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“Culture of Remembrance: Twilight or New Awakening”



International University of Sarajevo
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CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE

Book of proceedings

I INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:
Twilight or new Awakening“*

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*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:
Twilight or new Awakening“*

**I MEĐUNARODNI SIMPOZIJ
KULTURA SJEĆANJA**

*„Bosna i Hercegovina – Kultura sjećanja:
Sumrak ili Novo buđenje“*

**И МЕЂУНАРОДНИ СИМПОЗИЈ
КУЛТУРА СЈЕЋАЊА**

*„Босна и Херцеговина – Култура сјећања:
Сумрак или Ново буђење“*

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Papers

Contents

1. Nicolas Moll - "When A Man Does Good...": Representations of Help and Rescue
in Movies about the 1992-1995 War in Bosnia and Herzegovina 7
2. Adis Elias Fejzić – Addis – "Stećak: A (dis)continuity of resurrection of the art of *stećak*" 19
3. Lejla Panjeta – "Interpretation of View in Cinema: Bosnian Film from 1997 to 2013" 29
4. Azra Mehić, Mehmet Can, Jasmin Jusufović – "Red Jacket with a Hood" 37
5. Danis Fejzić – "Affirmation of "ugly" art and its role in the culture of memory" 45
6. Srđan Šušnica – "Culture of oblivion or remembrance: Conversion of the city identity" 53
7. Mario Katić – "War of Architecture: Creating New Places of Competing memory in
Bosnia and Herzegovina" 79
8. Vahida Đedović, Slađana Ilić – "Miner of Husino" – statue, now and then" 91
9. Dževad Drino, Benjamina Londrc – "Damnatio Memoriae – Spaces of Memory" 99
10. Džemal Sokolović - "Remembrance for the Future: 1914 – 2014" 103
11. Mirko Bilandžić, Danijela Lucić – "Controversy over the Sarajevo assassination –
Is it a terrorist act?" 129
12. Nedžad Novalić – „Sarajevo assassination in our memory (interpretation of the Sarajevo
assassination in an example of elating / removal of Monument to Franz Ferdinand and
Gavrilo Princip)“ 141
13. Ismet Dizdarević – „Negation of scientific truth on cultural past by defence
mechanisms“ 149
14. Dragomir, Vuković – „, Historical and contemporary dimensions of the phenomenon of
hatred in the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina“ 167
15. Alma Jeftić – „From Divided Memories to Divided Discourse: How Many Historical
Turths Exists in Bosnia-Hercegovina“ 173
16. Sabahudin Hadžialić – „Twilight of Remembrance in Bosnia-Hercegovina-
Examples of Bugojno & Skopje „, Donji Vakuf“ 187

17. Marius Chelaru – „Knowing through culture – an important step to accept one to each other and to deal better difficult moments“ 201

**Radovi učesnika Simpozijuma
Dostavljeno na jeziku autora
(bez engleskog prijevoda)**

18. Srđan Puhalo – „Koliko su vjernici u Bosni i Hercegovini spremni na pomirenje“ 209
19. Mirjana Nadaždin Defterdarević „Kultura sjećanja u kontekstu definisanja I tumačenja pravnih vrijednosti“ 229
20. Ladislav Babić – „Kultura sjećanja ili nekultura zaborava“ 239



