

Part 3: Stereotypes and Social Polarities

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11. Exposed and concealed Roma conflict: Representation of contemporary Roma conflicts in Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary

Abstract: Roma conflict is one of the dominant issues that societies and cinemas of Eastern Europe should face. Recently, a variety of deeply touching films have been created such as *Just the Wind* (dir. Benedek Fliegauf) and *Judgement in Hungary* (dir. Eszter Hajdú). While the films show disgruntlement or even large-scale protests and riots, the films' plots rarely present the causes of such events.

Documentary film projects with sociological ambitions, however, stand out above these films, they are knowledgeable and insightful but their range is only local. There are some exceptional cases that overthrow this rule, such as *Moving a Settlement* or *The Roma King* (dir. Viliam Poltikovič). On the other hand, the superproductions such as *Koza* (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský) or *The Queen of Silence* (dir. Agnieszka Zwiefka) mainly concentrate on the formal side at the expense of the simplification of the film's content. My purpose is to present various variants of the representation of Roma conflict in these films.

Keywords: Roma, Central Europe, film, politics

“Roma Issue” has progressed to become one of the most serious areas related to Central Europe since the beginning of 1990s. The time of political transformation has created a new context for the issue present in the collective consciousness for many decades. This context is connected to an assumption about a contemporary solidifying of conflicts resulting from ethnic diversities. I am stressing the position of Piotr Balcerowicz who has tried to destroy two myths related to this matter: The first one claims that the number of ethnic conflicts has been rising steadily in the world, especially in the last decades, while the second one claims that the reasons for ethnic conflicts lie in ethnic, religious or cultural differences.¹

1 Piotr Balcerowicz, “Czy istnieją konflikty etniczne i religijne?” (“Do Ethnic and Religious Conflicts Exist?”), in: *Zaawansowane zapobieganie konfliktom [Advanced Conflict Prevention]*, ed. Wojciech Kostecki (Warsaw: Katedra Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Szkoła Wyższa Psychologii Społecznej, 2011), pp. 29–62. http://www.balcerowicz.eu/texts/konflikty_etniczne.pdf.

The author notes a discrepancy in judgment, which he elaborates in the following way:

(...) the conclusion that it is difficult to explain a distinct increase in the number of ethnic conflicts in recent decades is problematic in view of the feelings expressed by the Western World, who, following the ideas and representations created by the superficially educated representatives of mass media and politicians (at least in the area of methodology indispensable to the conflict analysis or the analysis of intercultural relations), or in view of a schematic assessment of empirical data – are convinced that the most recent several years have brought a virtual wave of threats to which we have to ascribe the conflicts of religious and ethnic nature.²

These “common feelings” are influenced by visual representations (media, film among others) that change with time. It is important to note that media influence the shape of representations of ethnic and national minorities but not everyday encounters with their representatives. Before 1989, Roma minority has not been shown in the context of conflict or confrontation in Central Europe (which is particularly interesting in view of the fact that conflict helps construct dramaturgy of a document by itself). Roma people were observed with curiosity through the prism of otherness and uniqueness. Well-known documentary films *Before Leaves Fall* (*Zanim opadną liście*, Władysław Ślesicki, Poland, 1964) and *Gypsies* (*Cigányok*, Sándor Sára, Hungary, 1963), and fiction films – *Rosy Dreams* (*Ružové sny*, Dušan Hanák, Slovakia, 1977) – attest to these claims. There were also propaganda documents (documentary film *Upre Roma*, Dimitrij Plichta, Slovakia, 1955), but the representations of Roma peoples were relatively varied because they were based on the direct observation of this minority through years of coexistence. For instance, the prohibition to migrate from place to place has become a pretext for immortalization of this Roma custom in the film *Before Leaves Fall*, which has become an important document of Roma people migrating in summer for the last time.

After years of coexistence under the conditions of Socialism, which functioned as a unifying factor for various social phenomena, even ethnic varieties, in 1989, there appeared political system changes whose consequences, especially rampant unemployment, touched Roma communities as well.³ In this context, we could

2 Balcerowicz, “Czy istnieją konflikty,” p. 7.

3 “The reasons for the strengthening of this radical attitude within society are manifold, and I do not claim to propose an explanation for them. However, many researchers locate the origins of post-1989 anti-Roma sentiment in the forced assimilatory programs at the workplace under the Socialist regime, during which Roma were employed in unskilled positions of the lowest prestige and pay” Laszlo Strausz, “Producing prejudice:

ask: Where do the causes of conflict with Roma people lie? It is worth remembering at this point that the genesis of these conflicts has always been associated with ethnic or religious diversity, which Balcerowicz divides into four categories: (1) Bad living conditions and extreme poverty, (2) repressive political system and especially the exclusion of some groups defined by their ethnicity, (3) destruction of natural resources and (4) cognitive dissonance. Another important factor leading to ethnic conflicts is a feeling of threat to the identity of the group. In reality, however, the four factors form a combination that includes number five as one of the four factors.⁴

During the process of political transformation, Roma people have seen their situation more acutely – they experienced a cognitive dissonance.⁵ At the same time, they learned how their communities lived in the Western countries. Their exodus, especially of Czech Roma people, to Canada has had far-reaching repercussions. Canada's refusal to grant these Roma people political asylum has been well known as well as the circumstances of Roma people return to Europe.⁶

“To sum it up: it is not ethnic, cultural or religious diversity as such which creates reasons for conflict, it becomes an element of the process of the rationalization of conflict at the basis of which lies a sense of injustice and harm.”⁷ This sense of injustice is one of the elements underlined by the protagonists of documentaries. Even if we assume that the number of conflicts has not grown – the certainty that Roma people have suffered past humiliations is constantly heard by the viewers of television programs.

The rhetoric of discourses in and around current films on Roma–Hungarian interethnic relations,” *Romani Studies: Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2014), pp. 1–24.

4 Balcerowicz, “Czy istnieją konflikty,” p. 37.

5 Balcerowicz, “Czy istnieją konflikty,” p. 38. “For decades, a specific group can live in extremely modest social conditions and be convinced that a possibility for change is very small or the change of these conditions is not objectively possible. As a result, what I see as a critical change/turning point, there comes a whirl of dramatic changes followed by a different view of the group on their own previous situation.”

6 “Odchod Romu do Kanady,” *Kanada na vlastní oci* (2000): 9 Jun. 2017, <http://romove.radio.cz/cz/clanek/18731>. Television NOVA has emitted a reportage within their program *With My Own Eyes* about carefree life of Czech Romas in Canada. Its message was: Roma people pack-up and come to Canada. Several hundred Roma from many Czech towns started selling their possessions in order to buy an air ticket behind the ocean.

