

“Das ist Walter”: The Evolving Figure of the Archetypal Hero Embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović in the Yugoslav War Film

Mina Radović

To cite this article: Mina Radović (2021): “Das ist Walter”: The Evolving Figure of the Archetypal Hero Embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović in the Yugoslav War Film, *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, DOI: [10.1080/2040350X.2021.2008200](https://doi.org/10.1080/2040350X.2021.2008200)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2040350X.2021.2008200>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 20 Dec 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 344



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

“Das ist Walter”: The Evolving Figure of the Archetypal Hero Embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović in the Yugoslav War Film

Mina Radović

Department of English and Creative Writing, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK

ABSTRACT

Velimir Bata Živojinović boasts a body of work which traverses 350 motion pictures from Classical Yugoslav Cinema over The New Film to Contemporary Serbian Cinema, historical epic to film noir, family comedy to radical avant-garde. A legendary actor and one of the most significant personalities of Yugoslav cinema, he is best remembered as the archetypal hero of the Partisan film. This research examines the ways in which Živojinović's popular figure was constructed through the genre of the war film and the brand of Partisan film distinct to Yugoslavia. By situating Živojinović's star image in the context of his oeuvre, defining Partisan aesthetics and closely analysing three different periods in the actor's career, with respect to the films which are central in developing his image as the archetypal hero, namely *Kozara* (Veljko Bulajić 1962), *Valter brani Sarajevo/Walter Defends Sarajevo* (Hajrudin Kravac 1972), and *Lepa sela lepo gore/Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (Srđan Dragojević 1996), I demonstrate how the indestructible partisan figure embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović was established in on-screen cinematic space, and how this figure continued to develop, transform, and evolve across films, and, finally, through off-screen public space.

KEYWORDS

Velimir Bata Živojinović;
Yugoslav cinema;
war film; Partisan film; stars

Velimir Bata Živojinović starred in more than 350 motion pictures in every major genre across all the different republics and constitutive languages of Yugoslavia and its successor states (1955–2016). The term Partisan film, with which he is most often associated, is attributed to films set during World War II which focus on the plights of the guerrilla movement *partizani*, led by Josip Broz Tito. The most popular renditions of these films are characterized by patriotism, expensive production, and a melodramatic look at Partisans as heroes fighting for national liberation (Horton 1987–1988, 19; Cornis-Pope and Neubauer 2004, 468; Jakiša and Gilić 2015). In this context Živojinović represents the face of the indestructible Yugoslav national hero who seeks to liberate the South Slavs from the oppressor. The popular figure of this archetypal hero embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović was constructed through the Yugoslav war film and this figure was in turn transferred to his public image as an actor and star. This star image remains one-of-a-kind in the history of the country in which it emerged. The article's methodology primarily comprises close

CONTACT Mina Radović  minoradovicelic@gmail.com  Department of English and Creative Writing, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

examination of film narrative, characters and Partisan aesthetics but also includes audience reception. Although his figure evolved across many films, I focus on three that effectively demonstrate the different stages of his career and turning points in the Yugoslav war film¹: *Kozara* (Veljko Bulajić 1962) with respect to the early period, *Walter Defends Sarajevo* (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia 1972) as marker of the middle period, and *Pretty Village Pretty Flame* (Srđan Dragojević 1996) as demonstrative of the late period.² Where this essay examines the dominant narrative which shaped the public perception of Živojinović's figure and the most popular one with which audiences in Yugoslavia were familiar, it is important to remind the reader that Živojinović's oeuvre is certainly more intricate and indeed composed of multiple narratives which merit further study beyond this paper. My primary aim here is to demonstrate the ways in which the war genre, specific to the Partisan film in the domestic context of Yugoslavia, created the indestructible Partisan figure embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović in the on-screen cinematic space, and how this figure evolved across films, and through the off-screen public space. I therefore make reference periodically to advertising, branding and other paratextual elements of his stardom.

It is important to situate Živojinović's star image in the context of his oeuvre and to define what we mean by Partisan aesthetics before turning to the analysis. Velimir Bata Živojinović, from here on I refer to the actor as Bata, built a career over seven decades in what is one of the most versatile bodies of work in world cinema. What makes him particularly unique is that he is an actor who was simultaneously the face of the most popular epics and a European New Wave that had its quite radical manifestation in Yugoslavia. The fact of the matter is: seldom is an actor the face of a nation and the face of its critical deconstruction. It is all the rarer for a popularly celebrated star to be engaged in both ideological and counter-ideological, normative and disruptive cinematic practice. While the New Yugoslav Film, also known under the epithet of The Black Wave (Levi 2007, 17), introduced many of the most critical, humane, and enduring voices in Yugoslav cinema (as for example Aleksandar Petrović, Živojin Pavlović, Dušan Makavejev and Želimir Žilnik) and a critique of ideology that stands fresh to this day, the tradition of critiquing ideological structures belonged to a longer cinematic tradition that began before the New Film and that continued after it as well, albeit in different forms. Similarly, the popular epics were not always limited to or expressive of ideological content. Many of these epics show greater ambiguity in representing socialism by incorporating thematic and aesthetic content, such as religious symbolism, which could be deemed dogmatically anti-socialist and which eludes simple categorization, providing altogether a bigger picture of the partisan front and the horrors of war.³ While we have spoken here about popular epics and the New Wave (New Yugoslav Film) and noted the ways in which Živojinović's oeuvre extended modally across genres and geographically across the different republics of Yugoslavia, it also has a significant linguistic component. From his native Serbo-Croatian Živojinović moved to often leading roles in Macedonian, Slovenian, Roma, Albanian, English, German, French, Italian and Russian and was able to capture the nuances of a dialect in a given language. His oeuvre also extended formally across different media (he was a face of popular television and a presence in the press, radio, artistic, and cultural circles of his day) and temporally from the time of the emergence of the Classical Yugoslav Cinema after the Second World War to the development of Serbian Cinema in the second decade of the 21st century. The range of his acting is also reflected in the diverse body of often contradictory roles he took on and for which he is equally remembered. Naturally, he is the brave commander,⁴ but he is also the charismatic

