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Chronicling Private Lives: The Narratives of Fulfilment in
Helena Třeštíková's Longitudinal Documentary Films

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Abstract

The longitudinal documentary films of director Helena Třeštíková have observed a number of subjects over a career that has spanned two distinct historical periods in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. Both the normalisation system of communist Czechoslovakia, and the transition to a post-communist market economy after 1989, have impacted documentary production and the narratives within them, in addition to the specific topics and interests which filmmakers have focused on. For Třeštíková, who has often explored intimate, personal themes of subjects across authoritarianism and liberal democracy, a number of narratives concerning the fulfilment and well-being of protagonists has emerged. What is particularly fascinating is witnessing how the director crafts narratives in relation to the dominant documentary discourses of normalisation and post-normalisation, and what they argue about the impact that these different systems have on those who live in the Czech Republic.

Although a number of political analyses have been written concerning Czech history, there are significant gaps in a number of fields pertaining to documentary cinema and culture. This is particularly evident in the English language, with a lack of scholarship on the film and television tradition of either normalisation Czechoslovakia or what occurred after the fall of the regime. This thesis contends that further research into these fields is important for a number of reasons, particularly as there is little existing knowledge on how these times of political upheaval have been represented by documentarists; and that research of documentaries cast light onto individual destinies and lives while dealing with grand historical narratives from below. Furthermore, a study which investigates Třeštíková and the Czech experience can provide an insight into the wider role of woman documentarists and the study of documentaries in general.

This thesis will explore how Helena Třeštíková addresses the concept of fulfilment and crafts narratives which relate to it in her longitudinal films. To do this, two of the director's documentary cycles will be analysed alongside three standalone feature-length films, and against the existing non-fiction films and programmes of the two historical periods which are referenced. The study will conclude that the longitudinal approach to documentary allows Třeštíková to craft narratives that subvert the values of the state socialist system, before expanding to reveal that many barriers to fulfilment that existed in the 1980s remain after the Velvet Revolution; and that fulfilment emerges as a cycle which continues to affect subsequent generations of Czechs regardless of what system they are governed by.

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Introduction

Czechoslovakia - A Historical Overview

The events of the latter half of 1989 had a significant social, economic and political impact on the Warsaw Pact countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The Velvet Revolution, from the 17th of November to the end of the year, oversaw the dissolution of a one-party state monopolised by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa, KSČ*), leading to open, democratic elections in June 1990. This period is also notable for the fall of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the Cold War which had divided much of Europe into polarised political factions. For Czechs, 1989 is still regarded as an important milestone in the nation's history, one which eventually led to the separation of Czechoslovakia into two independent states and admission to the European Union in 2004. Many in Czechoslovakia see the Velvet Revolution as a struggle for freedom from authoritarian state socialism, and the 17th of November, the day of two important protests - firstly of Prague students against Nazi occupation in 1939, and the commemoration of this event that led to the beginning of demonstrations against the KSČ in 1989 - is commemorated as *Den boje za svobodu a demokracii (Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day)*, a public holiday.

The extensive international coverage of these events saw images of thousands of Czechoslovak citizens protesting in Prague and Bratislava broadcast around the world, as part of the greater international narrative of 1989 and the dismantling of various one-party regimes across Central and Eastern Europe. This international attention, which has been noted by Whipple (1991), Leviatin (1993) and Chadwick (2010), soon moved to focusing on events in other nations, most notably the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. This left the process of transition to a post-communist market economy far less covered and explored. In regards to this, "the mass media coverage of radical upheavals occurring in other countries in Eastern Europe and China, and the protest demonstrations within their own country being suppressed by state violence, were powerful influences on

Czechoslovak citizens”¹, referencing not only the practice of state propaganda, but also the power of television and the visual image. In the words of Timothy Garton Ash, “The crucial medium was television, and to a lesser extent, radio”, particularly in terms of “the battle for access and fair coverage on television and radio”².

Due to such events, “the society that had developed during the forty years after World War II started to change gradually in the post-Cold War world. It was a time of re-establishing parliamentary democracy, introducing a market economy, and incorporating the country into Western European and international structures”³. A change not mentioned within this quote is the attitudes around media, culture and image. Normalisation (*normalizace*), the period after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 through to the end of the regime, is noted for the reintroduction of stringent censorship of literature, television and film, and the monopolisation of media power at the hands of the state. The leadership of Gustáv Husák through this era is one best remembered for re-embracing the Soviet Union and a hardline Marxist-Leninism, with the rise of propaganda as a mean to bolster this view.

After the Velvet Revolution, “the politics and public sphere of the press and broadcasting again moved into the private sphere, but this time for individual gain, rather than communication”⁴. The changing ideological discourse now shifted from a pro-communist line to one which embraced the free market and vilified the KSČ - consistent with the dominant sentiment of the period, but also reflecting those now in positions of authority in the new political and social climate.

The normalisation era, dominated by an adherence to the KSČ’s specific values, was subject to the heavy hand of the state; at a time of increased powers for police and security forces after the more liberalising 1960s. Upon the relinquishment of absolute power, a number of actions - including the abolition of censorship, the opening up of borders and freedom of assembly - were

¹ Brook 2005: 82.

² Ibid.

³ Vaněk and Mücke 2016: 2.

⁴ Johnson 1995: 230.

enacted alongside reprivatisation of industry, foreign investment and the growth of consumer capitalism. These economic changes, which have been set out by Triska (1991), Wolchik (1991) and Simoneti (1993), coupled with the social transformation that no longer kept the country in isolation, demonstrated a quick replacement of one dominant ideology for another. In more recent times, the continuation of this process has led to accession to NATO (1999) and the European Union (2004), a complete break from the Warsaw Pact membership and state socialist economics that were characteristic of the country under KSČ rule.

Czechoslovakia's history, from its foundation in 1918 through to a Nazi protectorate, its short post-war democracy and subsequent transformation to authoritarian regime, has been well-documented by a number of authors both in English and Czech. H. Gordon Skilling's *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (1976) is a comprehensive and well-researched volume on the Prague spring reforms, which can be supplemented by Kieran Williams' *The Prague Spring and its Aftermath: Czechoslovak Politics, 1968-1970* (1997). Both Skilling (1981) and Kusin (1978) have additionally engaged with the normalisation process, albeit in incomplete fashion due to their dates of publication. A more contemporary book on this subject can be found in *Normalization and Charter 77: Violence, Commitment and Resistance in Czechoslovakia* (2009) by Järvinen, and serves an additional function of providing examples of the propaganda employed by the state for means of social control.

The entire history of Czechoslovakia, from the Czech national revival in the mid-19th century to the modern Czech state post-Velvet Divorce, is the subject of Mary Heimann's *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed* (2009). This history is extremely thorough in its engagement with archival sources and existing literature, and builds a convincing case as to the motivations for the Warsaw Pact intervention in 1968 and the events which led to the dismantling of the one-party state in 1989. These sources afford the reader a considered overview of 20th century Czechoslovak history, yet there is one problem that repeatedly occurs when investigating and analysing these sources.

Scholarship regarding the Czechoslovak and Czech states, particularly when approaching the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution, has been reasonably consistent in its focus on the political and the economical, and how this relates to the wider relationship between society and state. However, what has been inconsistent is further linking this to the development of culture. Such rapid and immediate transformations do not exist in isolation from wider cultural practice, particularly since it has offered “some of the most potent forces for global transformation... and for the transformation of post-socialist Europe”⁵.

Culture, and for this thesis particularly film, is closely connected to wider socio-economic and political developments around it; which shape its accessibility, narrative and financial support. In turn, culture also possesses the means to shape and influence discourses that lead to political and social change. By sidelining or marginalising culture in historical analysis, it is difficult to truly gain a comprehensive understanding of the forces and catalysts of the Czechoslovak transition. It is not the intention of this thesis to entirely readdress this imbalance, but rather to identify this gap in the existing knowledge and literature of these landmark events in Czech history, and to offer a contribution which employs a multidisciplinary approach. This will be developed further later in this introduction.

Czechoslovakia’s Film Tradition

The two-way-street of culture influencing the social and political environment and vice-versa can be clearly observed when it comes to film, and Czechoslovakia’s rich and diverse cinematography has been received to international critical acclaim. Czechoslovakia and the post-communist Czech Republic have won three Academy Awards in the Best Foreign Language Film category: the Slovak language *Obchod na korze* (*Shop on the Main Street*, dir. Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, 1965), *Ostře sledované vlaky* (*Closely Watched Trains*, dir. Jiří Menzel, 1967) and most recently for *Kolya* (dir. Jan Svěrák) in 1996. The director Miloš Forman, who found success directing *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s*

⁵ True 1999: 362.

Nest (1975) and *Amadeus* (1984) in the United States, is internationally recognised, having emigrated from Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the Prague Spring. Films, documentaries and television series, both produced during the regime and after, remain popular today in both Czech and Slovak republics; and across Central and Eastern Europe where Czechoslovak film and television was held in high regard. A lasting legacy of this can be witnessed in animation, where cartoons such as *Krtek (The Mole)* still regularly feature amongst children's programming in post-socialist states.

One particularly interesting aspect of Czechoslovak cinematography is how the format has evolved through several different incarnations of the post-1948 regime, which has included flirtations with socialist realism, liberalism, and a complete overhaul of the film industry in the mid-1960s. The alleged 'return to normal' of normalisation following the Warsaw Pact intervention which reversed much of the reforms to film and television production, afforded greater powers of censorship, while simultaneously witnessing a growth in self-censorship by many creatives. This process resulted, in general terms, in a film culture which is held in a far lower esteem than the so-called "Czechoslovak Film Miracle" of the 1960s, and dominated by the propagandistic environment of the times.

Czech and Slovak film theorist Peter Hames has summarised this historical period as being:

...much less susceptible to the emergence of any critical voice following the extensive purges of the Party. Of course, it is critically unfashionable to study either of these periods partly because they were aesthetically orthodox and partly because searching between the lines for relatively minor examples of political dissent is not especially rewarding.⁶

This understanding is problematic. Whereas significant work has taken place with regards to the Czech new wave, and to a lesser extent Czech cinema after 1989, the study of normalisation film and television has been marginalised and under-analysed, particularly within English-language scholarship. This, coupled with generalisations concerning the nature of normalisation and its effect on cultural output, had lead to the idea of the era as being "unfashionable" in

⁶ Hames 2009: 77.

comparison. Contemporary studies have additionally been hindered by the wave of privatisations after 1989, where a significant number of films and programmes have landed in private archives, resulting in resources being either difficult to access or of significant expense to obtain - confirming the earlier observation that the economics of the new post-communist ideology would impact culture. The availability of such programmes in translation has also arisen as a problem, and when taken alongside opinions such as that of Hames, has meant that study from an English-language perspective has not always been appealing.

However, there has been a recent, if small, uptake in both Czech and English-based scholarship on normalisation television and film, including contributions by Bílek (2013) and Kaňka *et al* (2015) concerning Czechoslovak state television. This work is valuable in the wider scope of Czech history, where it shows how wider narratives were constructed, and the impact once these narratives were applied. Far from the question of whether or not this research is deemed to be in fashion or otherwise, by comparing and contrasting film and censorship during the normalisation period, a far greater understanding of the post-1989 environment can be attained, particularly concerning shooting and producing documentaries (and indeed features) in a post-communist, market economy. Analysis offered in Chapter Two of this thesis will further dispute the notion that study of normalisation and documentary film is unrewarding, by providing a clear argument into the benefits of comprehensively analysing the cultural output of the regime within the wider research of documentary film.

Although the transition to the market economy posed challenges to documentarists in terms of funding, new opportunities arose for filmmakers with the abolition of censorship. With travel to other countries now permitted, and political restrictions on content no longer an issue, many films after 1989 were noticeable in deviating from the formulaic techniques demonstrated during normalisation, and incorporated a number of self-reflexive and narrational techniques rarely witnessed during the Husák era. Igor Hájek (1994) has discussed the impact of this post-communist period on culture, and the economic effects of the new system upon the documentary is acknowledged by Česálková (2014). Thanks to the work of Martin Štoll, who has written about documentaries during normalisation (2014) and post-normalisation (2001, 2002),

a general understanding of non-fiction film has been attained. However, with interest in normalisation and post-normalisation culture only increasing in recent years, analysis and documentation of the significant number of documentaries made across this timeframe has been selective and sporadic. This includes research on the films of Helena Třeštíková, who despite having a long career in documentary which began during normalisation, has been analysed infrequently. Discussion of research specific to Třeštíková will be returned to shortly, as this thesis addresses the gap in knowledge it aims to rectify. Nevertheless, while further study into cultural impacts of normalisation and post-normalisation is to be welcomed, it remains an under-explored part of Czechoslovak and Czech history at the time of writing.

Helena Třeštíková and Documentary Film

Documentary filmmaker Helena Třeštíková (1949-) has had extensive experience in the environment of Czech film, having started her career during the normalisation period and continuing through the post-89 transition. The majority of Třeštíková's films, and what she has become known for, are her longitudinal pieces (*časosběrný film*, *time-collecting film*), filmed over several years: in many cases overlapping the regime changes of Czechoslovakia, and latterly the Czech and Slovak Republics. Her fascination with personal lives and intimate, private spaces, alongside a filmic style unique in Czechoslovak film of the time makes for interesting comparisons to other documentary and propagandistic outputs, in addition to a crossover analysis of narratives during normalisation and the post-communist state.

Born in Prague in 1949, Třeštíková would witness the liberalising reforms and their effect on society as a teenager growing up during the 1960s and the Soviet-led intervention that followed. Having started her studies at FAMU (*Filmová a televizní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze*, *Film and Television School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague*) in 1968, the development of the normalisation process and its effect on the industry was something that could be witnessed first-hand - censorship was quickly reintroduced and international

developments in film were difficult to witness. Because of this, the origins of Třeštíková's longitudinal style lie in inspiration through the chronicling qualities of diaries and journals⁷, and of biological time-lapse films⁸ rather than comparable long-term projects taking place in other countries.

Her graduation film, *Zázrak (The Miracle, 1975)*, dealt with the issue of a friend's pregnancy and childbirth, and her desire to continue visiting mother and child meant this became her first longitudinal observation project⁹. Her most well-known work from the normalisation period, the *Manželské etudy (Marriage Stories)* cycle of documentaries, were the culmination of seven years of filming and editing. This serves as one example of a film cycle which is set completely in the confines of the 1980s, yet prioritises the lives of the protagonists and their personal stories, rather than the grander narratives of the state and its political direction. The six-episode series, dealing with young married couples, was well-received upon broadcast in 1987, and eventually led to revisiting the subjects between 1999 and 2005 in *Manželské etudy po dvaceti letech (Marriage Stories after Twenty Years)*.

Due to this occurring in the post-communist Czech Republic, *Po dvaceti letech* offers the researcher a platform from which to observe how two distinct ideologies, and the process of transferring between them, has affected the lives of the subjects, and of additional subjects introduced through the passage of time. When this is combined with a methodological approach which emphasises the role of the director as author and thus encoder of meaning¹⁰, an extra dynamic is raised which then observes both the director's own attitudes and the ability of filmmakers to subvert authoritarian values. What do these film narratives, therefore, say about the experiences of citizens during normalisation and the post-communist market system; and what do they say about the director's own observations? Moreover, what do the documentaries say about the process of filmmaking *itself*?

⁷ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 1.

⁸ Červinková 2012

⁹ In fact, this has also become her longest observation. The culmination of the project after thirty-seven years in *Soukromý vesmír (Private Universe, 2011)*, which comprises a significant amount of the analysis presented in Chapter Four.

¹⁰ This will be discussed further in the Methodology section of Chapter One.

Other longitudinal pieces by Třeštíková have continued the theme of interaction between subjects and the wider Czech society, and are equally valuable in approaching the questions above. Her series of hour-long features, entitled *Řekni mi něco o sobě* (*Tell me Something About Yourself*, 1992-1994), began in 1989 during the latter stages of the regime, and explored the stories of young people incarcerated in a juvenile detention facility in Libkovice. Like *Zázrak*, this would inspire further long-term observation leading to another feature-length film, *René* (2008), which observes the life of a habitual criminal. These experiences, switching focus from the 'ordinary citizen' of *Manželské etudy* to those on the margins of society, would continue in *Katka* (2009), exploring the life of a young woman whose life has been ravaged by drug addiction. 2011's *Soukromý vesmír*, the longest of the director's observations, returns to the subject matter of the said 'ordinary' family, continuing to follow-up *Zázrak* protagonists across four decades. The entire catalogue of Helena Třeštíková, spanning more than fifty documentaries, is extensive - offering a rich body of sources for investigation, but also necessitating a selective approach in order to merit the required level of analysis which each film requires.

It is interesting to observe the use of space, gender and work in Třeštíková documentaries, and the parallel representations which are made in documentaries of either the normalisation or post-normalisation periods. By doing so, a number of factors can be observed - the specific approach the director advocates compared to other filmmakers, the subversive qualities of her work, and how fulfilment is represented. The latter point is of particular fascination, given that fulfilment; be it standard of living, social satisfaction, or emotional stability and happiness; can be used as a measurement against the values held by the wider population and the country's political leadership at various junctures.

While documentaries can be compared and contrasted effectively through the discussion of approaches to filmmaking and the various techniques exhibited, fulfilment allows the researcher to judge the content of a film and how its representation can be decoded against dominant societal narratives. For example, the state's assertion that Czechoslovaks under normalisation had their financial and social needs completely met - a claim which will be explored in

this thesis - can be scrutinised through the lives of subjects featuring in the normalisation-specific cycles of *Manželské etudy* and against other documentaries; paying close attention to external factors such as censorship. It is necessary, therefore, to argue for a definition of fulfilment that can be applied to all documentaries in this thesis and encompasses the various themes that Třeštíková seeks to address.

In her monograph, Třeštíková makes it overt that fulfilment is a key issue:

The main topic of *Manželské etudy* were the relationships, striving for personal fulfilment and the values of the young generation in 1980s Czechoslovakia. From the beginning, I was convinced that the era will be encompassed by such a “bottom up” point of view (the need for new flats, incapability to get a decent job, prohibited travelling abroad, incapability of any personal activities), and I would be able to describe this era of blankness. I wanted to describe the life revolving around small issues, little conflicts, minor times of joy; to picture stationary posture, hypocrisy and averageness.¹¹

This quote is revealing in that it provides the stated aims of the project in the mind of the director, usefully identifying factors such as work and accommodation that can be related to the idea of “personal fulfilment” mentioned. These characteristics will form the bedrock of fulfilment analysis across the documentaries explored. However, understanding *how* housing and employment relate to fulfilment, and how this term can reflect relationships between protagonists, warrants further investigation.

Ideas around fulfilment as a concept have often been addressed within psychology, particularly in relation to the understanding of well-being where the two terms can often overlap, as “According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), fulfillment (*sic*) of the three universal human needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is an essential predictor for well-being.”¹²

Self-Determination Theory, a concept which deals with human motivation in terms of choice when these choices are removed from any outside influences, falls far outside the research scope of either this introduction or this thesis.

¹¹ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 7-8.

¹² Neubauer and Voss 2016: 1.

Nevertheless, this passage highlights the idea that well-being is established through the meeting of certain needs, as a criteria of overall life satisfaction. This “well-being”, which Ed Diener refers to as Subjective Well-Being (SWB), is closely associated with both quality of life and the individual’s perception of said qualities, but also positive and negative aspects:

There are three hallmarks to the area of SWB: First, it is subjective - it resides within the experience of the individual. Second, it is not just the absence of negative factors, but also includes positive measures. Third, it includes a global assessment rather than only a narrow assessment of one life domain.¹³

Alongside this, Diener references two sources in the definition of SWB: that, according to Veenhoven (1984), it is “the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his or her life as a whole in a favourable way”, and Andrews and Withey (1976) as “both a cognitive evaluation and some degree of positive or negative feelings, i.e., affect”.¹⁴ Both reflect the idea of well-being as being assessed in terms of life quality, while differing on whether this also includes negative feelings into the calculations. This is open to wider debate within the field of psychology, but what is important for the analysis of Třeštková films is well-being and the correlation with life quality - and how this is dependent on the fulfilment of criteria to be achieved. Helpfully, Diener also incorporates such this into his assessment, as:

One can decompose subjective well-being into finer and finer units. For example, life satisfaction can be broken down into satisfaction with various domains: work, love, and so forth. These domains in turn can be broken down more finely. Similarly, emotion can be divided into finer and finer categories. Unpleasant affect can be broken into discrete emotions such as anger, which can in turn be decomposed into anger over various types of events.¹⁵

The domains identified here are closely related to what Třeštková explores in her documentaries. Using the first *Manželské etudy* cycle as an example, the director states that “the topics [*of exploration during periods of the cycle*] were namely about accommodation, relations with parents, work, hobbies, self-fulfilment, sex”¹⁶, in addition to criteria she has already recognised as relating

¹³ Diener 1994: 103.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 108.

¹⁶ Třeštková and Třeštkík 2015: 8.

to personal fulfilment. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction in these areas therefore become building blocks towards how Třeštíková's subjects assess the quality of their lives. In turn, they also serve to indicate how this well-being is perceived by documentary viewers and the documentarist herself.

This latter point is important when considering Diener's view that there is a global assessment of this well-being, and that it is not confined to one particular area. In other words, quality of life does not rest on fulfilment of one field as opposed to another. It is also apparent, particularly to Třeštíková, that the various incarnations of the state will have an effect, either directly or indirectly, on a number of these factors (such as the 'decent jobs' she refers to in the first quote of this section). Both normalisation and post-normalisation eras have been subject to narratives of the superiority of their respective systems, as Chapters Two and Three will show: if both systems arrive with a promise of fulfilment, then Třeštíková's representation of Czechs - both of 'ordinary' families and of people on the margins of society - will inevitably engage with these claims.

Based on this understanding, the term 'fulfilment' is used in this thesis in relation to the units that have a mitigating factor on quality of life and the perception of this quality. By referencing these units and using them as a point of contrast and comparison between normalisation and post-normalisation, the director makes a number of arguments about the nature of state socialism, the free market and its relation to the lives of people living under them. Identifying these factors and their relation to the well-being of subjects in the documentaries is a more useful method of analysis and enquiry than adopting a more generalised definition, such as *happiness* or the aforementioned *quality of life*. This is due to the thesis pinpointing and identifying the specific barriers to fulfilment as argued by the director, and also the additional or changed circumstances brought on due to the transitional period post-89. By employing a more generalised term, there is the risk that more generalised, rather than specific, conclusions are reached, thus undermining the in-depth nature of this research.

