

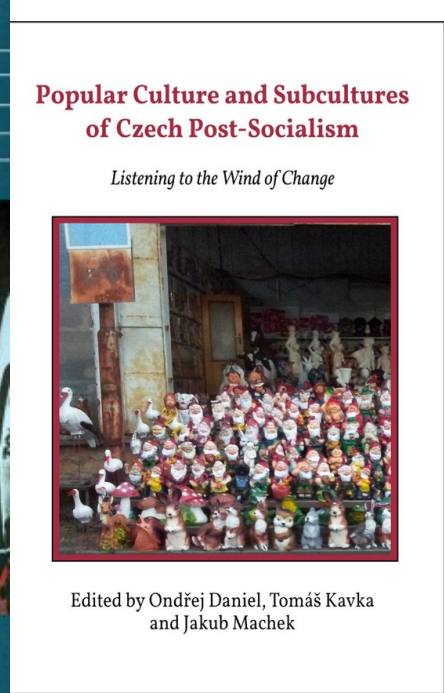
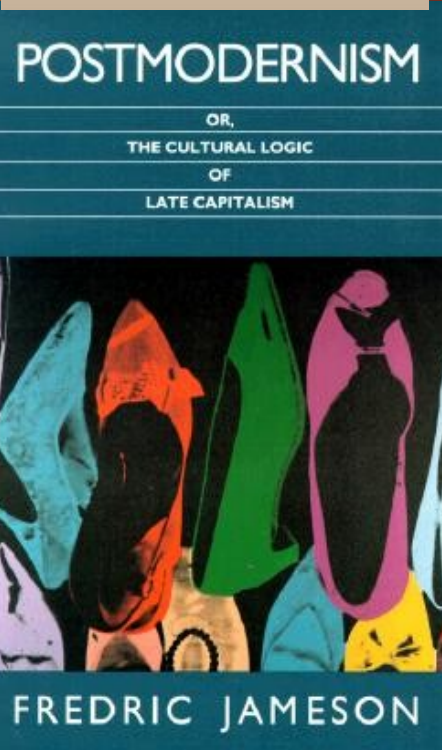
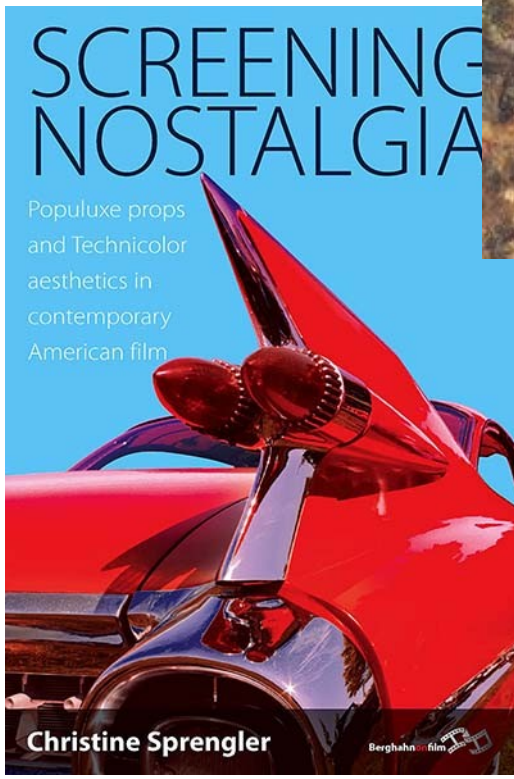
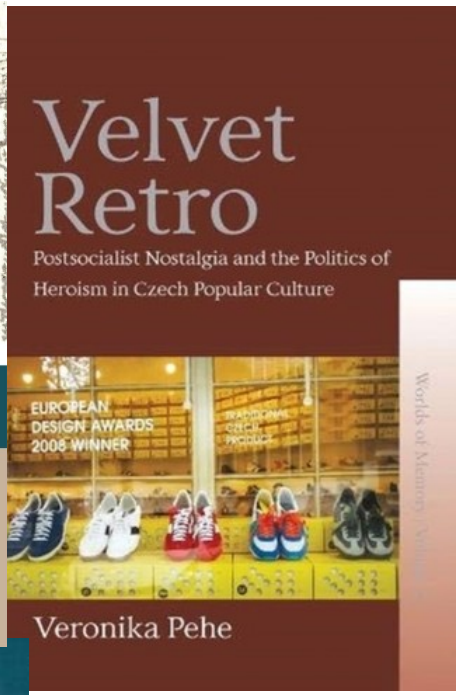
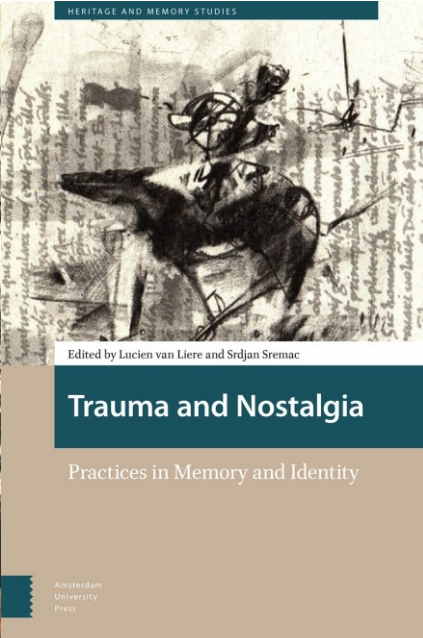