criminal (*Balkan Express* (Branko Baletić 1983); *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (Aleksandar Petrović 1967)), the righteous policeman (*Knife* (Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović 1967)), the drunk painter (*That Night* (Jovan Živanović 1958)), the peasant rebel (*The Song from Kumbara* (Radoš Novaković 1955) and *Anno Domini 1573* (Vatroslav Mimica 1975))⁵, the traditional home keeper (*13th July* (Radomir Šaranović 1982)), the intellectual (*The Man from the Oak Forest* (Miodrag Mića Popović 1964); *DR* (Soja Jovanović 1962)), the valiant outsider (*The Return* (Živojin Pavlović 1966); *The Enemy* (Živojin Pavlović 1965); *The Dog Who Loved Trains* (Goran Paskaljević 1977)), the authority figure (director of institutions as in *Special Treatment* (Goran Paskaljević 1980) and *Sivi dom* (Darko Bajić 1986) and the father figure as in *Beach Guard in Winter* (Goran Paskaljević 1976), *The Promising Boy* (Miloš Radivojević 1981) and *Full Moon Over Belgrade* (Dragan Kresoja 1993)), the hero (*The Red Horse* (Stole Popov 1981)), the demon (*The Master and Margaret* (Aleksandar Petrović 1972)), the communist revolutionary but also the chetnik monarchist (*The Feast* (Đorđe Kadijević 1967); *Hajka* (Živojin Pavlović 1977)), the youth (*The Little Shoes on the Asphalt* (Ljubomir Radičević 1956); *Saturday Night* (Vladimir Pogačić 1957); *Three* (Aleksandar Petrović 1965)), the veteran (*Tren* (Stole Janković 1978); *The End of the War* (Dragan Kresoja 1984); *Three Tickets to Hollywood* (Božidar Nikolić 1993)), men of different confessions including Muslim noble (*Death and the Dervish* (Zdravko Velimirović 1974)) and Orthodox priest (*The Knife* (Miroslav Lekić 1999)), the hustler (*In the Jaws of Life* (Rajko Grlić 1984)), the brutish husband (husky and unpredictable as in *We're Cursed, Irina* (Kole Angelovski 1973) and husky and disloyal, as in the classic '80s comedy *It's Not Easy To Get Along With Men* (Mihailo Vukobratović 1985), and the family man (*Some Birds Can't Fly* (Petar Lalović 1997)).⁶ Many actors show range but few like Živojinović put range into practice with longevity, candour, and coherence, developing their profession and art and creating a figure who simultaneously defies expectations and wondrously fulfils them and who breaks taboos while upholding social norms. And, so, we have Bata as the human face of the New Yugoslav Film and the Partisan film's man of steel.⁷

Now it is useful to turn and define what we mean here by Partisan aesthetics with respect to the Yugoslav war film. Partisan aesthetics refer to the conventions of cinematic representation prevalent in popular Yugoslav films which represent the struggles of partisans and advance the socialist ideals of brotherhood and unity. A crucial element which distinguishes the Partisan films from the wider genre of the war film is that they are framed by, and focus on, the partisan war effort unique to Yugoslavia and the socialist principles that characterized that effort. The films are marked by patriotism, high production values, and a melodramatic look at partisans as heroes fighting for national liberation. They often display ravaged open landscapes of WWII-Yugoslavia, following physically well-built, disciplined, compassionate soldiers, who, bearing the socialist five-sided star emblem and driven by anti-fascist ideals, fight the German occupying forces for the liberation of Yugoslavia. Their national struggle is accompanied by partisan songs and socialist imagery. The socialist iconography of the star, the war-torn Yugoslav landscape and the vigorous soldiers who fight for its restoration, are the characteristic components of the Partisan film. These films embody tropes of the war film as described, in relation to Hollywood by Steve Neale in their abundance of proverbial war iconography (guns, tanks, military fields), scenes of combat being central to the dramatic development (Neale 2000, 117), and ethical issues associated with combat including the (im)morality of war and sacrifice. However, the films should not be merely assimilated into the prism of the genre. Rather, the dialectical

relationship between the Partisan film and the war film should be examined. As mentioned above, they are framed by, and focus on, the partisan war effort unique to Yugoslavia and its socialist principles. The extent to which these principles were confirmed or critiqued, accepted or rejected, is communicated by filmmakers through aesthetics and complicates our definition to some extent. Namely, the definition I have chosen to follow here characterizes the most popular renditions of partisans on the silver screen. However, the term Partisan film extends significantly beyond this definition and includes films about partisans, but which do not necessarily boast this kind of aesthetic, and indeed films which critique or reject socialist ideals which the Yugoslav partisans represent. As we turn to film analysis it is worth bearing in mind the wider context of the actor's cinematic oeuvre and the tropes of the Partisan film, as they will inform the discussion of how such genre conventions contributed to the construction and evolution of the cinematic figure embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović.

Kozara: The Early Years of Živojinović

Kozara (1962), directed by Veljko Bulajić, focuses on the harrowing WWII Kozara Offensive, which saw the Partisan resistance surrounded by Germans in the Kozara Mountains of western Bosnia and Herzegovina fight the blockade to protect thousands of people and stop the Axis from gaining leverage over Yugoslav territory. Bata's role in this film is as an ordinary civilian who takes up arms against the fascist invader. The Croatian Film Association cites *Kozara* as the 'first "proper" offshoot of the spectacular Partisan epic subgenre in Yugoslav cinema.' (Croatian Film Association 2016). While the cinematic representations of partisans date to the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the subject matter (focus on one of the seven enemy offensives), the highly stylized and melodramatic treatment, and the combined ensemble of star actor (Živojinović) and star director (Bulajić⁸) make this film significant for instilling some of the lasting conventions of the genre and thus bears direct impact in shaping the figure embodied by the actor who himself would come to define the genre.

In the film Bata is introduced as a working-class family-man oriented towards looking after his family, indicated by his inseparability from his child (nursing him in every scene) and his loving gestures towards his (reciprocally affectionate) wife. By showing him as a disciplined labourer, and a dedicated father and husband, the film reflects the values of discipline and social(ist) dedication of Tito's socialism, a common feature of the Partisan film. Moreover his working class nature – anchored by his demeanour and partisan cap (a symbol of the working-class) – positions the class struggle of socialist ideology that is characteristic of the genre.⁹ More widely this working-class family-man reflects the compassionate idealistic soldier common in the war film, but perhaps more significantly, his call to action has less to do with a placid acceptance of ideology than with an active response to the realization of the perpetual suffering that war instils in its participants.¹⁰ Thus from the very beginning his character is defined by the principal tropes of the war genre and those specific ones which characterize the Partisan film.

The film's recruitment scene develops the traits of discipline, social(ist) dedication and civic and familiar responsibility further. During the recruitment scene a young boy is shown leaving to join the army. Bata watches, as the camera tracks towards his family, accompanied by a gradual string crescendo: his wife tells him to go after the boy, that is, enlist and help

the army's struggle. Bata's army enlistment mirrors both the war trope of the responsible man-turned-soldier being separated from loved ones for greater cause, and the partisan ideology of brotherhood and unity: an ordinary civilian feels obligation towards his fellow man (signified by the boy, Bata's family member) to help the Allied struggle. The scene can also be read to be gendered in interesting ways, for it is Bata's wife that pushes him to enlist. In this way we see both Bata's duty to his work and family but also his wife's feminine duty to renounce the immediate care and affection he gives and transfer these to his fellow man. The fact an ordinary civilian becomes a soldier further reflects the perpetuated ideal of unity which all Yugoslav citizens are called to embody: every ordinary man and woman could equally join the struggle. The aesthetic inclusion of man and boy, the vital and the frail, as the two characters stand surrounded by the grieving crowd depicted in monochrome fashion reminiscent of Italian neorealism for its composition and its tonal combination of joy and sorrow in depicting in the tribulations of the poor and weak, indicates that what one requires to be a soldier in the *partizani* group is not necessarily formal training, but social discipline and a yearning to keep the ideals of brotherhood and unity – unique to the Yugoslav struggle for national liberation – alive through personal intervention. Unity with respect to Bata's character is therefore directly associated with the socialist war struggle characteristic of Partisan film but is also more intimately framed by his personal motive of protecting a family member. The recruitment demonstrates a shift in his character from 'ordinary man' to national defender.