7 Balcerowicz, “Czy istnieją konflikty,” p. 40.

Media and the film industries of V4 countries cannot ignore the opinions or be dismissive about local conflicts. It is not by mistake that the bloody attacks on Roma people took place during the economic crisis of 2008, which coincided with both the government and the financial ones. Very soon, the deeply touching films on this topic emerged such as a fictional film *Just the Wind* (*Csak a szél*, Benedek Fliegau, 2012) or a documentary film *Judgement in Hungary* (*Ítélet Magyarországon*, Eszter Hajdú, 2013). I concentrate on these films because I am interested in a conflict shown from the inside with full understanding of its genesis, possible conditions and outcomes. The ambition of these films is to reveal that the conflict exists all the time while it remains hidden from view. Its explosion is potentially possible in view of the social conflicts present in a particular country. A proper recognition of the essence of these conflicts has been a crucial problem in recent years. The discourse about national minorities has been greatly tangled up in politics, the demonstration of which we see in film reviews as well. Such an entanglement is not conducive to the objectivity of expressed opinions. Neither is it conducive to noticing a universal conflict in the situation of national minorities' characteristic of any groups or individuals excluded or marginalized for any reason. Slovak film *Gypsy* (*Cigán*, Martin Šulík, 2011) is a good example of the presentation of one Roma boy in its universal aspect.

Among films illustrating spectacular conflicts, the documentary projects of the sociological ambition merit careful attention despite the fact that they reach only local audiences. Czech documentaries such as *The Resettlement* (*Stěhování osady*, 1992) and *The Roma King* (*Romský král*, 2009), both made by Viliam Poltikovič, are remarkable examples as far as audiences are concerned. In general, sociological documentaries underline civilization conflicts existing at present but possible to be moderated.

I would also like to examine fiction films on the border between fiction and document such as *Koza* (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský, 2015) and *The Queen of Silence* (*Królowa ciszy*, Agnieszka Zwiefka, 2014)⁸ duly noted and rewarded both in their countries and abroad. It is worth asking, however, whether concentration on the formal aspects of the films does not take place at the expense of the simplification of content and the dismissal of the crux of the problem. Another question concerns the avoidance of conflict or even the creation of a supplementary conflict. Protagonists of the films employing these strategies become media celebrities because they have been allowed to shine in the framework of big cultural or sport

8 At the International Documentary Film Festival "Flahertiana" (Perm, Russia), the film was awarded Big Golden Nanook.

projects, the process that does not solve their problems at all. The success goes to the creator of the film though.

Latent conflict

In the films devoted to the topic of Roma people, we can identify several ways of the presentation of conflicts. One of the most objective approaches is paying attention to the existing problems but absent from or eliminated from the present discourse and pushed into the subconsciousness. This intention is vivid in the film *Just the Wind*,⁹ which from the beginning of its production in political conflicts.¹⁰ Just this fact has been noted by critics:

“In Fliegau’s film it is the synergy between the actants who are invisible in the film like the wind and society whose representatives they feel they are, which is most frightening. The danger is more real the greater social permission for violence in society.”¹¹

“The atmosphere of the omnipresent xenophobia fueled by the nationalist tirades of Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary, makes the concern that former murderers will be followed by enthusiastic copycats quite credible.”¹²

The film is quite exceptional in Hungarian cinema. According to Strausz, “Fliegau’s feature bonds the viewer first visually, and as a result, emotionally, with the Roma victims; a characteristic seen rarely in Hungarian fiction films.”¹³

Just the Wind reveals the present state and possible consequences, conflicts and threat unceasingly hanging in the air. As Strausz sees it, “Thus, the central dramatic question of the film – when will the attack against the family take place – keeps audiences at the edge of their seats. It is obvious that the assault will happen,

9 The film refers to the events from 2008/2009 when six Roma people were murdered in Hungary.

10 Strausz, “Producing prejudice,” p. 3. “The premiere of the film in Berlin triggered a remarkable reaction by the Hungarian authorities (Ministry of Public Administration and Justice), which partially financed the production. At the press-showing of the film on February 16, 2012, the Ministry distributed a leaflet that suggested to the reporters and journalists how to interpret the film.”

11 Adam Kruk, “To tylko wiatr/It is only Wind” *Benedek Fliegau* (2012): 11 Aug. 2016, <http://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/4158-to-tylko-wiatr-rez-benedek-fliegau.html>.

12 Piotr Czerkowski, “To tylko wiatr – produkt cynicznie skalkulowany” [It is Only a Wind – a cynically calculated product] (2012): 13 Jul. 2016, <http://film.dziennik.pl/recenzje/artykuly/412867,to-tylko-wiatr-recenzja.html>.

13 Strausz, “Producing prejudice,” p. 8–9.

and the alignment of the audience with members of the family results in an effect of suspense, withholding information about the already suspected outcome.¹⁴

The atmosphere of fear is presented in an incredibly suggestive manner due to the construction of the film in a convention of a thriller. The director states that, “the perspective of the camera is taken directly from nature films. When (...) Attenborough tells about animals, he usually concentrates on those who are victims. The camera is not a weapon by itself – it only follows the protagonists under threat, and observes fear against the beast which may appear soon.”¹⁵

In the case of this particular film, the attitude to the topic, the awareness of the historical content, the expert preparation of the film content but also its final rejection function towards the presentation of an individual human drama. As Felis notes:

It is impossible to look at the murders and attacks as if it were a situation isolated from its context. What happened is closely related to the history of Roma people in Europe and Hungary accompanied by a long history of xenophobia and nationalist aggression, pseudo tolerance, mental prejudices and racial stereotypes. I have read numerous books, essays and articles about these issues but, at a certain moment, I had to discard this knowledge, reset mentally and concentrate on an individual human drama. Only this kind of drama can function in cinema, after all.¹⁶

According to Strausz, “Fliegau’s film thereby constructs positive character engagement by allowing audiences to consecutively move through the phases of recognition, alignment and allegiance bonding them with Roma protagonists.”¹⁷

What does the director pay attention to, and what was impossible to be shown in the film? Exactly this hidden conflict that waits half-asleep to burst out at the end. The film convention did not allow for the conflict to burst out openly, although it is precisely this conflict that stays in the spectators’ memory. There was no space in the film to reveal the roots of what took place in contemporary times in the middle of Europe. Fliegau openly states:

The characteristic of racist, religious and xenophobic prejudices is such that they function well when hidden from view. They rule in language use, jokes in the context where seemingly they do not harm anyone. However, it takes only a spark for them to burst into flame, Hungary and Poland being clear examples of that. One should hear what people

14 Strausz, “Producing prejudice,” p. 20.

15 Paweł T. Felis, “Film To tylko wiatr o atakach na węgierskich Romów. Tańczymy na beczce prochu” [It is only a wind about attacks on Hungarian Roma. We dance on the powder keg] *Wyborcza.pl* (2012): 13 Jul. 2016.