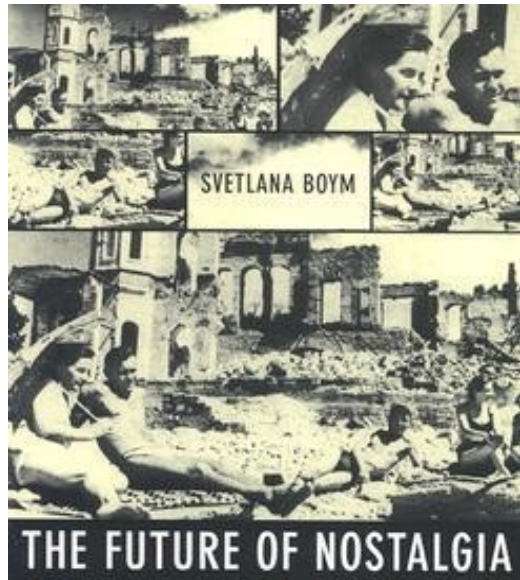
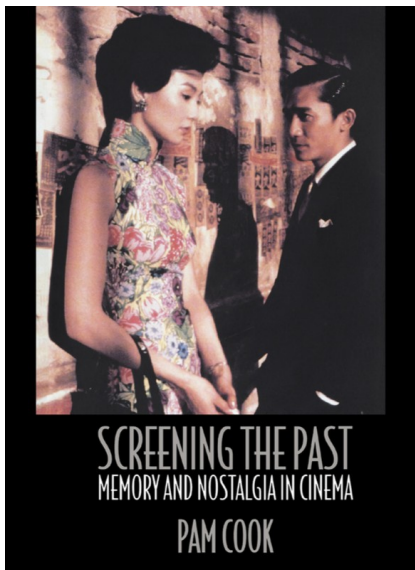
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History of Central European Culture III

