

1960s (the work of “modernists” mostly remained marginalized, receiving only acclaim among film critics), Slovenian film was not founded in the paradigm of film as an art strongly related to mass culture, but much more on the obsessive formula of “film as art”, which was supposed to follow traditional arts. In this sense, Slovenian film had to reinterpret a literary agenda that was articulated in the mid-nineteenth century by Fran Levstik, who wrote: “Of course one should write using home-grown words, using native thoughts, on the basis of domestic life, so that Slovenians will see Slovenians in a book, just as they see their face in the mirror” (Levstik, 1858: p. 19).

No realistic pattern followed from this agenda, but much more a kind of narcissistic attitude. This Slovenian obsession with Slovenians was noticeable in mainstream Slovenian cinema, which especially in 1980s was interested in national identity to a high degree. A thought by Thomas Elsaesser applies nicely to this pattern: “In the wings of these self-portraits, in other words, hovers the shadow of sacrifice and the sacred” (Elsaesser, 2005: 49), which raises the question of the role of tradition as a component of a culture, including culture in former communist countries. This point is revisited in the following section of this chapter.

Anyone that looks today at the well over 100 Slovenian films (produced over a period of about 50 years) would definitely doubt the repression of ethnicity under communism, and especially under the Yugoslav brand of it. In general, throughout the history of Slovenian cinema “national” topics were overwhelmingly present; therefore, it appears that film in the post-war period played a crucial role in forming notions of Slovenian identity. However, along with the changes leading towards the end of communism, whereby the ruling political groups were losing citizens’ support, Slovenian films were losing their audiences. For instance, in 1980 the editor of the only serious Slovenian film journal, *Ekran*, pointed out that Slovenian film was losing its audience. In his view, the reasons were not to be sought in the dwindling creativity of filmmakers; he remarked that “the reasons for the crisis should rather be seen in the huge archaic institution [i.e., the Slovenian film company Viba] that spends more on itself than on the production of movies” (Zajec, 1980: p. 3). Zajec’s assertion supports Robar-Dorin’s harsh view of the situation in the establishment upon which all filmmakers’ work was dependent.

A specific “cult of the mother” formulated in Slovenian literature (in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) stitched together elements of a universal myth of the mother as the basic matrix of the nation, and the