16 Felis, “Film To tylko wiatr.”

17 Strausz, “Producing prejudice,” p. 21.

in different parts of the world say about my film after screening. It is necessary to travel around cities, small towns and villages, in so called “civilized” European countries to experience the level of contamination with stereotypical, racist and totally nationalistic thinking which is truly striking and horrifying today. It seems that we are all dancing on a powder keg not knowing about it.¹⁸

Despite all the criticism, *Just the Wind* is an excellent example of a film that sensitizes its audiences to the threats present in contemporary times, the threats that result from confrontations and reveal their dimension. *Just the Wind* is often compared to the film *Gypsy* by Šulík the director who shows greater understanding for the specificity of the culture of Roma people than Fliegauf.¹⁹ The director and the screenwriter of the film from Slovakia have concluded that the worlds of Roma and the world of “white people” do not differ that much after all:

We did not want to mythologise, folklorise or romanticise Roma people. We wanted to show their lives in a natural way because life in a Roma settlement mirrors our world. The only difference lies in intensity: everything is more emotional, sharper and more instantaneous.²⁰

Universal conflict

Gypsy has a universal message as it tells the story of a man in an uncomfortable existential situation. In settlements in eastern Slovakia, their problem is not of national nature but rather of social nature. It is a problem of misery, lack of education and poverty, says the film director. Ghettos emerge as they do in every other part of the world as marginalized societies reflect on the value system in every country.

“Of course, a ghetto creates its own, tough principles. Poverty and hunger have never formed good people. The survival instinct often forces people to break the law. Adam, the main character in our film, is similar to any other young member of society who struggles to live one’s life. Inside, he does not agree with the world

18 Felis, “Film To tylko wiatr.”

19 Piotr Czerkawski, “Publicystyka przebrana za sztukę – recenzja To tylko wiatr,” [Journalism in the disguise of art. A film review of *It is only a Wind*] *Cinemaenchante* (2012): 13 Jul. 2016, <http://cinemaenchante.blogspot.hu/2012/12/publicystyka-przebrana-za-sztuke.html>.

20 [without the author] “Rozhovor s Martinom Šulíkom a Markom Leščákom” (2011): 20 Aug. 2016, <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10368608938-cigan/21151212083/5130-martin-sulik-a-marek-lescak/>.

he sees around him but it is very difficult to find another way. He faces not only difficult social conditions but also the deformed ghetto rules.²¹

This film, played in Roma language and with Roma actors, is part and parcel of the Slovak film tradition while it simultaneously enriches it. The Slovak film tradition implied wandering all over Slovakia in search of heroes, realistic locations and local customs. No theaters were avoided, including amateur theaters, schools, folklore sing-and-dance groups nor the artistic interest groups. Šulík states that this kind of work included another system of engagement with social groups based on establishing contacts, joining the group for a cup of coffee, getting to know who has been born, who died and who was arrested and learning about the incredible wealth of social levels at which Roma people function. The author shares with us a story of bricklayers who were never paid for their effort after finishing the job; he also tells us a story of a girl who was sold three times by her parents and who left her owners and studies now. The director knows more about Roma than he showed in his film. Thanks to this kind of approach, there is no feeling of artificiality or lack of adequacy in the means used in the film. The knowledge of Roma reality does not exclude the magic of visuals²² while the universalism of experience is an obvious good characteristic of the film.

Civilization conflict

Under the framework of the Czech group, Film and Sociology,²³ two documents, *The Resettlement* and *The Roma King* by Poltikovič, have been created. The starting point for the story in the first film was the resettlement of Roma people to condominium blocks, the matter of particular interest from the sociological point of view. The film is not only about complex ethnic relations but also about political decisions. The decision about the construction of these condominiums was taken during the time of socialism and signaled the central solution to social problems. The construction project was finished but Roma people suffered from unemployment, a predicament more pervasive in the case of Roma than in the case of Czechs and Slovaks. *The Roma King* constitutes an extension of *The Resettlement*. Thanks to

21 "Rozhovor s Martinom Šulíkom a Markom Leščákom."

22 The film has been accepted by Roma themselves, which I experienced personally participating in the film screening for Roma people in their own natural environment nearby Roma settlements.

23 The activities of F&S was the subject of my book: Jadwiga Głowa, *Film Documentary in the Epoch of Havel* (Krakow: Rabid, 2005). I refer to one of the films discussed in that book.

the use of archival material, we witness a certain process. The starting point is the present time in poor settlements. The way media wrote about the film resembled an embellished advertisement of a fictional emigration office:

The more ambitious and diligent Roma people leave for England where they find a new and noble life; the traditionally cosmopolitan society accepts them and they can live better lives there. There is also another factor which is important for seemingly unresolvable situation of Roma. The missionaries of new Christian churches (...) managed to convince Roma people that God is everywhere, and, if they do not want to go to Hell after death but to Heaven, to Jesus, then they have to follow his path and abide by his rules. The transformation of thousands of Roma people is unbelievable – the end of alcoholism, crime, usury, promiscuity and violence. They start new healthy and peaceful lives.²⁴

Religious motivation is really important in Romas' transformation. The film reveals the enormous civilization difference between the settlements in Spisz where living conditions are tragic and unemployment reaches 100 percent and those in cosmopolitan Sheffield where the happy migrants from Slovakia have landed.

Sequences in England were shot only during three days; however, it was possible to show not only this precipice but also the way it has been overcome. Key here is the statement of one of the protagonists. He proudly states that he has gained trust in his workplace. His behavior in front of the camera, the mimic of his face clearly attest to the fact that an opinion of an honest and reliable man is so valuable to him that he will not allow anybody to take it away from him. This is a value he never counted on. His career proves that in civilized conditions Roma can change their most established features and habits, the ones normally attributed to Roma. Because they are used to doing occasional jobs, they have not been used to systematicity, planning and thinking about tomorrow. However, when the stake is respect from Sheffield citizens, they conclude their efforts are worth it. The positive message of the film consists in the fact that the changes for the better have been shown, the changes that took place in a relatively short time.

Avoidance of conflict

Avoidance of conflict is a strategy seen in the films about “excluded people,” especially when the cause of this exclusion is poverty. The unemployed, homeless and orphaned children, for instance, are covered by programs that get them out of poverty and humiliation for a short and spectacular time.

24 [Press Release] “Televizní premiéra filmu Romský král” (2009): 20 Aug. 2016, <http://romove.radio.cz/cz/clanek/22327>.