CMAa12

13. 5. 2024

Mgr. Šárka Jelínek Gmitterková, Ph. D.



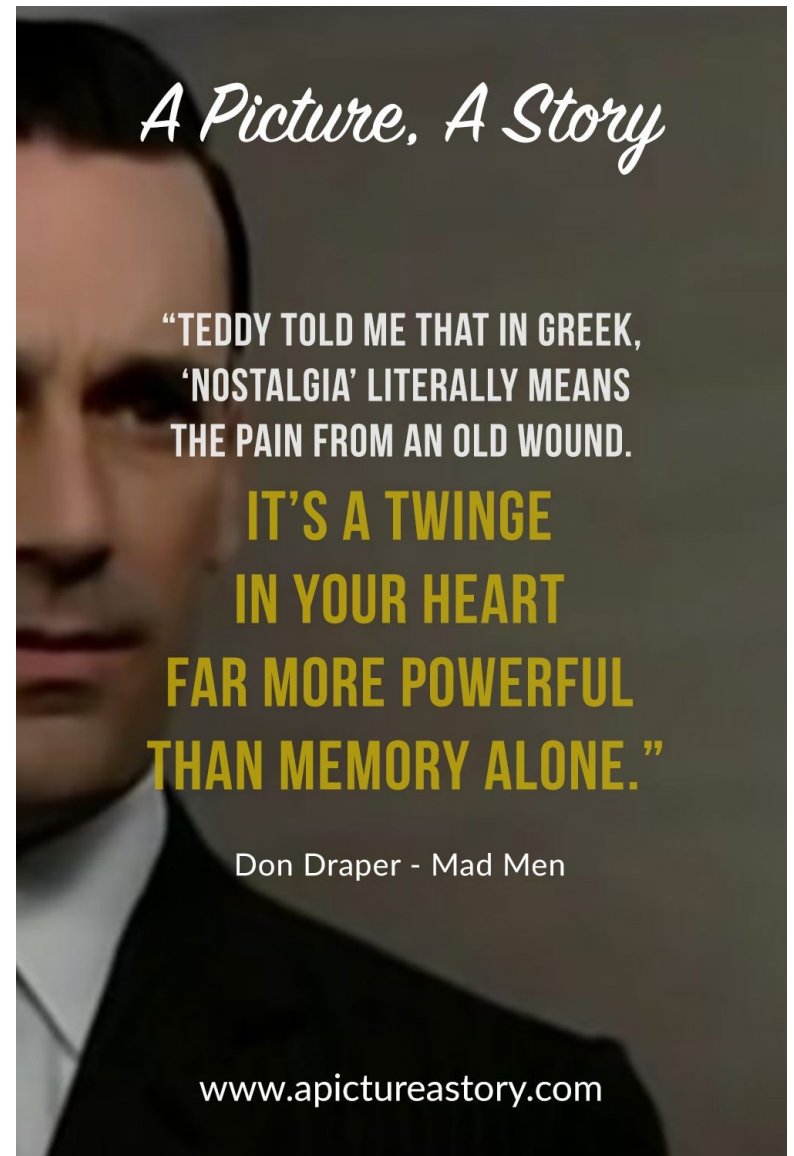
Cultural Memory

- Memory shaped by education, which binds the individual to the nation or region >> the ability to understand historical and cultural development across generations
- Carried by media that convey the lived experience of ancestors (artistic representations, monuments, museums, archives...)
- The transition from lived experience to cultural memory is problematic and risky, with the risk of narrowing, distortion and instrumentalisation

- X HISTORY?
- History as a disinterested past (calm, stoic)
- History as remembered past (saturated with emotions, "polluted" by the various intentions of those who remember)

History/Memory/Nostalgia

If we perceive history as something objectively reliable and distanced, then nostalgia is the opposite extreme – a bittersweet looking back to the past.



Nostalgia as a part of postmodernism

- Postmodern cultures as sequences of images, surfaces and their subsequent quotations X absence of a solid core and a substance + absence of depth
- Postmodern society is stripped of all historicity, everything is reduced to images

- Nostalgic returns in the form of stereotypes and evocations of feelings; intertextuality
- A lost ideal that will never return and will only be accessible through images, objects or performances of a bygone era
- an escape into enclosed and transparent worlds of the past instead of facing chaotic and unsatisfying present >> **as a form or resignation or a critical dialogue with the present?**

What, if anything, makes post-socialist nostalgia specific and distinct vis-a-vis other incarnations of mediated longing for the past?

Post-socialist nostalgia

- a sentimental relationship with the past in Central and Eastern Europe, accompanied by feelings of loss and longing X first half of the 1990s, when society was oriented towards the future (see the clip from the *Sun, hay and erotica*, 1991, dir. Zdeněk Troška)
- a fascination with nostalgic mode of remembering, closely tied to the vernacular and everyday level
- making sense of one's identity and belonging in the post-socialist transformation
- TV formats



What happened that citizens of the former eastern bloc have undergone such radical reversal with their relationship with time, suddenly dropping their future oriented revolutionary sense of future and transforming themselves into past-oriented beings with a sense of loss or even longing for the bygone era?