**“When A Man Does Good...”: Representations of Help and Rescue
in Movies about the 1992-1995 War in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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To what extent do fictional movies about the Bosnian War deal with the topic of rescue and help during the war, and how does this relate to general tendencies in the public remembrance of the War, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere? In many films that have been produced since the end of the war to the present day, rescue and help are either not present or are shown as something irrelevant or impossible. There are, however, a certain number of movies which present and deal with acts of help and rescue. Differences in the treatment of the topic can be found between international (Western) productions and productions from the Western Balkans: while the first emphasize the positive and successful intervention of international actors and, in a later arena, the ambiguity of perpetrator-rescuers, the latter insist more often on the absence of rescue or on interethnic rescue in combination with dramatic and tragic aspects. Nevertheless also among film directors from the Balkans an evolution can be seen, with the appearance in the past decade of films showing partially successful interethnic rescue actions. The fact that interethnic rescue is not a dominating topic but is lately attracting more attention on the cinematographic level reflects general tendencies of public remembrance in the Balkans: The strong focus on victims and perpetrators within the highly polarized public remembrance of the war does not leave much space for the topic of interethnic rescue, but the public interest in figures of interethnic rescuers as role models for reconciliation and civic courage has been growing in recent years. There are also links between this general tendency and the cinematographic production, as is illustrated by the movie “Circles” from 2013, which has actively participated in the popularization of the memory of Srđan Aleksić, a young Bosnian Serb who saved a Muslim in 1993. Additional to the analysis of the cinematographic treatment of the rescue-topic in relation with the public remembrance of the Bosnian war, the article puts this treatment in the context of the development of rescuer-movies, especially in relation with the Holocaust, which occurred in Europe and elsewhere in the last two decades, in parallel with the growing general public interest in the memory of rescuers in times of war and mass violence.

Key words: Rescue, Cinema, public remembrance, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srđan Aleksić

1. Introduction

Helping and rescuing civilians who are threatened by mass violence and war: There has been an increased interest, in the last 25 years, of both film directors and the public in making and watching films related to this topic. This concerns especially the Holocaust and the rescue of Jews, the most known film in this regard being Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List" from 1993. But there are many other movies which have been produced in the last two decades that focus on this topic in one way or another, as, for example, "Divided We Fall" (Czech Republic, 2000), "Monsieur Batignole" (France, 2002) or "In Darkness" (Poland/Germany/ Canada, 2011). Movies have dealt with rescuers and rescue previously, but the focus has become stronger in the last two decades, so that certain observers now even talk about "rescuer-movies" as a specific sub-genre of Holocaust-related cinematography (Insdorf, 2003).¹ It can also be noted that the cinematographic attraction of rescuers is not only limited to the Holocaust, but touches also other historical events, as illustrated by "Hotel Rwanda" (USA, 2004), related to the genocide in Rwanda, or "John Rabe" (Germany/France/China, 2009), related to the massacre of the Chinese population in Nanjing by Japanese troops in 1937.

This evolution seems to reflect a more general tendency of a growing global interest in the figure of the rescuer and the topic of help and rescue in face of war and mass violence. The status of "Righteous Among the Nations", through which the State of Israel designates and honors Gentiles who saved Jews during the Holocaust, was established in 1963, but the number of recognitions has proliferated in the last two decades, parallel to the institutionalization of the tribute to the "Righteous" in many European countries (Gensburger, 2010). In the same period, articles and books about individual rescuers, about rescue in general or specific aspects, especially in relation to the Holocaust, have been blooming, also within the field of scholarly research (Sémelin 2008; Klütze 2012). Furthermore, several monuments and museums have been inaugurated in recent years, for example in Berlin in 2008 the memorial "Silent Heroes" (Kosmala, 2012), and two monuments to Polish rescuers of Jews are to be inaugurated in Warsaw in 2015 (Israel National News 2014). This general boom in the rescuer-remembrance is not exclusively limited to the Holocaust. In 2001, the "Gardens of the Righteous Worldwide Committee - Gariwo", dedicated to raise awareness about rescuers related to different genocides and mass crimes of the 20th century, was established in Milan,² and in 2012 the European Parliament decided to support the idea of the creation of a "European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous to commemorate those who challenged crimes against humanity and totalitarianism with individual responsibility".³ Different reasons can be advanced for this increasing interest in rescuers and their actions; for example the growing need and will to insist on positive stories in the framework of the developing global remembrance of the Holocaust, and, after the end of "the era of ideologies", the search for new role models in line with the new political and social importance of the concepts of Human Rights and of Humanitarian Aid (Gensburger, 2010). The films mentioned are not only reflective of this general interest in the topic of rescue and help in face of mass violence and war, they are also articulating and partially influencing it. The most striking example is again Spielberg's movie "Schindler's List" which has made Oskar Schindler a near universally-known symbol of rescue and often quoted reference in this field, and stimulated the interest in and research of "the other Schindlers" (Grunwald-Spier, 2010).