The unemployed play international matches for instance and children have their dreams come true. For a short time they live with success or they are condemned to their fate in the film. The film *Koza* (*A Goat*, 2015) made by Ostrochovský includes many elements from reality. The main hero plays himself when he takes part in a story made up by the screenwriters.²⁵

Peter Baláž is the eight-time winner master of boxing in Slovakia who represented his country at the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996. Today he lives in a modest apartment, he gets half of the disability pension and he supplements his income with gathering scrap metal and delivering it to the scrap yard. The additional sources of income are ring boxing matches more or less once a month because he is not strong enough to perform more often than that. In the film, he is shown participating in an intense international boxing tourney in order to earn money because his life partner is pregnant and would like to abort the baby while he would like to save it. Anyway, he faces a challenge of proving that he is responsible for the family. The abortion dilemma has been probably created by film screenwriters but the director's discussion of it is questionable as not really compatible with reality. Roma woman, Peter's partner who lives in quite tolerable conditions, tries to abort the second child? The reasons for such a decision have not been shown in a credible way as Tomáš Hučko offers.²⁶ In his opinion, dilemmas and paradoxes of the main hero situation required the presentation of a realistic social background. However, all the details and social specificities have been discarded as they did not contribute to the plot development while the colourful details and the social environment characteristics are particularly valuable in the case of this particular story. Baláž fights at local boxing matches somewhere in Austria or Germany. Unfortunately, the director has not revealed the realities of similar boxing matches, the reaction of the public, neither did the director show the relations between spectators and the gradually weakening boxer, in other words, the minimalist aesthetics prevented the development of the topic or exposed its specific dynamics. The minimalism of means of presentation, the lack of emotion, coldness and restraint, sophisticated shots and the preference for contemplation led to an almost manneristic effect that resulted in the indifference of the spectator who is left to admire the perfection of the minimalist construction.

The admiration for the construction of the film far from minimalism is profound in the reception of the film *The Queen of Silence* by Agnieszka Zwiefka.

25 Tomáš Hučko, "Minimalizmus, ktorý aj v hrubej dokumentárnej vrstve osekala ozajstný život" [The minimalism that cuts down real life even in the rough documentary], Dokofilm (2015): 9 Sep. 2016, <http://dokofilm.sk/film/koza/>.

26 Hučko, "Minimalizmus."

The film is classified as documentary portraying illegal Roma inhabitants of the camp near Wrocław in which they have lived for over twenty years. Despite long contact with her protagonists and despite her own feeling of exclusion experienced during her former stay in the United States of America, the director clearly colors the film plot, which she justifies in the following way:

These children are truly happy. When I observed them, I was under the impression that they are much happier than the Polish ones who live in clean houses in which there is always warm food on the table. Polish kids, however, do not express this joy and love for life which Roma children do (...) we did not want to make an objective film of the social intervention reportage type. This was supposed to be a film about Roma community from the point of view ten-year-old Denisa. This is why the fairy tale aspect was so important.²⁷

The purpose of the director was to deliberately avoid the classical form of reportage that she realized earlier: "I am no longer interested in the classical form of documentary when an interviewee sits and responds to your questions for twenty minutes. Everything is sad, nothing happens and everything is gray and dark (...) I am aware of the fact that this film is somewhere on the border between genres and is a kind of a genre hybrid. Alas, am I to make another sad film about Roma? Nobody would be able to endure it, nobody would be interested."²⁸

Showing the world from the position of a child and obvious inspirations from Bollywood cinema were criticized in press. "How come a deaf girl can dance to music? Well, it is pure guesswork. Denisa loves all the encasement of Bollywood films – colorful clothes, gadgets and sequins."²⁹

Musical scenes, combining documentary with fiction film, a kind of genre hybrid drew critics' and spectators' attention to a greater degree than the film topic itself. It became an epitomization of a specific artiste's syndrome. In television practice in Central Europe, a solid reportage seems too banal, not in esteem and in its process of production is devoted too little time and money for its realization. On the other hand, a musical documentary has a chance to gain interest from co-producers interested in the international response to the film.

27 Katarzyna Nowakowska, "Agnieszka Zwiefka: Gdy oznajmiłam wrocławskim Romom, że chcę nakręcić o nich film, mówili o mnie "dili", co znaczy szalona," *Gazeta.pl*. (2016): 23 Aug. 2016, http://weekend.gazeta.pl/weekend/1,152121,17075984,Agnieszka_Zwiefka__Gdy_oznajmiam_wroclawskim_Romom_.html.

28 Nowakowska, "Agnieszka Zwiefka." The film author adds in the cited interview that the comparison of her document with the films of Kusturica was the greatest honor to her.

29 Mateusz Madejski, "Królowa ciszy: Bollywoodzki dokument z Wrocławia" (2014): 2 Sep. 2016, <http://www.serialowa.pl/87979/krolowa-ciszy-bollywoodzki-dokument-zwroclawia/>.

Surrogate conflict

Some documents may become questionable, especially the ones the plot of which is based on exceptional action, a mission probably planned for the film by the screenwriters. An example of such a film is *Back Passing* (*Malá domov* by Jaro Vojtek, 2008), which tells the story of David who wants to take part in an international football tourney in Serbia. A mixed football team is composed of Slovak and Roma boys. The trainer Roma Vlado Sendrei has gathered this team and even included boys from correction facilities. The spectator cheers on the young Roma boy who is about to be accepted for the team and hopes that everything goes well. Despite the fact that we may doubt the authenticity of some events, we observe with interest what has happened during the team's stay abroad. Has the mobile phone really been lost to justify shooting of a scene expecting its return? There is also another more important question to answer: has this trip changed anything in the lives of protagonists "rented out" from correction facilities for a moment?

An optimal project in the context of the earlier-mentioned documentary is the film *Tititá* (*Tititá*, dir. Tamás Almási, 2015). It tells a story of a boy coming from a Roma settlement who got a chance to participate in a musical workshop. The long and laborious process of education, exercises and rehearsals during which the protagonist realizes that he is not good enough to perform has been perfectly depicted. The protagonist lacks basic skills and cannot cover the distance between himself and other participants of the workshop. In an act of self-defense, he escapes into illness, bad moods, and he shuts himself in. When he leaves for a short stay to his family settlement, he sees it in a different light. It comes to him that he will never have the conditions there to practice guitar play. With his skills, he will only be able to play to dance at the local festivities.

Taking all the political correctness rules into consideration, we are talking here about establishing a space for an average Roma person who has talent, but not as much talent as he needs to be truly successful in the music world. If he started practicing guitar playing when he was a three-year-old child, who knows who he would be today. At present, he can teach music beginners at most, so the chance for success passes on to the next generation. The conflict exists but is not spectacular. In the presented scale, it cannot impact viewers' emotions, there is no great drama in the film or big wins, neither are tragedies particularly spectacular. The value of this documentary lies in prolonged observation – only then are acclimatization difficulties of the protagonist well seen as is the awareness of the loss more explicit. In *Back Passing*, we observe a single "success" of David, in *Tititá*, the causes of defeat of a nineteen-year-old Antal Kuru for whom it is too late to realize his dreams. He cannot have spectacular action without arduous process.