The emergence of post-socialist nostalgia

1. Politically motivated readings of recent history, which downplay the hardships of life under communism
2. Commercially repacked symbols and products of the bygone era
3. Grass-root reactions to the hasty rejections of all things socialist after 1989
4. Growing economic uncertainty and social disparities brought by economic liberalization

>> nostalgic practices are heterogenous, polysemic and can articulate a range of different attitude to the past

There are several types of post-socialist nostalgia:

1. Temporal orientations – restorative nostalgia X reflective nostalgia
2. Forms of expression
3. Political uses
4. Economic motivations

Ostalgia

- Combination of nostalgia and German "Ost" - East (origin in Germany)
- Its emergence is related to the economic and political crisis of the second half of the 1990s
- Ostalgia = a positive relationship to some phenomenon in the field of consumerism or directly to consumer goods associated with the socialist era
- Two types of continuity:
 - consumer or mass entertainment from the socialist period (mainly television and the music industry)
 - products



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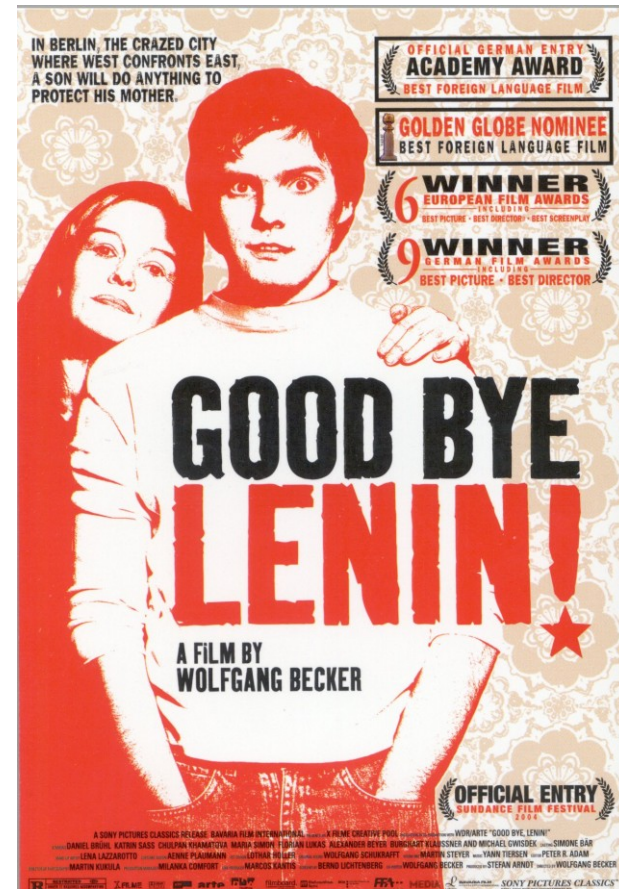
Ostalgie

- socialist kitsch?
- In the German context, it expresses the sense of social and physical dislocation of many former East Germans >> disillusionment with the reunification process
- The new German unified identity as a process for negotiation
- The attempt to show childhood and adolescence in East Germany as normal and shared by many is itself a political gesture



Good Bye, Lenin! (2003, r. Wolfgang Becker)

- The peak of the ostalgie wave
- The story of a young man, Alex, and his sister, Ariane, who take care of their mother, Christiane. She falls into a coma just days before the fall of the regime and wakes up eight months later.
- For his mother, he creates his own nostalgic version of late socialism that has nothing to do with reality >> a self-reflexive gesture
- Alex as an archaeologist searching for objects from the former regime.
- Just a family drama?



Good Bye, Lenin! (2003, r. Wolfgang Becker) trailer



Ostalgic Television – new formats

- ❑ **Once upon a time in East** (TV Nova)
- ❑ **Retro** magazine
- ❑ **Wonderful years** – a family saga spanning over four decades, combining personal memories with national history







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Ostalgia – characteristics

- Everydayness
- Greyness, uniformity and conformity X carefree period, family values and romance
- Small-scale heroism = humorous anti-regime gestures of defiance, as an illusion of tiny dissent for everyone
- Childhood/adolescence perspective
- "us" and "them"
- "we" as a family or neighborhood creating microcosms protected from outside influences
- Positive heroes are not necessarily positive, but their actions are not a subject of ridicule
- "they" are characters supporting and creating the regime, often a form of caricature