Moreover, the sequence comprises a protracted long-shot track through a thick swarm of people, squeezed together and little room to move, with soldiers kissing their loved ones goodbye, mothers waving off their sons, and despair echoing from the cries on all sides. The physicality of the image, conveyed through deep focus photography and the literal spatial compression of a people within the frame, amplified by the sequence's evasiveness of cuts through an emphasis on the long take and accompanied by quiet orchestral music in which the cries are not heard but expressed connotatively by the strings of the score, heightens the dramatic pitch of the scene, signifying the gruelling internal struggle of a people in the face of international war. The scene reflects the Partisan film's 'well-known formula of the nation (that is partisans) as a collective character represented by a series of expressive individual characters' (Croatian Film Association 2016). This is because the scene emphasizes the collective: the family unit and the people (symbolically the nation as the crowd includes people of all Yugoslav ethnicities and republics) as sorrowful and in danger of obliteration in the face of war, and this danger can in turn only be resolved by means of individual participation in the war effort, connoted by Bata's enlistment. The element of brotherhood that motivates Bata's character to enlist is emphasized through the collective sorrow of the people as representative of nation, which must be nourished in order to keep this brotherhood alive. The series of emotionally saturated situations, in this case moving from Bata's departure from family to his departure from nation (symbolized in the grieving crowd) are common to the Partisan film (Levi 2007, 65): in this way Bata's character is defined by the circumstances of war which are themselves framed by conventions of representation common to Partisan film.¹¹

By examining the position of the individual within the collective in the context of the Yugoslav struggle for national liberation in *Kozara*, we can begin to understand the ways in which Bata's character is not only defined by his context within the film but by the very genre codes which enable this context to operate. Despite the insurmountable odds, the

immensity of battle and number of casualties, *he* is alive. He returns with the one surviving member of his family to rebuild their country. His ability to survive the impossible circumstances themselves positions him as a persevering national defender of socialism, an archetypal image which would develop across films as he gradually becomes the central national hero, and a form of war-machine, in the Partisan films produced after *Kozara*. *Kozara* went on to win Bata the Big Golden Arena Award for Best Actor from the prestigious Pula Film Festival and Partisan films proliferated in the 1960s with him as lead¹², indicating that audiences, inclusive of the critical establishment, responded positively to his emphatic personality and national hero image. From this early point of his career Bata played an active role in public life as an initiator and founder of the Udruženja filmskih glumaca Srbije/Screen Actors Guild of Serbia in 1966. His active role in public life reflects his emerging importance for the cinematic consolidation of the socialist idea of the Yugoslav nation, as declared by *Kozara* and which would be cemented with the film which defines the central period of his career, *Walter Defends Sarajevo*.

Živojinović as Walter

Walter Defends Sarajevo (1972) is a Yugoslav epic directed by Hajrudin Krvavac, a prominent director of Partisan films. The film is set in Sarajevo during the last days of World War II. The Germans, having to draw their tanks back to shield Germany from the Allies, use Sarajevo as a refuelling post. The mythical Partisan-leader Walter, a veritable one-man army, is the only thing that stands in their way. Throughout the film he is depicted as charismatic, exemplified through body language and a sense of empathy for other characters. Walter is astute and intelligent, knowing the Germans' moves before they make them. He is also unstoppable: a battle scene comprises him killing countless Germans from a bell tower without suffering a scratch. In his characterization of the war genre's construction of the soldier's body in the context of Hollywood cinema, David Slocum explains that the 'body itself' is 'a war machine - trained, regimented, dressed, targeted, and deployed for maximum physical effect against the enemy' (Slocum 2005, 45). Slocum's insights can help us understand Walter as an imagining of the body of the soldier in the war film: his discipline, vigour and physiognomy are the reason he can transcend normal human strength and defend the nation. While such characterization is framed by what Slocum suggests is the American genre convention of the body as war machine, and which I have called here the one-man-army, the film retains a certain sense of Partisan visual appearance and ethos.

Walter appears sturdy, well-built, and frequently brandishes the guerrilla uniform embroidered with a socialist five-sided star, a symbol of resistance to fascism. In the second case Walter demonstrates fearless bravery in combat, he positions the well-being of others above that of himself and he establishes a collaborative spirit of camaraderie with the people of Sarajevo, who refuse to give him up once confronted by the Germans and, furthermore, are represented as admitting in a spirit of unitary resistance that they are Walter. While these are some of the normative tropes of Yugoslav war film there is also a fascinating contradiction present in the heart of Walter's aesthetics. Namely, first, Walter is only seen in the midst of combat action twice in the film and the spirit of resistance is manifested through the cinematic construction of space. Walter's heroism is thus expressed also in self-restraint and even self-denial. He only uses his prowess in the previously mentioned bell tower scene, where he fends off the assault on the city, and in the film's final showdown,

when he stops the enemy's advance through Bosnia. The demonstration of violence is concentrated within time and space, thus its effect is diffused across the film, and his physical position in the city of Sarajevo, as he shoots from its tallest building in the heart of the centre, makes him appear as one with the city and as its protector. His heroism is also evidenced by his commitment to collaboration: the march of people who proclaim to be Walter in unison, his successes are counted by the people that help him, that proclaim to be him, and the city that becomes him, or rather he who becomes the city, both as the cityscape dominates the film, as he dominates the cityscape, and at the end as this dualism is confirmed by the words of the German who tells us who Walter really is – 'Das ist Walter' – meaning Sarajevo. A collaborative spirit is to be expected in a film which espouses socialist ideals of brotherhood and unity. However, the simultaneous combination of individual and collective perspectives, situated in the cinematic negotiation of character with respect to geophysical space and cultural symbolism, makes *Walter Defends Sarajevo* one of the key exponents of the Partisan film but also a film that sidesteps conventionalism as much as it reproduces it.

By combining indestructibility with endurance, integrity with camaraderie, Walter embodies the ideals of brotherhood and unity, serving to further institute his role of national hero. Moreover, there is a tremendous change in the figure embodied by Bata from *Kozara* to *Walter*, as he evolves from untrained civilian into professional warrior, from a secondary protagonist, one of many national defenders, into a one-man-army embodiment of the nation. This shift in portrayal on-screen not only represents a change but a form of evolution in the sense that his character develops: he goes from not knowing how to use weapons to becoming an expert with them; from being a peasant trained in war and survival, into a model to be emulated. In the process he turns from *one national defender of socialism* to *unstoppable man/war-machine, a figure representative of all socialist national heroism*. There is equally a shift in focus from the collective body (the nation) as represented by an army unit to the collective body as represented by one man, who embodies all the qualities of socialism: perseverance, discipline, in short brotherhood and unity. This is significant as Bata's archetypal hero, in embodying the ideals of socialism which are inscribed by the Partisan film, becomes a mechanism for protecting these ideals through represented war intervention.