In my chapter, I have discussed the films of the directors from Central Europe. The Western perspective is also valid as long as one does not assume one fixed position. In my opinion, Western directors do not go deep into the analysis of the causes of conflicts while practicing political correctness that does not bring them closer to truth. There is a gulf between political correctness and reality, to which no proper terms are adaptable. In the case of Roma topic, there is danger of romanticizing and poeticization, especially concerning the past. This poeticization is the merit of non-Roma creators because in Roma culture, the question of historical memory is highly questionable. Coloring of the nomadic past is also a creation of the cinema as we absorb (both creators and spectators) this enchanting vision. The problem arises when we project this vision at the present and the future. Then we show an ideal reality whereby the cultural “otherness” is realized surprisingly in accord with the requirements of the contemporary world. The wishful thinking despite appearances has this negative effect that it pushes Roma people to the margin as the bureaucratized civilization needs a colorful embellishment (talented Roma musicians, for instance) that does not surpass the arranged framework.

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Iwona Grodź

12. Stereotypes and attempts at challenging them in *Papusza* (2013) by Krzysztof Krauze and Joanna Kos-Krauze*

Abstract: The chapter discusses the matter of stereotypes, antagonisms and all kinds of intolerance towards ethnic minorities in Poland. The research material is the Romani minority in Krzysztof Krauze and Joanna Kos-Krauze's *Papusza* (2013). The analysis begins with the interest in social problems, or "conflicts and controversies – divisive for contemporary societies." The subject of the analysis is the Romani minority and the attitude of the Polish society towards it. Stereotypes which bring about negative emotions and prejudices are followed by clearly discriminatory behaviour. The end point shall be a diagnosis of the manner in which Polish cinema challenges mental stereotypes of ethnicity.

Keywords: Stereotypes, Romani minority, Krzysztof Krauze, film *Papusza* (2013).

*In the forest I grew like a shrub of gold, born in a Gypsy tent, akin to a boletus.
I love fire like my own heart. The winds lesser and greater cradled the little Gypsy and blew
her far away into the world ...
Papusza, Pieśń cygańska z Papuszy głowy ułożona [Gypsy song taken from Papusza's Head]*

"Can we understand other peoples' cultures in the way they understand them?" "Must this understanding be distorted as it is transferred through the prism of our understanding?" "The troubles that occur between genders are similar to those that affect communication between two different cultures?" "Why are some cultures and cultural forms more appreciated than others?" These are just several issues that may arise when analysing the topic of stereotypes and attempts at breaking them in the Polish cinema.

Krzysztof Krauze and Joanna Kos-Krauze's *Papusza* from 2013¹ brings forth several perspectives into discussion in this context:

* Translation by Agnieszka Marciniak, Iwona Grodź.

1 See also two documents about the poet: *Papusza*, dir. M. Wójcik (1974) and *The History of the Gypsy*, dir. G. Kowalski (1991).

- a) Sociological – the main point of interest will be the relation between Poles and Romani minority as portrayed in the film. The most important topics include the forced settlements and “adjusting” the Roma to life in the Polish society; the problem of inequality (here: poverty) and subsequent conflicts or alienation; the stereotypical attitude to the Roma hidden even in the language – in the words such as the Gypsy or the Roma. The former (in Polish: *Cygan*), although most often used, raises a lot of negative associations, as it invokes an image of a liar and thief. The latter, although politically correct, is not so widely spread and is negated even by the Gypsies themselves. Edward Dębicki said about himself: “I am a Gypsy, and my grandfather was a Gypsy. I am no Roma! The word simply means a Gypsy in our language. For God’s sake! We cannot escape our history! [...]” Further, Karol Gierliński, a poet and sculptor, believes that the word “Roma” is in Polish an artificial name created in the media². My conclusion is as follows: a change in the nomenclature is significant when it proves that the way of thinking had changed. When it is only enforced by the correctness, it does not bring anything new. All the interested parties – including the bearers of a given name – know that³.
- b) Feminist – the centre of attention will be the way in which women are presented and functioning in the Romani society, what roles are attributed to

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- 2 See Angelika Kuźniak, *Papusza* (Wołowiec: Czarne, 2013), p. 190. See also Magdalena Machowska, *Bronisława Wajs – Papusza. Między biografią a legendą* [*Bronisława Wajs – Papusza. Between a biography and a legend*] (Kraków: Nomos, 2011), p. 26. In the part devoted to *Objaśnienie terminów Cygan, Rom* [*Explanation of Terminology – Gypsy, Roma*], Machowska explains that she uses the first form (in Polish: *Cygan* – translator’s note) since it appears in documents forming the basis for her work. Papusza called herself a Gypsy (*Cyganka*) as well. Moreover, the word Gypsy has a wider meaning than Roma. On the other hand, the aspect of political correctness is also important. Namely, as Machowska wrote: “In the view of the Roma the word *Roma* does not strip them of dignity and respect, since it creates a new context and gives a chance for dialogue in which the Roma’s story about themselves will be shared from a partner’s and not just subject’s perspective. Thus, they gain a chance to build a new identity. Certainly, however, it diminishes the distance towards the Gypsy community. The improvement of their image must come through education and not through changing names, and such cognitive and educational aims are set out by this book and an academic paper on Gypsies.”
- 3 The fundamental notions that are helpful in understanding this viewpoint on the story portrayed in the film will be: the power and surveillance, *habitus*, inequality, the concept of “the culture of poverty,” theory of “the vicious circle of deficiency,” appearance of people outside of social classes, topographies of culture and their cultural images (villages, towns, cities), nomadic cultures, community and alienation (expulsion).

them in childhood, adolescence (quick marriages) and above all in marriage (listening to and serving the husband) and what changes are occurring⁴.

One of the first researchers into the history and culture of Polish Roma, aiming at changing its image and popularising knowledge, was Jerzy Ficowski⁵. Further, Lech Mróz and Ryszard Tomicki would write on the history of Roma as well. The former noted that “[a]mong ethnic groups living in Poland for centuries, the Romani constitute the most exotic and intriguing element, least known to their neighbours and folklore researchers. Their clans and families are communities closed to the outside world and cultivating their own traditional customs, they are governed by their own laws and communicate in a language known only to them and unwritten. They do not allow outsiders to learn the secrets of their existence”⁶. The author of *The Polish Roma* wrote in his *Introduction* that the “firmly established animosities” and feeling of foreignness or aversion towards the Gypsies all result from speculations. They are thought to be “demonic” due to occupying themselves with divination, “criminal” as they are suspected of thievery and “operetta-like” since they are thought to be romantic, to love nature and play. The aim of the book is, however, to change the image and perception of the Roma by telling their stories and replacing imagery with rationalism⁷.

4 An appropriate context here is the representation of femininity in the Roma culture as well as the paradoxes of female modesty, duplicity, visibility, beauty or death.