¹ Significantly, Insdorf has added a new chapter "Rescuers in Fiction Films" in the renewed edition from 2003 of her book (258-275), which was first published in 1983.

² Cp. the website of Gariwo : <http://www.gariwo.net/?lang=en>

³ Declaration of the European Parliament of 10 May 2012 on support for the establishment of a European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous. Retrieved from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0205+0+DOC+XML+V0/EN>

How do films represent certain historical events and issues? And to what extent do these films mirror and influence general social and political tendencies of their time regarding the reflected past? These are two of numerous questions which can be formulated to address the complex relationship between film and history (Ferro 1977; Strübel 2002; Rosenstone 2006). Concerning the topic of rescue, I will address these questions in the following text in relation to the 1992-1995 War in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Since the end of the war in 1995, a large number of fiction movies has been produced in BiH, the region, and elsewhere about the most violent of the Yugoslav break-up-wars, and different aspects of this cinematographic production have also attracted scholarly attention (Iordanova 2001; Maroto Camino 2005; Elsaesser 2005; Žarkov 2014a; Žarkov 2014b), but the topic of rescue and help as a specific and transversal question within these films about the Bosnian War has not been treated so far. By looking at local, regional and international fictional movies that have been produced to date, my leading questions is: How is rescue represented in films about the War in BiH, and how can these representations be situated in the more general context of dealing with the war in BiH? In order to answer this question I will proceed in two steps: I will first analyze different movies to see to what extent and in which way the topic of help and rescue is present(ed). I will then examine to what extent rescue is in general a topic when it comes to dealing with the Bosnian War, and which role the named movies are playing within this public remembrance. In my conclusion I will connect the results of my analysis for BiH to the general contemporary remembrance of rescue evoked in this introduction, in order to see which place the cinematography about the Bosnian War and its approach of the topic of rescue holds in the general cinematographic and sociopolitical treatment of this question.

2. From “No Man’s Land” to “Circles”: Dealing with help and rescue within movies about the Bosnian War

To what extent is the topic of the rescuer present in films about the Bosnian War, and if it is present, in which way(s)? When looking at the totality of fiction movies realized about the war in BiH, the first observation that can be made is that rescue and help are not a dominating topic. Even to the contrary; what is striking is the absence of rescue. One example is the most known movie about the war in BiH, “No Man’s Land” (2001) from Danis Tanović, which won the *Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film* in 2001: This movie focuses on the absurdity and the drama of the war, by showing two ordinary soldiers, a Muslim and a Serb, who will not stop shooting at each other and are intent on killing one another, in spite of having opened a dialogue. The question of rescue is not entirely absent in “No Man’s Land”, as United Nations peacekeepers are due to arrive at the location and are supposed to rescue one soldier who is lying on a mine. But they fail to do so, a metaphor through which Tanović expresses the whole failure of the International Community during the war. Even worse, the UN fake a rescue, and in the end they pretend, for the media, to have saved the soldier, while in reality he continues to lie on the mine, totally abandoned; which is also the closing image of the film.

As with “No Man’s Land”, many other movies about the war in BiH focus on death and mutual killing, the absurd or tragic dimensions of the war, and on the hopelessness of the people caught in the war, which seems to exclude the possibility of talking about such positive and hopeful acts as rescue. Rescuing and escaping simply seem not to be seen as an option, not for the persons caught in the trap of the war and therefore also not for the film directors, as if rescue and/or salvation would be indecent in the face of the tragedy and the violence of the war. Interestingly, some films do not evoke a lack of will to help and rescue others, but a refusal or a lack of will *to get rescued*. The movie “Shot Through the Heart” (1998) is the story of two best friends, a Serb and a Muslim, who become snipers on each side of the besieged Sarajevo. Each of them offers at one moment the other the opportunity to escape, but both times they refuse, and the story ends tragically when finally one kills the other. In “The Perfect Circle” (1997), Hamza, the main character, refuses to

follow his wife and daughter who are evacuated from besieged Sarajevo, and chooses deliberately to stay in the city. He then unwillingly takes guardianship of two orphaned children, Adis and Kerim, who he finally decides to take out of Sarajevo. However, Adis is killed during the attempt, and Kerim remains with Hamza in the besieged city. Escaping the war zone seems to be a mission impossible.

