as a poor nobleman who lost his wealth and influence. Even though he was higher in status than Hasan-aga he was not brave as he was, nor did he possess the wealth Hasan-aga did. This made Pintorović-bey fearful of his brother-in-law in the film. Pintorović-bey was also shown as a conniving and calculating character, who did not care who he hurt, primarily his sister, as long as he got what he wanted. After Hasanaginica divorced Hasan-aga, her brother became her guardian, and he married her. Even though Hasanaginica was shown in the film as a strong woman, she was not independent. She had to rely first on her husband, and then on her brother, who did with her as they pleased. Hasan-aga was able to expel his wife and Pintorović-bey was able to marry his sister, even though she protested this since the society was highly patriarchal and the fathers, husbands, or brothers had the power in the family.

In the film, as well as in the ballade, Hasanaginica upheld the social norm by not leaving her house and she did everything that was expected of her. Nevertheless, she still was not able to appease her husband Hasan-aga. And even after the divorce, she was not able to stay divorced as she wished. This film points out not only the class struggle between the higher



born Pintorović-bey, but also his family fortune which fell in disarray, and a lower born Hasan-aga who became more powerful than Pintorović-bey. The film also touches upon the rights of women and their role in society. While Hasanaginica did uphold the social norm, regardless of that Hasan-age got angry and expelled his wife, even though she did nothing wrong in the eyes of the society, Hasanaginica sinned in the eyes of her husband. This was also the case with Pintorović-bey, who did with his sister as he pleased and used her only to get more money and land, even though he received relatively a lot of money from Hasan-aga when he married Hasanaginica. Nevertheless Pintorović-bey lost it all, which made him remarry his sister again. Out of all the male characters only Hasanaginica's second husband, called the Imotski qadi, listened to the wishes of his wife and bought gifts for her children. In the end Hasanaginica could be viewed as a real heroine, as she encounters many problems that are not of her own doing (Vuković, 2021) in nominally gender-equal Yugoslavia. I argue that they do this by transposing their stories from socialist Yugoslavia to the pre-socialist times: during Ottoman rule and monarchist Yugoslavia. The selected period films *Breza/The Birch Tree* (Ante Babaja, 1967, Yugoslavia).

The second film with a similar theme of struggle in the Ottoman society was the *Derviš i smrt* (1974) or *The Death and the Dervish*. While the struggle in *Hasanaginica* was that of a woman who did not have her freedom and was stuck between a class struggle between two men, *The Death and the Dervish* deals with the injustice in the Ottoman society. The film was adapted from the book with the same title, written by one of Yugoslavia's most famous writers Mehmed Meša Selimović. In his book he writes about a Mevlevi sheikh called Ahmed Nurudin, played by Vojislav Mirić, and his struggles with the Ottoman system, as well as his inner belief. His beliefs were shaken when Nurudin's brother Harun, was imprisoned under false pretences by the chief qadi. Soon Harun was executed, which sent Nurudin on a path of revenge with the aim of ousting the elites. He somewhat succeeds in his intentions, since he was able to partly carry out his objectives, but he ends up a broken man (Selimović, 1986). The final scene is that of Nurudin's attempted execution, but it is left uncertain if he was executed or not.

The representation of the Turks is not in the central theme of the film since it is an allegory of Selimović's own life. Selimović and his family were adamant Partisans, which during the Second World War held numerous

positions within the Partisans. This did not help his brother, who was also a Partisan, and he was executed by the Partisans for stealing in 1944 (Selimović, 1996). Thus, he incorporates his own life and struggles in the work on which the film is based on. This film differs from the other, since the work is intended to criticise the Socialist Yugoslavia and their actions, regarding Selimović and his family. In the end, the Ottoman society and their leading elites were shown as unjust and dishonourable, but this is more of a reflection of Selimović's view on Socialist Yugoslavia and its elites, rather than his view on the situation in the Ottoman Empire.

Another reason why there was a change in the way the Turks were represented, has to do with the fact that Yugoslavia at this point, started to actively engage with the Non-aligned movement, which was mainly compromised by Muslim countries, and it even became the *de facto* leader. Because of the newfound partnership between Yugoslavia and different Muslim countries, the former was keen on strengthening their bonds and the best way they found was to use the domestic Muslim population as a common element (Snjezana, 2002). Same as with the first era the Yugoslav foreign politics marked the films it produced.

The third era

The last film which revolved around the relationship of Southeast Europe and the Ottoman Empire made in Socialist Yugoslavia was the '*Boj na Kosovu*' (1989) or '*The Battle of Kosovo*'. This film represents the pinnacle of the negative representation of the Ottoman Empire. First of all, when the film was made it marked the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, which in the meantime became more of a myth than a real historical event (Čolović, 2019). This myth was used by politicians in the dissolution of the Socialist Yugoslavia, most notably by Slobodan Milošević, the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Serbia and later the President of Serbia and the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Milošević used Kosovo as a rallying point for all Serbs, since it was interpreted as a Serb victory and a defiant stand against the Ottomans (Reisigl, 2008). While in reality the battle itself was indecisive. Both the Sultan Murat I and the Serbian leader Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović were killed, and their armies suffered great losses. Nevertheless, this battle was seen, later in the centuries, as a heavenly victory and this motive is displayed rather straightforwardly in the film.

