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### KOSOVAFILMI (me fokus, filmat e Isa Qosjes)

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## **KOSOVAFILMI**

*(me fokus, filmat e Isa Qosjes)*

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### **ABSTRAKT**

**“Kosovafilmi”**, u themelua me 20 shkurt të vitit 1969 në Kosovë dhe ishte shtëpia kryesore në vend për prodhimin dhe distribucionin e filmave artistikë. Nga viti 1969 e deri me vitin 2005 ka prodhuar dhe bashkë-prodhuar në mënyrë të pavarur mbi 30 filma artistikë, dokumentarë dhe të animuar. Me disa filma ka marr pjesë në shumë festivale ku disa prej tyre u shpërblyen edhe me çmime ndërkombëtare. Njëri ndër regjisorët nga Kosova që ka realizuar më së shumti filma artistikë në kuadër të kësaj shtëpie filmike është autori Isa Qosja.

Në këtë punim do të merremi me tre filmat artistikë që janë punuar nga regjisori Isa Qosja dhe që janë mbështetur e realizuar nga shtëpia filmike “Kosovafilm”. Do t’i përshkruajmë një nga një, temat që kanë trajtuar këta filma, qasjen regjisoriale si edhe disa nga simbolet më të theksuara që janë përdorur në këto vepra. Më anë të këtij punimi, ne do të kemi përpara një pasqyrë të përgjithshme të veprimtarisë së autorit në fjalë, e cila ka funksionuar në kuadër të “Kosovafilmi-it”.

**Fjalët kyçe:** Prodhimi, filmi, regjisori, tema, simboli.

## **KOSOVAFILM**

*(focused in Isa Qosja's Films)*

### **ABSTRACT**

“**Kosovafilmi**”, was established on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, 1969, in Kosovo. It was the main house in the country for making and distributing artistic films. From 1969 to 2005 it has produced and coproduced independently more than 30 artistic films, documentaries and animated films. With some of these films this house was part of many film festivals in some of which were rewarded with international awards. One of directors that realized the most films within this filmic house is the author Isa Qosja.

In this project we will treat three films made by Isa Qosja which were supported and realised by “Kosovafilm” filmic house. We will describe one by one the topics treated by these films, the director’s attitude and some of the most important symbols used in these creations. Through this project we will have a general reflection of the activity of the above mentioned author which functioned within “Kosovafilm”.

**Key words:** Production, film, director, topic, symbol.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The filmic house “Kosovafilm” was the only institution in Kosovo which dealt with production of artistic creations. This filmic house was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1969, by a decree of the Kosovo assembly and it continued working until 2006. During this period it has produced and co-produced over 30 artistic films. This filmic house has also produced documentary and animated films. Within its activity there was a distribution sector which managed to import more than 200 artistic films, mainly from the west which were shown in ex Yugoslavia.

During the activity of this filmic house the biggest amount of the artistic creations were made by Kosovar authors. One of them is the director Isa Qosja. Qosja managed to realize three feature artistic films with “Kosovafilm”. His films were shown in and abroad. Apart from long artistic films he has realized some short ones, documentaries, TV films and some theatrical plays.

The director Isa Qosja lives and works in Kosovo. He was born in 1949 in Vuthaj in Montenegro. Qosja is the author of some artistic and documentary films, within them the best known is “Proka” (1985), a participant in a lot of international festivals. His second film is “The fog guards” (1987), then the third one, “Kukumi” (2005) and the fourth “Three Windows and a Hanging” (2014). These films have also participated and taken awards in a lot of international film festivals.

In this project we are focused especially in treating the artistic films of Isa Qosja produced by “Kosovafilm” filmic house. These films will be treated one at a time including; topics and directorial attitude, a special analysis and treatment of the use of symbols.

## 1. TOPICS AND DIRECTORIAL ATTITUDE

The cinematography created in Kosovo and the directorial attitude is totally freed from the thematic burden enforced only by the “**Proka**” film of Isa Qosja. In this film for the first time it is spoken by the film language, actually by the language of authors who create without enforced thematic and substantial burdens.