The actor's persona of indestructibility equally developed outside the cinema. The actor's off-screen nickname Bata Životinja ('Bata the Animal'), although originating in his theatre days, receives new connotation through the image of the indestructible unyielding soldier he embodied in a number of Partisan war films. Contemporary peoples in the Yugoslav successor states still often refer to him by this nickname¹³, indicating that the on-screen construction of his figure is not only dictated by the war genre but his branding and remembrance in the public imaginary may also be read as a result of genre construction. His ongoing popularity for being a vigorous, almost animalistic, yet compassionate national hero renders him in the public sphere a standard of Partisan cinema itself: the war-constructed personality on-screen is inseparable from, and constructs the meanings of his star figure and provides his very name off-screen. Vivian Sobchak reminds us that the genre of the historical epic comprises 'not so much the narrative accounting of *specific historical events* as it is the narrative construction of *general historical eventfulness* (Sobchak 2003, 302). Although she writes of historical epics, we can recognize that this generalization and extravagance can transcend the concrete (Sobchak [Ibid]) also in war films: in this case it serves

as a basis for the mythical perpetuation of Živojinović as eternal national hero whose relationship with historical reality is of less significance than his function as symbol of brotherhood and unity of socialist Yugoslavia. His extravagance and indestructibility are characterized through his ability to defy genre logic: death in war. Death often frames central characters in war films, either through their near experience of death or their experience of the death of loved ones in the battlefield. By experiencing the bitterness of losing loved ones but himself defying death Bata breaks from the normative codes of the genre where *death is pervasive*.¹⁴ Bata's archetypal hero can be compared to other indestructible fighting figures in world cinema, as, for example, Charles Bronson or John Wayne's heroes in the war film and western, Toshiro Mifune's samurai master in the films of Akira Kurosawa, Amitabh Bakchchan's angry young man in Indian cinema, Clint Eastwood's man with no name in Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns, Gojko Mitić's Native American chief in DEFA's *Indianerfilme*, and Kabir Bedi's Sandokan in the eponymous Italian pirate series *Sandokan*.

In further considering the extra-filmic context it is worth stating that *Walter Defends Sarajevo* remains one of the most popular war films ever made: upon release it became instant classic in Yugoslavia and internationally raised attention, most infamously being seen by 300 million people in China in 1972 alone and more than one billion people worldwide (Cabrić 2012). Moreover, the audience interaction with the film was directly tied to the figure of Velimir Bata Živojinović: for instance, in China mass adverts circulated with his face, including billboards, merchandise and a popular beer, named after him (see Figures 1, 2 below). The Serbian documentary *Cinema Komunisto* (2010) by Mila Turajlić also features an interview with the actor, who shares his experience on the perception of *Walter Defends Sarajevo* in China. He states that Walter is in China what James Bond is in 'the West'. He further adds that on his arrival in Beijing people swarmed all the way to the aircraft to greet him and in Shanghai he was received by 1 million people.¹⁵ Thus, the reception of the film is an important factor to consider for understanding the perception of Živojinović as an actor and how it was understood in relation to his on-screen persona even beyond the Yugoslav context.

His figure as national hero in these off-screen materials is directly dictated by codes of the Yugoslav war film: the posters feature him with a stern expression, in military uniform, brandishing a weapon, while the partisan cap and communist slogans indicate the Partisan specificity of this war iconography. The reason for his immense popular appeal in China



Figure 1. Poster.

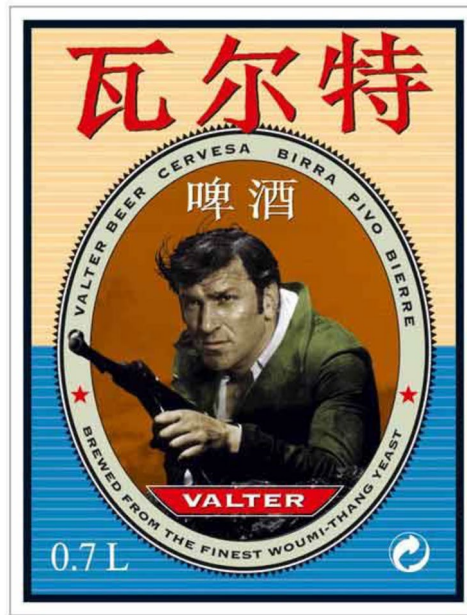


Figure 2. Beer.

deserves a separate study, which would usefully reveal the degree and quality of cultural exchanges that went on between film industries in the East and those in the West during the 1970s (new research is being conducted on this front and merits further study beyond this paper, see Wu 2018).

While Bata's figure on-screen develops from defender of socialism to one representative of all socialist heroism there is off-screen evolution as well: from national model in Yugoslav cinema and culture to international symbol of socialist indestructibility. The slogans 'Walter' or 'Das ist Walter' were used in transnational advertising of the film, as seen in the posters above, and they were perpetually quoted and re-cycled in socio-cultural life, becoming a reflection of the perseverance of the socialist project. As previously mentioned, the phrase 'Das ist Walter' stems from the film's famous closing scene, where the Nazi German officer acknowledges Walter as indestructible by stating that the city, Sarajevo, *is* Walter. Through this scene he becomes a symbol of the city (Sarajevo and its indestructibility) and by extension the people (the Yugoslav nation). This symbol in turn equally remains defined by war genre characteristics: Walter as a moral, loyal, and unyielding soldier; and the national specificity of the Partisan film: the socialist fighting for liberation from fascism. In this way *Walter Defends Sarajevo* can be seen as the film that develops Bata's figure through Partisan iconography, and through his character, Walter's own ability to negotiate the normative aspects of genre, from defying death in war to being physically and morally unbreakable.

The cult of Walter was expanded through the eponymous television series in 1974 and diversified through a range of cultural reappropriations, including, famously, the 1983 debut album by the rock band Zabranjeno Pušenje/No Smoking, named *Das ist Walter* in honour of the film. The cult received a new meaning with the onset of the Yugoslav civil war in the 1990s. Krvavac, the director of *Walter*, who died during the siege of Sarajevo

lived to see the words ‘We are all Walter’ proclaimed by its people protesting against the war. In this sense while *Walter* aimed to represent national unity on screen the call for the same unity in time of division and war confirmed the continued legacy of the canonical Partisan film.