Even if in the majority of the movies about the war in BiH rescue and help are not present or are shown as something irrelevant or impossible, there are nevertheless a certain number of movies which present acts of help and rescue, in an accessory or more central way. By looking at these movies, we can distinguish four different aspects that they emphasize: the individual help through international actors; the hidden, inter-ethnic rescue; the question of perpetrator-rescuers; and the topic of open and heroic rescue, which ends tragically but has positive effects.

1) *The rescue of endangered civilians by international actors during the war.* These movies send a different message from the film of Tanović, as they show how individual international persons try to help and also sometimes manage to do so. “Welcome to Sarajevo” (1997) is the most well-known film in this category, where a journalist decides that he cannot be a bystander any more, and brings a young girl named Emira out of the war zone and to his home in England. Another example is “Warriors” (1999) where some British UN soldiers attempt to save civilians against the orders of their superiors: they fail twice, but at least succeed once when they evacuate Muslim refugees from a neighborhood before Bosnian Serb forces take control of it. There is also the movie “Savior” (1998), where an American mercenary, who is fighting on the side of the Bosnian Serbs, decides to protect a Serb mother and her baby, who are threatened by their own family, and then finally saves the baby during a massacre orchestrated by Croatian paramilitaries.

The common point of these movies is that they are all international productions showing international protagonists who are saving innocent civilians. The focus is on saving children, the most innocent of the innocent, and even if the attempts take place in dramatic circumstances, they are shown as partially successful. These movies do not pretend that the International Community was not passive during the war in BiH; on the contrary: they portray the passivity of the International Community in general, and they show the role of rescuer as being performed by individuals. At the same time, we can also see these movies as an attempt to save the honor of the international community by showing at least these courageous individuals, and could interpret these movies as a sort of compensation for the failure of the international community to intervene and to help in its totality. The representation of international actors as rescuers appears also in the Pakistani television series “Alpha Bravo Charlie” (1998), where one of the main characters, Khan, as commanding officer of his company, launches a number of successful rescue operations to protect endangered civilians.

“Welcome to Sarajevo” and “Savior” both conclude with a sort of happy end, as the threatened child is rescued, and the spectator does not know what happens after. Another film, “War Child” (2006) starts its story when the others are ending, and deals with the ambivalent and also dramatic consequences of rescue. The “war child” in question is Aida, who, as a two-year-old girl was brought out of the warzone by the Red Cross and then adopted by a German family. Ten years later, hearing that her daughter is alive, her mother Senada goes to Germany to search for her and bring her back, which leads to the question of impossible choices, between Aida - who has become Kristina - and her adoptive family on the one hand, and Senada as the biological mother on the other.

2) *The topic of secret inter-ethnic rescue, where Serbs try to hide or secretly help Muslims or vice-versa.*

In relation with the Bosnian War this topic appears randomly in “Remake” (2003), where at one moment Miro, a Serb soldier, helps his best friend Tarik to escape from a prison, but the attempt fails, and both are caught. A much more central topic is interethnic help and rescue in “Go West” (2005), with the story of Milan and Kenan, a homosexual couple living in Sarajevo at the beginning of the war. They decide to leave the city, and, in order to hide from Serbian militia, Kenan, disguised as a woman, is brought by Milan to his native village, where he presents him as his wife-to-be. The rescued Kenan manages to survive the war years in the village, and can finally leave to the Netherlands, but without Milan, who has died while fighting on the front line. The common point of the two movies is that they are made by filmmakers from BiH who picture help and rescue in the middle of tragedy and hopelessness of war and who refuse to show a happy end.