The film deals with the spiritual drama of the main character, “Proka” who is the victim of the provincial mentality. The sorrows and low spirit of “Proka”, who always minds his business and tries to survive in a fierce social atmosphere, causes a lot of problems and jealousy in the environment where he lives. Then they gradually start to create problems to his life by even proclaiming him dangerous to the society and the place. So “Proka” does not have classical gifts “*he does not pray for rain, does not consider standard norms and does not believe in God as the others do*”.<sup>1</sup>

He becomes an object of attacks, tortures and they even try to eliminate him because he represents a danger towards the environment, society and the government. “Here stands the main point of the film which penetrates deep in the history and the fate of a man”.<sup>2</sup> In this film, in structure as well as in form, Qosja tries to bring a unique and original spirit in order to escape from any influence and dogma of the time when it was created.

In his second film, “**The fog guards**”\*, the author treats the dark period of that time, where the same kind of luck has the writer, too. He tries to ease the hard atmosphere, the dread and sadness by the love of a girl. He tries to find a little consolation in the reminiscence which turn to trauma a lot of times. Dramas developed around him, are very difficult, breathtaking and sad ones which prohibit him in the social and intimate life. It is a film of individual atmosphere and drama, narrated by careful metaphors but with a brave straightforwardness for that time.<sup>3</sup>

In the third film of Isa Qosja, “**Kukumi**” \* which was realized after a long absence from his work, the author treats in this film the problems of misunderstood freedom from people. The event takes places immediately after the entrance of KFOR troops in Kosovo in 1999. Three characters of the film escape from a madhouse; *Mara, Hasan and Kukum*. Being free but also frightened they start to wander through the burned and destroyed country. Through these characters the film represents the euphoria of lack of law and order where the thieves, plunderers and violators start to bloom in Kosovo.

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<sup>1</sup> Mehmetaj, Gani, “Magjia e ekranit” Film critic, Kosovafilm, Prishtina 2005, p. 149-150

<sup>2</sup> Salaj, Ali, “Në mbretërinë e imazheve” Art Club, Ulcinj 1996, F. 15

\* Based on the motive of the novel “*Vdekja më vjen prej syve të tillë*” by Rexhep Qosja (1974).

<sup>3</sup> KOSOVO, *Vështrim monografik*. Edited; Academy of Science and Art of Kosovo – ASAK. Prishtina 2011, p. 586

\* Based on the novel “*Edhe të çmendurit fluturojnë*”, by Mehmet Kraja, “Onufri”, Tirana 2004

## 2. THE USE OF SYMBOLS\*

“Art could be said to be a symbol of the universe, being linked with that absolute spiritual truth which is hidden from us in our positivistic, pragmatic activities. In order to be engaged in any scientific system a person has to avail himself of logical processes of thought, he has to achieve an understanding, which requires as its starting point a particular kind of education”.<sup>4</sup>

So as mentioned before the great director Andry Tarkovsky makes a deep description about art and even does not hesitate to call it as a symbol of universe. When we look the films of Isa Qosja, we generally realize that the influence of the director Andry Tarkovsky and some of the other classics of film is present in all his films even in the use of filmic language.

Concerning symbols, Isa Qosja is the only author in Kosovo who tried to use different symbols in all his films. In this analysis there are included three of Qosja’s films by mainly choosing for treatment some of mentioned symbols. The symbols in these films are included in: photography, requisites, dialogues, some of them are realized through scenography, actors play, etc. when talking about the use and inclusion of these symbols in film, Tarkovsky says: “The purity of cinema, its inherent strength, is revealed not in the symbolic aptness of images (however bold these may be) but in the capacity of those images to express a specific, unique, actual fact”.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, as we mentioned before, we will represent some of the most important things we thought deserved to be included in this part of the analysis. Used symbols apart from the narrative part are also illustrated by photography in order to have a clear and professional reflection from the scientific and methodological aspect.

### 2.1 The film: “Proka”

In this film, a very strong and straightforward symbolic is shown in the scene where we see a tree on the suburbs of the village. All the peasants, men, women and children are praying for rain. People from all ages are gathered there. This scene symbolizes the mentality of the time, the myth and revitalization of pagan elements identifying time, situation and different levels of Kosovar society and their vain conviction about the future as well.