The legacy of the film for perpetuating unity off-screen was reinforced beyond the national lines of the former Yugoslavia as well. In a conversation with Živojinović for Zagreb media outlet *Lupiga* in 2012, the actor spoke about an interview he gave for Chinese television during the NATO bombing in 1999. He tells us that the television received responses from 1 million Chinese people ‘who wanted to come to Serbia and “defend Walter”’ and, the actor adds, ‘Walter is a Bosnian’ (Kegelj 2012). The perseverance of the ‘Walter brand’ continues in the Yugoslav successor states, moving from outside the theatre to more traditional exhibition spaces and even the culinary industry: the first film museum dedicated to the legacy of the film opened in Sarajevo in 2019, while a restaurant chain called Walter opened in Belgrade in 2006 and now operates across Serbia, being well-known for its polished interior design brandished with the actor’s portraits and transnational memorabilia from the film. Jasmin Durakovic, the director of the Film Center Sarajevo where the museum is based stated how he expects it to be a major attraction for Chinese tourists and since 2019 ‘Walter-themed trips’ have sprung up, including a 12-day tour of the Balkans with one day taking tourists around the locations in Sarajevo where *Walter* was filmed (Hui 2019). Both recent examples demonstrate the intense degree of influence the film continues to exercise in its native Sarajevo and across the former Yugoslavia after the country’s formal dissolution. Furthermore, the film has also served as a contemporary tool of cultural diplomacy and the actor remains a star ingrained in the consciousness of viewers. Writing for the BBC in Serbian, Jelena Maksimović tells us that ‘the popularity of the film has not dimmed for decades’, citing the examples of how in 2012 Chinese workers building the bridge Zemun-Borča in Belgrade expressed the wish to spend Chinese New Year with their lauded star while much was reported in the Serbian press about how, during his three day diplomatic visit, the Chinese President Xi Jinping planned to meet Živojinović before the latter’s sudden passing (Maksimović 2021). During the same visit then President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić greeted President Jinping with a reception which opened with the theme song from *Walter* (Hui 2019). Živojinović himself once said that the ‘Chinese will come and want to do a remake of Walter’ (Matijević and Radosavljević 2019). As we near fifty years after *Walter* was made, the prediction appears to be materializing as preproduction on a remake of the film was announced as a coproduction between China, Bosnia, and Serbia (China Film Insider 2019).

‘Pretty Villages Burn Nicely’: The Destruction of the Image

The third film I wish to discuss, *Pretty Village Pretty Flame* (in literal translation ‘Pretty Villages Burn Nicely’), directed by Srdjan Dragojević, takes place during the Yugoslav civil war in the 1990s. It follows a group of Serb army-soldiers holding out in a tunnel (The ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ tunnel) surrounded by the Bosnian Muslim army. The soldiers in the tunnel are led by General Gvozden (meaning Steel) played by Velimir Bata Živojinović. The film opens with a written dedication ‘to the cinema which no longer exists’. Dragojević’s use of Bata in the film as a war general evokes his earlier roles of national war hero (symbol

of Yugoslav ideals of brotherhood and unity) and circumscribes his place as remnant of that tradition, Yugoslav socialism, and the Partisan film which as such 'no longer exists'. Bata's figure undergoes a final shift: from mythical indestructible hero to displaced Partisan veteran. His Partisan veteran figure is emphasized through the conversations he holds with other characters about socialist values (quite notable are the exchanges between him and Nikola Kojó's character Velja) and through his persistent indestructibility throughout the film. Indeed, a scene shows Bata standing motionless, under fire from all sides, but, in an echo of his earlier work, not receiving a scratch. The scene works as a pastiche recalling the indestructibility of his characters in previous Partisan films (such as *Walter*) in the face of certain death. Dragojević's film incorporates the feature of indestructibility which connects Bata's characters across different war films, but the contextualization of this representation is different: Bata's Partisan soldier in this case remains defiant of death despite being removed from his war (WWII) and from his ideology (socialism, destroyed with Yugoslavia's collapse).

The representation of Bata's figure as displaced reaches its destination at the end of the film when Bata's figure is destroyed. In the penultimate sequence of the film the Serbian soldiers instigate a plan to break out of the tunnel. The soldiers move out firing, while Bata's General Gvozden drives a truck filled with explosives straight into enemy lines, killing himself and the opposing army in the process. The driver of the truck is a Partisan and devotee of Tito's era, yet rather than fighting for Yugoslav liberation, he now drives the truck in the midst of a civil war. He becomes displaced as the 1990s conflict occurs between ideologies which diverge from those of brotherhood and unity established under Yugoslav socialism, those to which his Partisan identity, both in terms of General Gvozden's character in the film and Bata's partisan figure across films, is tied. New ideologies become created under separate nations. Dragojević's war is metaphorical as much as it is physical: he uses Bata's driving of the truck not only to evoke a memory of brotherhood and unity of Yugoslavia (as Bata was its most popular delegate in the cultural sphere) but to create a meta-cinematic reflection of socialist ideology and Partisan cinema in the wider sense: the filmic symbol of socialist liberation drives the army truck which spells socialist destruction. This reveals a contradiction: his figure can only function within a Partisan war framework, however he must simultaneously die because the socialism he fought for no longer exists. Socialist ideology no longer has an outlet to serve because the very people who proclaimed brotherhood and unity substituted it in the 1990s with nationalist ideology, leading to the civil war.¹⁶ The studies of Dina Iordanova and Milja Radović are useful for understanding, first, the history of the film's production, distribution, and critical reception (Iordanova 2001) and, second, the wider socio-political and cultural context in which the film emerged and how the film functions as a work of subversive cinema with respect to that context (Radović 2009).

The grandiosity of the truck's explosion, driven by the sole representative of brotherhood and unity, connotes the violent break-up of Yugoslavia but also brandishes the appropriate amount of spectacle to *finally kill the man who could not be killed*. The killing of the mythical war figure embodied by Bata on-screen shows the end of an era of brotherhood and unity of Yugoslavia, as the country which no longer exists. Bata's figure in both on-screen and off-screen space and the Yugoslav identity of brotherhood and unity can all together be seen as elements most clearly manifested and defined through the conventions of the Partisan film throughout the 47 years of the country's existence as a socialist state. The

Yugoslav war film was not only crucial for constructing an actor's legendary figure on and off-screen but for visually representing and negotiating the very socialist ideals that established the country, and (the conventions of) the Partisan film. The figure embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović can be seen as a symbol of the Partisan film itself, created and developed by the conventions of the genre and continuously perpetuated within these conventions in the wider cultural imaginary. His being cast as a Partisan soldier in the film dealing with issues of Yugoslav identity, as constructed by war, is itself a reflection of his figure in the wider cultural imaginary: to many filmmakers, including Dragojević, Bata *is* Partisan cinema. In the director's words, Bata's character is 'an homage to the cinema my generation grew up on' but also 'our contempt for the "drones" who were a privileged class for half a century but did not do the one thing they were supposed to do: protect the integrity of the country' (Dragojević 2021). Dragojević's view reflects a rather common perception among the people that the ex-communists did not do their job, namely, to keep Yugoslavia together or to secure its peaceful disintegration (according to the law) but instead it was 'Tito's generals' (in all former republics) who led the war. The director criticizes this through his film and his critique stands contrary to the official position of many successor states but perhaps his critique is also one of the reasons why the film was received well in Serbia and the other republics of the former Yugoslavia. The destruction of that cinema (through the collapse of the country) can achieve most symbolic catharsis through the destruction of his own figure on-screen, killing him through the very Partisan war genre mechanism which made him.