5 Jerzy Ficowski, *Cyganie w Polsce. Dzieje i obyczaje [The Romani in Poland]* (Warszawa: PIW, 1953).

6 Jerzy Ficowski, *Cyganie*, pp. 8–9.

7 See also Lech Mróz, Ryszard Tomicki, “Jak Cyganie świat zdobyli ... Kilka uwag, kilka pytań, kilka refleksji” [How the Roma conquered the world ... Some notes, questions and reflections], in: *Antropolog wobec współczesności*, eds. Anna Malewska-Szałygin, Magdalena Radkowska-Walkowicz (Warszawa: UW, 2010), pp. 293–317. The authors analyse how the Roma arrived not only in Europe, but also in Africa, Asia, America and even Australia. “In Europe, the Gypsies created clan and regional communities, as well as international ones. In the 1970s a new community layer was born, the intelligentsia of political leaders, social workers and artists. The Gypsies began to fight for their rights and dignity. Political correctness led to them being called Roma, even though they themselves did not accept such a name. The European Union allowed for the Gypsies to become fully fledged citizens of countries where they lived, with the idea of ex-territorial nation. The Gypsies began to discover Europe and history once again, by separating truth and legend. Source literature claims that “in the arising ethnic mythology, the origins of Gypsies are rooted in India and connected to the Kshatriya social class. But what really connects them is their ancient nomadic lifestyle.”

The uniqueness of Papusza consists in the fact that, as Ficowski wrote, “the Gypsy song exists as a work of nameless folk culture, but we have never known a conscious Gypsy author and praiser of camping tabors (settlements), someone whose name would be known and saved in the collective memory. Not for the five hundred years of Gypsy wandering through Poland”⁸. The oral tradition is evanescent, improvised and anonymous. It was not favourable towards permanent presence of Gypsy folk songs in people’s memory⁹.

Papusza is the first Gypsy poet with firm presence in the public space. Angelika Kuźniak wrote that “[t]he possibility of having her words written down stripped Papusza of her unrestrained freedom of vocal improvisation with accompanying music – which gave wings to imagination, her words and phrases. The limited ability to write was for Papusza to a certain extent an unwanted barrier, as it did not always lead to correct choice of words or appropriateness of means of expression. (...) Despite such difficulties (...) the poems are not only a precious document, but also a work of art – no longer nameless, yet still bearing the features of folk art and ‘primitive’ freshness”¹⁰.

Poetic and vocal improvisation was the characteristic form of Gypsy art. It was a folk recitation to music, covering subjects such as death, mourning, freedom and loss of freedom, and the nomadic lifestyle. Only a few folklorists managed to record the ephemeral works via taping of Gypsy songs or artistic shows¹¹.

The social issues in the film *Papusza*

Researchers of social issues indicate six main areas of conflicts and compromises, or in other words, of relations laden with social tension: gender (subordination, feminist perspective, etc.), race (racism), nationality, religion, social class (poverty and contempt) and age (youth and old age).

8 Jerzy Ficowski, “Wstęp” [Introduction], in: Papusza, *Lesie, ojciec mój* (Warszawa: Nisza, 2013), p. 7.

9 See for example the new edition e-book Teodor Narbutt, *Rys historyczny ludu cygańskiego* [*Gypsy People: A Historical Outline*] (Warszawa: Imprint, 2010).

10 Jerzy Ficowski, “Wstęp”, p. 9. Ficowski mentions Gypsy poets from other countries, but judges them to be professionals and not “naive poets” such as Papusza. They include Bari Karoly from Hungary and Rajko Burin from Yugoslavia.

11 In the margin, it must be added that the music for the film was composed by well-known Polish composer Jan Kanty-Pawluśkiewicz (born 1942), who has no Roma roots. It is a clear signal that the directors wanted to emphasise the versatility of their film, in the sound layer of *Papusza*, to combine, not to divide.

For years, the nomadic lifestyle was the most interesting characteristics of the Romani. It was considered the most intriguing. The reasons for beginning to wander and various motivations and consequences of it were thoroughly analysed. The history of the ethnic group ought to be the starting point.

Linguistic research has proven that the Romani language is similar to languages in the Indo-European group, which allowed for speculations that the Romani come from India¹². However, the history is much more complicated and full of gaps, ambiguities and assumptions, as Lech Mróz and Ryszard Tomicki claim in the subchapter *Exodus and expansion* of their previously mentioned work. As regards Poland, the earliest traces of the Roma come from 1401 and the town log book of Kazimierz in Cracow, where a taxpayer Matiasz Cygan was mentioned¹³. Interestingly, the Roma were very familiar with biblical stories, despite their lack of education. Mróz and Tomicki also indicate that the Roma used safe conduct documents issued by popes and kings (including Sigismund I the Old).

Stereotypes concerning perception of Roma in Poland have been around for long; not often, however, do they become the content of artistic undertakings in the Gypsy community. Papusza was a person who not only saw the disdain towards her social and ethnic group, but was also able to talk about it. Hence, probably, her words that have become the motto to Angelika Kuźniak's study, *Papusza*: "I come not to you for your money, (...) I come to you so that you don't make a black night of a white day"¹⁴.

An important event was also the decision of the Ministry for Public Administration concerning "the settlement and activation of the Gypsy population" of 1950¹⁵. Through a conference organised in Warsaw, Papusza and her husband were also involved in the action. In contrast to other Romas, the poet believed that such activities would contribute to their good. She tried to argue with others and convince them. In 1950, Papusza even wrote a poem on the topic, entitled *Na dobrej drodze (Pre laćcho drom/On the right road)*¹⁶.

12 Lech Mróz, Ryszard Tomicki, "Jak Cyganie świat zdobyli," p. 295.

13 Lech Mróz, Ryszard Tomicki, "Jak Cyganie świat zdobyli," p. 298.

14 Words of Papusza as quoted in Angelika Kuźniak, *Papusza*, p. 7.

15 Angelika Kuźniak, *Papusza*, p. 91.

16 Papusza, "Na dobrej drodze," in: *Lesie, ojciec mój [Forest, My Father]* (Warszawa: Nisza, 2013), pp. 46–47.

Previously, as Papusza wrote, the Romas would be expelled to the forest “by other lords.” There, “their hearts became like stone.” That is why now they would be afraid of the change and miss the woods¹⁷.

Ficowski wrote that Papusza should not be considered a social didactic, even though she wrote some poems in favour of activation of Gypsies¹⁸. These works are usually judged quite harshly. Moreover, the poet created them for specific financial benefits (allegedly, to be allotted housing).

In the *Report on Aid and Activation of the Gypsy People* of 26 February 1951, we read that “[c]oncerning the settlement of Wajs’s tabor of about 130 people, a conference with its representatives was held. After the five-person delegation learned more about the government’s position, they expressed the willingness to settle the whole tabor in one of the towns near Wrocław. (...) Due to housing shortages and other unrealistic demands the group was not settled. According to other Roma, Wajs’s group had not really wanted to settle, but just to see what was the position of central government towards the Roma people”¹⁹. There were many difficulties. It seems that they have not been overcome until today. The point was mainly to force the Roma to settle (via registration), undertake permanent jobs and send children to school – all in all, making them, in line with the popular slogan of the time, “fully-fledged citizens of the People’s Republic of Poland.”