3) *The topic of the perpetrator-rescuer, in other words persons who are committing crimes, but at one moment help or rescue a person “from the other side”.*

In “In the Land of Blood and Honey” (2011), one of the two main characters is Danijel, who directs a rape-camp during the war, but at the same time helps his former girlfriend to escape. The movie “As If I Am Not There” (2010) is also about the rape of women, and we can find a similar character, the commander of a rape-house, who at one moment starts to “protect” Samira from being raped by other soldiers. Another example is the short movie “In the Name of the Son” (2007), where the commander of a Bosnian Serb unit kills his own son, but decides to spare the life of a Muslim soldier and to let him escape. This last movie is also interesting because the story does not end during the war, but deals primarily with the consequences of this dramatic rescue, as it shows how both men meet again several years after the war and how they deal with the situation. Interestingly, the three movies are all international productions; it seems that the notion of the perpetrator-rescuer has until now been a more difficult topic for filmmakers in BiH, who are more insistent on the fate of “ordinary” people caught in tragedy, and for whom picturing perpetrators who show some humanity seems a more difficult option to choose to tackle.

4) *The open and heroic rescue, ending tragically but producing positive effects:*

This is the central topic of the film “Circles” (2013), which is based on the real story of *Srđan Aleksić*, and which shows how Marko (representing *Srđan Aleksić*) intervenes openly when his Muslim acquaintance Haris is beaten up by other Bosnian Serb soldiers. Marko manages to save Haris, but is himself beaten to death. As with “In the Name of the Son”, the film “Circles” mainly deals with the question of the consequences of this tragic-successful act of rescue, and the main question which the director raises is formulated by Marko’s father twelve years later: “There is just one thing bothering me. Was it all for nothing? A life, just like that ... You understand? (...) When you throw a stone in water something happens... Those circles appear and spread. And yet this... That is what I fear: That when a man does a good thing, it means nothing to other people.”

Actually, the film endeavours to illustrate that the act of Marko was indeed not for nothing, and will show that this act had positive effects, as for the different persons concerned by Marko’s act and death, twelve years later, something positive will result from it. However, even though the film shows that Marko’s tragic act of rescue has different positive effects, it is important to notice how the director chose to end the film: not with the situation twelve years later, but by coming back to the original scene during the war, showing how Haris can escape thanks to Marko, and how then Marko is beaten to death in the middle of the city while other persons watch on. The last image is Marko’s dead body, lying in the middle of the marketplace, with nobody around him. Significantly,

the French co-producer of the film did not like this ending, and wanted that the movie to finish on a positive note, with one of the positive outcomes twelve years later, arguing that this would be better for a Western public. However, the film's Serbian director Srđan Golubović insisted on ending the film with Marko's death, explaining his choice as follows: On the one hand, it was just unconceivable for him that a film from and about the Balkans ends with an entirely positive note; on the other hand this end was necessary for him because he also wanted to transmit the following message: "We have to forgive, but not to forget."⁴

To summarize this short overview of the cinematographic representation of help and rescue in films about the war in BiH, we can see that while in many films the topic is absent, there is nevertheless a certain number of films where it is addressed, which, taken together, show a wide range of aspects and perspectives on the topic of rescue, and in combination illustrate the complexity of rescue in times of war. Differences in the treatment of the topic can especially be found between international (Western) productions and productions from the Western Balkans: the first emphasize the positive and successful intervention of international actors and, in a later arena, the ambiguity of perpetrator-rescuers, while the latter insist more often on the absence of rescue or on interethnic rescue in combination with dramatic and tragic aspects. Nevertheless also among film directors from the Balkans an evolution can be seen, with the appearance in the past decade of films showing partially successful interethnic rescuer actions. That Western productions have not focused on interethnic rescue, except under the ambiguous angle of perpetrator-rescuers, but on rescue by international protagonists confirms what Žarkov (2014a, 2014b) writes about Western film production regarding the Bosnian War reproducing Balkanist and Orientalist discourses, situating humanity and morality in the Western world, and violence and victimhood in the Balkans.