*Fig. 1 (The ritual of praying for rain)<sup>6</sup>*

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\* According to “*Fjalori filozofik*” by Prof. Dr. Ekrem Murtezaj, ( published by “Soros” foundation, printed “Dukagjini”- Peja, 1995, p. 689-693); **Symbol** ( in Greek Symbollo- throw, complete, make together; symbolon- the sign, image, photograph; germ. Simbol; French. Symbole; eng. Symbol) a thing. Phenomenon, sign, gesture, action, idea, person etc. in a person’s and society’s life, work and creation almost everything is related to symbols: art (literature, painting, sculpture, music, dancing, film etc.)

<sup>4</sup> Tarkovsky, Andry, “SCULPTING IN TIME” (The great Russian filmmaker discusses his art), Translated from the Russian by Kitty Hunter – Blair, PDF, p. 37

<sup>5</sup> Tarkovsky, Andry, cited work, p. 72

<sup>6</sup> Film “Proka” (1985), a view from the first scene around the tree. Min. 00:07:30

The next symbol comes through the main character called “Proka”, which keeps alive all the dramaturgical line of the film. In the second part of the film, after the pressure from the environment, society and the government, “Proka” starts to be “silent” realizing that any word or thought of his is already misunderstood. During the whole film he does not say any word, apart from the very end of the film when he is confronted for a lot of times with the government. Then he starts to talk a bit.

This character and his situation symbolize and represent: time, flattery, ignorance, unemployment, cheating and betrayal in all the poles of life of that society. The time when the silence remains the only type of communication in the society. Through “Proka”, the author represents a kind of society which inhibits in every step of life and which is filled with hate and envy. A society that mocks and steals all the time. A society that does not care to find and use the most brutal methods to destroy the saint future.



*Fig.2 (Proka staying silent and blooded from the peasants' violence)<sup>7</sup>*

In this film we encounter the inclusion of symbols even through the dreams of characters. In this scene, “Proka” stays leaning at the grave post. Next to him stays a peasant woman who holds her hands up and prays to God. “Proka” starts to narrate his dream: *there was a heavy rain and the wheat was like a sea! It was wheat that never grew before in our land. Big spikes but black and tiny corns. Many times I woke up at night and felt bitterness in my mouth. I used to turn back to my dream. The land turned to a farming one then I felt fire... like when they put the candle under my heels... and its drops over my head.*<sup>8</sup>

The leaning of “Proka” at the grave itself represents a dark prediction for the future of that society; it symbolizes a frightening future for the society of that time. An unfulfilled dream calling for carefulness from the elites surrounding them. It was deep call representing the support at society which has already been transformed into live cadavers.



*Fig. 3 (Proka with the peasant woman)<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Proka staying silent in the scene when being accused for uncommitted crimes, min. 00:48:12

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. the scene where Proka describes his dream to the peasant woman. Min. 01:04:10

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Proka describing his dream to the peasant woman. Min. 01:04:37

## 2.2 The film: “The Fog Guards”

This film is maybe on its whole filled with different symbolic. At the very first minutes of the film we can notice their presence almost in every scene. We will represent two of the best realized symbolic which bear a special importance to treat. The first symbolic is presented by the “writer’s” character. Almost all his life is a film which talks about the society’s time and fate. This symbolic attitude through him is mostly presented in the environment where the writer stays including: the atmosphere in his room, a strong wind, the entrance of the wind inside his room, the vanity of the writer’s work, sorrows and pains, the system of that time and the outline of fate.



Fig.4 (The main character, the writer with a lamp on his hand)<sup>10</sup>

The character of the “writer” keeps alive the narrative symbolic of the film. Through him we see the vanity of being, a sort of existential awareness about family and life. On the other hand we can see the meanness presented by the violence touching even the most saint thing, the family and its pure biology.

Another symbolic is the peasant’s life, too, where he is seen dancing on a village street showing his terrible traumas already, caused by the effect of the previous scene. He could see from the door slit his wife being sexually abused by the government in the middle of the mosque. After this the character can not recover anymore. As a result he passes to a traumatic state starting to dance and laugh on the street of the neighborhood.

The peasants coming around him look at him strangely and with a great pain. After a while, in the same scene, two men from security are shown, dressed in black, starting to make a systematic violence over his whole being. They tie his hands and start to hit him hard and with no mercy on his head. The peasant, lying on the ground, in front of all the people passing by, starts a monologue: *didn’t I tell you who the power here is (smiles), power at night, power during the day, power at the church and the mosque*. After a while the main character, the writer, comes too.