Druhé Vánoce pro každého
Česká televize, tvůrčí skupina Pavla Barabova a Filmová a televizní společnost Total HelpArc T.H.A. uvádí film na náměstí Petra Jarchovského s využitím motivů z knihy Petra Šabaha „Hovno hoří“

pepišky

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hraji Miroslav Donutík – Jiří Kotek – Simona Stašková – Emilia Vláčilová – Boleslav Polívka – Eva Holubová – Stella Zázvorková – Jiří Krejčík – Jaroslav Dušek – Kristýna Nováková – Michael Berman – Ondřej Brunko – Štěpán Kobalík – Marek Moravský – Boris Hybner – další scény Petr Jarchovský – výpravník sceny Milan Býšek – výpravník kostýmů Kateřina Holá – zvuk Karel Jaraš – střih Vladimír Barák – výkonný producent Ondřej Trojan – producenti Pavel Barabov – Ondřej Trojan – kamera Jan Malin – režie Jan Hřebejk

BÁJEČNÁ LÉTA POD PSA

REMATER
obrazu
a zvuku

Česká televize uvádí film na náměstí Petra Jarchovského s využitím motivů z knihy Petra Šabaha „Hovno hoří“

Občiansky preukaz

dospívate je o život
v každej dobe

FILM JANA HRĚBJKA A PETRA JARCHOVSKÉHO

ŠAKALÍ LÉTA

Hej baboňka
čuču
bugy

REBEL LOVE

Písničkový film z let šedesátých

ES

Kino hit

Režie: Filip Renč

TÁNA PAUHOFOVÁ · HÝNEK ČERMÁK · LUCIE ŠTEFLOVÁ
ROBERT CEJNAR · VOJTECH DYK

NĚŽNÉ VLNY

KOMEDIE JIŘIHO VEJDĚLKA

FILM JANA HRĚBJKA A PETRA JARCHOVSKÉHO

nápadník

ANNA FIALKOVÁ · ANNA KRIS-ŠEDOVÁ · MARTIN FINGER
IVAN LUPČÁK · MIROSLAVA FALOUSKÁ · KLARA MELIŠKOVÁ · DARIELA MIKOVÁ
SABINA RANDESKÁ · LUDVÍK KRTOŠEK · JIŘÍ VEJDEK

V KINÁCH OD 16. NOVEMBRA

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The end of ostalgalia?

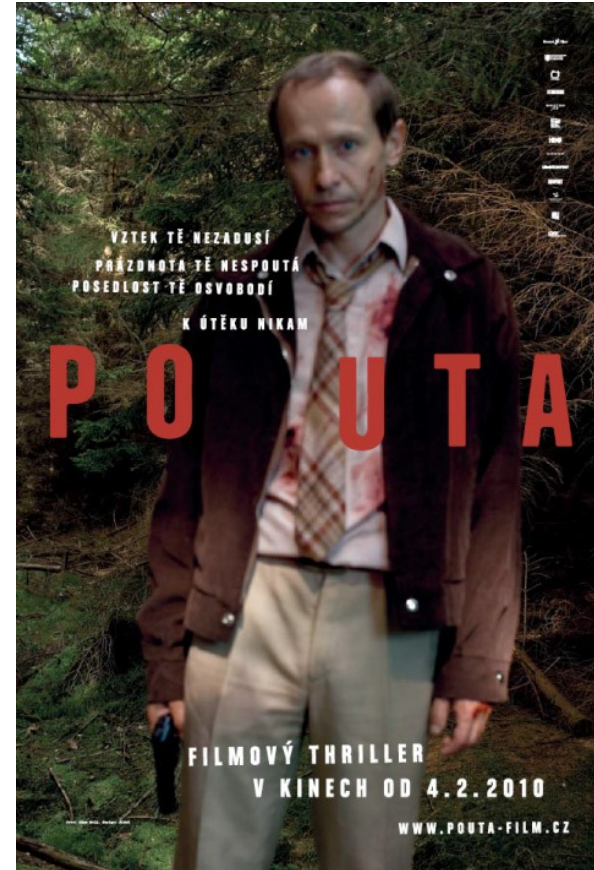
The lives of others

(2006, Germany, dir. Florian Henckel von
Donnersmack)



Walking too fast

(2009, Czech Republic, dir. Radim Špaček)