Analysis on fulfilment will investigate what appear as the main units that comprise Třeštíková's arguments: work, emotional and romantic relationships,

gender, income, and pastimes; analysing their importance to the subjects represented in the documentaries, and how they relate to them. Of particular interest here is the question of *if* and *how* this relationship has changed due to the implementation of a post-communist system of governance. This forms an important base for the director to argue about the overall nature of Czech society, but also in terms of questioning how these changes have shaped directorial technique and the ability to produce films.

By comparing post-89 Třeštková films against her earlier work and the wider oeuvre of Czech documentary, the question of a fulfilment cycle can be seen to emerge. The subversion of the dominant political narratives of normalisation that Chapter Two argues were visible during *Manželské etudy* no longer exist upon the cessation of the state socialist system, but are instead replaced by this related (yet different) phenomenon: which posits whether the post-communist transformation had any significant or life-changing affects upon either the original subjects or subsequent generations. Barriers to fulfilment which were observed during normalisation, therefore, may still be experienced during *Po dvaceti letech*; both in the day-to-day lives of those who have been observed since the early 1980s, and their children who have reached adulthood. The cycle can then additionally be witnessed in other protagonists who exist outside of the *Etudy* cycle or occupy different spaces to that of the everyday citizen (which will be seen in *René* and *Katka*). From this it will be argued that Třeštková documentaries are about the intimate lives of protagonists backgrounded against radical change and their relationship to it; but also that explorations of fulfilment are a distinctive characteristic of the director's work throughout her career.

Helena Třeštková in Existing Literature

Data collection undertaken for the completion of this thesis was heavily dependent on the use of Czech language sources. Available English language books, edited volumes and monographs have been effective in providing much of the historical background to normalisation, and comprise the bulk of the

methodological approach to the study of documentary which this thesis advocates. Nevertheless, the specialist nature of Czechoslovak and Czech documentary, particularly due to many films not being translated, has meant that there is a noticeable lack of academic discourse in English dedicated to the field.

Iordanova has argued that documentaries of Central and Eastern Europe have not been investigated to the level that fiction films have¹⁷, and this has been observed in the collection of sources. Due to this, a thorough investigation was conducted of Czech publications, including the collection and translation of newspaper and magazine articles pertaining to Třeštíková and her films to address this imbalance; and these sources are used extensively when the thesis moves to studies of specific documentary works. It has become evident that sources with a main focus on Helena Třeštíková are few and far between, certainly in English. Unfortunately, the majority of articles specific to Třeštíková are intended for consumption in the mass media, with general questioning as opposed to specific, in-depth discussions on style and technique; and are not particularly useful for this thesis aside from general background information. On the other hand, certain publications do exist which have been helpful in meeting the challenges of conducting doctoral work in an area which is still under-explored.

Dominika Švecová's work on Třeštíková compares her approach to longitudinal filmmaking with fellow director Michael Apted, and appears in Kaňka et al (2015) *Autor, vize, meze, televize*. This contribution offers an overview of the *Etudy* cycles, with analysis of the impact of style on the documentarist's meaning. The conclusions to this piece, namely that the longitudinal method raises interesting questions on authenticity as set ideologies are difficult to maintain during such long processes, broadly correspond to the arguments which are made on page 38 onwards. Nevertheless, questions on artificial constructs within *Po dvaceti letech*, which are discussed on page 185, differ from those which are presented here. Although certain fulfilment criteria are addressed within the author's

¹⁷ Iordanova 2003: 19.

analysis, there is a greater interest in formal technique rather than fulfilment narratives.

A recent PhD thesis by Maja Hličišin Dervišević, published in English in 2014, has additionally proved useful in furthering the academic study of Třeštková films. This body of work is more technical than the approach taken in this thesis, owing to being less historical in nature, prioritising the impact of formal processes and techniques employed by the director and their relation to levels of authenticity. A number of case studies are used in her analysis, including *René* and *Katka* which are explored in Chapter Four, in addition to a brief discussion on *Manželské etudy*. Hličišin Dervišević's work has helped in supplementing analysis of spatial representations in *René* and *Katka*, but differs from what will be discussed in this thesis by not linking space to Třeštková's arguments of fulfilment, or of the transition to the market economy.

As hypothesised over the following four chapters, the use of space within Třeštková documentaries is a key component of differentiating the two historical periods that feature within her documentaries, and access to public and private spaces is significant in measuring the fulfilment experienced by the subjects of each documentary. As fulfilment is the primary focus of the research presented here, it serves to highlight the gap in literature on this topic, and the relationship between this fulfilment and Třeštková's overall narrative. As the remit for this PhD sets out in the following section, this thesis serves to fill this gap, and occupies a different role than either Švecová or Hličišin Dervišević, despite the usefulness of these contributions.

Třeštková's own book, *Časoběrný dokumentární film*, is co-authored with her husband Michael Třeštík and has been of great use to this project; particularly as it gives an insight into the director's own perspectives. The monograph, which is divided between scripts from documentaries and the documentarist outlining her own approach to making longitudinal films, provides a number of details into subject selection, conducting interviews and deliberate stylistic choices. However, when dealing with this source, a certain amount of caution must be taken when considering authorial intent. There are no guarantees that such retrospective writing actually reflects the intent of the filmmaker at the time,

and so a critical analysis is needed in order to sidestep this. Furthermore, the specificity of this thesis means that Třeštíková does not directly deal with issues of fulfilment in this book, but touches upon a number of different factors which, as will be argued, contribute towards the term as defined.

By analysing the monograph, it is also possible to reduce any overinterpretation of the director's intent. The issue of overinterpretation, where the viewer affixes an illicit meaning to a particular sequence which misjudges the intention of the director, will be discussed further in the methodology section. Equally as important as *Časosběrný dokumentární film* is an interview conducted for this thesis with the director in March 2017. This is subject to the same considerations as the book as a primary source, and was conducted to gain a more robust understanding of the director's working environment at Krátký film during normalisation, the challenges of censorship, and the changes to funding which occurred after 1989. The interview, which lasted around an hour and a quarter, was conducted in Czech, recorded and is affixed to this thesis.

The combination of the aforementioned literature sources, both pertaining to Třeštíková specifically and to documentary in general, supplement the use of a number of documentaries as the main means of critically analysing the fulfilment narratives that exist within her filmmaking. In turn, this is bolstered by a methodology which will emphasise the importance of 'reading' a film to concentrate upon the encoding by the director and how meanings are formulated. Above all, these aids will assist in creating a depth of analysis, and a focus on fulfilment, the specifics of which will now be addressed.

The Thesis Remit

The aim of this thesis is to analyse several longitudinal films by Helena Třeštíková in relation to narratives crafted around the idea of fulfilment, and how these narratives create a wider argument about the changing societal dynamics of Czech society. To do this, it will compare and contrast Třeštíková, her construction of documentaries, and her analysis of fulfilment; backgrounded

with examples of the prevalent documentary discourses of normalisation and post-normalisation. Analysis will also recognise the director's position as both a woman and longitudinal director, and how these factors have influenced her documentaries. In order to achieve this, the thesis will address the following three questions:

How was the narrative of normalisation constructed in propaganda films and television programmes, and what (if anything) changed in narratives put forward in post-normalisation?

This question reflects two distinct narratives that have come to the fore in the historical periods that Helena Třeštková has operated in. The first reflects the normalisation process within Czechoslovakia under state socialism, where a value system which heralded the superiority of the socialist system and the fulfilment of the populace was constructed and disseminated. To do this, censorship would play a key role in reducing any dissent towards regime values, resulting in a number of fiction and non-fiction films possessing a clear propagandistic narrative.

If Třeštková proposes an argument which is not found in the existing documentary films of the era, or more importantly, proposes a counter-narrative to those which exist in these films, then this must be measured against this wider library of cinematic output; and particularly between normalisation and post-normalisation. How, therefore, does the construction of film differ once the communist-led documentary industry is replaced by one with a different ideological outlook, and subject to different means of funding? By critically analysing several films from both pre- and post-89, certain patterns and particularities appear that indicate the approach to construction and narrative, firmly establishing the context which Třeštková has operated in throughout her career.

How are Helena Třeštková's longitudinal documentaries constructed in relation to the dominant narratives of documentary and television programmes of normalisation and post-normalisation?

This follows up the previous research question in dealing with the values which Třeštková features in her own documentaries, how they are constructed, and how they are designed to be decoded by the viewer. Research here is primarily interested in the similarities and differences in Třeštková's construction of films in relation to the wider oeuvre of Czech documentary, which leads to questioning how the various narratives are built by the director. Ideas around longitudinal film, in addition to self-reflexivity, are taken into account as critical techniques employed by Třeštková in achieving her aims around fulfilment.

If, as this thesis argues, the *Manželské etudy* cycle functions as a means of subverting normalisation values prevalent in 1980s cinematography, changes in technique and approach must take place in the years where the KSČ no longer governs with absolute power. As it stands to reason that after 1989 documentaries would not be subject to political censorship, and nor would they be made in order to promote the state socialist ideology, it is necessary to evaluate where Třeštková films are now positioned amongst these new features; and if there is a mimicry or similarity in the approach taken by other directors. Any evolutions of the documentary itself presents the researcher with a further insight into both the Czechoslovak transition in the documentary industry, and the wider historical changes of the Czech state - particularly illuminating due to the lack of film sources used in historical literature.

How does Třeštková engage with the concept of fulfilment, and what arguments are crafted through a focus on it?

Close viewings and textual analyses of Třeštková's work, alongside what the director has said herself, reveal the notion of fulfilment as an important and definitive theme of her longitudinal documentaries. It is therefore crucial to recognise what narratives emerge in relation to fulfilment as defined, and how these relate to the representations of subjects in the films which are explored.

Further study of this question will then expand to demonstrate how Třeštková's notions of fulfilment relate to wider constituencies both inside and outside the Czech Republic, and will address an emerging cycle; arguing that barriers to

fulfilment still exist amongst subject from either generation to generation, or from one socio-economic system to the next.

As previously mentioned, it would be difficult - if not impossible - to dedicate the required space to study the entirety of Třeštíková's extensive canon of documentaries. Because of this, care must be taken in the selection and justification of the films that will comprise the analysis in this thesis. As this project looks to examine normalisation and its aftermath, film selection must keep this in mind, in addition to longer longitudinal works where there is a degree of overlap, allowing the transition itself to be studied. The Třeštíková films used in this thesis are, in chronological order:

Manželské etudy (Marriage Stories, 1987)

Manželské etudy po dvaceti letech (Marriage Stories after Twenty Years, 2006)

René (2008)

Katka (2009)

Soukromý vesmír (Private Universe, 2011)

These films fall into three distinct chronological categories. The first, *Manželské etudy*, is confined exclusively to the normalisation period, having been shot from 1980 to 1986 before its initial broadcast a year later on Czechoslovak Television. The second cycle of these documentaries, *Manželské etudy po dvaceti letech* (herein referred to as *Po dvaceti letech* to avoid confusion between the two), is conducted over a similar timescale, but within the post-normalisation context between 1999 and 2005. This is a similar period to that explored in *Katka*, which begins in 1996, and the only documentary which is removed from a personal background in normalisation (as *Po dvaceti letech* continues the representations of the six couples in the original *Etudy* cycle and their children). In contrast, both *René* and *Soukromý vesmír* go across the transitional process, having been initiated before 1989.

There is a further diversity amongst these works in terms of who they intend to represent. Whereas the *Manželské etudy* cycle and *Soukromý vesmír* focus attention on what could be defined as the 'ordinary' citizen (in these instances couples beginning to raise a family), *René* and *Katka* represent marginalised protagonists and outsiders who were seldom seen during the KSČ's tenure, and who will continue to be sidelined in the following years. These representations of people on the fringes provide a window to observe the values which are widely accepted as a society, and how these may differ from their own lifestyles. Furthermore, the observation of families allows a broad representation of women, in addition to the specific story of Katka herself. As longitudinal works, they demonstrate many stylistic choices and techniques which the director has used throughout her career, and the different stages in which they have been adopted.

A number of documentaries of various styles and topics supplement the analysis of Třeštíková's work and seek to provide context and comparison. These include several documentaries acquired from the archives of Krátký film studios during the time of the director's employment there, featuring other woman filmmakers. When dealing with the post-normalisation environment and non-fiction film of the new millennium, this moves to investigating documentaries which appeared on Česká televize, the Czech Republic's public broadcaster, and feature length-films designed for cinema screening; which saw a significant increase from 2000 onwards. This also has the advantage of mirroring the selected Třeštíková films which comprise of two television cycles and three full-length feature documentaries.

The first chapter of this thesis establishes the methodological background to the approach of documentary film, and outlines several points concerning Třeštíková's style. Of particular interest is that of the longitudinal documentary itself; which must be defined and measured against other more common forms of non-fiction film. The strength of the longitudinal documentary, when combined with encoding strategies such as metanarration and self-reflexivity, reflect the director's influence of Dziga Vertov and the ideas of authenticity he promoted. It will also consider a key claim concerning longitudinal documentary and the inability to maintain a set ideological narrative over an extended period

of time. As strong gender themes exist throughout Třeštíková documentaries, Chapter One additionally explores aspects of gender and women documentarists from an international perspective, allowing a theoretical base for further discussions on gender in the Czechoslovak and Czech contexts in subsequent chapters - recognising the differences of filmmaking under different ideological systems.

Chapter Two, which builds on these conclusions, applies the methodology to the study of the normalisation period and the first *Manželské etudy* cycle. This is first built around an analysis of censorship and propaganda prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, noting the specific conditions afforded to filmmakers and the content and form of documentary films at this time. Particular to this is the concept of space, which is intrinsically linked to the dominant ideology of the state. It is therefore hypothesised that public spaces such as workplaces or town squares lack a diversity of opinion due to being firmly under KSČ control and subject to their own value system. By prioritising intimate, public spaces of subjects, and away from the larger narratives pushed by the regime, *Manželské etudy* subverts these values, and argues that normalisation fails to provide for the fulfilment needs of young couples - particularly evident when work, accommodation and gender are fully explored.

Chapter Three then turns to the post-1989 context and the transition to a market economy, where *Po dvaceti letech* revisits the subjects first encountered during the earlier *Manželské etudy* cycle. This period is noted for significant changes in the way that documentaries were funded and broadcast, and the important role taken by Česká televize in supporting the industry. With censorship no longer impacting on the form and content of documentaries, a variety of different narrational techniques are also exhibited which are not previously seen in the canon of Czech non-fiction film. In this new environment, the chapter notes that there are several key differences between the two *Etudy* cycles, most noticeably that a cyclical argument is established concerning fulfilment, complementing an increased representation of public space and self-reflexive practices. In contrast to newly emerging narratives vilifying communism and the Czechoslovak experience, and praising the new market economy, *Po dvaceti letech* argues that fulfilment is not necessarily attained by

this transition, and that issues and concerns which arise during the first cycle of documentaries often remain unsolved or are passed down to the next generation of Czechs.

Chapter Four completes the analysis of Třeštíková's documentaries by looking to *René*, *Katka* and *Soukromý Vesmír*. Alongside demonstrating the ability of the director to focus on additional sections of society - namely that of career criminals and drug users - the feature-length films allow clear cycles of fulfilment to be observed over one piece, instead of a series of episodes. This allows Třeštíková to concentrate on fulfilment and posit that marginalised individuals remain this way despite the significant changes which are occurring, and experience parallel yet connected cycles (continued addiction or habitual criminality). *Soukromý vesmír*, which returns to observing a family, provides a consistent representation over the initial transition period which the *Etudy* cycle does not show; and offers a strong continuation of the arguments made in Chapter Three on the cyclicity of fulfilment from generation to generation.

This thesis will then offer concluding remarks relating to the concept of fulfilment and the narratives which exist in Třeštíková documentaries, their differences to other non-fiction films of their respective periods, and provide closing comments on the use of the methodology in conducting similar research in the field.

Research Impact

Contributions to the study of Helena Třeštíková by Hličišin Dervišević and Švecová, as mentioned on pages 14 and 15, are to be welcomed for several reasons. Not only do they signify the beginning of a research interest in normalisation film and television (not to mention the director in particular), but also of the wider, international context of women documentarists. These are areas which have been rarely explored in academic discourse. While studies on gender and filmmaking exist, which will be discussed in Chapter One, they are from the perspective of feature film only; and this thesis will provide a further

international context to the study of women and cinema using the example of Czech non-fiction film. Furthermore, the longitudinal technique employed by Helena Třeštková is unique in Czech filmmaking, but not in the wider context of international documentary, making this project extremely relevant to this particular genre. Although several books investigating longitudinal documentaries exist, including Richard Kilborn's *Taking the Long View: A Study of Longitudinal Documentary* (2010), and several analyses which are specific to other projects, this technique continues to be underrepresented in academic writing. The isolation in which Třeštková documentaries were crafted, due to the closed nature of Czechoslovakia towards the west, further underpins the importance of this knowledge, providing an observation of how the director settled upon the specific techniques and approach she employs.

There are also linguistic issues to be taken into consideration. This introduction has referenced a number of authors and sources - both in English and Czech - pertaining to the fields of normalisation Czechoslovakia and Czech documentary film. However, there is still a clear lack of scholarship in comparison to other areas of Czech history, international documentary, and Czech cinema itself. This is particularly evident in the English language, where outside of a few journal contributions, scholarship on Czech and Czechoslovak documentary is non-existent. This thesis therefore intends to contribute towards filling a gap in research (in this case, concerning narratives of fulfilment in Třeštková documentaries), while simultaneously encouraging further studies to be conducted. It is hoped that this project will highlight that not only is study of normalisation and post-normalisation documentary interesting, but it is important - offering a methodological approach which can be replicated in other studies of longitudinal and non-fiction film; and providing valuable insight into how both historical periods are represented outside of the dominant value system of each era. It will also show the role which documentary has to play in the construction and representation of various groups against a backdrop of the larger histories of state socialism and liberal democracy.

Chapter One

Defining Třeštíková and the Longitudinal Approach

A representative and comprehensive analysis of Helena Třeštíková's longitudinal documentaries would be impossible to carry out without sufficiently referencing and engaging in the numerous issues that exist around the medium of documentary film. This thesis does not set out to offer a new definition or analysis of the documentary, but instead to highlight where Helena Třeštíková's filmmaking sits within the context of normalisation and post-normalisation; and what it offers to the understanding of documentaries produced under a system of censorship and of the market economy. As debates on documentary and representation are not confined to a single country, the advantages of exploring these areas is to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the longitudinal method as part of a wider international documentary context, and the ability to propose a framework which uses a multidisciplinary approach.

By defining Třeštíková's work in terms of longitudinal film, the following chapter's focus on case studies identifies certain technical and narrative aspects which are repeated throughout the chronological periods of the films, followed by their level of impact. The methodological approach, which this chapter will establish and justify, will set out the theoretical, interdisciplinary method of analysis required for a thesis of this particular remit, paying particular attention to the documentary as a 'text' which is encoded by the director and designed to be interpreted in a particular manner. It will compare and contrast works of Třeštíková with other contemporary longitudinal projects, highlighting the biographical nature of the medium and how this fits in with the director's own self-definition as chronicler, which is closely linked to her understanding of the term 'story'. From this, the case studies which are investigated in chapters Two, Three and Four can provide answers to the stated research questions based on a solid analytical framework.

Documentary as Asserted Veridical Representation

Definitions of documentary within the field of film and television studies have been contested and debated since initially applied by John Grierson, opining that documentaries reflected “the creative treatment of actuality”¹. As commented in the introduction to this chapter, assessing the merits and shortcomings of scores of documentary definitions cannot be adequately achieved within the remit of this research without doing a disservice to the outlined aims of this work. Nevertheless, a suitable definition is necessary in order to place Třeštíková and longitudinal documentary within the wider framework.

With this in mind, a suitable definition is offered by Plantinga, who recognises that documentaries are profilmic events that deal with representation:

I propose that the typical or usual documentary film be conceived as an asserted veridical representation, that is, as an extended treatment of a subject in one of the moving-image media, most often in narrative, rhetorical, categorical, or associative form, in which the film’s makers openly signal their intention that the audience (1) take an attitude of belief towards relevant propositional content (the “saying” part), (2) take the images, sounds, and combinations thereof as reliable sources for the formation of beliefs around the film’s subject and, in some cases, (3) take relevant shots, recorded sounds, and/or scenes as phenomenological approximations of the look, sound, and/or some other sense or feel of the pro-filmic event (the “showing” part).²

The author goes on to assert that traditional definitions are not particularly helpful, opining that it may be instead advantageous to define the various modes of documentary³ - something which will be returned to in a few paragraphs. There are, however, a lot of strengths to his claim. His definition of Asserted Veridical Representation (AVR) is categorised as follows:

Representation, that is, in the case of implicitly or directly asserted propositions, truthful; and in the case of images, sounds, or combinations thereof, a reliable guide to relevant elements of the profilmic scene or scenes. When a filmmaker presents a film as a documentary, he or she not only intends that the audience come to form certain beliefs, but also implicitly asserts something about the use of the medium itself - that the use of motion pictures

¹ Eitzen 1995: 81-82.

² Plantinga 2005: 115-116.

³ Ibid.

and recorded sounds offer an audiovisual array that communicates some phenomenological aspect of the subject, from which the spectator might reasonably be expected to form a sense of that phenomenological aspect and/or form true beliefs about that subject.⁴

What appears central to Plantinga's definition is that there is an argument involved - an assertion by the film's author(s) conveyed to the viewer - and the use of the film medium to enforce that assertion by means of picture and sound. This may also be true of fiction film, of which numerous examples could serve to demonstrate a director using the platform to argue a set of beliefs. What makes this definition different, however, is Plantinga's qualifier to the use, arguing that "the documentary is intended as a reliable account of, argument about, record of, or approximation of some aspect of the actual world"⁵, communicated by the "saying", or statement of belief, and the "showing", the reinforcement of such a belief by means of visual evidences.

This reflects and develops an earlier definition by Bill Nichols, who believes that the documentary is a "representation, case, or argument about the historical world", where "the images we see (and many of the sounds we hear) had their origin in the historical world"⁶. Although not an all-encapsulating definition, either from Nichols or Plantinga, this is to be expected from a genre that is extremely hard to define, and one which pigeonholing would do a disservice to the various scopes and remits of it. In Eitzen's discussion of Nichol's position - "the use of conventional means to refer to, represent, or make claims about historical reality"⁷ - there is a degree of ambiguity (recognising that fiction films can occupy a space within this idea), but by adopting Plantinga's concept of AVR this is solidified in terms of the work claiming a set of beliefs based in the reality that the documentarist finds themselves in; and their projection of said 'real' event through the medium of the film.

As the research presented here posits that Třeštíková employs fulfilment and the representations of subjects to create an argument about the historical world (in this case Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic) at two distinct historical

⁴ Ibid., 111.