The last on-screen moments of Bata comprise him carrying Tito's picture as he runs 350 km on foot to his funeral (See Figures 3, 4). This can indicate a final nod to Partisan cinema: Bata bears his trademark partisan cap, dressed in military uniform, as he must



Figure 3. Portrait of Josip Broz Tito.



Figure 4. Velimir Bata Živojinović.

perpetually continue to run, after a leader that is long gone. The Partisan films that carried socialist ideals of brotherhood and unity equally no longer exist. Thus, Bata's running visually immortalizes his figure of national hero, as this is the last time we will see this image of Bata as a Partisan in film history. This scene reveals a further contradiction: Bata is running *out of the tunnel* called Brotherhood and Unity, equating the destruction of those ideals with the collapse of the country. Bata continues to run but by running out of the tunnel which bears the core ideals he embodied, his identity is made redundant and, therefore, his fate is to die, as indicated by the truck explosion which follows these two compositions.

The Lexicon of Yugoslav Mythology, published in 2004, claimed that 'after Tito' the hero Walter represented by Bata 'was the greatest national hero of the Second World War' (Adrić, Arsenijević, and Matić 2004; Maksimović 2021). This collaborative post-Yugoslav publication reflects the enduring iconic status of an actor that embodied the face of a nation by the equivocation of historical and fictional figures, Josip Broz Tito and the archetypal hero embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović. When Živojinović died in 2016 the news was reported across the former Yugoslavia with the press honouring the death of 'the legend' (Arandelović 2016; Grgić 2016; Krajišnik 2016; Hina and Buva 2016). In Belgrade's prestige daily *Politika* the headline ran 'There was only one Bata' while in Ljubljana's *Delo* reported 'Bata said goodbye, Walter remains', confirming again the enduring iconic status of his figure in public life. The apotheosis of his figure was perhaps best summed up in the concise words of then President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić who said that it was 'unthinkable that titans such as Bata, are mortal after all' (The Newsroom 2016). Throughout the successor states and to this day popular press write regular articles about the actor, his career, his personal life, and new anecdotes from his famous and equally lesser-known films, their production and original theatrical run. It is not uncommon to see murals of the actor around Belgrade, and a commemorative plaque was placed on the building in which he lived in Belgrade's historic municipality of Vračar. As of 2019 the Velimir Bata Živojinović Street was named after him in the same neighbourhood (Matijević and Radosavljević 2019). Velimir Bata Živojinović was a three-time winner of the Best Actor Award from Yugoslavia's prestigious Pula Film Festival, the recipient of The Slavica Lifetime Achievement Award in 1993 for 'his contribution to Yugoslav cinema', The Golden Seal Lifetime Achievement Award awarded by the Yugoslav Cinematheque in 2010 for his contribution to 'the development of film art' and The Belgrade Victor Award for Lifetime Achievement bestowed upon him by FEST the Belgrade International Film Festival in 2016 (Film Center Serbia 2016). In an interview given this year, FAMU graduate and lauded director Rajko Grlić reminds us that it 'was not accidental they called him [Bata] the Yugoslav John Wayne; they shared the same approach to acting. Both were larger than life but at the same time they played out life itself' (Grlić in Maksimović 2021).

The discussion of the three films above aimed to reveal the complex interaction between the genre characteristics which define war films in general and the Yugoslav partisan films in particular, and the way these came together in the construction of the on-screen and off-screen persona of a legendary actor who, as Grlić attests, brought life to the silver screen. Moreover, the negotiation of genre in the films, most notoriously Walter, enable an understanding of how his figure continuously evolves across the films and remains relatively fixed in its essence of Partisan national heroism.

Conclusion

I examined the essential role of genre in building an actor's figure in the characters on-screen and framing his representation off-screen. By clarifying certain characteristics of the war genre and the aesthetic specific to its Partisan sub-genre I was able to establish a basis for my genre discussion, upon which I could build to explain how such genre characteristics are deployed and negotiated within the selected films: *Kozara*, *Walter Defends Sarajevo* and *Pretty Village*, *Pretty Flame*. By exploring Živojinović's characterization within the films and the degree to which they adhere and deviate from genre tropes I established how his figure is communicated and how it evolved through the prism of the war genre, proceeding from ordinary civilian to national defender, national defender to one-man-army national hero, the archetypal hero to displaced Partisan veteran. The formation of Živojinović's figure by genre was equally discussed off-the-screen: posters, billboards, beverages and even his popular nickname being informed by his on-screen Partisan persona and the socialist military iconography associated therein. The kind of public popularity which he received bound together with a prestige status in Yugoslavia, honouring his longevity and dedication to cinema as an art form. This honour was also reflected in his being cast in roles which ushered in respect, for instance as family patriarch, man of authority, and war veteran. The evolution of this figure off-screen was addressed to the extent it serviced the genre argument: his rise from national figure to international star by the iconography associated with war cinema and Partisan aesthetics. In discussing all these elements, the paper aimed to elucidate how the war film was crucial in constructing the figure of the archetypal hero embodied by Velimir Bata Živojinović on screen and how this figure continued to evolve historically across films and more dramatically in the life of the audience, which by and large it retains to this day, and in sectors which range from music to museology, the culinary industry to cultural diplomacy, beyond the screen.

Notes

1. It is worth noting here that Živojinović's acting range and public personality was immense, going beyond the confines of the war film. A more comprehensive study should be undertaken in order to process and assess the serious quality and range of his output in all genres and forms of film. Such research may reveal more intricate genealogies between character, actor and star than first meets the eye. The most notable recent studies of this kind were published in Serbia. See Radoslav Lale Vujadinović: *Velimir Bata Živojinović: Valter pre Valtera (Velimir Bata Živojinović: Walter before Walter)*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2017. Božidar Zečević: *Veliki filmski znak: Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović (The Great Film Icon: Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović)*, Niš: Niški kulturni centar, 2018.
2. The last of the three is not itself a Partisan film, but rather a war film made just after the disintegration of Yugoslavia which functions as self-reflexive critique of the actor's earlier Partisan work.
3. For a study which notice the contradictory nature of Yugoslav war films and the need for going beyond prescribed models of reading partisan films, integrating the cinematic representations of suffering, disability and typhus into the research, see Ivan Velisavljević: "Bodies That Shudder. Disability and Typhus Sufferers in Partisan Films" in *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film and Visual Culture* (Edited by Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić), Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag 2015, pp. 265–282.
4. This includes leading roles in films like *Battle of Neretva* (Veljko Bulajić, Yugoslavia-Italy-West Germany-USA 1969), *Demolition Squad* (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia 1967);

Operation Belgrade (Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović, Yugoslavia 1968); *The Bridge* (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia 1969), and *Partizanska Eskadrila* (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia 1979), but also supporting roles in films which focus on children, such as the classic comic series-turned-film *Mirko and Slavko* (Branimir Tori Janković, Yugoslavia 1973), where although he does not feature as a central character his partisan commander appears almost patriarchal and reinforces his authority from the leading roles for which he is known.