3. Movies dealing with help and rescue and public remembrance of the Bosnian War

To what extent do the mentioned movies reflect the ways in which the Bosnian War and the question of help and rescue during the War are in general remembered in BiH and the region from 1995 to today, and what is the role of these movies within this aspect of dealing with the wartime past? The fact that help and rescue are not a dominant topic within movies about the war reflects indeed also the general situation regarding the public remembrance of the Bosnian War. The public remembrance regarding the war - in BiH and the region - is dominated in general by a focus on other topics: on suffering, civilian victims and heroic soldiers from one's 'own' group, or evil perpetrators from the other side. Since the war, BiH is an extremely divided country, where the war memories continue to be strongly polarized and constitute an important factor of the ethnic, political and social division (Moll 2013). The strong polarization in the public culture of remembrance does not leave much space for stories of interethnic help and rescue as they do not conform to the dominating narratives of division between "us" and "them".

At the same time, from the end of the war to the present day, there have been efforts to promote the memory of rescuers in BiH and the region. Several books gathering stories about interethnic help and rescue during the Bosnian War have, for example, been published by civil society actors (Broz 1999; Milosević 1999; Research and Documentation Center 2010). The Sarajevo-based NGO "Gariwo", since its creation in 2001, has engaged in this field through different activities, likewise the Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC) which realizes educational activities around the topic of those who had the courage to help and rescue others during the Bosnian War.⁵ The case of *Srđan Aleksić*, the young Bosnian Serb whose story constitutes the basis for the film "Circles", has in particular been promoted since 2007 by different civil society actors in BiH and Serbia, and has also reached some institutional recognition, for example with streets being named after him in

⁴ Interview with Srđan Golubović by N.M., Sarajevo, 20.8.2013

⁵ See their websites www.gariwo.org and <http://p-crc.org>

Sarajevo, Novi Sad, Pančevo and Podgorica.⁶ In general, civil society actors emphasizing the memory of interethnic help and rescue aim through this to promote ideas of reconciliation and/or civic courage, and to propose alternative role models in a society where war criminals are often celebrated as heroes. These efforts face much resistance, as they usually challenge the existing lines of division, but they have nevertheless been developing in recent years. The successful promotion of *Srđan Aleksić*, who has become a well-known example of rescue in the public sphere in BiH, is the best illustration of that.

The fact that the film “Circles” was made very recently seems to illustrate and reflect this strengthening, even if the promotion of the rescuer-memory remains marginalized in general. But the film “Circles” not only reflects this strengthening, it has also actively contributed to it by helping to popularize the memory of *Srđan Aleksić*. The film attracted a lot of media attention in BiH and the region between the beginning of filming, in 2011, and the film’s release in 2013, and was successfully shown (and won several awards) in a series of film festivals, worldwide and regionally. Through this, *Srđan Aleksić* became more known, both on an international level, where his story was nearly unknown until then, and also in BiH and the region, where, although the promotion of *Aleksić*’s memory had already started some years before, the fact that a fictional movie was dedicated to him constituted a new and important step in this process. Regarding this it is also important to see the interaction between the movie and the general efforts to remember *Srđan Aleksić*. For Golubović, the film was explicitly a way to honor and promote *Srđan Aleksić* whom he called “a true hero of our time” (Agar, 2013). Also, different civil society organizations showed the film “Circles” in the framework of their activities to honor the memory of *Srđan Aleksić*. And it is certainly not a coincidence that an initiative was launched in Belgrade to name a street after *Aleksić* shortly after the film was released; the initiators also referred to the movie in order to legitimate their idea, and Golubović agreed to publicly support the street-naming initiative (Agar, 2013).