⁵ Ibid., 115.

⁶ Nichols 1991: 18, 25.

⁷ Eitzen1995: 84.

junctures, this is especially welcome - particularly as over time the director recognises her own role in the historical work that her subjects inhabit. This self-reflexive understanding will now be analysed in more detail.

Self-Reflexivity as Documentary Mode

As referenced in the previous section, Plantinga believes that examining the different modes of documentary film is a more worthwhile endeavour than merely attempting to create an all-encompassing term for documentary itself. Bill Nichols's work within this field has been regarded as "the most influential conceptual mapping"⁸ of these modes (or subgenres) of film, and when applied to the output of documentary filmmakers, in this case Třeštíková, allow a platform where the strengths and weaknesses of the approach can be evaluated; particularly within the political and historical contexts that the films are a part of. This section will therefore discuss the modes Nichols describes that are relevant to Třeštíková, before analysing how this fits within the greater method of longitudinal filmmaking.

The six modes of documentary are set out in Nichols's *Introduction to Documentary*, and "establish a loose framework of affiliation within which individuals may work; they set up conventions that a given film may adopt; and they provide specific expectations viewers anticipate having fulfilled"⁹. The "looseness" of these modes again indicate the difficulties of defining such concepts in rigid and inflexible terms, and leaves open the idea that a film may transcend several of these modes within a specific piece or cycle. These modes, which Nichols argues are poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive and performative, are clearly and thoroughly introduced by the author, allowing this section of the thesis to explore the three which are relevant to Třeštíková: participatory, observational, and reflexive. As the earlier *Manželské etudy* cycle employs off-screen questions during interviews, and has at its core the necessity to form an author-subject relationship for an extended period of

⁸ Plantinga 2005: 105.

⁹ Nichols 2001: 99.

time, there are strong identifiable characteristics with the participatory mode - yet the development of technique over time, particularly the inclusion of the director into the films herself as seen in *Po dvaceti letech*, signify a large amount of self-reflexivity which questions the construction of the film and its narratives.

The style of the participatory mode is, according to Nichols:

cinéma vérité... As “film truth”, the idea emphasizes that this is the truth of an encounter rather than the absolute or untampered truth. We see how the filmmaker and subject negotiate a relationship, how they act toward one another, what forms of power and control come into play, and what levels of revelation or rapport stem from this specific form of encounter.¹⁰

Třeštíková’s relationships with her subjects has been well documented. As Švecová has noted, “Třeštíková’s subjects have, over the years, become her very close friends”¹¹, and the director herself states that as “The protagonist voluntarily gives up to the spectator a part of his life... a friendly, but also equal, relationship needs to be built” between subject and author¹². These relationships are critical in the successful completion of longitudinal film projects, which will be explored further in the section examining it, but also emphasises the reaction and representation of subjects that comprise the participatory mode. This connection separates the director’s work from what could be termed a ‘pure’ observational mode, where authorial control is “sacrificed to observing lived experience spontaneously” and “social actors engage with one another, ignoring the filmmakers”¹³. As engagement, and the visualisation, of Třeštíková increases over time, this engagement - such as questions in interviews being heard - develops to one where the director can clearly be understood as a participant within the documentary being shot.

A *cinéma vérité* direction of filmmaking has often and deliberately eschewed the ‘voice of God’ narrative techniques of the expository, or at times observational, documentary piece; understanding that such a voice is “privileged over the

¹⁰ Ibid., 117-118.

¹¹ Švecová 2011: 6.

¹² Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 47.

¹³ Nichols 2001: 110-111.

visual track and tends to become the dominant voice of the film”¹⁴. The consequence of this is that its employment becomes one of direct address from the narrator as opposed to one where subject dialogue and action is prioritised, thus altering any persuasive argument by the director on the historical world to one which is far more overt. Whereas this narration is often rejected in observational documentary, it has been argued that films of this mode “sacrifice conventional, polished artistic expression in order to bring back, as best they can, the actual texture of history in the making”¹⁵. A response to this latter concern has seen the reintroduction of direct address, this time by the subject, “prompted, it would seem, by these limitations of *cinéma vérité* or observational cinema”¹⁶, and used extensively throughout Třeštková films.

In addition, Nichols’s argument on self-reflexivity is closely in tune with Třeštková’s profilmic techniques. For him,

These new self-reflexive documentaries mix observational passages with interviews, the voice-over of the film-maker with intertitles, making patently clear what has been implicit all along: documentaries always were forms of representation, never clear windows into “reality”; the film-maker was always a participant-witness and an active fabricator of meaning, a producer of cinematic discourse rather than a neutral or all-knowing reporter of the way things truly are.¹⁷

In other words, Nichols finds self-reflexive documentary to be subjective. Observational passages and interviews make up large portions of the documentaries that Třeštková constructs, and the prime narratorial feature is provided by direct address from these interviews. These are divided into instances where the responses are given over footage gathered in an observational manner, and at other times where the subjects address a camera situated in front of them, with the director - who is not the camera operator - asking questions to one side of it¹⁸. What is interesting about these questions, however, is their increasing involvement in the Třeštková projects over time. While questions to subjects in the first *Manželské etudy* cycle, which takes place during normalisation, are almost all edited out (or are asked before the cameras

¹⁴ Kuhn 1978: 78.

¹⁵ Nichols 1983: 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁷ Nichols 1983: 18.

¹⁸ Třeštková’s positioning can clearly be seen in *Po dvaceti letech: Ivana a Václav*, at 38:16.

start rolling), there is an increasing prevalence of both voiced questions and director-subject interaction in subsequent projects, particularly if *Po dvaceti letech* is viewed in comparison. Furthermore, the use of intertitles also evolves to serve a different purpose, changing from serving a purely descriptive function to one that introduces irony and other subjective forms of narration. As these changes are presented within the documentary films and cycles, the visual presence of Helena Třeštíková appears further on screen, suggesting her role as the participant-witness and producer of discourse that Nichols refers to in his quote.

What now becomes clear, and what the thesis will continue to argue, is that Třeštíková “provoke(s) our awareness of social organization and the assumptions that support it”¹⁹, through a self-reflexive approach to documentary which has become increasingly more apparent due to the longitudinal format. This point will be developed further when this chapter moves to exploring longitudinal film, but it is apparent that self-reflexivity is a product of Třeštíková understanding her own involvement in her documentaries - by considering the relationships that have been forged over an extended period of time, her own presence on set as the filmmaker, and as a participant within the historical period that her films represent.

Vertov and the Influence of Self-Reflexivity on Třeštíková

Returning to *cinéma vérité* within the context of self-reflexivity, it is important to reflect upon the influence of Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov in Třeštíková’s approach. This is referenced in several quotes written by the director in her monograph on longitudinal documentary, *Časosběrný dokumentární film*:

At the time my studies at FAMU (Film Academy) in the early 70s I got interested in the movies of Dziga Vertov, and movies inspired by his creations, attributed to direct cinema or *cinéma vérité*. In my diploma thesis I also dealt with theoretical outcomes of these authors and this movement, the same goes for

¹⁹ Nichols 2001: 130.

its practical application. I was also interested in filmic observations of, “life caught in action”, “surprised life” (terms coined by Dziga Vertov).

I considered long-term filming as an opportunity to make real some of the ideas of creators who inspired me, such as Vertov or *cinéma vérité*, to “catch life in action”, “film people, who would not experience a thing”.²⁰

The term *cinéma vérité*, or direct cinema, has its origins in Vertov’s idea of *kino-pravda*, or “film truth”. What both terms have in common is the idea of reflexivity being at the core, something which Saunders says “bring[s] to the forefront the mechanics and/or intellectual methods of production and flaunt these as integral to the film’s epistemic honesty and hence effectiveness, entering into a dialogue about film, and film’s workings”²¹. Vertov’s extensive writings on film show noticeable disdain for “kinodrama” (fiction cinema), referring to it as “an opium for the people”²², and something which needed to be eradicated in favour of films with a higher moral and artistic standing:

WE proclaim the old films, based on the romance, theatrical films and the like, to be leprous.

-Keep away from them!

-Keep your eyes of them!

-They’re mortally dangerous!

-Contageous!

WE affirm the future of cinema art by denying its present. “Cinematography must die so that the art of cinema may live. *We call for its death to be hastened.*”²³

To combat this, Vertov’s *kino-pravda* embodied both a theoretical approach to the medium, and would also be the name of his newsreels primarily shot and screened in the 1920s. The objective here was to create film pieces which were grounded in reality or “life caught unawares”, assembled via the editing process to make sense; and crucially to the definition of documentary on page 25, (and in

²⁰ Třeščíková and Třeščík 2015: 3.

²¹ Saunders 2010: 28-29.

²² Barsam, in Saunders 2010: 36.

²³ Michelson (ed.) 1984: 7.

contrast to the older Soviet newsreels that came before Vertov) had a “mobilisation of film’s persuasive power”²⁴ - or in other words, an argument. For Vertov, the camera, or *kino-eye*, was something considered “more perfect than the human eye”²⁵, particularly as the director or editor possesses the ability to expand the role of the camera, expanding or refining the image, experimenting with lighting or other techniques. In reference to this, Vertov comments that “We cannot improve the making of our eyes, but we can endlessly perfect the camera”²⁶. His writings on *The Birth of Kino-Eye* in 1924, concretise this understanding:

Not kino-eye for its own sake, but truth through the means and possibilities of film-eye, i.e. *kinopravda* [“film-truth”].

Not “filming life unawares” for the sake of the “unaware”, but in order to show people without masks, without makeup, to catch them through the eye of the camera in a moment when they are not acting, to read their thoughts, laid bare by the camera.

Kino-eye as the possibility of making the invisible visible, the unclear clear, the hidden manifest, the disguised overt, the acted nonacted; making falsehood into truth.

Kino-eye as the union of science with newsreel to further the battle for the communist decoding of the world, as an attempt to show the truth on the screen - Film-truth.²⁷

Further to this was the publishing of the *Cine-Eyes Field Manual*, which offered instructions of several techniques which included “filming unawares”, “filming from an open observation point”, and “filming when the attention of the subjects is diverted naturally/artificially”²⁸. These are set out deliberately as an attempt to reduce performative elements while filming as means of accentuating the “truth” of Vertov’s work and to distance it from the “leprous” fiction films he rallied against. These techniques may well reduce the performative aspect, which is also a hallmark of *cinema vérité*, particularly this

²⁴ Hicks 2007: 23.

²⁵ Saunders 2010: 36.

²⁶ In Cook 2007: 83.

²⁷ Michelson 1984: 41-42.

²⁸ Hicks 2007: 25.

term as witnessed in Czechoslovakia, with films that featured non-actors and cameras which kept rolling when the cast were unaware.

The Czechoslovak New Wave, which will be briefly discussed in the next section, is another influence on Třeštíková's style. However, despite the reduction of performative aspects within a documentary or feature, the adoption of certain *cinéma vérité* techniques does not stop the piece from being either constructed or a representation as opposed to objective 'truth'. Indeed, Vertov himself references that the editing process alters the supposed reality of the *kino-eye*, noting that "Kinopravda is made of footage just as a house is made with bricks. With bricks one can make an oven, a Kremlin wall and many other things. One can build various film-objects from footage."²⁹ His argument, however, is that taking this so-called 'truth' from the camera (eye), creatively treating it, and creating a film from it, produces *kinopravda* and thus an authentic representation.

These ideas are particularly relevant to Třeštíková's style and approach. In considering the concept of "life caught unawares" which the director reveals an interest in, Bruzzi argues that "documentaries are inevitably the result of the intrusion of the film-maker onto the situation being filmed"³⁰. Although the director has discussed her aims of "capturing reality"³¹, she rejects Vertov's proposal of filming unawares:

I have never used it [a hidden camera], I think it's unethical. It's only justified when used to reveal a crime, but in a normal documentary it's absolutely repulsive. My characters always know what we were doing and I invite them into the editing room for authorisation.³²

Unlike Vertov, and particularly his works such as *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), Třeštíková's style lacks much of the unconventional editing techniques and montage sequences, instead opting for techniques that Nichols associates

²⁹ Michelson 1984: 45.

³⁰ In Hicks 2007: 23-24.

³¹ Černá 2012.

³² Červinková 2012.

with the observational mode. Nevertheless, there are several aspects which both directors hold in common.

The first is that Vertov and Třeštíková employ strategies, mostly through editing, intertitles and so on, to make their documentaries persuasive. It is arguable that this is similar to many films and filmmakers, considering that most documentaries seek to make an argument based on the historical world, yet as a noted influence on Třeštíková, there is a distinct and direct link here. For Vertov, the persuasive aspect of film involved pioneering work in newsreels as well as his own experimental works, which more often than not made arguments to the supremacy of the Soviet system. His 1926 film *A Sixth Part of the World*, a travelogue featuring the different peoples of the Soviet Union, is presented, argues Sarkisova, as “Opposite “Capital”, the Soviet World is presented as a site where spatial variety, economic diversity, and cultural richness never threaten the unity of the variegated parts”³³. Vertov’s quotes which talk of *kino-eye* as “further[ing] the battle for the communist decoding of the world” firmly places the director into the communist camp, seeing his film work as advancing the Soviet interpretation of the Marxist worldview. This is, of course, different than the work of Třeštíková, who instead provides a counter-narrative to mainstream media interpretations on Czechoslovak society; and later, a counter-argument to documentary discourse on fulfilment that emerges post-89.

Furthermore, both directors profess a desire to observe subjects in what they deem as the most authentic way as possible. Třeštíková’s intention “to think of how to make the most authentic and truest picture”³⁴ will be revisited later in this and subsequent chapters, but its inclusion at this junction demonstrates an affinity shared with Vertov - the idea of capturing real people in everyday life - and conduct this in a way which is self-reflexive. Of course, the idea of “real” is based heavily on the subjective views of the documentarists - whereas Vertov wishes to highlight the “truth” of Soviet communism, Třeštíková subverts the propaganda of the Czechoslovak state and argues that the post-normalisation ideologies do not necessarily fill the void in terms of fulfilment.

³³ Sarkisova 2007: 28.

³⁴ Černá 2012.

It is therefore important to view the projects within their own historical contexts, and particularly the cinematic context in which they originate. As Vertov's experimentations and development of the *kino-eye* is a reaction to feature film and newsreels of the silent, early days of cinema, Třeštíková documentaries are distinct as longitudinal projects within Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic: created from the different backdrops of state socialism and the market economy, emerging ideas of freedom of speech, and a domestic documentary industry which has transformed from its former function of creating pieces which did not seek to challenge the monopoly of the KSČ.

Longitudinal Documentary

The introductory remarks of this thesis mentioned that academic discourse towards longitudinal documentary is not as comprehensive as other studies into non-fiction cinema, despite a growing number of projects that have taken place throughout the world since the term was coined. In discussing the medium it is important to recognise the various techniques and approaches that longitudinal documentarists advocate in the shooting and production of these significant bodies of work, and in the case of this research, how longitudinal film aids the reflexivity and legitimacy of Helena Třeštíková's narrative. This sub-chapter investigates the existing literature defining longitudinal film and its characteristics, and how these relate to Třeštíková documentaries, noting other longitudinal projects and issues concerning participants and ideological narrative.

According to research offered by Skillander and Fowler³⁵, the origins of the term 'longitudinal' in relation to film come from a newspaper review in 1985 of Michael Apter's *Up* series, despite work of this nature having been produced since the 1960s. His series, following the lives of a group of children at seven-year intervals, began on Granada Television in the United Kingdom in 1964, and the last documentary in the series (at the time of writing), *56 Up*, was broadcast in 2012. Within critical study of longitudinal film, the *Up* series has enjoyed the

³⁵ Skillander and Fowler 2015: 127-142.

majority of exploration and research, due to its position as one of the earliest longitudinal projects and, perhaps, its accessibility as an English-language cycle; yet other documentaries, which include Třeštíková's films, have also received some level of attention. These include - but are not limited to - Winfried and Barbara Junge's *The Children of Golzow (Die Kinder von Golzow)*, a study of children in the German Democratic Republic which took place between 1961 and 2005, and the *Jordbro* series, directed by Rainer Hartleb. Like Apted, Hartleb follows children from the age of seven years old from 1982 until the present, with the last instalment broadcast in 2014. Analysis of these existing projects and others yield important points that can equally apply to Třeštíková as a director, and will be returned to shortly.

The term 'longitudinal' does not relate to cinema alone, but has seen extensive use in fields such as social science and psychology, where it describes a repeated observation over a series of time - a definition which also neatly describes many documentaries which fall under this banner. Carrying the terminology over to film, Kilborn regards longitudinal documentaries as films which either "chronicle developments in a specific local (or national) context by returning to people and places on a more or less regular basis", or "instances where filmmakers revisit material that has been shot many years previously and produce a new film that contains a critical re-evaluation of the earlier footage"³⁶³⁷. Stella Bruzzi, who writes about the *Hoop Dreams* longitudinal study in addition to *Up*, argues that such longitudinal projects serve "as social documents, detailing specific aspects of the English and American class and racial systems respectively and although neither is an overtly political documentary, both share and interest in the personal impact of politics and political issues"³⁸.

This quote resonates in considering Třeštíková and the environment of normalisation and post-normalisation, where arguments which have a politicised aspect are communicated through the exploration of subjects, their private lives and their relation to wider spaces. To give a brief example which will be built

³⁶ Kilborn 2010: 11.

³⁷ This is in specific reference Eduardo Coutinho's film *Twenty Years Later (1985)*, but could refer to any documentary project that revisits, or continues to revisit, a location or participants over an extended period.

³⁸ Bruzzi 2006: 88.

upon further in the next chapter, the ideologically-driven society under normalisation - the socio-political context of *Manželské etudy* - is one which subjects, and by extension Třeštíková as a director in this historical period, cannot help but allude to, considering the impact that the state has on employment, gender and other discourses. Due to the role of censorship under normalisation, and the director's desire to prioritise spaces that are removed from some of the more excessive ideological domains (for instance workplaces and public buildings), these narrative utterances are indirect or subverted, but inevitably engage with the regime's narrative on several levels.

Despite the emergence of longitudinal documentaries two decades before *Manželské etudy*, the director was unaware of the medium and its application to film. This is made clear as at the time of her initial explorations into the medium "We knew no method of long-term documentary technique from abroad"³⁹. According to her, there were two reasons for exploring, and subsequently adopting, this approach:

I'd say I was inspired by curiosity. As a FAMU student, I'd seen a time-lapse film but this was in nature, a plant being planted, then blossoming and then withering. And I thought this anomaly would make a terribly interesting and beneficial film, so why couldn't it be applicable to humans?⁴⁰

I originally made a fifteen-minute documentary about how motherhood changes a woman. When I finished in 1975, I decided to watch the child and family further; on their own without any official support. It was the first time that I realised the possibilities of 'time and film' - that film can record the changes that happen in life, and when condensed, it could be interesting. My thoughts were a completely unfounded practice for me and everyone else, because at the time no one here had done anything like this before.⁴¹

These developments, originating from her studies as a student of documentary film, gave rise to the application of the term *časoběrný* (literally *time-collecting*) into the Czech lexicon with regards to film:

In the Czech Republic the term *časoběrný film*, long-term observation film, has originally been used for natural scientific motion pictures, which are known in English as *time-lapse films*. I first coined the term longitudinal documentary film in the 80s in reference to shooting my first long-term project *Manželské*

³⁹ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 8.

⁴⁰ Červinková 2012.

⁴¹ Černá 2012.

etudy. In English terminology, such long-term social studies are being called *long-term observations*. In the Czech Republic we are going to stick to our term *časosběrný*, which has found its place in public use.⁴²

The director also mentions, in this same monograph, the influence of keeping a diary in developing an interest in longitudinal studies. As diary entries involve the “caption of a topic, opinion or mood of a particular moment”, it is possible to “observe change, evolution and progress” over time, including the “clashes and mingling of the large and minor, more intimate events with the background of larger public, society-changing events serving as a contrast”⁴³. In this quote Třeštková provides both a succinct example of her motivations towards adopting a longitudinal method, and indicating the link to politics and society as discussed by Bruzzi. Although not directly influenced by the longitudinal projects of directors such as Apted and Winfried and Barbara Junge, many of the theoretical practices and issues around longitudinal documentary can be witnessed within Třeštková’s documentaries, and which will now be analysed in the following sub-chapter.

However, it is clear that the motivations of the director in undertaking longitudinal documentary projects rests on an interest in the progression of time, the changes to subjects over such a period, and crucially, the motivations - internal or external - that lead to such changes taking place. It also provides an early indicator as to why Třeštková embraces the term ‘chronicler’ with respect to her documentaries, which will be returned to on page 44.

Longitudinal Documentary and Ideology

A pertinent topic in longitudinal documentary is the question of ideology and intent- if what once was initiated (either as a one-off broadcast or otherwise) to try and advance a certain belief or argument has changed or altered in terms of political or social outlook due to the medium of the method. In an era where the state’s narrative and its implementation had a significant effect on both

⁴² Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 1.

⁴³ Ibid.

filmmakers and their subjects, the idea that politicised filmic arguments based on Czechoslovak politics and society may not be maintained appears to be counterintuitive. Yet, as has been alluded to on several occasions, the altering or diminishing of an ideological narrative in longitudinal documentary has occurred in other projects, warranting an investigation in terms of the medium in addition to the position documentary possesses within the dominant narrative or values of the historical period(s) it is based upon.

For directors and producers of documentaries, Rosenthal opines that:

One of the more difficult problems for documentary filmmakers is finding structure where there is no obvious approach. The previous chapter discussed a proposal for a film about a university whose object was simply to portray the university to a general audience. A film of this sort has no natural structure; depending on the writer, it could go in almost any direction.⁴⁴

This is a useful insight into the documentary film process, and where the *Up* series serves as a good example in terms of long-term observation. Apted's original idea was not merely to portray the lives of his subjects to an audience: although a biographical view emerged and dominated once the project took the form of a longitudinal project, it was designed as a standalone documentary looking at two groups of children from different sides of the British class spectrum. Once *Up* was transformed into a longitudinal series, the ideological, class-driven focus of the work waned in favour of personal stories and individual narratives of the project's subjects, which became far more diverse than a rigid study where subjects fell into one of two social strata.

When interviewed, Apted has explained the political nature of the initial piece, both in its direction and selection of observational subjects:

...maybe the original choice had been politically self-serving. But Grenada had wanted to make a political point about the British class system, which I was happy to go along with. We chose the kids from the two extremes of society, which rather proved and argued our point.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Rosenthal 2002: 65.

⁴⁵ In Bruzzi 2007: 88.