5. It is worth saying that the cinematic representations of peasantry and peasant uprisings was not limited to socialism. Rather, peasantry is the force of social change but at the same time preserves traditional values. See *The Song from Kumbara* (Radoš Novaković, Yugoslavia 1955) about the First Serbian Uprising and the Liberation of Belgrade, and *Anno Domini 1573* (Vatroslav Mimica, Yugoslavia 1975) about the peasants' revolt in Croatia in 1573.
6. While there are numerous films and television series where he espouses the lovable family man, one that significantly stands out and speaks to the soul is *Some Birds Can't Fly* (Petar Lalović, FR Yugoslavia 1997), where he plays the grandfather figure who looks after his granddaughter (diagnosed with leukaemia) in the Serbian mountains.
7. Comparing Aleksandar Petrović's *Three* and Hajrudin Krvavac's *Walter Defends Sarajevo* is as a good starting point for understanding the difference between the human face and the man of steel.
8. The director would go on to direct a series of partisan films, including the famed *Battle of Neretva* which would reinvigorate the production of high-scale war epics well in the 1970s, resulting in some of the most well-known partisan films such as *Battle of Sutjeska* (Stipe Delić, Yugoslavia 1973), *The Republic of Užice* (Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović, Yugoslavia 1974), and *Walter Defends Sarajevo*.
9. For further analysis of the archetypal partisan character(s) see Stanković (2015, 245–265).
10. Scholars Marie Cronqvist and Lina Sturfelt take up the issue of the representation of suffering and death in the media in their anthology on war. The book includes a chapter on the role of film in mediating war and historical memory which can be useful when analysing a variety of cinematic representations of the Second World War. See Marie Cronqvist and Lina Sturfelt (eds.): *War Remains: Mediations of Suffering and Death in the Era of the World Wars*, Gothenburg: Kriterium, 2018.
11. The extent to which these conventions are also found in non-partisan Yugoslav films merits further research beyond this paper. Similarly, studying the ways in which the collective is expressed through a series of individual characters in the history of world cinema is another subject worthy of analysis. The study of Mexican cinema, in particular the work of Emilio Fernández, Egyptian cinema with its highly developed star system, as well as the films of transnational artists like Alejandro Jodorowsky, would be beneficial for understanding how the relationship between individual and collective, person and society, is conceptualized and negotiated aesthetically across different cultural contexts. Furthermore, such research would also show the different ways in which film directors as well as film actors become cultural figures and the diverse social, political, economic, and historical functions they take on as national and, in some cases, supranational symbols.
12. The films include *Looking into the Eyes of the Sun* (Veljko Bulajić, Yugoslavia 1966); *The Demolition Squad*, *Operation Belgrade*, *The Bridge* and *Battle of Neretva*.
13. Bata received this nickname when he joined the infamous theatre group in Yugoslavia who would go on to make some of the most revered films. This nickname persists to this day. See Ivan Kegelj: "Razgovor – Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović: Nisam ono što sam radio!" in *Lupiga*, Zagreb, 2012. <http://www.lupiga.com/vijesti/razgovor-velimir-bata-zivojinovic-nisam-ono-sto-sam-radio>
14. While there are exceptions to this rule, as in *Looking into the Eyes of the Sun* (Veljko Bulajić 1966) and *Doctor Homer's Brother* (Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović 1968), the most popular renditions of Partisan film perpetuated his figure as one which defies death.
15. *Cinema Komunisto* (Mila Turajlić, Serbia 2010); for said extract from the film visit official Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/167718772>; Last accessed 23.07.2021.

16. The issue of nationalist ideology in the film is exemplified through characters including General Gvozden. For further discussion see Milja Radović: *Cinematic Representations of Nationalist-Religious Ideology in Serbian films of the 1990s*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2009.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Ewa Mazierska, Gabor Gergely, and Lucy Donaldson for their constructive feedback in the writing of this paper.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council UK and the Scottish International Education Trust.

Notes on contributor

Mina Radović is a doctoral researcher and associate lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. A FIAF-trained archivist, film curator, and historian, he is the founder and director of Liberating Cinema UK, a non-profit charitable organization committed to the representation, restoration, and exhibition of world cinema heritage. His research expertise is in film history and historiography, archiving and restoration, world cinemas with special focus on Yugoslav cinema and Serbian cinema, early cinema and culture, cinematic representations of the Holocaust and the study of totalitarian ideologies through language and film.

References

- Adrić, Iris, Vladimir Arsenijević, and Đorđe Matić. 2004. *Leksikon YU mitologije*. Zagreb: Postscriptum / Beograd: Rende.
- Arandelović, Ivan. 2016. "Jedan je bio – Bata." *Politika*, Belgrade, May 23. <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/355597/Kultura/Preminuo-Velimir-Bata-Zivojinovic>.
- Cabrić, Nemanja. 2012. "Documentary Tells Story of the 'Walter Myth.'" *Balkan Insight*, August 10. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-story-behind-the-walter-myth>
- Cornis-Pope, Marcel, and John Neubauer. 2004. *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Types and Stereotypes*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing,
- Croatian Film Association. 2016. "Kozara." http://hrfilm.hr/baza_film.php?id=39
- Cronqvist, Marie, and Lina Sturfelt, eds. 2018. *War Remains: Mediations of Suffering and Death in the Era of the World Wars*. Gothenburg: Kriterium.
- Dragojević, Srđan. Personal Interview. October 21–22, 2021.
- Editorial. 2016. "In Memoriam: Velimir Bata Živojinović (1933–2016)." *Film Center Serbia*, Belgrade, May 23. <http://www.fcs.rs/preminuo-bata-zivojinovic/>
- Editorial. 2019. "Headlines from China: China to Remake War Classics 'The Bridge' and 'Walter Defends Sarajevo.'" *China Film Insider*, Beijing, May 8. <https://chinafilminsider.com/headlines-from-china-china-to-remake-war-classics-the-bridge-and-walter-defends-sarajevo/>
- Grgič, Jožica. 2016. "Bata se je poslovil, Valter ostaja." *Delo*, Ljubljana, May 23. <https://old.delo.si/kultura/film-tv/umrl-srbski-igravec-bata-zivojinovic-poro-ca-casnik-kurir.html>