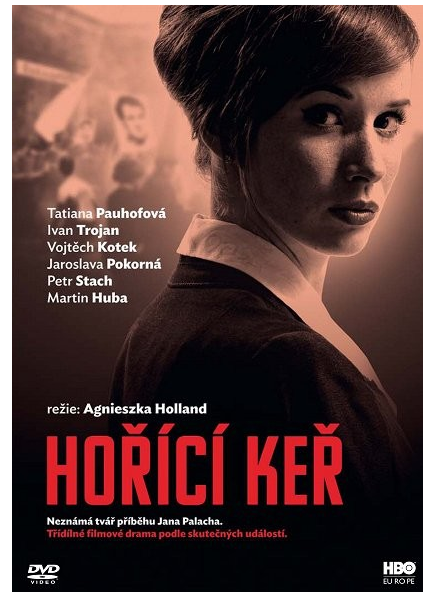


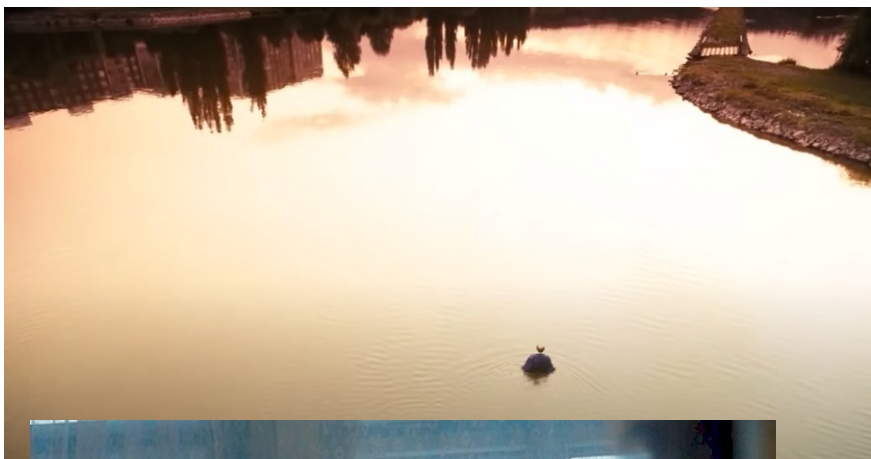
Critical portrayals of recent past

- ***... it's gonna get worse*** (2007, dir. Petr Nikolaev, about a hippie community situated in northern part of Czechoslovakia)
- ***Walking too fast*** (2009, dir. Radim Špaček, a story of a secret service member Antonín Rusnák)
- ***Kawasaki's Rose*** (2009, dir. Jan Hřebejk, a contemporary drama reflecting on past guilt)
- ***Eighty letters*** (2011, dir. Václav Kadrnka, personal experience of growing up in socialist Czechoslovakia in a minimalist concept)
- ***Burning bush*** (2012, dir. Agnieszka Holland, HBO miniseries about the growing disillusion after the suicide of Jan Palach)
- ***Fair Play*** (2013, dir. Andrea Sedláčková, drama about a competitive athlete and practices of socialist top level athletics)
- ***The Teacher*** (2016, dir. Jan Hřebejk, about a teacher who exploits her pupils and their parents for a network of various services)

Critical portrayals of recent past

- ***I, Olga Hepnarová*** (2014–15, dir. Tomáš Weinreb and Petr Kazda, a story of a murderer sentenced to death, based on real events)
- ***The Sleepers*** (2019, dir. Ivan Zachariáš, espionage themed series set at the dawn of the 1980s)
- ***Volha*** (2023, dir. Jan Pacht, series about a driver, who is able to navigate himself and benefit from the socialist system)





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Possible conclusions?

- Post-socialist nostalgia can be seen growing out of global nostalgic tendencies evident in the late 1990s and early aughts, however in central-eastern European countries it is an important aspect of making sense of one's identity and belonging in the post-socialist transformation.
- Various tv formats and recycled tv content (series, game shows, documentaries) are tarnished by the medium's history as an important tool of communist propaganda. Nevertheless, post-socialist viewership is able to enjoy these programmes as forms and pleasures of entertainment (see Richard Dyer – Entertainment and utopia in *Only entertainment*)
- Negative aspects of life under communist governments are more critically explored in films rather than in television broadcasting.