The intended one-off special, as part of Grenada Television's *World in Action* current affairs programme, was revisited in 1970 out of apparent curiosity⁴⁶ and has now continued to its eighth broadcast in the cycle. *Seven Up*, the first episode, is still important when considering the series as a whole, as "it remains the moment when the series' view of the children - regardless almost of what these interviewees do in their lives - was fixed"⁴⁷. The style compounds this by being expository, something which "addresses the viewer directly, with titles or voices that advance an argument about the historical world"⁴⁸, in an attempt at "critiquing the social delineations that governed Britain in 1964"⁴⁹. Despite the focus on the subjects, expository documentaries are also shaped around the viewer, the 'voice of God' narration becoming the dominant voice, as referenced earlier. Naturally, this allows any ideological rhetoric on behalf of the director to shine through if desired: Bruzzi cites Moran in the claim that "leading questions" in *Seven Up* "reveal the programme's class agenda"⁵⁰.

A significant change in the *Up* series, however, is how the initial expository mode has not resulted in the other programmes of the series being as ideologically driven. Skillander and Fowler note that the series loses its original political intent "because as it develops so it evacuates any social, political and cultural context beyond that referred to in interviews"⁵¹. Narration by Apted will inevitably take a significant position within the documentary's voice, yet this control is wrestled away in part as the biological and biographical nature of longitudinal films allows for personalisation - the ageing of the subjects over time and the ability to give answers to interview questions helps to retain the focus on the individuals featured as opposed to the director alone. The person-oriented direction which *Up* undertook strengthened due to the director's choice to take more of an interview-based approach from the second episode (*Seven Plus Seven*, or *14 Up* as it would later be known), allowing the films to maintain an interest in the lives of the respondents as opposed to the overt politics *Seven Up* started as⁵². Furthermore, the seven-year gap between episodes "not only

⁴⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁸ Nichols 1991: 34.

⁴⁹ Bruzzi 2007: 49.

⁵⁰ In Bruzzi 2006: 88.

⁵¹ Skillander and Fowler 2015: 151.

⁵² Kilborn 2010: 74.

allowed ample time for a significant amount of narrative material to accumulate, it was also long enough for those tell-tale physical signs of ageing to be discernible on subjects' faces"⁵³. From this it is clear to see how this longitudinal form has affected ideology - the focus on people's lives has, over time, become the point of interest rather than a pre-conceived political viewpoint, the focus being aided by the representations of time within a longitudinal work. The waning of ideology is also reflected by "the richness of the material and the fascinated engagement of viewers"⁵⁴ in the cycle, which has in turn widened the documentarist's initial remit as these personal stories develop over this extended period.

Up provides one explanation and example of the difficulties of sustaining ideology through a work which maps several decades. However, returning once again to the notion that documentaries pose an argument on the historical world, ideology is not entirely eliminated from longitudinal documentaries - either in the dominant political narratives of the time period they represent, or the ideology of the filmmaker whose own narrative can support or oppose this. Whereas Apted's subsequent documentaries following *Seven Up* see the scope of the project move away from the rigidity of class-dominant narratives, this does not mean that the question of class disappears from the other eight *Up* films, nor does it remove the director from periods in which class was a significant factor in British societal discourse.

This is equally true for Helena Třeštíková. Although the director employs the use of intimate, private spaces, in part as an attempt to diminish the influence of the communist-led narrative that dominates the more public sphere (as Chapter Two will deal with comprehensively), issues of the ideologically-rigid regime under normalisation still play a significant part in the *Manželské etudy* cycle. Equally true is the affect that transitioning to a post-communist society has on the subjects in later features. As analysis in the next chapter reveals, the role of censorship under normalisation plays a critical role here, which can often manifest as self-censorship - indicative of the entrenchment of the KSČ in its attempt to dominate political and societal narratives. This is not something

⁵³ Ibid., 75.

⁵⁴ Skillander and Fowler 2015: 130.

experienced by Apted, but even with a rigid environment of propaganda and censorship, ideological arguments, centred around fulfilment, are still significant in Třeštíková's normalisation films; eventually leading to different narratives being constructed after 1989. Just as Apted was a part of the same British society as his documentary subjects in *Up*, so is Třeštíková and her own subjects, making the longitudinal projects inescapable from the wider historical and political context.

Central and Eastern European ideology also factors into the work of Barbara and Wilfried Junge. Beginning in 1961, the couple began shooting a documentary series based on East Germans growing up in the small town of Golzow, Brandenburg. With the last film being released in 2007, *The Children of Golzow* has currently amassed forty-six years of coverage, featuring important socio-political events such as life in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is a useful point of comparison and contrast for several reasons.

The first, perhaps most pertinent, of these points is that it shares with Třeštíková the longitudinal approach to representing subjects, within an authoritarian regime that subscribed to a similar communist ideology before its replacement by a market economy. Furthermore, despite taking several years to be put into fruition, the series was also imagined as a longitudinal study as opposed to a standalone feature⁵⁵, allowing for comparison in terms of maintaining ideology and focus between it and equivalent films which transitioned to become long-term observations. Although *Up* and *The Children of Golzow* share a resemblance inasmuch as both projects begin with school-aged children, *Golzow* differs from Apted in using children from one community group and not selecting a sample based on perceived class differences⁵⁶.

Existing literature on *The Children of Golzow* emphasises the unique environment that the series aims to portray, summed up neatly by Byg:

The experience of these East Germans also traces a much more dramatic portion of European experience in the twentieth century: the development

⁵⁵ Kilborn 2010: 39.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

from a relatively agrarian area on the Polish border to an industrial and high-tech society, the social history of German socialism, its collapse, and the experience of German reunification.⁵⁷

For reasons of brevity it would be impossible to give a comprehensive account of the various particulars of the GDR's experience of socialism, but there are several elements which link it to Czechoslovakia: both countries spent several decades under the Soviet sphere of influence, including membership of the Warsaw Pact; both regimes implemented various restrictions on social and political criticism, and both underwent significant changes after 1989. Like Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, the GDR and reunified Germany witnessed differing narratives throughout its history, and both Třeštíková and the Junges continued their documentaries after the Velvet Revolution and fall of the Berlin Wall, concentrating their filmic work on how their subjects adapted (and continue to adapt) to the changes that these events brought. While still remaining pieces that are influenced by politics, both film cycles suggest how initial projects of this nature evolve to become biographical and led by the personal stories of the subjects, and their relationship with the wider socio-political environment.

These examples should be noted in that they highlight how a fascination with the documentary subject(s) and their personal experience becomes a significant focus in the longitudinal format, which then reduces or neutralises the original ideological intent of a project or film - particularly when it evolves from a short study into a long-term work. In the case of *The Children of Golzow*, however, the omnipresence of an authoritarian system for several decades maintains an ideological backbone to the work, in a similar fashion to Třeštíková's normalisation pieces, reflecting that both sets of directors are also living an experience relatable to their subjects, and depending on broadcast, their viewership.

⁵⁷ Byg 2001: 128.

Třeštíková as ‘Chronicler’ in Longitudinal Documentary

When discussing Třeštíková’s documentary work it is important to consider the self-definition of the director as a ‘chronicler’. In an interview in the magazine *Kafe*, she states that:

I depict myself as a chronicler, confining myself to the Czech Republic, human interest stories and social issues. There is a little sociology there, though it a bigger part of more samples. But I always try to deal with topics that capture time and contemporary trends.⁵⁸

The mention of social issues again reflects the director’s analysis of fulfilment and its relation to the dominant social-political narratives of the time, but this quote also serves to indicate a term that is particularly relevant to the longitudinal form. In addition, the term ‘chronicler’ is closely related to Třeštíková’s desire “to make the most authentic and truest picture” in her documentaries⁵⁹. During normalisation, she mentions that “I tried to search for a possibility how to authentically capture such an era by delicate systematic work”, and that overall “The purpose of filming is to capture the reality as authentically as possible and get close to its true development and to the needs of main protagonists”⁶⁰. These desires for authenticity again stem from her influence of Dziga Vertov and his approach to representation.

A dictionary understanding of chronicler is likely to be connected to the recording of particular historic events, yet will be different when applying such an understanding to film. As documentaries are concerned with the idea of representation, any notions of objectivity which may arise through the use of ‘historical record’ does a disservice to the other profilmic events that comprise an asserted veridical representation. Therefore, when dealing with the notion of a chronicle, it becomes clear that any historical record that is claimed must be shaped by the documentarist in terms of argument - in other words, the film chronicle relates to how a documentarist represents their subject(s) and what such a representation is intended to mean. On this point the example offered by Eric Barnouw is particularly useful. In discussing the use of historical artefacts in

⁵⁸ Černá 2012.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 7, 34.

documentary film, Barnouw defines filmmakers as “film chroniclers” who are “evoking” experiences⁶¹. To demonstrate this, he references the Yugoslav documentary *Apel (Roll Call, 1964)*, where director Vera Jocić “evoked the experience of a World War II concentration camp” by featuring sculptures of Veda Jocić, a sculptor (of no relation to the director) who was imprisoned in Auschwitz and Ravensbrück; an approach where “the film chronicler learned to consider almost any historic relic or artifact (*sic*) a potential narrative instrument”⁶².

Here, Jocić as chronicler uses the sculptures of Jocić, the sculptor, to construct a narrative which is a representation of the latter’s internment, thus providing an interpretation of this particular historical event. Barnouw communicates that the issue is not one of objectivity, but one of the process of representation itself, and that a wide variety of historical sources (such as the artefacts referenced here) may well be used as narrative devices in the construction of a documentary piece. This in itself reflects upon a wider discussion of history, and whether, in a written or recorded form, it can ever be objective. Such points merit a wider discussion in a more appropriate format than this thesis on Třeštíková, but a good summary of the arguments (albeit one lacking in modern scholarship) can be encountered in Blake (1955), with Bevir (1994) providing a more up-to-date, philosophical perspective.

As Třeštíková applies a range of narrative devices and technique in her work, elements of Barnouw’s example can be witnessed, as there are several instances across the longitudinal documentaries which see items (in Barnouw’s case ‘artefacts’) being treated in a similar manner: the accommodation of subjects during normalisation and post-normalisation, or specific cherished items such as vehicles or cameras, become tools with which a greater argument or narrative can be crafted, serving to “evoke” experiences in such a way that they are perceived as authentic, or persuasive, historical contributions. Based on this interpretation, it can be argued that Barnouw would agree that Třeštíková also becomes a “film chronicler”.

⁶¹Barnouw 1983: 205.

⁶²Ibid.

To expand on these ideas, and particularly towards longitudinal documentary, Kilborn summarises another crucial argument concerning the director as chronicler, and whether documentaries can serve such a function:

By tracing the manner in which subjects, over an extended period, respond to the demands of the changing times, long docs supposedly not only give us insight into how adept individuals are at adjusting to new situations; they also provide a socio-political record of the times themselves. One does well, however, to treat these claims with some circumspection. As already suggested, projects which start life with a distinct sociological orientation have a habit of slowly transmuting into works with a far more biographical inclination.⁶³

The latter point Kilborn makes is reflected in the previous sub-chapter of this research, where the longitudinal format is seen to diminish in terms of ideological outlook as the project progresses in favour of the biographical notion of storytelling - particularly true for documentaries that were not initially envisioned as longitudinal pieces. The *Up* series, for instance, sees “the initial chronicling intentions of the author [are] slowly subsumed into a more person-centred documentary account”⁶⁴. This is different to films by Třeštková, given the director’s intention to create longitudinal documentaries from the outset, yet there are similarities here. In comparing and contrasting the two *Manželské etudy* and *Po dvaceti letech* cycles, Švecová opines that “the meaning of the films has changed considerably. The original political intention is lost”⁶⁵. The following two chapters will expand on this in more robust terms, particularly as it can be interpreted in a problematic fashion - the cycles have certainly changed, but in terms of political argument and a cyclical notion of fulfilment, as opposed to a set ideology which has been lost - but what it does show is the changing direction that longitudinal projects can take over time due to their biographical nature of representation, and how they interact with the wider socio-political environment around them.

Nevertheless, the fact that longitudinal documentaries tend to become biographically-centred does not necessarily inhibit them from serving a chronicling function - placing a subject in the centre of a film does not eliminate them from the socio-political environment they inhabit. Třeštková herself has

⁶³ Kilborn 2010: 17-18.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁵ Švecová 2011:22.

said that as a chronicler, her interests are rooted in both human interest stories and Czech social issues⁶⁶, and these two features are distinctly intertwined in the films that she directs. Normalisation's political orthodoxy, in which practically everything in society served some sort of political function, gave way to the dramatic changes of political narrative in the post-89 context, and are impossible to separate from the lives of documentary subjects; as these impacts upon their lives (the fulfilment criteria identified in the introduction, for example) must be accounted for.

The standalone films of Chapter Four have strong claims towards chronicling the transition from state socialism to the market economy and observing its effect on the documentary protagonists, in addition to that of Třeštíková who adopts self-reflexivity to feature further in her own films⁶⁷. The omnipresence of the state during normalisation raises the additional question of censorship and the ideological constraints put on the director, which will be returned to in due course, and the changing environment of the documentary film process as post-normalisation and the transition takes effect. What is clear, and a key component of the following two chapters on *Manželské etudy* and *Po dvaceti letech*, is that the ideological narratives prevalent during the shooting and editing of the films are too strong to be completely sidelined by the biographical nature of longitudinal works.

This political atmosphere is similar to that of *The Children of Golzow*, particularly due to both documentarists experiencing pivotal upheavals during the course of the project, yet differing in the Junges operating under three uninterrupted decades of communist-driven society as opposed to the years of normalisation with Třeštíková. Such a highly ideological environment, in addition to ideas of chronicling, can be found in Byg's analysis of the documentary:

In the 1993 film *Drehbuch: Die Zeiten*, Junge quotes his mentor Karl Gass more specifically than in the GDR-era material: "We expected to be able to show with the example of the *Oderbruch*⁶⁸ the development and progress of socialism:

⁶⁶ Černá 2012.

⁶⁷ As will be argued when discussing *René*, Třeštíková will become a subject in the documentary herself.

⁶⁸ *Oderbruch* refers to an area in Eastern Germany, the location of *Golzow*; and *Drehbuch: Die Zeiten* (1993) and *Lebensläufe. Die Geschichte der Kinder von Golzow in einzelnen Porträts* (1980) are two constituent instalments of the *Golzow* series.

thus we had a tremendous amount of trust”. The film was thus meant to show how farmers, partly coming from the former Eastern territories of Germany, were transformed into model industrial workers or collective farmers. Heinz Klunker connects both sides of the equation, the typical *and* the individual: “For with *Lebensläufe* the village chronicle had become a national chronicle, the biographies took on a more GDR-typical coloration with an accompanying loss of individual emphasis. That they remain, like any other biography of former GDR citizens, life stories *sui generis*, is something that many of the ‘other’ Germans after the so-called *Wende* still have to learn.”⁶⁹

The working conditions under which Winfried and Barbara Junge conducted *The Children of Golzow*, according to the former’s statement, is closely related to the same work and practices of normalisation Czechoslovakia, where “The only documentary biographies were about the heroes of the working class; movies about emigrants who had betrayed their country by leaving or, in case they didn’t make it, admitted their mistakes and returned to Czechoslovakia to repent for their sins”⁷⁰. By being placed in these historical worlds, both Třeštková and the Junges offer a representation of the life of subjects within these particular systems.

Furthermore, Kilborn has highlighted the chronicling qualities of the documentary cycle in that their biographical focus creates a representation of the historical times⁷¹. This, however, is not exclusive to the subjects, or the initial subjects of the documentary and their interaction within this observed environment. As self-reflexivity has shown, and the directorial understanding of the process involved in the construction of these projects, there is also the representation of the wider field of historical and ideological narrative:

Viewed from the present, post-communist perspective, *The Children of Golzow* has proved to have an additional chronicling function. It provides, namely, some revealing insights into the media environment in which it was produced, especially the difficulties that filmmakers face when working under conditions of quite strict state censorship.⁷²

From this it is clear that Třeštková films, also subject to censorship and ideological challenges in their production, occupy a similar role within normalisation; and in a similar way to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the

⁶⁹ Byg 2001: 132.

⁷⁰ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 6.

⁷¹ Kilborn 2010: 17.

⁷² Kilborn 2010: 19.

reunification of Germany experienced by the Junges, a changing society and environment after 1989, with the altering constraints that this has on film and television. If Třeštíková is a chronicler, it is not only towards the private and intimate lives of her subjects, or even herself once she becomes a constituent part of the documentaries, but also of the wider environment.

Once again, documentary is confronted with the issue of argument. As this chapter has argued at several junctures, the dominant idea of narrative and Třeštíková's "most authentic and truest picture" is based on an argument set *in* the historical world represented and based *upon* it. Central to this is the persuasive function of the argument itself. Therefore, if chronicling is to be interpreted as objective historical reality through film, it is difficult, if not impossible, for any documentary to make such a claim; and Třeštíková (and indeed Winfried and Barbara Junge) could not be included within such a definition. However, such a simplistic understanding of the term and of wider documentary representation does not apply here.

As Třeštíková follows the lives of her subjects, she invokes several arguments about fulfilment based upon the historical society as represented in the documentary (as interpreted by both herself and her subjects) and the interaction between subjects and this society. In doing this, she creates a historical record based on such an interpretation in a similar way to a historian, particularly in the biographical nature of a longitudinal film that can be compared in some respects to an oral history. Because of this, it seems reasonable that Třeštíková's documentary films do serve a chronicling function.

Even with this understanding of chronicling, it is unclear as to whether these points are considered by the director. What seems probable in the context of the director is that the term is employed as a means to communicate a precedence of private, biographical narratives and the exploration of subjects, their relationships and private lives as opposed to a larger, societal or politically-dominated subject. Třeštíková's ideas as a chronicler thus appear interlinked to her notion of the story, which is a central focus of her work. A sub-chapter in the director's monograph which deals with these issues, furnishes the reader with Třeštíková's own thoughts on its usage:

We ourselves are a story, which we tell about ourselves. By the way how we connect particular episodes in our own memory, we interpret ourselves. We configure this seemingly chaotic bunch of information into a form of story that becomes our identity... We are not only living surrounded by stories, but even ourselves, we are a part of larger stories. Since long time, not only the individual experience, but even the experience and self-identification of humanity as a whole is being preserved within the stories. Through myths, religious tales or legends, stories are being transferred from generation to generation and such process is permanent, it lives even in contemporary novels, drama or film.⁷³

This paragraph suggests why the longitudinal method is an effective vehicle for Třeštková's focus.

The previous sub-section, in addition to the analysis above, highlighted the tendency of longitudinal documentary to focus on the biographical aspect of representation, giving rise to a more subject-oriented project - a trend which is repeated not only in Třeštková films, but also *The Children of Golzow* and *Up*. These biographies are the 'stories' referred to by the director, the anecdotes of personal experience and life which are the foundations of the documentary projects. The base of these stories in historical reality means that their construction is far different to fiction film, where a concept of a story appears from project inception, as opposed to the broader observational (or investigational) nature of documentary. This is accentuated in long-term, longitudinal projects where, after a process of selecting subjects and the general theme, a biography emerges over a long, potentially unspecified, time period. This is far different to the notion of an artificial, constructed story which is subject to a much larger degree of authorial control.

This contrast is highlighted by the director:

During the configuration of one's own "experienced" story, people start with an almost unlimited supply of episodes, opinions, feelings and situations, that he has stored in memory. He gives them the meaning, which he needs to, some of the episodes might get accented, some pushed into background.

The author of artificial storyline has a vision of his sense and a meaningful arc, he accordingly works in key moments and puts hints into the preceding episodes

⁷³ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 44-45.

to point towards the key moments or illustrates some of the characteristic features that explain behaviour of the characters.⁷⁴

What Třeštíková alludes to here is what she regards as an organic process to the narrative of long-term observation. The key difference here is that a longitudinal project will inevitably yield different amounts of usable content, or content that can be constructed into the final edit, at different points over the duration of shooting and visitations. By representing these biographical narratives that emerge (and not forgetting the argument or directorial narrative of the piece), Třeštíková is laying claim to the role of chronicler through documenting (and then constructing) these glimpses of life as lived in the historical moment. The question then, of how these representations are then interpreted by director and audience, forms a key avenue of enquiry in the following chapters where these documentaries are case-studied.

The Metanarrative in Třeštíková's Projects

The concept of the metanarrative in Třeštíková documentaries is an important avenue in the understanding of the documentarist's work as a whole. If, as this thesis argues, Třeštíková's documentaries construct arguments around fulfilment which subvert or challenge the dominant documentary discourse of the historical periods she works in, it is imperative to critique the functions that are used to create this, particularly as the thesis observes that longitudinal documentary often has problems in maintaining a specific, set ideology (as explored earlier in this chapter).

According to the work of Ansgar Nünning, there has been a gap in scholarship in understanding metanarration and its employment, due to there being little distinction between metanarration and metafiction; leading to both terms being used interchangeably⁷⁵. Thus, in order to understand metanarration, and the definition that will be employed throughout the thesis, it is crucial to recognise what metafiction is, and how it differs from the former term; leading towards a

⁷⁴ Ibid., 45-46.

⁷⁵ Nünning 2004: 15-16.

definition of metanarration that reflects the narrative techniques witnessed and applies to their particular deployment.

The Living Handbook of Narratology defines metafiction as something that “describes the capacity of fiction to reflect on its own status as fiction and thus refers to all self-reflexive utterances which thematize the fictionality (in the sense of imaginary reference and/or constructedness) of narrative. Metafiction is, literally, fiction about fiction, i.e. fiction that includes within itself reflections on its own fictional identity”⁷⁶. Central to this is the use of language, of which “its relationship to the phenomenal world is highly complex, problematic and regulated by convention”, thus “‘meta’ terms therefore are required in order to explore the relationship between this arbitrary linguistic system and the world to which it apparently refers”⁷⁷. Both of these quotes reflect an additional definition by Hutcheon that metafiction is a “fiction about fiction—that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity”⁷⁸. The idea that metafiction is at its core self-reflexive implies the relationship between narrator and narrative, and indeed the recipient of that narrative, if metafiction is to “a form of discourse that draws the recipient’s attention to the fictionality and artifactuality of the narrative”⁷⁹.

Contemporary scholarship in narrative studies provides a great wealth of resources on metafiction and its application in various texts. To return to Nichols’s understanding that “documentaries, then, do not differ from fictions in their constructedness as texts”⁸⁰, the text of documentary films can be included within this canon. However, various problems arise from this approach, not least in terms of the documentary medium itself. The first point is that documentary films are not fictions - they may, and often do, contain fictionalised elements, and as has been briefly discussed earlier in this chapter, yet metafiction “by definition, only appear in the context of fiction”⁸¹, not taking into account the

⁷⁶ Neumann and Nünning, in Hühn *et al.*

⁷⁷ Waugh 1984: 3.