Emancipation of the Roma brought about both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, the group finally had a chance to become visible. On the other, new rules of living often ended in dramatic situations. Starting from 1964 (thirteen years after official announcements), the Roma were fully forbidden to lead a nomadic and migratory life. The elders believed that the prohibition was dangerous for their traditions and ethnic diversity. The process of assimilation and education, according to sceptical Romani, led to the disappearance of their language and culture. Papusza was a poet who predicted the change and the end. Ficowski calls her the “expression of common habits, attachments and yearnings which were the *spiritus movens* of her work”²⁰.

The aversion of the Roma towards Papusza came from their distrust in outsiders. By getting closer to someone from outside the community, the poet entered the path of treason. Hence, in the 1950s and onwards, she was prosecuted for her

17 Papusza, *Lesie, ojczyzna*, p. 30. In the poem entitled *Na śladach ognisk grzyby wyrosły* [*Mushrooms have grown in old Gypsy bonfires*] (*Watry betkenca zabaryne*), mushrooms, like old Gypsies or simply elderly people, die when uprooted.

18 Jerzy Ficowski, “*Wstęp*,” p. 10.

19 Angelika Kuźniak, *Papusza*, pp. 95, 97, 128.

20 Jerzy Ficowski, “*Wstęp*,” p. 11.

friendship with Ficowski and other “Others.” Disdain of the Roma contributed to her nervous disease, loneliness and unwillingness to continue writing. True, she was not fully expelled from the community due to her illness; in Gypsy circles such offenders were usually called *famulo* or *infamis* and simply disappeared due to *magerdy* or exclusion. Yet, close to the end of her life she wrote: “If I hadn’t learned to read or write, maybe, me silly, I would have been happy”²¹. The poet could not have foreseen the opinions and reactions to her work. That is why in her case the old Gypsy proverb proved true: “Cut your tongue before your tongue cuts your head off.” The question is, how did she start learning to read?

The future poet was born in 1909; some sources indicate 1908 or 1910. At that time, illiteracy was the norm among the Gypsies. Against the will of her parents and despite the anger of other Gypsies, she started to learn to read with a Jewish shopowner. Eagerness to learn and the approval (a compliment) from an elegant lady she met, made Papusza sure she wanted to continue. However, because of that she faced numerous challenges throughout her lifetime, and some Romani never accepted her education. When she died on 8 February 1987, the attitude of this ethnic group towards education was partly, although not radically, changed.

Understanding the mentality of the Roma is linked to learning more about their customs, perception and interpretation of the world. Only this allows for good practices within the so-called engaged culture. Romani dances, freedom and joy are just one side of the coin, the one shown to the world. Nowadays, it is associated with Cepelia and stereotypical presentation of cultural features of the group. One of Papusza’s poems praising the dances is entitled *Patrzę tu, patrzę tam* (*Dikchaw daj, dikchaw doj/I look here, I look there*) of 1951²².

However, there is also the other side of the coin. It is symbolised by winter, which for ages has been the time of stopping and settling. In this season, the Roma would reminisce about past travels, sing, chat and wait for the spring. They also felt most of the chill, poverty, hunger and alienation.

Settling down in one place was a necessity, in order to escape the poverty and disdain of the people. At the same time, it meant the loss of freedom, praised nostalgically in the memories of spring or summer wandering. Papusza wrote on the subject as well. We are also familiar with her biography. Before the war, she would wander mostly through Volhynia, Podolia and the Grodno area. After the war, she lived in Żagań, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Inowrocław. It is said that she

21 As quoted in Jerzy Ficowski, “*Wstęp*,” p. 13.

22 Papusza, “*Patrzę tu, patrzę tam*,” in: Papusza, *Lesie, ojciec mój* (Warszawa: Nisza), p. 48.

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dreamed about looking at trees, but the forest remained only a memory, similarly to rivers or green grass in May (cf. the poem *In May*)²³.

The feminist issues in the film *Papusza*

In one of the interviews, Joanna Kos-Krauze stated that “[i]n Poland the attitude towards women is hypocritical. Yet, it is women who are the driving force behind economic development”²⁴. Similar thinking is applied to female artists.

The status of women at the beginning of the twentieth century in Poland – and additionally, in a particular group – is a matter that may be raised when discussing the name of the main character. The secret of the unusual (illegible for Poles) name of the Gypsy poet is hidden in her mother’s dreams and an exceptional ghost story.

The film reveals the former source. In the prologue, we see a pregnant woman looking dreamily at an elegantly dressed doll standing in a shop window. We arrive at the conclusion that the young Roma is fascinated not only by the doll, but also by the female world which it represents. The world is at the same time close and far away. It is close since it treats women mainly as beautiful decorations, but far away in the manner of showing or rather expressing this status of women. The bourgeoisie culture is connected with luxury and creation of at least the appearance of respect towards women – ladies. The Gypsy culture is quite open about reducing women to “toys,” which are to be the source of entertainment, but also – paradoxically – mothers, housewives and simply physical workers. The double role is an additional burden on the shoulders of Gypsy women. Not all of them may enjoy the privilege of being only beautiful and rich.

Let us return to the ghost story: according to the legend, a ghost appears on the third night after a Gypsy child is born. It reveals what good and evil will come to the newborn; the same happened with *Papusza*. However, nobody ever wanted to reveal what had been forecast for the little girl. The secret has only been strengthened by the words which are also repeated in the film: “She will either bring us great pride, or great shame.” At first, the girl was named Bronka, but she turned out to be so wonderful and beautiful that they began to call her “Precious.” Finally, the girl received the nickname *Papusza*, which in the Romani language meant “doll.”

23 *Papusza*, “*Patrzą tu, patrzą tam.*”

24 Bożena Chodyniecka, “U nas faceci robili filmy tylko dla siebie” [Here, men would only make films for themselves], *Dziennik Trybuna*, Vol. 28–30 (2013), p. 16.

In the Gypsy society, the family model is patriarchal, and the man "(...) may do whatever he thinks of to his wife"²⁵. Hence the analysis of the feminist perspective and of female search for knowledge. *Papusza* knew the importance of education. Unfortunately, it was "evil" to be educated in her community, especially for a woman. The poet would say: "Without education, one has blind eyes. Mummy also did not know anything. I asked her to let me go to school. She didn't want to listen. So, I collected paper, sometimes pulled it out of garbage. And I painted with coal whatever I saw. Only not letters, because I didn't know them"²⁶.

Young *Papusza* dreamed about learning to read, and that is why she quickly found an appropriate teacher. The Jewish shopowner received a chicken from the girl for each lesson. The mother did not like it, and she used to say: "The books are for nothing, the head gets poisoned with them. This is where stupidity comes from." *Papusza's* father hit her for studying, and other Roma are said to have spat on her and made fun of her²⁷. The poet wrote about her dreams in *I, the poor Gypsy*, as she knew that Roma who do not describe their experiences will be forgotten. She, therefore, was writing in their name, in order to save the memory.