Nevertheless, the impact of “Circles” should not be overestimated. Even if the film provoked mainly positive reactions, there have also been negative, as for example from the Veterans’ Association in Trebinje who rejected the movie due to its depiction of Bosnian Serb soldiers. And despite the fact that “Circles” received positive media feedback and a warm reception by the public in the festivals where it was screened, the quantitative outreach of the film remained rather limited: in Serbia less than 25,000 persons went to see the movie - which should be compared to the 800,000 who went to see Srđan Dragojević’s “Pretty Village, Pretty Flame”, one of the most successful Balkan movies about the war, which predominantly shows each side as perpetrators of killings. This raises the further question of the impact of other movies related to the topic of the rescuer: To what extent have they raised public awareness or provoked discussion of this topic? Beside “Circles” and the memory of *Srđan Aleksić*, fictional movies have until now not triggered a significant increase in interest concerning the rescuer-topic in BiH and abroad: Firstly, because in general help and rescue are not a central topic of films about the Bosnian War, and secondly, even in the quoted movies where the topic of rescue is more or less present, and which have attracted a significant level of public attention, on the one hand the directors in their statements have insisted on other aspects, and on the other discussion of other topics has overshadowed the rescuer aspect in the public sphere. Two striking examples may illustrate this: The movie “Go West” has attracted much public attention, but discussion has focused predominantly on the fact that the story was built around a homosexual couple and on the way the different characters were pictured (Cornet, 2006), while Angelina Jolie’s movie “In the Land of Blood and Honey” was immediately caught in a

⁶ See my conference presentation: “A positive hero for everyone? Challenges and possibilities of creating consensual memory sites in divided post-war societies: the memorialization of Srđjan Aleksić in the countries of the former Yugoslavia”, Conference “Perspectives in (post)conflict academia and society”, University of Sarajevo, 14-16 March 2013. The publication of an updated version of the paper is in preparation.

polarizing controversy between those who saw it as an “Anti-Serbian” film, those who saw this as sacred testimony of support for Bosniak victims, and those who simply saw it as a bad movie (The Sofia Echo, 2012). In this context there was nearly no chance for a differentiated perception and discussion of the film, and especially about the character of Danijel as a perpetrator-rescuer. The question of the perpetrator-rescuer is also in general a topic that is absent from public discussion, also from the side of the civil society initiatives which, in their will to promote positive stories and role models for reconciliation and civic courage, avoid addressing these cases and prefer instead to focus on non-ambivalent cases of help and rescue, or at least on cases which in their eyes appear as unambivalent.

4. Conclusion

Rescue is not an easy topic to explore, even for filmmakers. First, because the rescue itself can be ambivalent and problematic, as we see for example with the question of perpetrator-rescuers, or with the sometimes dramatic fate of persons who were rescuing or were rescued. Second, because a person who chooses to talk about rescue in times of war faces the challenge of bringing together two extremes: on the one hand, talking about help and rescue is talking about a positive act, even more so if it succeeds, while on the other there is the issue of war which is mainly about violence, suffering and killing. On what should the filmmaker wish to place the focus? If they consider the war first and foremost as a drama or a tragedy, they cannot focus on rescue, at least not a successful one. If they want to counter the general negative image, and to take something positive out of the war, then the rescue topic offers an opportunity to do so – but then the danger is that they may depict the war in a too positive light.

There is no rescuer film (sub-)genre which exists concerning the Bosnian War. But there are movies which deal with the topic, in different ways. That it is not a dominating cinematographic topic reflects, as we have seen, tendencies of the public remembrance in BiH in general. At the same time, all of the aforementioned films, when taken together, transmit a rather complex view of the topic of help and rescue, including its problematic sides, while civil society actors who are involved in the remembrance of rescuers mostly insist on presenting non-ambivalent cases. Overall, the approach to the topic is becoming stronger in the Western Balkans, both in film, as best illustrated by “Circles”, and in the public sphere in general. It can be expected that with the growing temporal and emotional distance from the war this development will continue.

In other European countries the development of a strong public remembrance regarding rescuer-figures and the topic of rescue has also taken some time. The stronger promotion of the memory of rescuers, especially concerning the Holocaust, but also beyond, in the last twenty years has occurred parallel to the efforts to develop their memory in Balkans regarding the Bosnian War. The efforts in BiH are connected to this general evolution, which can, for example, be seen in the fact that the director of the Bosnian NGO “Gariwo”, Svetlana Broz, is also very active in the “Gardens of the Righteous Worldwide Committee” and that her own NGO is situated within this general initiative. Another illustration is that the PCRC in its exhibitions and educational workshops not only uses examples of rescue from BiH, but also from Cambodia, Rwanda and the Holocaust.