⁷⁸ Hutcheon 1984: 1.

⁷⁹ Neumann and Nünning, in Hühn *et al.*

⁸⁰ In Loizos 1993: 9.

⁸¹ Nünning 2004: 16.

unique position of documentary and its relationship to the real world. In Waugh's definition, where metafiction helps "explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text"⁸², documentary's basis in reality blurs the lines between the imagined and real, meaning that any analysis framed by literary text alone will not be adequate. On the other hand, the *meta* prefix and the increased usage of such terminology is both "a consequence of an increased social and cultural self-consciousness" and "a greater awareness within contemporary culture of the function of language in constructing and maintaining our sense of everyday 'reality'"⁸³. A narratological term which this thesis can apply to Třeštková, therefore, needs to account of these factors - possessing a wider scope than literature, but maintaining the awareness of reality integral to witnessing narration occur on only one level.

The need for such a term increases in importance considering that the body of research on *both* metafiction and metanarration (again, both terms are needed here to reflect how their usage has often been interchangeable) overwhelmingly focuses on literature as opposed to either feature film or documentary, particularly the latter. As metafiction, according to Scholes, "assimilates all the perspectives of criticism into the fictional process itself"⁸⁴, recognition that documentary films can and do comment and critique on the construction and process of filmmaking which differs due to the audio-visual medium must be sought. Thus, in order to apply ideas of self-reflexivity and the understanding of construction to film, a more refined approach is necessary.

By employing the term *metanarration* as opposed to metafiction, the reference to only fictional works is avoided, whilst maintaining the self-reflexivity of the practice as indicated by the *meta* prefix. Nünning understands metanarration as "the narrator's commenting on the process of narration", which "refers more to these forms of self-reflexive narration in which aspects of narration (and not the fictionality of the narrated) becomes the subject of narratorial discourse" and can "serve to create a different type of narration by accentuating the act of narration"⁸⁵. This somewhat simple definition is echoed by several scholars of

⁸² In Currie (ed.) 1995: 40.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁴ Scholes 1995: 29.

⁸⁵ Nünning 2004: 12-17.

fiction film. Sage Hamilton Rountree notes that “metanarrative films [however] consistently draw attention to the means by which they are created” and that “the audience must consider not only the technical aspects of filmmaking but also the motivations that lead to the production of a film”⁸⁶.

Such techniques, which expose films as constructions, carry further weight for the documentary, and also enforce another crucial point. As “readers, especially of postmodern novels, are constantly aware of the process of reading, the viewer who prepares to watch a film usually prepares to suspend disbelief and concentrate on the story of the movie, not the way in which it was produced”⁸⁷. The same can be said for the documentary, yet often for different purposes - while there are several reasons that motivate viewership of documentaries⁸⁸, or for reasons including reminiscence, historical value or entertainment, there is not a suspension of belief in favour of a fictional world.

Rather, the representations within the documentary are based in and on the historical world. Self-reflexivity in the documentary, therefore, can serve to reveal or communicate the process around the construction of the film itself - a prime example being shots of camera equipment on-screen in the *Po dvaceti letech* cycle. As it is possible to argue that “while we know that things like narrations are scripted and that editing is a kind of composing, we still do not like to think of documentaries as *written*”⁸⁹, such self-reflexive practices have the ability to bring to the fore ideas of construction and argument, particularly if the argument advanced by Nichols, that documentaries are not facts but “an *argument* about the historical world” is accepted⁹⁰. Drawing attention to the processes involved in the documentary aids Třeštíková’s work in several ways, as the thesis will go on to argue that these signs indicate the director’s own involvement as subject in the longitudinal format, strengthening the idea that her films make an argument about what they depict - as opposed to claiming that everything shot is the objective reality and truth.

⁸⁶ Hamilton Rountree 2001: 21.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸⁸ Nichols, for example, uses the term *epistephelia*, or the desire and pleasure of knowledge (in Smail 2010: 9-10.).

⁸⁹ White 2006: 92.

⁹⁰ In Loizos 1993: 9.

Joseph Kupfer has defined film metanarrative in two distinct ways. The first, in line with definitions of the concept above, is that it “concerns films that make salient film narration itself”⁹¹. However, he also states that there is a second metanarration, one which “refers to film stories that call attention to the importance of stories and storytelling in real life”, writing that “What makes these movies special is that viewing them with stories central in human life yields a complex and nuanced aesthetic experience”⁹². This second definition, or function, of metanarrative does not apply to documentary cinema or the goal of this thesis, considering that it explicitly deals with stories in a fictional format relating to the non-fictional world, as opposed to analysing how self-reflexive practices impact on the perception and construction of Třeštíková’s work and thus how it is viewed alongside other documentaries of the historical period.

Taking into regard these factors, this thesis defines metanarration as *the self-reflexive practice of the documentarist, designed to question or reveal the process of the documentary’s own construction*. This definition takes into account the self-reflexivity that narrative utterances in documentary are able to produce, focusing this with a filmic perspective as opposed to one that exists primarily within literature and the field of fiction. Considering the documentary as a construction based on the real, rather than a fictitious world, and therefore making arguments about the representations of that world, the use of metanarration here will focus exclusively on such reflexivity as opposed to the idea of film stories (based in fiction) that can apply to the non-fiction of ‘real life’. By applying this understanding to the displays of self-reflexivity that occur within the documentaries covered, a comprehensive analysis can be achieved that indicates how Helena Třeštíková constructs narratives in terms of arguments on fulfilment and the recognition of the director herself as a subject within the longitudinal process.

⁹¹ Kupfer 2014: 3.

⁹² Ibid.

The Methodological Approach to Třeštíková Documentaries

Textual analysis of the documentary films, both of Třeštíková and the wider industry during normalisation and post-normalisation, is an important methodological requirement within the thesis, and will frame much of the upcoming case studies in Chapters Two, Three and Four. By exploring the aforementioned films in terms of their narrative function, interpretation, and the connotative and denotative meanings of the filmic sign structures, a duality within Třeštíková's films will be revealed: one which is clearly operating within codes particular to normalisation and the state socialist ideology (and, of course, the codes which then dominate post-1989 discourse), but also of personal, covert and highly subversive argumentation; resulting in codes which are open to both interpretation and transformation.

It is through this process that the television programme or documentary film is able to convey meanings to what is seen and heard through the medium, and most importantly in terms of answering the research questions set out in the introduction, to communicate certain arguments about the nature of the socio-political context (state socialism/the market economy) and its relationship with the fulfilment of individuals. However, in order to attain a comprehensive analysis of the source material, this must go further than merely recognising the sign structures that exist within the filmic 'text'. The study and application of theory behind the establishment of meaning will therefore explore the author's intent when encoding texts as means of identifying a preferred decoding strategy of the reader (or viewer), while also acknowledging the limitations of reader interpretations. This approach to the study of the films in question, which will be evident from the case studies put forward from the next chapter onwards, prioritises the author in the construction of argument and crafting of the narrative, as opposed to what will be argued as erroneous interpretations of the film as text.

Documentaries and Television Programmes as Codes

Christian Metz understands that cinema operates in a similar way to language, in the sense that it can construct narratives or a text which is decoded by the viewer on-screen; and therefore, like language, should be regarded as a sign system⁹³. As a product of culture, and thus influenced and affected in multiple ways and by multiple codes, he argues that researchers of film have to be well-versed in history, semiotics, economics, politics, “in sum, virtually nothing less than a universal anthropological understanding is required”⁹⁴.

This quote should be regarded as purely illustrative, Metz making the point that the origin of signs is heavily influenced by the historical and political environments of which films (and documentaries) are a product of, which are then incorporated into the text of a film. It is not expected or assumed that the audience during normalisation Czechoslovakia, or indeed the post-1989 context, are comprised solely of polymaths, yet neither is this audience expected or expecting to be analysing the documentaries or television serials they watch in an academic context.

However, as codes are comprised of a “rule-governed system of signs whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture, and which is used to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture”⁹⁵, the audience will derive meaning from codes pertaining to their experience and understanding of the society they inhabit. For Czechoslovaks of the normalisation period, this includes the dominant-hegemonic position of the KSČ and their historical interpretation of the world, the historic experiences of the state which has come before it (from the Stalinism of Gottwald to the Prague Spring), and importantly for the medium of television and film, censorship and access to the authorised speech of the regime, which is explored fully in the second chapter.

By decoding such signs, a meaning is attained, which “influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional,

⁹³ Metz 1974: 285-286.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁵ Fisk, in Bílek 2013: 4.

ideological or behavioural consequences”⁹⁶. Referring back to earlier discussions on self-reflexivity and Třeštková’s style of filmmaking in this chapter, it was noted that central to this was the understanding of the persuasive power of documentary. To comprehend this persuasive power, it is therefore necessary to investigate this decoding further.

A helpful framework to the decoding process is found in Petr Bílek’s theoretical chapter *TV Serials and Series as Specific Representations of Mimetic and Performative Impact*⁹⁷, which makes extensive use of the approach set out by Stuart Hall. This is not to suggest that documentaries, as non-fiction films, are the same as the fictional world of the television serial or drama, and this point will be developed subsequently - both in brief during this sub-chapter, and further in following chapters where the methodology is applied to the case studies. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting the key similarities that exist.

Firstly, it should be noted that “The primary motivation for the making of the TV serials [in Czechoslovakia] was ideological. There were no commercial pressures.”⁹⁸. Furthermore, these serials used as case studies by Bílek, which will be analysed in Chapter Two, were usually broadcast on a weekly basis, allowing for “a rich space for reflection, informal debate, and anticipatory guesses as well as for retrospective consideration of the previous episodes”⁹⁹. As these weekly episodes necessitated a continued audience in order to attain any significant impact, thus disseminating any ideological conclusions, it was important for serials “to accommodate sets of values which were shared by the populations of the communist countries”¹⁰⁰. Consequently, “Whenever the producers of the TV series tried to promote particular sets of values, they had to do it in ways which would be acceptable for their audiences”¹⁰¹.

In terms of Třeštková’s filmmaking, certain elements of this ring true. Like serials, there was no commercial objectives to be attained by the production of the documentary cycle; although, akin with said serials, this would change once

⁹⁶ Hall 1980: 130.

⁹⁷ In Čulík (ed.) 2013: 1-9.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Czechoslovakia began transitioning towards a market economy¹⁰². Not all Třeštíková films have taken the format of *Manželské etudy* in cycles that are broadcast weekly, but the cycle in question does form one of several important case studies within this thesis, and thus must also reflect or accommodate a certain value or code to maintain viewership - like the serial, this certainly means representations of life or people that are relatable or identifiable by the viewer. For Třeštíková, this centres around the director's fascination with private stories of citizens; whereas the approach for these fictional programmes would follow different characteristics and constructions based upon the setting and content of the fictional work (for example, a programme which is based upon a police officer). Whereas the documentary may not fully fictionalise certain subjects or content that are identifiable to the film's recipients, they are, like serials, still constructions encoded by their author. With this in mind, the framework advocated by Bílek, examined below, presents a useful introduction into how the codes within Třeštíková's films function.

The denotative and connotative levels of signs within the documentary are crucial in terms of how such meanings are produced, with the latter being of most use to the aims of the thesis. Whereas denotative levels of signs provide the literal meaning of what a sign is, the connotative "is more open, subject to more active transformations, which exploit its polysemic values. Any such already constituted sign is potentially transformable into more than one connotative configuration"¹⁰³. In this way, it is possible for Třeštíková's narratives to transcend pure denotation, allowing for the representations of subjects within her longitudinal studies to posit wider observations about life and society in both normalisation and post-normalisation, based on how these connotative meanings are extracted by the decoding process. Hall's three positions in the decoding of signs is fleshed out fully within his research chapter,

¹⁰² This does not mean, however, that there were not budgetary constraints on the making of Třeštíková's documentaries. As the director has herself explained in interview, certain contracts for documentaries, particularly of an ideological nature, were competed for by various film directors. Budgets for other projects, such as the *Manželské etudy* cycle, were limited in terms of finance, amount of film used, and other factors.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4.

entitled *Encoding/Decoding*¹⁰⁴, in addition to Bílek's contribution on the subject. For the purposes of brevity, they are listed here, with the following remarks:

- (i) The Dominant-hegemonic position, in which is delivered¹⁰⁵ and accepted by the viewer at face value. The decoding here, which is done in the same reference or intention that the sign was itself encoded, sees the viewer operating inside the dominant code, partaking in a preferred reading of the sign and situation.
- (ii) A negotiated code or position, on the other hand, refers to the understanding by the viewer that the dominant position outlined above is precisely dominant due to the prevalent reference codes in existence (certain grand narratives, generalised worldviews and so on). This hypothetical position therefore arises when the viewer undertakes decoding with both a reception and rejection of the intended preferred, or dominant, reading of the sign.
- (iii) It follows that "it is possible for a viewer perfectly to understand both the literal and connotative inflection given by the discourse but to decode the message in a *globally* contrary way"¹⁰⁶ and thus reject on these terms in favour of an opposite decoding. This, the oppositional code or position, serves as the opposite of a dominant-hegemonic interpretation.

These three positions hold significant importance in the study of Czechoslovak (and Czech) television and film in the two distinct historical periods that this thesis explores. As this thesis argues, decoding of Třeštíková's longitudinal documentaries cannot be undertaken without a robust understanding of the dominant socio-political narratives that existed during normalisation or the post-89 transformation. Overtly political programming, such as the infamous "Anticharta" *Za nové tvůrčí činy ve jménu socialismu a míru (New Creative Works in the Name of Socialism and Peace)*, which comprised highly ideological

¹⁰⁴ In Durham, M. and Kellner, D. (eds.) 2006: 163-173.

¹⁰⁵ Hall uses the example of a television newscast, though for the purposes of this thesis it could also be an expository documentary.

¹⁰⁶ Hall, in Bílek 2013: 5.

speeches with a signing ceremony of famous radio and television personalities against the Charter 77 document, were designed to be read as a dominant-hegemonic decoding - although in such a manifest form, anti-communists could very easily employ the oppositional position.

The same can be said of much of the documentary output of the Czechoslovak state when dealing with political or historical discourses of sobriety - as Chapter Two demonstrates, many of these documentaries employ an expository narrative style as a deliberate means of conveying a preferred reading in line with the KSČ's national and international worldview. Nevertheless, direct address is far from being the only tactic in delivering a preferred reading. The creation of television serials under normalisation certainly had a preferred dominant-hegemonic position of decoding at its core, yet these are presented, as the next chapter highlights, in an altogether different way from the documentary, or of news items and reports. A degree of caution must be taken in comparing documentaries with works of pure fiction, yet exploration of the medium is beneficial to the overall analysis of television and film from the normalisation period, and yields several further points for consideration.

Television serials are accommodating of certain values as entertainment programmes in order to draw and retain viewership, but also to disseminate an ideological interpretation of a particular social situation or historical event. This can be seen in the supermarket-based serial *Žena za pultem*, which will be analysed on page 101. Although *Žena za pultem*, Čulík writes, “concentrates on personal, primarily erotic relationships and the problems within them, which keep the viewer in suspense and infuse the narrative with tension and energy”, these narratives are also “subtly formatted in a way which communicates a pro-regime, propagandistic message”¹⁰⁷. By employing this, the serial becomes a platform by which several meanings can be extracted depending on the decoding process, as one that could be dismissed as a reasonably accurate representation of what the self-service supermarket is like (dominant-hegemonic reading), rejected as nothing short of propaganda (oppositional reading), or something that lies in the middle (a negotiated position).

¹⁰⁷ Čulík 2013: 112.

These same rules apply to audience decoding of Třeštková documentaries, albeit with some subtle differences by medium. There is indeed a question of ‘voice’, both in fictional and non-fictional film and television, as referenced above with the different narratives at play, and it is true that “all film-making is a form of discourse fabricating its effects, impressions and point of view”¹⁰⁸. There are, however, differing psychological factors when examining both film formats.

In rudimentary terms “In fiction films, no matter how realistic they may be, some form of “suspension of disbelief” is always operative. By contrast, documentary appeals to us precisely because of its truth claims, whether at the level of fact or image”¹⁰⁹. In television series and soap operas which share certain identifiable values with the viewership, “The illusion is created that events in the world of soap are evolving or running in parallel with those in the sphere of reality”¹¹⁰, something that quite evidently highlights the value for the regime in placing certain codes within the narrative. This is also true for television shows which possess a more chronological progression, as with the case of *Třicet případů majora Zemana*, a police drama; which works on a parallel reality based on a communist interpretation of history, but within the recognisable environment (for viewers during the original broadcasts) of Czechoslovakia. This “suspension of disbelief” can also be found in documentary viewership, where “in order to trust documentary’s truth claims most viewers have to suspend disbelief in order to foreground its referential integrity”¹¹¹, despite its roots in the supposed reality of non-fiction. However, like the television series discussed, the familiarity of these situations, the focus on relationships and location aid the derivation of meaning with Třeštková’s films.

Another point which will be expanded in the next chapter is the issue of politicised content and censorship that arises when considering Třeštková documentaries, particularly when compared to the more deliberate and explicit pro-regime documentaries and programmes of the period. The subversive elements of the director’s longitudinal cycles, which become a counter-narrative

¹⁰⁸ Nichols 1983: 18.

¹⁰⁹ Grant and Sloniowski 1998: xxiv.

¹¹⁰ Kilborn 1992: 38.

¹¹¹ Hill 2007: 137-138.

to representations of society advanced through propaganda, require the viewer to identify the connotative meanings of the signs in order for a decoding via the three processes stipulated by Hall.

Interpreting Documentaries and Programmes as Texts

This thesis has already discussed the documentary film (or rather, any film or programme) as fundamentally textual in nature, in which meaning is established through their interpretation of the signs contained within. In recognition of this, it was noted that there are three distinct positions in which the viewer (or the reader of the text) may take in the derivation of meaning. The decoding process - in general terms, how the documentaries and television programmes dealt with in this body of research are read - must, however, take two things into consideration in order to fully appreciate the construction and reception of film.

The first is clearly the role of the viewer (or reader) and their decoding of the televisual and filmic signs; but there must be additional attention paid to “the more formidable question of the reader’s response as a possibility built into the textual strategy”¹¹². This was alluded to briefly in the last sub-chapter in terms of the ‘preferred reading’ of the texts. To borrow from an earlier example, there is a broad consensus that some television serials in normalisation Czechoslovakia were deliberate in their communication of a pro-communist ideology, and thus encoding their programmes accordingly. Yet there is a further avenue of enquiry, which Eco states here, that pertains to the recognition of the viewer by those involved in the construction of these codes, and the approach - if any - taken in the attempts for that viewer to decode the programme or film in a way preferred by the author; in other words, to ensure a non-oppositional decoding of the sign as argument.

The work of Umberto Eco in the study of interpretation and the reader allows for a solid methodological understanding to be applied to the documentaries of normalisation and post-normalisation and the establishment of meaning. Crucial

¹¹² Eco 1981: 35.

to this, and the acknowledgement of the design and interpretation of texts, is his idea of the 'model reader'. The 'model reader' does not refer to a particular individual, and neither does the 'model author', its opposite equivalent, but to a strategy for interpretation within the text, where "every type of text explicitly selects a very general model of possible reader through the choice (i) of a specific linguistic code, (ii) of a certain literary style, and (iii) of specific specialization indices..."¹¹³. In other words, "The Model Author is, in actual fact, the text's intention, and the Model Reader represents the interpreter who successfully grasps that intention."¹¹⁴.

This is, therefore, closely related to the decoding process of Hall which Bílek has applied to his analysis, yet whereas the dominant-hegemonic position of decoding is one where the viewer *accepts* said position, the 'model reader' understands the intention and may be free to accept, reject, or decode using a combination of the two. As Robey explains, "While the 'model reader' is originally a presupposition on the part of the historical author, in that s/he necessarily writes with a particular set of competences more or less consciously in mind, the model is only relevant for purposes of interpretation to the extent that it is embodied in the work itself"¹¹⁵. This demonstrates that the creator of a text constructs it in a way that has a model reader in mind, through the three categories of linguistic code, style and "specific specialization indices", but emphasises the crucial point that interpretation and decoding by the reader is predominantly controlled by the text itself, the importance of which can be seen further in the next paragraph.

Eco's model reader and analysis on interpretation aids the analysis of Třeštková documentaries (and other featured films) for the precise reason that it emphasises that arguments and meaning arising from the director's text must come predominantly from that text. To accept the text as "a place where the irreducible polysemy of symbols is in fact reduced because the text symbols are anchored to their context"¹¹⁶ is not to argue that documentary is separate from the cultural context or socio-political discourses of which it has come from.

¹¹³ In Robey 2004: 5.

¹¹⁴ Crisafulli 2004: 94.

¹¹⁵ Robey 2004: 5.

¹¹⁶ Eco 1994: 21.

Indeed, the beginning of this chapter offered a definition of the documentary as an asserted veridical representation with arguments based on the discourses of sobriety, clearly acknowledging the variety of internal and external influences on the medium. However, the argument put forward by Eco serves to communicate that basing textual decoding on the text itself is necessary to avoid an unintended or illegitimate interpretation:

An open text is always a text, and a text can elicit infinite readings without allowing any possible reading. It is impossible to say what is the best interpretation of a text, but it is possible to say which ones are wrong... Texts frequently say more than their authors intended to say, but less than what many incontinent [i.e. hermeticist or deconstructionist] readers would like them to say.¹¹⁷

In other words, there is a belief here that texts are “by their nature susceptible of multiple interpretations; but some interpretations can be categorised as legitimate and others as not: literary meaning is indefinite but not infinite”¹¹⁸.

Of course, the reader is free to interpret text in many different ways, but only certain interpretations are legitimised in the sense that they are intended or anticipated by the text’s author. By going beyond a model reader strategy, an “aberrant reading”, or overinterpretation, arises, “because it yields a semiotic excess, a surplus of meaning, with respect to the text’s intention”¹¹⁹. These overinterpretations should be considered and subsequently rejected, rather than regarded as a possible interpretation based on the text, less they attach meaning which does not exist in the mind of the author.

In analysing the cultural context of Třeštková’s filmmaking and the arguments she makes on fulfilment - both in terms of an oppositional analysis to communist hegemony during normalisation and the cyclical fulfilment that occurs once longitudinal projects take place after 1989 - it is imperative to prioritise the intent of the director as author in the formulation of texts. Viewership helps this goal in demonstrating the effectiveness and persuasiveness of the arguments held within these documentaries, and how these have been decoded, but the

¹¹⁷ In Capozzi (ed.) 1997: 147.

¹¹⁸ Robey 2004: 7.