- Hina and Mia Buva. 2016. "U Beogradu pokopan Velimir Bata Živojinović: 'Odlaziš u legendu, dragi moj učitelju.'" *Večernji List*, Zagreb, May 26. <https://www.vecernji.hr/showbiz/u-beogradu-pokopan-velimir-bata-zivojinovic-1087384>.
- Horton, Andrew. 1987–1988. "The Rise and Fall of the Yugoslav Partisan Film: Cinematic Perceptions of a National Identity." *Film Criticism* 12 (2): 18–27.
- Hui, Mary. 2019. "China Loves This Obscure 1972 Yugoslavian Movie—and Sarajevo is Cashing in." *Quartz*, New York, April 13. <https://qz.com/quartz/1589664/chinas-love-for-old-yugoslav-war-movie-fuels-balkan-tourism-boom/>.
- Iordanova, Dina. 2001. *Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media*. London: British Film Institute.
- Jakiša, Miranda and Nikica Gilić, eds. 2015. *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film and Visual Culture*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Kegelj, Ivan. 2012. "Razgovor – Velimir Bata Živojinović: Nisam ono što sam radio!" *Lupiga*, Zagreb. <http://www.lupiga.com/vijesti/razgovor-velimir-bata-zivojinovic-nisam-ono-sto-sam-radio>.
- Krajišnik, Đorđe. 2016. "Velimir Bata Živojinović: Radio sam svoj posao, izvodio glumačke radove." *Oslobođenje*, Sarajevo, May 25. <https://bhdani.oslobodjenje.ba/bhdani/arhiva/radio-sam-svojo-posao-izvodio-glumacke-radove>
- Levi, Pavle. 2007. *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Maksimović, Jelena. 2021. "Velimir Bata Živojinović: Pet godina od smrti najpopularnijeg jugoslovenskog glumca" *BBC*, May 22. <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-57202148>
- Matijević, J., and R. Radosavljević. 2019. "Velimir Bata Živojinović dobija ulicu u Beogradu." *Večernje Novosti*, Belgrade, May 21. <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:796041-Velimir-Bata-Zivojinovic-dobija-ulicu-u-Beogradu>
- Neale, Steve. 2000. *Genre and Hollywood*. Hove: Psychology Press.
- The Newsroom. 2016. "Obituary: Velimir Bata Živojinovic, Yugoslavian Film Star." *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, May 23. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/obituary-velimir-bata-zivojinovic-yugoslavian-film-star-1475958>.
- Radović, Milja. 2009. *Cinematic Representations of Nationalist-Religious Ideology in Serbian Films of the 1990s*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.
- Slocum, J. David. 2005. "Cinema and the Civilizing Process." *Cinema Journal* 44 (3): 35–63. doi:10.1353/cj.2005.0021.
- Sobchak, Vivian. 2003. "'Surge and Splendour': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic." In *Film Genre Reader III*, edited by Barry Keith Grant. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Stanković, Peter. 2015. "1970s Partisan Epics as Western Films. The Question of Genre and Myth in Yugoslav Partisan Film." In *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film and Visual Culture*, edited by Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić, 245–265. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Velisavljević, Ivan. 2015. "Bodies That Shudder. Disability and Typhus Sufferers in Partisan Films." In *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film and Visual Culture*, edited by Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić, 265–282. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Vujadinović, Radoslav Lale. 2017. *Velimir Bata Živojinović: Valter pre Valtera (Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović: Walter before Walter)*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik,
- Wu, Yanxi. 2018. *The Influence of Yugoslav Films on China in the 20th Century* in *Transformation of Art Systems after Political Turns 1945 and 1989/91*. Ljubljana: Research Centre at the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- Zečević, Božidar. 2018. *Veliki filmski znak: Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović (The Great Film Icon: Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović)*. Niš: Niški kulturni centar.

Filmography

- 13th July* (Radomir Šaranović, Yugoslavia, 1982).
Anno Domini 1573 (Vatroslav Mimica, Yugoslavia, 1975).
Balkan Express (Branko Baletić, Yugoslavia, 1983).

- Battle of Neretva* (Veljko Bulajić, Yugoslavia-Italy-West Germany-USA, 1969).
Battle of Sutjeska (Stipe Delić, Yugoslavia, 1973).
Beach Guard in Winter (Goran Paskaljević, Yugoslavia, 1976).
The Bridge (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia, 1969).
Cinema Komunisto (Mila Turajlić, Serbia, 2010).
Death and the Dervish (Zdravko Velimirović, Yugoslavia, 1974).
The Demolition Squad (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia, 1967).
The Dog Who Loved Trains (Goran Paskaljević, Yugoslavia, 1977).
DR (Soja Jovanović, Yugoslavia, 1962).
The End of the War (Dragan Kresoja, Yugoslavia, 1984).
The Enemy (Živojin Pavlović, Yugoslavia, 1965).
The Feast (Đorđe Kadijević, Yugoslavia, 1967).
Full Moon Over Belgrade (Dragan Kresoja, FR Yugoslavia, 1993).
Hajka (Živojin Pavlović, Yugoslavia, 1977).
I Even Met Happy Gypsies (Aleksandar Petrović, Yugoslavia, 1967).
In the Jaws of Life (Rajko Grlić, Yugoslavia, 1984).
It's Not Easy To Get Along With Men (Mihailo Vukobratović, Yugoslavia, 1985).
Knife (Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović, Yugoslavia, 1967).
The Knife (Miroslav Lekić, FR Yugoslavia, 1999).
Kozara (Veljko Bulajić, Yugoslavia, 1962).
The Little Shoes on the Asphalt (Ljubomir Radičević, Yugoslavia, 1956).
Looking into the Eyes of the Sun (Veljko Bulajić, Yugoslavia, 1966).
The Man from the Oak Forest (Miodrag Mića Popović, Yugoslavia, 1964).
The Master and Margaret (Aleksandar Petrović, Yugoslavia-Italy, 1972).
Mirko and Slavko (Branimir Tori Janković, Yugoslavia, 1973).
Operation Belgrade (Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović, Yugoslavia, 1968).
Partizanska Eskadrila (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia, 1979).
Pretty Village, Pretty Flame (Srđan Dragojević, FR Yugoslavia, 1996).
The Promising Boy (Miloš Radivojević, Yugoslavia, 1981).
The Red Horse (Stole Popov, Yugoslavia, 1981).
The Republic of Užice (Živorad 'Žika' Mitrović, Yugoslavia, 1974).
The Return (Živojin Pavlović, Yugoslavia, 1966).
Saturday Night (Vladimir Pogačić, Yugoslavia, 1957).
Sivi dom (Darko Bajić, Yugoslavia, 1986).
Some Birds Can't Fly (Petar Lalović, FR Yugoslavia, 1997).
The Song from Kumbara (Radoš Novaković, Yugoslavia, 1955).
Special Treatment (Goran Paskaljević, Yugoslavia, 1980).
That Night (Živanović, Jovan. Yugoslavia, 1958).
Three (Petrović, Aleksandar. Yugoslavia, 1965).
Three Tickets to Hollywood (Božidar Nikolić, Yugoslavia, 1993).
Tren (Stole Janković, Yugoslavia, 1978).
Walter Defends Sarajevo (Hajrudin Krvavac, Yugoslavia, 1972).
We're Cursed, Irina (Kole Angelovski, Yugoslavia, 1973).