To come back to the question of cinematographic representation: What is the place of movies about the war in BiH which deal with help and rescue within the general cinematographic opus regarding rescue, especially related to the Holocaust? Quantitatively, far more movies have been realized on the subject of the Holocaust and the rescue of Jews, than movies on the war in BiH. The spectrum of the movies dealing with this topic, produced from the 1940s until today, is very large, oscillating between positive-heroic and ambivalent figures, developing different aspects of the complex relationship between rescuers and rescued, showing also sometimes the fine line between rescue

and betrayal. Even if there is not a ‘typical’ Holocaust rescuer movie, there is nevertheless one tendency which has become stronger in the past twenty years, and for which “Schindler’s List” has become the prototype: movies which focus on a heroic rescuer who might be ambivalent to a certain point, but who turns out to be “a good person” and succeeds in saving those he wanted to save, including himself. It is noteworthy that so far, as we have seen, no film about the Bosnian War has been made in the mould of “Schindler’s List”; film directors have obviously, to date, had no wish to show this kind of overall-happy end concerning the war in BiH, although this does not mean that it will not be done one day. At the same time, some of the movies dealing with rescue during the Bosnian War can be seen as original contributions to the general cinematography broaching rescue as a theme, as “Go West”, which combines a story of rescue with grotesque-dramatic elements and the question of sexual and ethnic identity, and “Circles”, which links an original narrative technique with the question of the long-term-consequences of an act of rescue.

One final remark which can confirm that interest in the topic of rescue and help is getting stronger in BiH and the region, and which concerns two other aspects of cinematography not discussed here, but which would be worth investigating to complement this research: In recent years, several documentary films have been produced in BiH and Serbia about rescuers during the Bosnian War, and it would be interesting to see their role in dealing with that memory and how they relate to the treatment of the topic in fiction movies.⁷ Additionally, the topic of how civilians helped and rescued endangered Jews, Serbs and others during the Second World War in Yugoslavia, which has not yet been an important topic in cinema (and also more generally), is now receiving more attention: Three film projects have been launched, in Serbia and Croatia, to tell the story of Diana Budisavljević, who saved thousands of children from Jasenovac Concentration Camp in 1942 (Večernje Novosti, 2012). It would be interesting to examine how these efforts to promote rescue related to the Second World War are linked (or not) to the efforts concerning the wars of the 1990s, and also to the general remembrance of rescue during the Holocaust, also on the cinematographic level. The title chosen for one of the three productions, a Croatian docu-fiction scheduled to be released in 2015, is already a clear reference to the most famous of all rescuer-movies: “Diana’s List”.

Quoted Films about the War in BiH:

- “Pretty Village, Pretty Flame”, Srđan Dragojević, 1996 (Serbia)
- “The Perfect Circle”, Ademir Kenović, 1997 (BiH)
- “Welcome to Sarajevo”, Michael Winterbottom, 1997 (UK)
- “Shot through the Heart”, David Attwood, 1998 (USA / UK)
- “Savior”, Predrag Antonijević, 1998 (USA)
- “Alpha Bravo Charlie”, Shoaib Mansoor, 1998 (Pakistan)
- “Warriors”, Peter Kosminksy, 1999 (UK)
- “No Man’s Land”, Danis Tanović, 2001 (BiH)
- “Remake”, Dino Mustafić, 2003 (BiH/France/Turkey)
- “Go West”, Ahmed Imamović, 2005 (BiH)
- “War Child”, Christian Wagner, 2006 (D)
- “In the Name of the Son”, Harun Mehmedinović, 2007 (USA / BiH)
- “As If I Am Not There”, Juanita Wilson, 2010 (Ireland)
- “In the Land of Blood and Honey”, Angelina Jolie, 2011 (USA)
- “Circles”, Srdan Golubović, 2013 (Serbia)

⁷ See for example the documentary-series “Living Together” (<http://zivetizajedno.net/>) and “Ordinary Heroes” (<http://p-crc.org/project/ordinary-heroes-documentary-series/>)

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