¹¹⁹ Crisafulli 2004: 95.

decoding process must come from a legitimate interpretive position (thus not overinterpretation) in order for any connotative meaning to reflect upon the director's work. It is the director and their encoding which is the true signifier, and carrier, of argument that is relevant to the director's aims. If interpretation and overinterpretation are not recognised during analysis, there is the risk that meaning and intent is attached to documentaries that do not exist, leading to assumptions that will skew or damage any hypothesis on how Třeštková understands fulfilment.

By adopting this methodological framework in approaching both Třeštková's documentaries and the wider oeuvre of documentary film and television in both normalisation and post-89 contexts, this thesis avoids potential pitfalls in terms of overinterpretation; instead focusing on how the encoding of filmic texts affixes desired meanings to the narrative and for what purpose. This takes into account the particular socio-political conditions of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic at the two distinct time periods explored, the challenges of censorship and propaganda throughout normalisation, and the changes to narratives and the documentary industry after the Velvet Revolution. By focusing on the intent of Třeštková's encoding, it is therefore possible to analyse how wider societal narratives are subverted through her work, and how an argument based on fulfilment is crafted.

Třeštková and Women Documentarists

In the assessment of fulfilment and the narratives that are constructed in Třeštková documentaries, the question of gender and of the director as a woman documentarist in shaping such narratives occupy an important position in the analysis. Třeštková's stated interests as a filmmaker are well established, as she "[confines herself] to the Czech Republic, human interest stories and social issues"¹²⁰, and "couldn't shoot large historical causes or cases overlapping the

¹²⁰ Černá 2012

Czech border... My forte is the here and now”¹²¹. Whereas on a denotative level arguments and conclusions encoded in the text may relate to the specific social and political occurrences of normalisation and post-normalisation Czech society, issues of fulfilment - including areas such as work, relationships and gender roles - have a cross-national and cross-cultural interest in wider discourse.

It is clear that the representation of women has comprised a significant proportion of Třeštíková’s filmic output, from the exploration of motherhood in *Zázrak* to episodes of *Manželské etudy* that are dominated by wife rather than husband. In addition, several standalone documentaries by the director concentrate solely on the experiences of women - the experiences of Marcela, a *Manželské etudy* subject who divorces her husband and lives as a single parent, was re-worked into the full-length feature *Marcela* in 2006, followed three years later by *Katka* which is explored in Chapter Four. The 2016 film *Zkáza krásou* (*Doomed Beauty*) sees the director break with her usual techniques and eschews longitudinal observation due to the narrative revolving around one interview with actress Lída Baarová; and supplemented with a significant amount of archival footage. While these are all Czech-oriented documentaries, unquestionably shaped by the historical and socio-political background of the area, issues and influences of gender in filmmaking exist on a broader international level.

Identifying the issues of gender pertinent to the analysis of Helena Třeštíková necessitates an exploration of the national and international contexts of women documentarists, in addition to scrutinising the existing body of literature on the subject. It is therefore unfortunate that sources focusing on gender and documentary cinema are often collected alongside that of fiction film and as part of wider discussions on feminism and gender studies. The ambiguity of these approaches, often due to a lack of distinguishing the specific features of non-fiction and pure fiction works, brings the adequacy of such sources into question. As Alison Butler notes in the introduction to her book *Women’s Cinema: The Contested Screen*:

¹²¹ Červinková 2012

Women's cinema is a notoriously difficult concept to define. It suggests, without clarity, films that might be made by, addressed to, or concerned with women, or all three. It is neither a genre nor a movement in film history, it has no single lineage of its own, no national boundaries, no filmic or aesthetic specificity, but traverses and negotiates cinematic and cultural traditions and critical and political debates.¹²²

It is not in the scope of this thesis to propose a new synthesis on gender studies or the role of women as directors within documentary cinema, but it is nevertheless crucial to determine the influence of gender in how certain narratives are constructed - and subjects approached - in projects both directed by women and which prominently feature women as subjects. It is clear that the representation of women has a significant role in Třeštková's documentary films, and it is therefore apparent that by exploring documentaries of a similar nature, several conclusions as to the effectiveness of the constructed polysemy and its intended decoding can be drawn; mitigating the negative consequences that come with a lack of appropriate sources.

Narrative Intent of the Documentary - Insider vs Outsider Perspectives

The longitudinal approach practiced by Třeštková is significant in the shaping of her documentaries in terms of narrative style and the means in which they address their viewers. As research exploring address in documentary films of the normalisation era will show in the next chapter, the majority of films from the period - both by male and female directors - apply an expository approach to the form by employing direct address. This direct address is reasonably consistent in that it takes the form of voiced, off-camera narration¹²³; and on other occasions by subjects speaking directly to the camera. The results of this, Nichols argues, is that the voiceover brings with it "authoritative omniscience or didactic reductionism" and "the dubious claim that things are as the film presents them, organized by the commentary of the all-knowing subject"¹²⁴. Considering the ideological role that many documentaries played during normalisation, it is not

¹²² Butler 2002: 1.

¹²³ This is often used in the same documentary, breaking from voiceover narration and turning to a particular specialist or person of interest.

¹²⁴ Nichols 1983: 23.

surprising that a style directly narrating specific values of the regime, such as the position of women the workplace or their interpretation of the role of women in fighting fascism, would be advocated in films of this type. Furthermore, it raises important and necessary questions pertaining to the voice of the documentary itself - if narrative utterances arise specifically from the director as a woman or as a wider, ideological construction disseminated in a top-down fashion by the regime. This point will be explored further in the next chapter.

Yet the direct voiceover, and making certain values explicit - whether they originate from the woman documentarist or otherwise - is not a mutual exclusive, nor is a more observational approach necessarily reflective of a subversive, hidden argument requiring a more sophisticated decoding. Additionally, a significant proportion of normalisation documentaries which are based in and on Czechoslovakia may lead to arguments that these films are centred on the familiarity and personal experience of the woman documentarist in the cultural and political environment of the state. The closed nature of the Czechoslovak state up until 1989 does mean that the intended viewers of such films are easily identifiable. Nevertheless, the focus on domestic (Czech) issues again does not necessarily suggest that this is a deliberate focus on behalf of the director for personal reasons. Whereas there may be (and as will be subsequently argued, *are*) strongly identifiable personal links between Třeštíková and her subjects, particularly since (i) she can relate to marriage and parenting in the context, (ii) deliberately focuses on personal issues rather than grand political narratives in the public space and (iii) adopts more self-reflexive practices as her cycles continue over time, these factors are not sufficient to create a generalisation of women documentarists in Czechoslovakia or further afield.

Another point worthy of consideration relates to the difficulties of both filmmakers and citizens to travel outside of Czechoslovakia. Restrictions on travelling outside of the country during normalisation have been well documented¹²⁵; and the ability to film documentary projects overseas was

¹²⁵ The U.S Helsinki Watch Committee 1986: 23-25.

reliant on the fulfilment of a number of factors, including the reputation of the filmmaker and the ideological importance of the film in question. From a political perspective, these restrictions did not exist for many documentarists operating within the West who desired to film overseas. Even when these restrictions were lifted in Czechoslovakia, Třeštíková continued to investigate domestic Czech issues, particularly in relation to the changes that have occurred during the transition to a market economy - her focus on intimate stories, within the contexts she has always operated in, has led to the assertion that she “couldn’t shoot large historical causes or cases overlapping the Czech border”¹²⁶. As Chapter Four points out, even when overseas territories are represented in *Soukromý vesmír*, they are shot by the director’s son and not by Třeštíková herself. Nevertheless, opportunities to make films abroad has been taken by woman directors in both the Czech Republic and further afield.

A good example of this is offered by the films of Kim Longinotto, who has regularly directed documentaries set outside of her native Britain. These films are deliberate in their direction towards a Western audience and attempts to redefine the perception of countries and cultures that have been viewed in either a primitivist or orientalist gaze. This is evidenced in the director undertaking these projects with co-directors from the specific culture being represented. Belinda Smaill references Rey Chow in her observations of the director, stating that:

Longinotto’s films set in Iran, Kenya and Cameroon recast cultures that have become familiar to Western audiences through their demonization or primitivism, and depict them as ‘themselves transforming and translating into the present’ and as cultures that ‘are equally engaged in the contradictions of modernity’. Because Longinotto is always concerned with exploring, through representation, hierarchies of value, her documentaries narrativise the contradictions and conflicts that permeate cultures as hegemonies shift and conform.¹²⁷

Longinotto’s interests as a woman director engage with issues around women of various cultural contexts, particularly in respect to squaring advancement (or modernity) of socio-economic issues with traditional practices. This can be seen in documentaries such as *Divorce Iranian Style* (1998) which explores Iranian

¹²⁶ Červinková 2012

¹²⁷ Smaill 2010: 74.

women using the court system in order to attain divorce in a country dominated by Islamic theology, and 2002's *The Day I Will Never Forget*, shot in Kenya on the subject of Female Genital Mutilation. These documentaries exhibit a style different to that of Třeštková, summarised by Ross Whitaker as "Generally speaking, Longinotto doesn't use interviews in her films, uses little music and rarely uses any kind of voiceover. She never wants to ask her subjects to repeat anything or act in any particular way and she doesn't shoot cutaways"¹²⁸.

This ethnographic style of approach, an attempt to minimise interaction with subjects as a means to shine a light on other cultures and practices, downplays the director's own involvement with the project, despite Longinotto maintaining authorial control. The voiceovers used by the director are employed sparingly, serving to aid the chronological progression of the film, and - importantly considering the intended audience - to supply details necessary for comprehension due to the language barrier (and, for example, the complexities of the Iranian legal system). They are not designed to function as a commentary on behalf of the director.

It can be argued, therefore, that such voiceovers occupy a similar role to the intertitles of the normalisation *Manželské etudy* cycle, although they do provide much more information than names and dates and¹²⁹, as an off-screen narration by the documentarist, will privilege this aural aspect over the visual. It is telling, that these voiceovers often occur at times that do not interfere with the subject interaction. In *Divorce Iranian Style* this includes sections where no subject is speaking, such as at the beginning of a court hearing, or over shots of inner-city Tehran as the documentarists travel to a subject's home.

The difference in style and approach between these two filmmakers is reflective of the different positions that each documentarist takes in the wider discourse on gender. Although the ability to travel outside of Czechoslovakia to make

¹²⁸ Whitaker 2010: 34.

¹²⁹ "Ziba and Bahman have to submit to arbitration before the court will grant them a divorce. The main issue to be resolved is whether Bahman should pay Ziba the marriage gift he promised her when they married - roughly ten thousand U.S Dollars. Although a woman is legally entitled to this gift, in practice she usually gives it up to get her husband's consent to divorce. Ziba wants both. Ziba and Bahman have chosen their uncles as arbiters, and they are meeting tonight at Ziba's family home. Ziba's uncle, Ali, sits next to her." (*Divorce Iranian Style*, 27:33)

documentaries was difficult, making documentaries overseas was not an aim or concern of Třeštková. This is strongly suggested through the stated aims of *Manželské etudy* and how it relates to the environment of normalisation, in the quote from the director which features on page 10 concerning the “era of blankness”¹³⁰.

In returning briefly to an argument mentioned on the previous page, the strong links that Třeštková has with the subject matter, as a woman and filmmaker who operates within Czechoslovakia, has had a profound effect on her filmmaking; particularly as self-reflexivity in later cycles indicate her own position within the documentaries as a subject-author. Despite certain limitations in terms of freedom of expression afforded by the regime, the *Manželské etudy* cycle is unambiguous in intent - it is a long-term study aiming to represent the private, personal lives of Czechoslovak citizens (in this case, young married couples), designed for broadcast on domestic television for a domestic audience. This in itself is the greatest difference between Třeštková and Longinotto in terms of remit, as the documentaries of Longinotto are not constructed in the locations she visits with that particular audience in mind. Due to the longitudinal approach, Třeštková’s films are more fluid, noting that “long-term documentary has only questions at the beginning”¹³¹. This is reinforced by stating that “in the beginning of filming *Manželské etudy* we knew nothing but the names and professions of our heroes, which would eventually become a movie; and we would get to know everything by working with them”¹³².

Whereas the aim for Třeštková is clear in the broad sense (the ability to “describe this era of blankness”), proposals made by Longinotto and co-directors indicate a far more in-depth plan in terms of demystification and the representation of women as agents of change in their various cultures:

We had to distinguish what we (and we hoped our target audiences) saw as ‘positive’, from what many people we talked to saw as ‘negative’, with the potential of turning into yet another sensationalized foreign film on Iran. Images and words, we said, can evoke different feelings in different cultures...

¹³⁰ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 7.

¹³¹ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 16.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 14.

One answer was to present viewers with complex social reality and allow them to make up their own minds. Some might react favourably, and some might not, but in the end it could give a much more ‘positive’ image of Iran than the usual films, if we could show ordinary women, at home and in court, holding their own ground, maintaining the family from within. This would challenge some hostile Western stereotypes.¹³³

This quote exposes the clear difference in strategy of the two directors.

Třeštková sets out to subvert the normalisation value system, as part of a wider argument that the normalisation process acts as a barrier to subjects being able to achieve fulfilment. Whereas this is a subversion of the director’s own society, Longinotto is interested in subverting Western stereotyping of other cultures, and attempts this by attempting to capture the ‘everyday’ lives of subjects.

Furthermore, the role of Mir-Hosseini within *Divorce Iranian Style* is understood as being due to her expertise in Islamic family law, “and she was present throughout the shoot to translate and even to direct the attention of Longinotto, who serves as cinematographer, by a touch on the arm”¹³⁴. This is standard practice for the director, “who always finds (and generously credits as co-director) a woman to collaborate with who knows the culture and the language. More than acting simply as translators, these women frequently advise Longinotto on creative and ethical decisions—as do the subjects themselves, significantly”¹³⁵. Considerations such as the language barrier, or bringing in a co-director from the culture being represented, does not exist within Třeštková films, which instead take a form of holding a mirror up to society, encouraging her subjects to self-reflect, from their own shared cultural background. This leads to questions concerning the *othering*, or marginalisation of a cultural community, in Longinotto’s practice. Although it is stated that projects such as *Divorce Iranian Style* and *The Day I Will Never Forget* seek to de-orientalise the representations of both cultures and the women within them, the agency for undertaking the films still arises from an outsider director. Does she feel a sense of duty towards these themes and topics? These concerns, which are not tackled by Smaill or White in their contributions on Longinotto, remain unanswered.

¹³³ Mir-Hosseini 1999: 17.

¹³⁴ White 2006: 121.

¹³⁵ Malkowski 2007: 33.

Across the Atlantic, early documentary films by Canadian Anne Wheeler, who is mostly known for television films, also served to explore questions of gender. Her 1976 film *Augusta*, based upon an octogenarian Shuswap woman who lives in a cabin in rural British Columbia, prioritises the subject's anecdotes and life story, including experiences of colonialism that remain controversial in Canadian discourse. The documentary employs expository narration of Augusta's friend, yet mostly in terms of narrative progression and additional information (such as the planned shopping trip between the two), ensuring that "there is no disembodied voice on high delimiting Augusta's point of view"¹³⁶. This dialogue, where the subject discusses an abusive husband, several of her children dying in poverty and the attempt of forced assimilation of First Nations people into white colonial society, is treated in such a manner that "she emerges not as a victim of oppression and racist violence but as an agent of resistance"¹³⁷, particularly due to the power and oration in which such anecdotes are addressed to the camera.

Augusta serves as one example of Wheeler's career, which has focused on issues of gender in both her documentaries and subsequent feature films. Unlike Longinotto, but similar to Třeštková, the director's area of exploration has been primarily centred in her home country, and particularly in her native Alberta - the subject of migration to this province was explored in her first film *Great Grand Mother* (1975), an expository style of documentary with several dramatic re-enactments. That the film begins with the assertion that "This is a personal history of settlement, from a woman's point of view" (01:21) is a clear indication of what the director sets out to achieve in this - and several other - films and creative works, an explicit annunciation which Třeštková does not employ.

It follows, therefore, that *Great Grand Mother* lacks in male voices and narration, focusing knowledge and authority on behalf of the woman narrator and women who are interviewed during the piece; including the employment of her own great grandmother as subject, which aids to "resist[s] romanticizing marriage and gender relations of the past"¹³⁸. Once again, Wheeler's work is

¹³⁶ Cummins 2010: 73.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 74.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 73.

centred on rejecting the image of women as either victims or passive participants, and therefore demystifying them in terms of narrative in favour of being empowered agents of change. This theme of empowerment similarly runs through Longinotto's documentary work, as argued previously. Although, as Chapter Two and Three will indicate, Třeštíková aims to subvert representations of women in both normalisation and post-89 contexts, they are treated in an altogether different manner - particularly as a group that is disproportionately affected in terms of access to labour markets, public space, and means of financial or emotional fulfilment. However, whereas Wheeler and Longinotto deal with subjects on the margins of society in these examples, Třeštíková is grounded in so-called "everyday" subjects and the experiences of the majority.

Despite a focus on what could be termed the "everyday", it is clear from *Katka* and *René* that Třeštíková has been able to enter into other, unfamiliar communities on the margins of society - in these cases the community of drug users and of repeat offenders. The involvement that she has with her protagonists is self-reflexive (the advice she offers to Katka about taking her parental responsibilities seriously, help with finding a publisher for René's writing¹³⁹) and thus visible and audible on and off-screen, leading to the impression that the director feels a certain level of responsibility towards her subjects as the protagonists of her films. This is, however, explained as the deepening bond between director and subject which arises out of the longitudinal approach, as "The protagonists become part of my life and I become part of theirs"¹⁴⁰. Whereas the relationship between Třeštíková and subjects has its roots in empathy, it is accentuated by the visitations of director and crew over a significant period of time, as opposed to any politicised sense of duty and demystification that can be found in Longinotto's work. In addition, Třeštíková's ability to access fringe groups in her documentaries is aided by possessing a mutual language, requiring no need for mediation via a translator. Chapter Four, which focuses on *Katka*, *René* and *Soukromý vesmír*, will further explore interactions between the director and those perceived as being on such societal fringes.

¹³⁹ Třeštíková and Třeščík 2015: 17-26.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Insider Perspectives of Women in Central and East Europe

The previous section explored the differences between woman documentarists in terms of familiarity with the subjects and cultures that they represent in documentary cinema, in addition to highlighting how these may be shaped in terms of longitudinal film. Whereas these documentaries are backgrounded in the work of directors outside of the state socialist sphere, it is useful to recognise the role of woman directors existing in neighbouring Central and East European countries which also underwent transitions to a market economy; and whether their focus was predominantly based on a familiarity of cultural contexts. The result of this is a shared interest in discourses of sobriety that transcend individual nation states who are nevertheless united by political bonds (the shared history of Central European states as Warsaw Pact countries), but that differ vastly in strategy.

In other words, women documentarists in fellow socialist states engage in recognisable issues that arise from their respective regimes, but offer a different encoding and model reader pertinent to their experience and method. Within the Czech context, chapters Two and Three note the contributions made by such directors as Olga Sommerová and Drahomíra Vihanová, and are expanded and analysed there due to the shared histories and practices of documentary film production.

Documentary filmmaking in Poland has enjoyed a long and diverse tradition. As Ford and Hammond understand,

In Poland, as in other countries of the Communist Bloc, this production [*of documentaries, short films, and animation*] was especially abundant, since it could exist on the minimal funding that still managed to trickle in... It is noteworthy, furthermore, that women directors had a chance to have a career in these shorter forms of cinema. Although women were extremely rare as directors of feature-length films, there were several active in the documentary field.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Ford and Hammond 2005: 140-141.

In line with a broadly consistent understanding of the role of media and culture that existed within the societies of Central and Eastern Europe before 1989, the role of censorship and dominance of socio-political narratives at the hand of a ruling state-socialist party emerges as a general theme¹⁴². Documentarists in Poland were also subject to censorship, and a dominant-hegemonic narrative imposed by a Communist leadership which had to be navigated in order for their films to be screened or broadcast on television - thus it was important for films to be encoded which possessed the potential for a model reader to be attained, and for a derivation of meaning which opposed the values of the regime. Like in Czechoslovakia, documentary films served an ideological purpose in disseminating pro-state values, and would be subject to regime-mandated censorship practices.

However, “Throughout the 1970s and (after Martial Law was repealed) the 1980s, Polish documentarians would produce daring films that shed light on the individual’s relationship to the institutions of power and the limited choices available to citizens within the communist system¹⁴³. As the next chapter discusses, the 1980s in Czechoslovak documentary afforded a limited degree of space in the exploration of social issues of a critical nature; but Shpolberg’s analysis here reveals a documentary environment that was far more open in Poland at the time. This is corroborated by the output of several filmmakers of the period, including work by Krzysztof Kieślowski, which the above source cites as an example¹⁴⁴.

Women documentarists were also active in this period. Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz was a prolific documentarist during the 1980s, at the same time as Třeštíková was shooting the *Manželské etudy* cycle. Her films of this period demonstrate a keen interest in the representation of socio-political issues, studied under Kieślowski at Katowice film school. Zmarz-Koczanowicz’s documentaries are noticeable for exploiting the ability of directors to create critical works of a social nature when compared to Czechoslovakia, and are based primarily in

¹⁴² Practices of censorship in Poland has been outlined in Curry, J.L. (ed, trans.) (1984) *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*, and other overviews of censorship in Central & Eastern Europe can be found in Jones, D. (ed.) (2001) *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*.

¹⁴³ Shpolberg 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

public spaces - employing these locations as a means of subverting regime narratives through irony, and of which gender regularly appears as a theme.

This is particularly evident on watching *I am a Man (Jestem mężczyzną, 1985)*, a sixteen-minute short concerning a regional party leader in a small village near Wrocław, who is chairman of several local organisations - including the League of Polish Women. The intentions of the director, to “resemble a documentary about a dangerous totalitarian dictator”¹⁴⁵ result in a narrative dominated by the protagonist, both by the use of voiceover and in shots that foreground and centre him during meetings and events, and is effective in communicating to the viewer the absurdity of local-level politics in Poland, dominated from the top-down by (male) bureaucrats. Whereas the protagonist’s monologue is intended to reflect the village as a close-knit community loyal to the regime, it is telling that the other villagers are relegated to the backgrounds and ultimately voiceless within the documentary; inferring the absurdity of the regime’s attempted control of all society, from both the national to local, and to the extent that the local women’s organisation has a male chairperson. On the other hand, it can be argued that the documentary shows that “the regime had social backing”, as “Its inhabitants are always ready to carry out orders”¹⁴⁶, yet this is only clear in relation to the public sphere - the private lives of citizens (and their potential opposition) remains unexplored.