The film has the elements of a drama piece intended to be played in theatres. The dialog of the characters is quite artificial and most of the



lines of dialog can be used as quotes to spread religious and nationalistic intention. In the film the main character is Lazar Hrebeljanović and Miloš Obilić played by Miloš Žutić and Žarko Brajović respectively. They both were shown as righteous warriors, fighting for their country and what is right. Even willing to sacrifice their own life if it means victory. On the other hand, the Ottoman Sultan was portrayed by Ljubomir Tadić and his representation can be compartmented into two categories. The first one is his physical appearance and the second one is his character. Firstly, regarding his physical appearance, he is shown as an overweight hedonist laying in a bed smoking a hookah, while the battle was raging on. Also, the actor was exposed to a lot of makeup and plastic extensions, which rendered his character almost cartoonish and deformed. This visual representation of the Sultan could be interpreted as a way of dehumanizing him by making him look almost as non-human. On the other hand, his character was shown to be brutal, but wise and reasonable. Murat was shown in the film to be a good military leader able to command his troops. As far as the general view on the Turks is concerned, it is largely negative and they were discussed in a dialog, as being barbaric murderers keen only on killing and spreading Islam. The only group worse than the Turks are the so-called "Poturice".⁵ In the end the portrayal of the Ottomans or the Turks as they were called in these movies, had a great influence on parts of the Yugoslav population. Especially those who harboured negative feelings for the Ottoman Empire or more precisely for the Islam in general. Specifically, this came into prominence during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, in which the domestic Muslim population were viewed as Turks or Poturice. The most notable example of this is when the Serb general Ratko Mladić occupied the city of Srebrenica in July of 1995 and declared: "On the eve of another great Serbian holiday, we give a gift to the Serbians, the people of this city and finally the time has come that after the revolt against Dahija, we avenge the Turks on this territory" (Biserko, 2006). Even though the Ottomans or the Turks haven't existed for seven decades and did not control Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as its neighbouring countries for over a century, the domestic Muslim population were still Turks and they had to be dealt with.

The last film examined only dealt partly with the role of the Ottoman Empire in Southeast Europe and the film was made after the fall of Socialist Yugoslavia. The film in question is called 'Nož' (1999) or 'The Dagger' and it deals with the interconnectedness of the domestic Muslim and Orthodox population (Karčić, 2015). The film covers the time period of the second half of the 20th century, and it starts with a disagreement between the Muslims and

⁵ Poturica means a local person which converted to Islam and embraced the Ottoman Empire. Most notably the biggest grievance on the Poturica is that they sold their religion for political favours.



the Christians over land. This disagreement later evolves into a bloody conflict when the Muslims attack the Christians during Christmas in 1942, while the Second World War was underway. The Muslims kill all the inhabitants except for one baby, which is raised by a Muslim woman. Meanwhile the Christians come to the village, where the baby was taken and kill the Muslims. They also took a baby which they believed was taken from them, but this was not the case, and the real baby stayed with the Muslims. The baby which grew up as a Muslim was Alija Osmanović⁶ and is played by Žarko Laušević. As the film progresses, we see that he lived his life with an internal conflict, which stemmed from the fact that the baby who he presumed was his brother, was taken away. At one point he has a nightmare in which he sees the process of Devshirme being carried out. He sees it as a process that relates to his situation, but he is yet not fully aware of this. In this scene there are men with faces covered with white chalk, wearing black jackets taking away young children also covered with chalk. The main character recognises the two boys as himself and his lost brother. At the end of the nightmare, he sees a church burning down. This representation of Devshirme is filmed with the notion that it was “danak u krvi” or blood tax imposed on the Christian population by the Ottomans. In the scene the Turks are represented as faceless fiends, and they were almost shown as monstrosities. This film was adapted from the novel of Vuk Drašković, who is a controversial Serbian politician, and while the novel does not have a historical premise and is a work of fiction it is situated in real historical events such as the Second World War and the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, which then leads to an assumption that these events did occur in one way or another.

Conclusion

During the 20th century the representation of the Turks changed in the Yugoslav cinema. Similarly, as was the case during the time in which the Ottoman Empire existed its image was used by others for their purposes. The only difference was that during the second half of the 20th century the Ottoman Empire did not exist, and the main medium used to spread the message were not books but rather films and movies. We can identify three distinct and different eras of the representation of the Turks.

The first one was after the Second World War and lasted until the late 1960s, while the second era lasted from the late 1960s until the late 1980s, and the third era lasted from the late 1980s until the formal dissolution of Yugoslavia. The first era was marked by films such as *'The False Emperor'*

⁶ This could be a play on words since the official name of the Ottoman Empire was Devlet-i ‘Alīye-i ‘Osmāniye and the character was named Alija Osmanović.



and *'The Thundering Mountains'*. In these films the main role of the Turks was to be a common enemy for the South Slavs and to represent other contemporary foreign powers. In the second era, the main focus was not put on historical battles and the struggle for unification and independence, but rather on works of literature. The two movies which represented this era were *'Hasanaginica'* and *'Death and the Dervish'*, both of which were first works of literature and were later adopted as films. These films could be viewed more of a foreign relationship tool, rather than artistic films. This comes from the fact that they were made during the height of the Non-Aligned Movement in which numerous Muslim countries participated and Yugoslavia had cordial relationships with. The last era is defined by two overly nationalistic films, firstly *'The Battle of Kosovo'* and *'The Dagger'*. Both of these films have a highly polarizing view on the Turks which for the most is not aimed on the Ottoman, but rather on the domestic Muslim population, also called the Bosniaks. In the end, the representation of the Turk changed in the way it was needed at the moment. First the Turk was seen as a tyrant and an oppressor, later he was given more depth and was not only the object of the films, but rather the main character. And finally, he became the personification of the native Muslim population and an object of hatred.

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