Finally, one should ask the question: "Is *Papusza* a feminist film?" The director has stated that it showed the helplessness of women in the system of oppression, which is similar to that experienced by ethnic minorities, including the Romani. Undoubtedly, it is the engaged cinema. Additionally, one should remember that relatively few films have been made on the subject of the Roma when deciding on the importance of *Papusza*. The topic was undertaken basically only by Emir Kusturica²⁸ and Tony Gatlif²⁹, and in Poland by Dorota Kędzierzawska (on a margin of her feature film *Diabły, diabły*³⁰) and documentary filmmaker Władysław Ślesicki³¹. Hence, it is important to show that the Romani life is no fairy tale, no regional fair or traditional parade. In a metaphorical manner, the selection of black, white and a palette of grey for the film explains this reality. The Roma, just

25 Bożena Chodyniecka, "U nas faceci," p. 15.

26 Angelika Kuźniak, *Papusza*, p. 27.

27 Angelika Kuźniak, *Papusza*, p. 27.

28 Emir Kusturica – director, born in Sarajevo in 1954, his films include *Dom za vešanje* (1988), *Underground* (1995), *Black cat, white cat* (1998).

29 Tony Gatlif – director, born in Algiers in 1948, his films include *Gadjo dilo* (1997), *Vengo* (2000), *Exils* (2004), *Transylvania* (2006).

30 Dorota Kędzierzawska – Polish director, born in 1957.

31 Władysław Ślesicki (1927–2008) – Polish director of feature and documentary films which include *Jedzie tabor* (1955), *Zanim opadną liście* (1964).

as in the film, still remain the “close strangers,” similarly to women in oppressive systems, often limited by religion, politics or economy³².

Conclusion

Marian Golka noted that:

(...) art is not separate from the social life, but constitutes one of its elements or aspects. Of course, it is not the sublimation or the most important product of the social life, but also – it is not its margin. In its nature, art is social, just as societies are inherently co-created by artworks, together with other cultural and natural influences. An artistic fact is a social fact; regardless of whether it is a purely social one. (...) Sociology is less useful for the examination of the work of art itself, more so for learning about its context. In art, we deal with a particular tangle of social values and means of expressing them, of content and form, of perception of the world and the manner in which the perception is articulated³³.

Such attitude towards art ascribes it to the “engaged culture” area, which overcomes stereotypes and prevents conflicts. In line with that, the most important functions of artistic statements or performances are according to Golka:

- a) “Modelling of social values” – this function consists of a number of minor functions: aesthetic, hedonist, therapeutic, expressive, communicative, magical, ideological, educational, cognitive and economic.
- b) “Modelling of social ties” – this function consists in connecting people with similar experiences and values, in unification and ordering of the social structure. At the same time, it brings in differentiation and complicatedness, as it distinguishes between “Us” and “Them”³⁴.

In the case of *Papusza*, almost all of these functions have been fulfilled. Film is a type of art directed at mass audiences. It may establish, sustain, model or explain both well-known and new values belonging to a different culture. It does that via

- a) refined anaesthetisation and overly orderly manner of filming – *Papusza* is shot in black and white since the directors wanted to escape the artificial bling, cheap folklore and circus-like quality which is often associated with the Gypsy culture full of colourful dresses or gold. Even so, the artistic layer of the film is

32 Bożena Chodyniecka, “U nas faceci,” p. 16. The issues mentioned here were also discussed during the Congress of Women or Women’s Cinema Review, as mentioned by Joanna Kos-Krauze in the quoted interview.

33 Marian Golka, “Sztuka w socjologicznych ramach” [Art in the sociological framework], in: *Socjologia sztuki*, ed. Marian Golka (Warszawa: Difin, 2008), pp. 11–46.

34 Marian Golka, “Sztuka,” pp. 200–227.

refined due to precise framing and focus on lines and shapes, structures that determine the texture of scenography, and nuanced hues of grey. Ultimately, one may arrive at a paradoxical conclusion: the film is internally colourful with “hidden colours” within the black-and-white world. In order to see it, one needs to forget what is visible with the blind eye and delve deep into the reality.

- b) the hedonist and therapeutic function of *Papusza* is brought about by joy experienced at certain (only few) moments in the film: when we see the Roma celebrating, playing, singing and dancing with joy at bonfires. Each time, the image is dusted over with internal and hidden sorrow, for instance, by the yearning of the little girl to learn, by reflection on poetry and writing, or contrariness in prison. The therapeutic qualities of *Papusza* consist mainly in separation from contemporary problems and reaching for the roots of the undertaken subjects. Understanding what is “the otherness” requires understanding its sources, since some perceive what is different as alien. Deeper insight into the image allows for recognition of one’s own, often stereotypical, attitude.
- c) the expressive function should present the position and emotions of the Krauze duo, senders of the artistic message. It consists of the cognitive and magical, as well as partly didactic, minor functions. The filmmakers bring the already non-existent world to life; hence, the magic of *Papusza* comes from the willingness to retrieve the time which has almost passed into oblivion. At the same time, they establish a separate imagery of that world³⁵. All those undertakings are based on the willingness to learn more and spread the knowledge about the Roma culture and *Papusza*, the poet, and indirectly, also on the need to share the feelings accompanying the artists which have shaped the final film: nostalgia and melancholy, but also memory, hope and freedom.
- d) the ideological function of *Papusza* is not related to “ideology” understood and defined in the outmoded political sense, but rather to the modern tendency to reinterpret various notions and assume certain perspectives, such as the feminist one. According to that statement, the film may be said to refer to a concrete way of thinking of the women question and their role in the society.
- e) the economic aspect of the film made by the Krauze duo suggests the need to focus the researcher’s attention on three stages: production, distribution and “consumption” of the film. At each stage, directors showed great understanding

35 *Papusza*’s poetry performed similar functions. For her, the creative work was like a magical spell, a secret skill and love. This is visible in her *Szarika-marika* poem, which reads: “(...) fly, come here!/Oh, my song! Where are you today, my heart?” (*Papusza, Lesie, ojczcie mój*, p. 33).

of the mechanisms of the art market. They managed an uneasy feat: achieved financial success without resignation from their own recognisable artistic style. *Papusza* is a fully original and artistic film without the burden of necessity to draw huge audiences to cinemas.

Finally, the most important function of *Papusza* consists in modelling the social ties. It is difficult to state whether the task has been completed. Definitely, the film revealed positive contexts for thinking about the Romani culture: artistic creation, willingness to learn, war experience close to that of Poles. It allows the recipients to better understand the culture and realise that the contemporary problems stem from certain sources. However, will the connection between “us” and “them” (and thus elimination of the division) be ever fully established? It is difficult to judge that today.

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