Although certain similarities exist, this is a different strategy from that employed by Třeštíková. The longitudinal format of Třeštíková documentaries, which has at its core the development of relationships between director and subject, is an obvious contrast; yet the prioritisation of the public space by Zmarz-Koczanowicz serves to forge an ironic portrait of masculinity in a different environment - Třeštíková, as will be developed in the next chapter, focuses on private spaces in questioning the ability for women to enter the public sphere that Zmarz-Koczanowicz represents, albeit in a different national context. The narration of *I am a Man*, being dominated by the male narrative, relegates the role of women to a tier below that of men (particularly such men who possess the capital of being a party functionary), just as *Manželské etudy*

¹⁴⁵ In Sobolewski 2008: 18.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

represents women subjects as lacking the agency that their husbands do in accessing work and resources outside of the home.

The private sphere occupied by Třeštíková is a means of re-addressing the imbalance witnessed in the majority of normalisation documentary and film, which aims to promote normalisation values through concepts such as employment that dominate public and open spaces. For Zmarz-Koczanowicz, such spaces allow a focus on what she regards as ironies existing in day-to-day life under the control of the Polish United Worker's Party. Critical analysis of the regime is therefore far more overt than within Třeštíková documentaries - by being located in the public sphere and engaging with issues head-on, as opposed to subtly subverting the narratives of communist-dominant spaces through representations of the everyday life of citizens. Not only is this a result of style, but also of the aforementioned environment of Polish documentary cinema, which provided more room for filmmakers to conduct social investigations.

Just as *I am a Man* featured the party official as the main protagonist (and thus focusing directly upon politics and party members as discourse), 1986's *The Office (Urząd)* concerns collection agents and their attempts to claim rent and bill payments from various people. This is a very different film to both *I am a Man* and Třeštíková's canon, as "The film includes actual statements by court collectors, but most did not agree to appear on camera and thus had to be replaced by actors"¹⁴⁷. The "surreal, socialist tax office, whose employees go to poor homes and take people's belongings"¹⁴⁸ does not require any sophisticated decoding to reach the director's conclusions that the government is not adequately providing for citizens who are less well-off. Although stylistically different to Třeštíková, and with different objects of focus, Zmarz-Koczanowicz confirms the space inside the People's Republic of Poland to offer a measured amount of criticism, and to involve issues of gender, therefore creating documentaries that would differ from other propagandistic narratives.

In discussions of documentary film in Central and Eastern Europe, Dina Iordanova makes two interesting points. Firstly, as mentioned in the introduction, the

¹⁴⁷ Strękowski 2003.

¹⁴⁸ Zmarz-Koczanowicz, in Sobolewski 2008: 20.

study of Central and East European documentaries is “the least explored cinematic form”¹⁴⁹, and that “Another misleading assumption is that documentary film of the region was strictly politically controlled and mostly used for propaganda purposes”¹⁵⁰. Repercussions of this first quote can be felt in the attempts to investigate and source films and analysis of women documentarists in Central and East Europe during the latter stages of state socialism. Early documentary films by Hungarian director Marta Mészáros, for example, are discussed by Catherine Portuges in her book *Screen Memories: The Hungarian Cinema of Márta Mészáros* (1993), yet the films which she discusses are not readily available either outside of Hungary or with English-language subtitling - an issue which affects several other CEU countries.

Based on research into the area, however, Jordanova’s assertion only appears to be partially true. With regards to Poland, it is evident that there was further space that could be negotiated by filmmakers to pass socially critical comment, yet as this thesis explores in the next chapter, this was not an experience shared by Czech and Slovak directors during normalisation. Although certain preliminary conclusions can be attained from the examples included within this section, a fuller appreciation of the cinematic environment for women documentarists in the 1970s and 1980s across Warsaw Pact and allied states requires far further exploration than can be provided in a work of this remit.

Třeščíková’s Position as a Woman Documentarist

Although an in-depth study of women documentarists on both an international and Central European scale is beyond the scope of this thesis, several useful conclusions can be taken from the above. It can be noted that Třeščíková is not isolated, either within Central Europe or further afield internationally, as a woman documentarist; yet her approach is unique in several ways. By not adopting an interest in the representation of other nations or cultures (as Longinotto does) and instead favouring Czech social topics, in addition to the

¹⁴⁹ op. cit.

¹⁵⁰ Jordanova 2003: 19.

previously discussed longitudinal form advocated, Třeštíková arguably occupies a unique position within documentary film.

Like Zmarz-Koczanowicz, Třeštíková's documentaries are based within, and on, the specific culture and socio-political environment of their home country. Nevertheless, the representation of primarily private spaces stands out as a unique method of subverting regime narratives, particularly how women are represented, as the second chapter discusses in detail. In contrast, public spaces occupied in the work of the other directors, such as the collection office in *The Office*, represent a far more denotative, overt criticism of the Polish regime and its practice as compared to Czechoslovakia. Earlier in this chapter, it was stated that longitudinal documentary often has problems in maintaining a specific, set ideology based on shooting and editing over an extended period of time. Alongside the high level of censorship within normalisation society, this approach lends itself better to a less bombastic cycle of film, which then increases in validity (in the eyes of the viewership) by being a long-term investigation. It further cements the uniqueness of Třeštíková's position within documentary cinema, and the analysis of fulfilment that she achieves through her work.

Chapter Conclusions

In addressing a number of particularities of the longitudinal approach to documentary filmmaking, the position of Třeštíková as a woman in the specific context of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, and the techniques and influences which can be seen in her films, there is now a solid foundation to approach the in-depth studies which will be presented in the following chapters. Of crucial importance has been the setting down of a clear methodology which understands the textual qualities of film narratives, and that these are encoded by the director in order to generate a model reader; from which meanings can be derived. As the following chapters will show, these meanings are closely linked to how Třeštíková understands fulfilment, and how the crafting of her

documentaries significantly differ from that of existing non-fiction films of normalisation and post-normalisation.

As Asserted Veridical Representations, it is evident that documentaries are not objective realities, but subjective constructions by directors which engage in the discourses of sobriety. The influence of Dziga Vertov, and the novel approach which led to Třeštíková's discovery of longitudinal filmmaking, highlight that authenticity is a clear concern; but in addition, the format is a vehicle for her own observations alongside those of her subjects. These subjects, who the director aims to give as much agency as possible to through the techniques such as intertiting and interviews, must be approached with a view to building a subject-author relationship that will allow observations to last over a number of years. As these relationships endure, it is therefore necessary for Třeštíková to reflect upon her own presence in the narrative, which is where self-reflexivity arises. On the basis of these relationships, and the long-term process of observation, the filmmaker crafts narratives which take into account the role of the author, the socio-political situation, and how they feed back into the personal stories of the subjects which feature.

Chapter Two

Constructing and Subverting Normalisation Values in Documentary Film and Television

The normalisation process which began after the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion provides the socio-political backdrop to Třeštíková's early documentary projects and her first longitudinal cycle. As the introduction noted, H. Gordon Skilling (1976) and Williams (1997) have both contributed to the study of the various political and historical factors that led to military intervention and the subsequent fall of Dubček, with a detail this thesis cannot adequately replicate.

Yet the ramifications of Gustáv Husák's leadership of the KSČ - and therefore Czechoslovakia - on film and television are of significant interest and importance, if it is hypothesised that (i) Helena Třeštíková's documentaries differ in style and approach to most documentary films of the period, and (ii) these documentaries subvert the narrative of fulfilment that is put forward by the regime. The role of censorship and the use of propaganda - which this section will argue were central to the state's cultural strategy - will be defined and analysed with the use of case studies to build up a background to the longitudinal *Manželské etudy* cycle and its encoding as a counter-narrative to state socialism in action. This reflects the three research questions of this thesis, in addressing how the narratives of normalisation were constructed, and the response by Třeštíková. At the heart of this is the study of gender, work and space, which is employed to investigate the notions of fulfilment apparent during the six constituent episodes of the cycle, and which form the first part of the *Etudy* documentaries.

Despite normalisation television and film borrowing heavily from 1950s propaganda narratives (reflecting the return to neo-Stalinist values that characterised the period), the final decade of the regime began to permit investigations of topics which would previously have fallen foul of the censorship system. This change, designed to position the KSČ and official channels as aware of issues of public concern and taking active measures to alleviate them,

afforded space that was subsequently exploited and encoded in a subversive manner. Rather than deal with the problems of alcoholism, young mothers or anti-social behaviour by centring the party and state as the solution, directors, including Třeštková, constructed their documentaries in a manner which did not overtly criticise the regime; but argued a political line that went against the normalisation value system. By comparing and contrasting the canon of propaganda-heavy broadcasting of the period, it is possible to approach the films of Třeštková and colleagues with a semiotic analysis recognising the various encoding techniques that communicate a counter-narrative to the regime.

Framing Censorship: Authorised Speech in Czechoslovakia

The importance of censorship for authoritarian regimes such as the KSČ stems from the understanding of power as a key agent in its deployment - both in the dichotomy of powerful and powerless in enforcement (the former as implementer) and the goal of maintaining power through it. This understanding is captured through Sue Curry Jansen's definition of the term, which:

encompasses all socially structured proscriptions or prescriptions which inhibit or prohibit dissemination of ideas, information, images, and other messages through a society's channels of communication whether these obstructions are secured by political, economic, religious, or other systems of authority. It includes both overt and covert proscriptions and prescriptions.¹

By noting that censorship restricts the dissemination of certain ideas and messages, it is possible to gain a rudimentary appreciation of how subversion operated within Czechoslovakia: if certain signs are banned or subject to censure - particularly if the *meaning* of these signs goes against the values of the regime - then the generation of oppositional meaning must take on a different and connotative decoding to evade restriction. This underpins the linguistic characteristics of censorship, which serves to formalise what speech can be deemed permissible and impermissible to those in possession of political power.

¹ Jansen 1991: 221.

As Foucault argues:

Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.²

Enforcing this binary division, which in this context can be extended to those who are loyal and disloyal to the regime, is the hallmark of normalisation practice and how censorship was implemented. As Foucault continues, “All the mechanisms of power, which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive”³; drawing parallels with normalisation protocol designed to discourage and handicap opponents by making this dual distinction. Its re-introduction is evocative of the claims of former Hungarian leader and Stalinist Mátyás Rákosi (and similar to what was adopted during Gottwald’s tenure in the late 1940s and 1950s), who claimed that “He who is not with us is against us”⁴, setting out both where power lies and the direction that censorship flows.

Returning to the observation that political power controls the formation of linguistic signs, it is clear that language reflects power, those who possess it, and how it is interpreted. The work of Pierre Bourdieu recognises that language is strongly tied to social structures that are registered in the linguistic market. In other words, aspects of speech possess values dependant on what the market values most (*linguistic capital*), and the ability to produce these values originates due to social, economic and political factors. Those who possess the largest amount of said capital therefore find themselves with a larger influence and degree of power than those with less. Greater power increases the ability to further restrict speech, which then becomes an example of censorship in action. For normalisation Czechoslovakia, linguistic capital was concentrated amongst

² Foucault 1995: 199.

³ Ibid., 199-200.

⁴ Weiner 1994: 48.

those loyal to the regime, in particular members of the KSČ, who in turn gain a privileged position through what Bourdieu terms “official speech”:

There is a rhetoric which characterizes all discourses of institution, that is to say, the official speech of the authorized spokesperson expressing himself in a solemn situation, with an authority whose limits are identical with the extent of delegation by the institution. The stylistic features which characterize the language of priests, teachers and, more generally, all institutions, like routinization, stereotyping and neutralization, all stem from the position occupied in a competitive field by these persons entrusted with delegated authority.⁵⁶

As this chapter will examine, the use of this official speech can be witnessed in a significant amount of propaganda broadcasts during normalisation. However, this speech is not exclusive to party podiums and ideological broadcasts, as “In fact, the use of language, the manner as much as the substance of discourse, depends on the social position of the speaker, which governs the access he can have to the language of the institution, that is, to the official, orthodox and legitimate speech”⁷. This reflects upon the desired control of Czechoslovak society by the KSČ, in that those in possession of power, and thus official, legitimised speech, can maintain an authoritarian control throughout public life. As “Religion and politics achieve their most successful ideological effects by exploiting the possibilities contained in the polysemy inherent in the ubiquity of the legitimate language”⁸, censorship and propaganda work together in the retention of political power at the hands of the state. In light of this, the documentaries of Třeštíková must be analysed with respect to their encoding, and compared to conventional documentary and programming of the normalisation period. In bypassing censorship, a degree of tolerated or official speech is required, or at the very least an encoding which can appease those in control of the censorship process - this explains the critical lack of any broadcast during normalisation

⁵ Bourdieu 1991: 109.

⁶ These issues were also touched upon in the work of Jan Mukařovský, as part of a wider exploration of the aesthetic function. He has noted the influence of language in shaping reality, which is useful when considering that documentary films are a mixture of linguistic and visual encodings. This is developed in full in (1979) (translated by Suino, M.) *Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts*.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 39.

which overtly challenged the regime's values, in contrast to the liberalised 1960s where such projects were, to a certain extent, possible.

Self-censorship, another important factor of normalisation, is also understood by Bourdieu, anticipating that “all linguistic expressions are, to some extent, ‘euphemized’: they are modified by a certain kind of censorship which stems from the structure of the market, but which is transformed into self-censorship through the process of anticipation”⁹. Noting the power structures involved, the anticipation of censure, or the repercussions of language not valued within the linguistic market, was a powerful tool of the top-down censorship that was enforced. As the next section identifies, this self-censorship was then formalised as a part of the KSČ's overall strategy.

Cook and Heilmann make two distinctions when discussing self-censorship: *public* and *private*. *Public* self-censorship, where the individual modifies their speech based on the political or societal censor, is the self-censorship described in the previous paragraph. On the other hand, *private* self-censorship is “the suppression by an agent of his or her own attitudes where a public censor is either absent or irrelevant. Private self-censorship is a process of regulation between what an individual regards as permissible to express publicly, and that which he or she wishes to express publicly”¹⁰. For both brevity and clarity, the term *self-censorship* which appears throughout this chapter is to be understood as the former, for the reason that anticipation (of repercussions and censure) was a strong motivating factor in the choice of editors and filmmakers to censor themselves. That self-censorship was enshrined in law during normalisation¹¹ stands as a testament to both its importance to the state and to its attempted involvement in both the personal and private lives of the citizenry, underpinning just how crucial censorship was to the regime.

⁹ Thompson, in *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁰Cook and Heilmann 2013: 179.

¹¹ See Law 127/1968 in the next sub-section.

The Censorship Process at Work

1968's Warsaw Pact invasion is widely understood as a reaction to the reforms witnessed in the lead-up and subsequent tenure of Alexander Dubček as First Secretary of the KSČ¹². The *Akční program KSČ (Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia)*, published on April 5th 1968, set out a liberalised political direction of the party under the new leadership and enshrined several laws and practices regarding media and the arts. By this point in the country's history, censorship had been well-established: at first through the KSČ leadership's Cultural Council and editors of newspaper and state radio, before the creation of a dedicated censorship office from 1953 onwards¹³. This would be renamed the Central Publication Office in 1966 and an organ of the government as opposed to the party, before being severely weakened by a decree a year later which stated that editors of newspapers and magazines could accept or reject the office's rulings on content¹⁴. The 1966 law enshrining the role of censorship in Czechoslovak society provides a clear point of reference as to how television, film and media should operate based on communist hegemony - that the role of the press is to "promote the interests of socialist society" and "cooperate in the development of the socialist consciousness of citizens, the spirit of the Constitution and the ideas of the policy of the Communist Party as a leading force"¹⁵. Pertinent to this thesis is the stipulation within the law that includes radio and television news, film and video recordings.

It is a testament to the departure from this orthodoxy that the *Akční program* took an oppositional approach to censorship, noting that "Legal norms must guarantee more exactly the freedom of speech of minority interests and opinions"¹⁶. The section pertaining to culture, and thus to literature and film, was explicit in stating that "Artistic work must not be subject to censorship... The Party will guard and safeguard both the freedom of artistic work and the right to make works of art accessible"¹⁷. This led to the outright abolition of the

¹² See Williams 1997 pp.29-38, Suri 2006.

¹³ Čulík 2001: 626-627.

¹⁴ Ibid., 628.

¹⁵ The National Assembly of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 1966.

¹⁶ The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1968: 34.

¹⁷ Ibid., 80.

Central Publication Office in June of that year, alongside government confirmation that “Censorship is impermissible. Censorship is defined as action by the state authorities against the freedom of speech and pictures and against their dissemination by the mass media”¹⁸.

A consequence of the Warsaw Pact invasion was the rapid reinstatement of the censorship process. Law 127/1968¹⁹, *o některých opatřeních v oblasti periodického tisku a ostatních hromadných informačních prostředků (On Some Measures in the Area of Periodical Press and Other Mass Media)*, re-established the Office for Press and Information²⁰, and this was in place alongside growing self-censorship of editors, fearing reprimands or anticipating censorship by the authorities. An important consequence of the law was the formalisation and institutionalisation of self-censorship by the regime, as “Individual newspapers and journalists were now responsible for what they published”²¹. Despite such measures, Skilling comments that the press remained generally open in the weeks following²², although several events of early 1969 - including riots over two ice hockey matches against the Soviet Union, and the self-immolation of two students in protest of the undoing of the Prague Spring reforms - led to a Soviet ultimatum. This was to either “immediately impose order and censorship and stop discussion about the leading role of the party, or the members of the Warsaw Pact would again be asked to intervene”²³.

Therefore, the reintroduction of official censorship coincided with wider practices intended to roll back reforms and return to the “normal” model of a Soviet-loyal Czechoslovak society. Dubček’s replacement, Gustáv Husák, oversaw the “normalisation” process which included wide-reaching purges of both high-ranking KSČ members and party cadre²⁴, and further powers to the *Státní bezpečnost (State Security, StB)*, the regime’s secret police - which built up a network of collaborators and aided the advancement of politically-motivated

¹⁸ Čulík 2001: 628.

¹⁹ The National Assembly of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 1968.

²⁰ This included a parallel Slovak Office for Press and Information, reflecting Czechoslovakia as a federal socialist republic - a Dubček reform which was not overturned.

²¹ Čulík 2001: 628.

²² Skilling 1976: 816.

²³ Heimann 2009: 273.

²⁴ Kusin 1978: 74.

trials against critics of party policy²⁵. Maintaining a highly-controlled society was beneficial for the KSČ in concretising censorship, giving a further impetus to journalists and filmmakers to self-censor their works or potentially face repercussions. Furthermore, the effects of party purges, and parallel purges of certain professions such as teaching and the media, served to dramatically reduce liberal voices within these positions; ushering in replacements loyal to the regime and “who strove hard to surpass the demands of any censor”, let alone attempt an oppositional encoding of any text²⁶.

Both written works and the visual arts were subject to censor during Husák’s tenure. Public libraries were screened, and books deemed to be either anti-Marxist or anti-regime were withdrawn from circulation. This included novels by dissident Czech and Slovak writers, as “The works of the leading lights of the 4th Writer’s Congress were entirely banned: after Kundera’s, Klíma’s Havel’s and Vaculík’s names the word “everything” was written”²⁷. Other writers, such as Josef Škvorecký, Jan Beneš, and indeed Milan Kundera, all emigrated during normalisation. For both dissident writers who moved abroad and those who remained, “Officially, they ceased to exist”, resulting in being “excluded from the literary life of their country and their influence on it has thus been greatly reduced”²⁸. A similar process directly affected filmmakers of the era, including well-known directors who contributed to new-wave, subversive and critical films that were a hallmark of 1960s Czechoslovak cinema.

In addition to several directors leaving the country, over one hundred films, including *O slavnosti a hostech* (*Report on the Party and the Guests*, dir. Jan Němec, 1966) and *Hoří, má panenko* (*The Firemen’s Ball*, dir. Miloš Forman 1967) were banned by the authorities²⁹. In the case of Němec, he was “one of a few people who were named as dangerous individuals and he was fired from Barrandov Studios (this was a decision from the Communist Party and adopted by the Czech National Council, not the film studio)”³⁰. Other directors subsequently

²⁵ See Heimann 2009: 274. and Kusin 1978: 117.

²⁶ Čulík 2008

²⁷ Čulík 2001: 628.

²⁸ Hájek 1978: 706.

²⁹ Hames 2014: 147.

³⁰ Buchar 2003: 25.

banned from making films included Věra Chytilová and Jiří Menzel³¹. Like literature, the effects of this censorship could not only be witnessed in the non-controversial, apolitical nature of many feature films of normalisation, but also in numbers: with Liehm and Liehm observing that film production at the start of the 1970s was roughly half that of the period which came before³².

Whereas a significant number of apolitical documentaries were also produced during normalisation, the role of these films - alongside many television broadcasts - was far more ideological than feature films, thus necessitating their investigation within this chapter. Yet the above examples of feature film and literature demonstrate well the pivotal role that censorship played in its elimination of dissenting voices. This, alongside the use of propaganda, was deliberately designed to prioritise the KSČ's dominant-hegemonic narrative in Czechoslovak society.

Propaganda: The Case of Czechoslovak Documentary and Television

Chapter One of this thesis touched upon the use of propaganda broadcasts and television serials on Czechoslovak state television (*Československá televize, ČST*) in relation to the methodological approach taken. It noted the dualism of retaining viewers through the value of entertainment on-screen, but also using this as a vehicle for communicating an ideological viewpoint. This differentiates these programmes from more conventional expository documentaries and news items, which were far more direct in communicating an ideological line, and possessive of official speech in greater volumes. An important question therefore arises in the position and context that Třeštíková films occupy within a television culture dominated by two very different forms of propaganda, and the key differences in the encoding of these broadcasts. This directly relates to the first

³¹ See Bergen 2014, and Shen 2015: 202.

³² Liehm and Liehm 1977: 305.

research question and offers a comprehensive analysis of Czechoslovak television and documentary to attain the dominant narratives which are disseminated.

This analysis distinguishes two different forms of programmatic propaganda in addition to documentaries - namely of overt, expository broadcasts of presidiums and congresses, and of light entertainment programmes - and the different means in which they convert a pro-regime narrative to television viewers; offering an in-depth context to normalisation in action. In addition, documentaries made during this period are explored as case studies to determine prevalent approaches and techniques, seeking to provide a useful comparison to Třeštková's longitudinal documentaries. Not only does Třeštková exhibit a technique which appears unconventional in contrast to existing normalisation documentary, but her work subverts the normalisation value system that is disseminated - in its representation of women in society, the state's prioritisation of work, and the narrative that state socialism fulfils the economic and social needs of the population. Furthermore, there are strong arguments to suggest that Třeštková's ability to produce *Manželské etudy* is the result of the introduction of more critical themes and topics at the beginning of the 1980s, which is argued from page 115.