Fig. 5 (sexual abuse done to the peasant’s wife in the mosque)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Film” The fog guards” (1988), A view of the writer and his studio. min. 00:07:49

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. the scene where the peasant’s wife is raped, min.00:07:49

He gets in the middle of the crowd and sees his co peasant covered in blood. Terrified, angry and silent, he looks at lying peasant. In front of his eyes the peasant continues the monologue representing by it a huge symbolic about the situation and society where he lives. The monologue continues: *do you know what I see today?! I can see a boot! A lot of boots! (continues laughing as crazy)!* The peasant's eyes full of torture are already focused at the other peasants' legs who just stare at him and nobody dares to help him. The monologue continues: *I can see something else (laughs)!* *I can see a pussy..., honestly, a pussy!*<sup>12</sup> This symbolic coming from the peasant's monologue tells a lot about the mentality of that society, about the loyalty and the saint moral they had. It talks about fear, insecurity, servility and the betrayal made to each other.



Fig. 6 (A view of a scene of the violence on the peasant)<sup>13</sup>

### 2.3 The film: “Kukumi”

In the film “Kukumi” the director is very generous in using different symbols too. In addition we will treat two of the most important symbols used in this film. The first symbolic comes from the main character, “Kukumit” by whom is the film named. So we can see the main character, “Kukumin” in a meeting where people talk about the gained freedom and the future of the society. Suddenly “Kukumi” steals the national flag and starts running with it in the deserted hills.

During the time “Kukumi” runs, he also shouts and pounces without knowing where he is going. Through this character the author symbolizes the situation after 1999 where not responsible people who act in the name of nationalism are very dangerous for all. They take the power and wander on the streets turning the country in an anarchic situation and without hope for the future.



Fig.7 (Kukumi wandering through deserted hills)<sup>14</sup>

The next symbolic in the film is shown through the madhouse where the characters wander in eventually freed streets; desperate with the freedom they encountered, they decide to turn back to the place they left before. This symbolic attitude tells a lot about the fate of the Kosovar society. The author criticizes hard and straightforwardly not only the power of the government but also the supporters of this senseless freedom.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. where the violence towards the peasant starts, min. 00:19:11

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. from the violence scene

<sup>14</sup> Views from the film “Kukumi”, where the main character steals the flag and wanders, 2005



In the scene showing the “madhouse” we can see *Mara and Hasan*, two ex inhabitants of the madhouse, sitting in the yard of this house. Both of the characters after escaping from this house some time ago, and after wandering on the streets and a lot of surviving difficulties decide to turn again where they used to live before. This scene in this situation symbolizes a big stagnation that clenched the country after liberation. Life inside the madhouse is better and more secure than life created after freedom outside of it. It symbolizes a place where security can not be discussed and life in this false atmosphere of freedom is dangerous and without perspective.



Fig. 8 (*Mara and Hasan turn back at the madhouse*)<sup>15</sup>

Through this symbolic the author talks about a misunderstood and traumatic society from the gained liberty. A society where even crazies do not feel secure. This symbolic is one of the best messages realized from the time of liberation of the country. So by this act the author has announced a dark future for the Kosovar society in following years.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper we tried to represent the activity of Isa Qosja within “Kosovafilm”. Not accidentally, we titled the paper “Kosovafilm (focused in Isa Qosja’s films)”, because this filmic house although being the only one in Kosovo, opened its doors and made possible for Qosja to show his talent in the world of cinematography. It was this filmic house that realized almost all of his artistic activity. In this paper we treated three of the author’s films and during the analysis we represented the most essential parts of his activity including the use of symbols. As stated in the paper, Qosja is distinguished in the use of symbols, and maybe is the only author in the country who used such big number of symbols in his work.

In all his films, he chose the as a topic the problems of society as well as the fate and the future of the country. The biggest parts of his films are influenced by some of the classic directors of the time, such as: *Andry Tarkovsky, Akira Kurosawa, Federico Fellini, Vittorio De Sica* etc. Qosja’s films continue to lead in Kosovo’s cinematography. Until now we do not have authentic directors and films that treated so seriously and with an artistic courage the problems that preoccupied the Kosovar society. He, still, continues to be the only director who achieved, with such a courage and competency, to talk through a filmic language about the individual fate and role and also about the society and the power of the country.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. a view from the last frame of “Kukumi” film, 2005

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