The Normalisation Value System

Whereas the process of censorship in Czechoslovakia was designed to undermine and eliminate opposition, the propaganda of the state served a dual purpose - to promote a narrative of the success of the country and fulfilment of its citizens, and to attack political opponents and practices that were regarded as contrary to the party's orthodoxy. Both these attacks, and the construction of a narrative of a fulfilled socialist republic, combined to produce what can be termed as the *normalisation value system*, or beliefs and practices associated with Husákism and the de-liberalisation of the country. The propagation of these values was a key element of the regime's cultural policy, and dominated much of the televisual output.

One of the most visible policy lines of normalisation was re-emphasising pro-Soviet rhetoric and its interpretation of Marxist-Leninist doctrine as a response to the ‘deviations’ of Dubček and his supporters. This led to certain ideological tropes replicated in documentaries, newspaper articles and radio broadcasts of the age, many of which regularly occur in the documentaries examined in this chapter. In television programmes which dealt with the historical issues of Czechoslovakia or the international communist movement, such as *Třicet případů majora Zemana* discussed later, signs on a denotative, overt level demonstrated that those loyal to the regime - and of the communist cause - were the heroic, successful agents of a suitably heroic socialist state. As Kusin remarks, “Throughout the period no stone was left unturned to declare emphatically the party’s allegiance to Soviet theory and practice of the Soviet party’s stand in the international communist movement”, showing that “After the early 1950s, the ‘normalisation’ period has been the most militantly and blatantly ideological phase of modern Czechoslovak history”³³. This corresponds to the official language widespread in expository documentaries, stressing Czechoslovak-Soviet cooperation in the economic, social and militarist spheres and parroting a near-identical ideological understanding of the building of the Socialist state; from the “anti-fascist resistance” during the Second World War, to the rejection of liberal reforms of the 1960s thanks to the supremacy of the industrial working class³⁴.

This focus on the industrial (or manual) worker was intended not only as a commitment to communist orthodoxy which championed this specific archetype, but also as an attack on the Prague Spring liberals and later civil society groups such as Charta 77, which featured a significant number of intellectuals and artists in their ranks. Reactions to the chartists included articles in the party daily *Rudé právo*, targeting “various ‘bourgeois’ intellectuals ‘alien to their own land’” and “who were ‘serving the aims of American superpower policy’”³⁵. The effect of political policy, in particular the purges mentioned in the sub-chapter on censorship, meant that journalists and academics “found themselves frozen

³³ Kusin 1978: 202.

³⁴ This fight against fascism, and the ‘errors’ of the Dubček era, can be witnessed in this thesis’ discussions on *60 let Československa*, *Gustáv Husák* and *Ženy socialistického Československa*, which begin on page 108.

³⁵ Skilling 1981: 131-132.

out of their familiar professions and had to find other jobs, particularly working-class ones”³⁶. The distrust of - and attacks on - intellectuals is rooted in the practice of the 1950s, which Kusin alluded to³⁷; and reveals the extent to which the values of normalisation reflect on the earlier experiences of the state.

Documentary and information films from the era of the Czechoslovak Republic (1948-1960) reflect the extent which normalisation values borrow heavily from the past. Socialist Realism, a key tenet of Soviet literature and film, was adopted by the KSČ as an official policy line in 1949³⁸, designed to glorify the industrial worker and collective farmer, and their alleged commitment to building socialism. The formula for these films often centred around a class-conscious worker and their overcoming of a certain problem, which is then successfully navigated to the benefit of society. This can be witnessed in 1950’s *Hutě volají* (*The Ironworks are Calling*, dir. Karel Kabeláč), a recruitment film where *úderník*³⁹ Kalabus and fellow workers of the Vítkovice ironworks work day and night to repair a broken machine and thus support the promise that “we’ll give more steel to the country” (04:59). In the agricultural sphere, a similar narrative is found within *Ženy v JZD* (*Women in Agricultural Cooperatives*, dir. Josef Soukup, 1951), where the problem (this time a lack of milk production) is alleviated through the idea of increased haymaking and learning from the experiences of collective farmers in the kolkhozes of the Soviet Union. The representation of Soviet workers as role models continues in *Hosté nejmilejší* (*Beloved Guests*, dir. Erna Friesová, 1951), a film covering a visit of more Soviet farmers to help those in the Mělnické Vtelno cooperative “spread our wings in the way taught by Soviet agriculture” (03:15). Whereas cooperation between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was represented as more of an equal partnership during normalisation documentary, the role of work is a consistent theme that ties both periods together.

³⁶ Bolton 2012: 62.

³⁷ op. cit.

³⁸ Heimann 2009: 189.

³⁹ The Czech version of ‘shock worker’, a term used throughout communist Europe to refer to model workers who exceeded production quotas.

Furthermore, expanded ideas of fulfilment that exist during normalisation are also backgrounded during these first decades. As early as 1949, *Žijeme lépe, žijeme radostněji* (*We Live Better and More Happily*, dir. Miroslav Hrubý) disseminated a narrative that party loyalty and hard work would be rewarded in terms of increased living standards. The film, which advertises the opportunities for workers to holiday in fellow socialist states or at resorts inside Czechoslovakia, depicts subjects participating in various activities, and displays extensive usage of shots of the Bulgarian and Polish coasts; proclaiming that “workers travel to the sea” (02:57) - an enticing prospect for workers in a landlocked country. Further shots include a table of holidaymakers eating a large quantity of grapes, in an encoding that signifies abundance. However, the conditions of which one can go on holiday are overt, the narrator stating that these opportunities are “for those who deserve them for their contribution to building our state” (06:52).

In similar fashion to many normalisation features analysed in the next section, not all documentaries and films are as conspicuous - a decade later, *Jen čtvrt hodinky?* (*Only Quarter of an Hour?*, dir. Oldřich Mirad, 1959), a short comedy promoting tourist clubs and respectful behaviour⁴⁰, reflects “one of the post-war means of spending one’s time that was preferred by the regime”⁴¹. This narrative is then supplemented by footage of the main protagonist’s family home in Prague, which is filled with furniture and consumer items, suggesting that Czechoslovak citizens are well looked-after and have access to a wide variety of goods. Both overt and covert encodings would be equally as important to the construction of fulfilment during Husák’s tenure, and the examples here indicate the beginnings of a social contract that provides for working people - a notion similarly witnessed after 1968.

Narratives of fulfilment espoused by the state reflected “the regime’s consistent effort to improve the country’s economic situation”⁴², which eventually led to “a substantial increase in incomes and standard of living for broad social

⁴⁰ The film employs several comedic skits to dissuade viewers from littering, vandalising historical sites and avoiding certain dangers.

⁴¹ Ligasová 2015: 21.

⁴² Järvinen 2010: 81.

strata”⁴³. The encoding of numerous programmes served to maintain an image of abundance and consumerism under Husák, as seen in *Žena za pultem* later in this chapter. Although the concept of consumerism is alien to the initial postwar regime under Gottwald, it afforded the KSČ significant capital in maintaining political control in the form of a social contract between citizen and state:

The contract is based on the assumption - which goes completely against communist ideology - that in a society the citizens place their personal goals ahead of social (common) goals and ‘exchange’ their rights as citizens for political compliance, material well-being, secure employment, and social benefits... balancing of the economic situation and the social contract played an important role after the social crises in reinforcing the power of the new administration and demobilizing any opposition.⁴⁴

The consumerism that emerged from the 1970s onward was depicted by the regime as an achievement of the socialist state, leading to many representations of workers with access to material goods and the ability to partake in recreational activities with their disposable incomes⁴⁵. Despite evidence to confirm increases in income and living standards during normalisation, it is also apparent that the claims of abundant material goods emerged as a mythology, as a “large amount of unsatisfied purchasing powers has evolved in the form of savings”, which aided notions of affluence, yet coupled with “not being fully successful in [*the government’s*] endeavour to match availability of goods with money in people’s pockets”⁴⁶. Nevertheless, the regime placed significant importance on promoting the line that Czechoslovaks were affluent, “pointing out that the affluence and happiness of the population was achieved by the Communist Party and that it was self-evident, sensible and normal to support the regime and its ideology”⁴⁷.

Therefore, the main characteristic of the normalisation value system was in promoting the role of the KSČ in all walks of life. In short, the achievements of the Socialist Republic, such as an increase in living standards, is thanks to the growing economy at the hands of the workers; led by the Party and in defiance

⁴³ Krejčí and Machonin 1996: 197.

⁴⁴ Järvinen 2010: 82-83.

⁴⁵ Attested to with the images of the well-stocked supermarket in *Žena za pultem*, or the well-furnished housing in *Roddiné album*.

⁴⁶ Kusin 1978: 230.

⁴⁷ Čulík 2013: 149.

of vilified liberals and intellectuals. Even when the main point of focus is not on the KSČ itself, the encoding of audio-visual programmes, which the next section analyses, is deliberate in constructing narratives that can link back to the Party as the catalyst of fulfilment, legitimising the regime and justifying its prominent position. In line with political policy borrowed from the decades before, the KSČ is then part of an international communist movement which looks up to the Marxist-Leninist positions of the Soviet Union, a key ally and one which is portrayed as possessing identical values to the Czechoslovak people. This unity, which is particularly evident in the realm of normalisation documentary, is then intended to elicit support for the regime's relationship. Overall, the normalisation value system exists through propaganda as a pro-active attempt to cement the existing position of the KSČ as a bulwark against another Dubček-styled liberalisation movement, and in doing so promotes a social contract between state and society that promises fulfilment in exchange for its continued authoritarian governance.

Overt Political Propaganda: *Za nové tvůrčí činy ve jménu socialismu a míru*

Czechoslovak Television first began broadcasting in May 1953, initially as single broadcasts on a single channel, before rapidly expanding throughout the life of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. By the time that Třeštíková was making longitudinal documentaries, ČST was comprised of two channels regularly (but not exclusively) broadcasting in colour, and with a highly ideological approach to programming. This approach, and the content found here, is explained by Čulík:

In the 1970s, there were ties between Czechoslovak Television's News and Current Affairs department and the Czechoslovak secret police (STB). Czechoslovak Television occasionally broadcast programs, based on secret police material, that scandalized the banned democratic reformers and human rights activists. Czechoslovak Television also transmitted popular, consumerist entertainment in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Čulík 2005: 641.

The “banned democratic reformers” in question refer to the members of Charta 77 and other informal civil society groups, who were subject to a multi-faceted oppositional campaign by the KSČ which included police harassment and a rigorous propaganda campaign. An in-depth analysis of the group, which included figures such as Václav Havel and Zdeněk Mlynář (a key liberaliser and policymaker of the Prague Spring era) can be found in Skilling (1981) and Järvinen (2009). In the interests of this thesis, the agitation against Charta 77 on ČST offers an interesting case study into the more overt propaganda of the state, as opposed to the light entertainment programmes that offered a more sophisticated encoding of the normalisation value system.

The televised event *Za nové tvůrčí činy ve jménu socialismu a míru* took place in January 1977 as an immediate response to the dissemination of Charta 77 earlier in the month, and took the form of an open letter and petition signed on-air by members of the artistic and cultural community. This was accompanied by many plenary speeches, again filled with official speech of the regime. Heimann’s description of the event, where the audience were “treated to vehement speeches about the treasonous, imperialist and capitalist wiles of the Chartists, or simply the importance of keeping Czechoslovakia socialist”⁴⁹, demonstrates a general format copied by other broadcasts of this ilk - the use of the regime’s official speech and direct address to an audience from a party platform. Where *Za nové tvůrčí* differed was the use of celebrities - footage⁵⁰ of the event features cameras focusing on certain well-known audience members; and speakers from the platform included Karel Gott, one of Czechoslovakia’s most popular entertainers, and actress Jiřina Švorcová, who was also a member of the Party leadership. While the broadcast took a rigid ideological tone, it is clear that the use of celebrities was designed to impact a certain persuasive element to proceedings, encouraging viewers to follow the example of these cultural icons. It is also an interesting example of self-censorship on behalf of the artists featured, where participants in the broadcast make the claim that they would prefer to be singing than talking - yet have stopped to deliver this regime-

⁴⁹ Heimann 2009: 286.

⁵⁰ Footage of the event is possible to view online, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkcjRG_mPt4 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIVS_MvekJo (accessed 18/11/2017).

approved message. This highlights the importance of self-censorship alongside official censorship in maintaining control of the population.

Broadcasts such as *Za nové tvůrčí* occupy a position separate from documentaries in this thesis in order to make a distinction between documentaries (as asserted veridical representations) and the representations of the KSČ as captured in recorded conferences and meetings. In many respects, these overlap - as the investigation into normalisation documentary will show, heavily ideological films often featured footage from Party events - yet have not been deliberately constructed and edited in a manner that is familiar to documentary filmmaking. Rather, they have been descriptive or literal representations of events. Commenting on the environment of television during normalisation, Třeštíková mentions that “documentaries in a real sense were really scarce. The only documentary biographies were about the heroes of the working class”⁵¹. In addition, “Many derogatory films about dissidents were created as well (with no opportunity for them to object to such movies)”⁵², of which *Za nové tvůrčí* is a prominent example of. It is interesting to note that footage from this event is featured in *Soukromý vesmír*, as an example of the normalisation system in effect as the Kettners start to build a family.

As Chapter Four will show, these programmes, alongside other snippets of documentaries and television broadcasts in *Soukromý vesmír*, serve the purpose of enforcing the cycle of fulfilment that exists in the documentary, as well as supplying ironic observations about Czechoslovak society. Coupled with the overt ideologies of many documentary films and the encoding of many serials, the KSČ was able to dominate narratives on television through a wide and diverse range of tactics, all working towards the common cause of disseminating the hegemonic line of the regime.

⁵¹ Třeštík and Třeštíková 2015: 3.

⁵² Ibid.

Propaganda as Light Entertainment: Television Serials

In discussing the methodology employed within the thesis, two examples of normalisation serials - *Třicet případů majora Zemana* (1974-1979) and *Žena za pultem* (1977) - served to demonstrate the ability of the regime to employ a more sophisticated coding in their television programming. In both of these examples, light entertainment provided a vehicle to retain viewership, while conveying a communist-friendly narrative. Although many serials of the period were steeped in the normalisation value system, it is interesting to note that many of these programmes, *Major Zeman* in particular, are still popular in the post-communist Czech Republic and have enjoyed several reruns on both private and state television, such is the nostalgia attached to the series. As mentioned in the methodology, the lack of commercial pressures allowed these serials to be created exclusively for propaganda purposes.

Třicet případů majora Zemana “has been perceived as the most heavily ideologized product of socialist television in Czechoslovakia” and “made to showcase the good work of the communist police - allegedly with direct guidance from the Ministry of the Interior”⁵³. The thirty-part series recreated milestones in Czechoslovak history between 1945 and 1973 through the eyes of communist police chief Jan Zeman, who steadily rises up the ranks until his retirement and solving various crimes of the ages. The programmes inevitably show that Zeman conforms to the KSČ’s narrative, as Bílek explains:

Throughout the 1950s, he helped rid the public sphere of any remaining capitalist mentality and enemies of the new society. In the early 1960s, he became Chief of the Prague criminal police. During the communist reform year of the 1968 Prague Spring, he lost his position and was pushed aside to serve as a mere local police officer. In 1969, after the Soviet invasion, he was brought back again to serve as the Chief of the Prague criminal police until he decided to retire in 1973. Whilst he was an expert on criminal issues throughout the whole serial narrative, his work was based on fluent everyday cooperation with the secret police (StB); these two sorts of police organization in communist Czechoslovakia were represented as an organic unit with no need for any strictly drawn borders. Criminal offences were represented in distinct episodes of the serial and usually carried political implications and vice versa. Society was depicted as a mutually referential network: a political history of ideas

⁵³ Pehe 2014: 100.

determined the everyday ways of living and everyday events developed into major issues with obvious political and ideological consequences.⁵⁴

Bílek's analysis offers an unambiguous insight into how the series operated in normalisation society. Whereas serials such as *Žena za pultem*, which will be subsequently analysed, enclosed many signs with connotative meanings in their episodes, *Major Zeman* was far more overt in the dissemination of regime values. This is perhaps inevitable based on the subject matter of the police, and there are no significant attempts to hide much of this ideology. One episode, which deals with Zeman successfully apprehending the anti-communist Mašín brothers, results in a communist re-write of history and a clear communicative line that the KSČ-loyal police and security forces always triumph over their 'capitalist' adversaries⁵⁵. The most overt ideological factors are communicated through narration that clearly corresponds to a "us and them" model, with Zeman and his comrades all united - and thus successful - by upholding communist standards. On the other hand, "In contrast to the positive value of the working people, certain social types and professions clearly signified the story's villains. They were intellectuals (medical doctors, lawyers, journalists, literati, actors, and students) and various other problematic individuals (restaurant waiters, taxi drivers, company bureaucrats, foreigners, sales people who did business with the West, and rock musicians)"⁵⁷. This approach, which evokes the Gottwaldism of the 1950s replicated through normalisation, is designed to uphold the image of the worker-hero, a trope further witnessed in many documentaries of the period, whilst attacking "people for whom physical labour holds no value at all" - an unsubtle polemic against the intellectuals that the regime associates with 1960s liberalism⁵⁸.

Normalisation's mistrust and condemnation of the intelligentsia is a theme that carries through several television serials, including *Žena za pultem*. Unlike *Major Zeman*, which is based inside one of the state organs of power, *Žena za pultem*

⁵⁴ Bílek 2013: 50-51.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ It should also be noted that the true details of the Mašín's - and their successful escape from Czechoslovakia - were suppressed by the state, and that "a viewer of the serial in the 1970s could not obtain a monograph or a solid historical article about the real event" (Ibid., 57). This serves as yet another example of how censorship and propaganda worked hand-in-hand.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁸ Bílek 2007: 108.

focuses on the staff and customers of a small supermarket, thus dealing with the supposed 'ordinary lives' of protagonists. Whilst lacking the bombastic politics of *Major Zeman*, the programme "created the impression of an idyllic life of consumerism, presided over by kind and genial Communist Party officials who were regarded by the population as genuine figures of authority. In this sense, the TV serial lent legitimacy to the regime"⁵⁹. The use of certain images in encoding such ideals is overt from the opening credits, which change in each of its twelve episodes.

Episode One, which introduces the cast and location, reveals a fully-stocked supermarket with a wide variety of goods on offer, enforcing narratives of abundance and the consumerism that arose with the general increase of living standards under the Husák regime⁶⁰. Later, the fifth episode features shop staff in the centre of Prague on the May Day procession, alongside political banners and the KSČ leadership waving on, their political sympathies established. Instances such as this represent the peak of political commentary that exists in *Žena za pultem*, which adopts a different strategy from *Major Zeman* in the dissemination of communist propaganda. Although occasional political statements are voiced through the supermarket's manager Karas, the serial's encoding exists mostly on a connotative level. Strong visual clues, such as political banners on the procession or a propaganda poster hanging on a wall, are never the main focus of any sequence they feature in (despite being on the May Day procession, the camera prioritises the shop workers). Artists and intellectuals, which *Major Zeman* rallies against, rarely feature in any episode, replaced by a narrative that celebrates workers and the idea that hard work is rewarded with greater disposable income - as Čulík observes, "Money is no object for the customers and many times during the serial, various individuals purchase large amounts of luxury food"⁶¹.

Whereas *Major Zeman* disseminated an overt ideological message attesting to the power of the regime, *Žena za pultem* exists to legitimise the state through its portrayals of an affluent citizenry assisted by diligent and friendly authority

⁵⁹ Čulík 2013: 112.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 115.

⁶¹ Ibid., 120.

figures and staff members. The encoding of the series may be covert, but deliberate in highlighting the supermarket as a success for the reason that the Czechoslovak state is successful *itself*. This is a more sophisticated interpretation of the line put forward in *Žijeme lépe, žijeme radostněji* twenty-eight years earlier, where holidays were an example of the fruits of hard labour on behalf of the socialist state. Here, the wide range of goods functions as a similar reward for the Czechoslovak worker, in exchange for loyally supporting the party. As argued earlier in this chapter, consumerism and the disseminated value that this is a good and beneficial upside to normalisation functioned as a trade-off for the waiving of certain rights (in other words, maintaining the KSČ's leading position) and thus a tool of control for the regime.

In addition, engagements with gender during the series arise as an interesting comparison with Třeštíková's documentaries which focus on the subject of women. A major subject within the series is Anna Holubová, who works at the delicatessen counter and is the "woman behind the counter" the title references. Holubová's story as a worker and mother to two children is interlinked through the series, where she is often portrayed as a conflict resolver and model worker. It can be argued that for the regime, she represents the desirable image of a woman within Czechoslovak society, particularly due to the historical build-up to the normalisation era:

From the point of view of the regime, Czech men in the 1960s behaved recklessly and irresponsibly because they attempted to act in the political arena. They were equally as irresponsible in the area of erotic relationships. Their egoistic philandering is used to assassinate character in this serial. It was women who had to step onto the scene and bring Czechoslovakia back from the brink. Women managed to do that because they are steadfast, sensible, and effective builders of family nests. They are not interested in political activity in the public sphere and thus they constitute the healthy fundament of the nation - they concentrate on the wellbeing of the family and on the raising of children, unlike their reckless male counterparts.⁶²

As will be argued later, representations within normalisation documentary demonstrate a dualism between the woman as loyal, industrial worker and as a mother and homemaker, something which is then subverted by Třeštíková. Based on the hypotheses put forward when defining the normalisation value system, it

⁶² Ibid., 117.

can also be observed that these depictions existed during the 1950s, providing a prototype of sorts for further films. It is interesting that this image can additionally be found in light entertainment broadcasting which is not encoded as an undisguised dominant-hegemonic message. This affirms the position of *Žena za pultem* as an idealised representation of normalisation Czechoslovakia, where the question of fulfilment is not an issue - the state overseeing a fully functional and affluent economy where the needs of the population are met. This encoding of such serials, in addition to the more direct address of documentaries and programmes such as *Major Zeman*, work to mitigate oppositional or negotiated decodings of ČST output - whereas some programmes may elicit a strong oppositional decoding from some viewers, it is plausible that other, more covert ideological undercurrents, will be accepted in another format. This means that the various encoding techniques by directors and scriptwriters on behalf of the regime served to create a blanket environment for the communication of the regime's ideological line, without the saturation of one particular propagandistic strategy; affecting popular entertainment programmes alongside documentary broadcasting.

The Documentaries of Normalisation

Documentary filmmaking during normalisation was primarily concentrated in four studios - Krátký film Praha, Filmové studio Gottwaldov, Armádní film and the Slovak Štúdio krátkých filmov v Bratislavě - which produced the bulk of some 2,000 documentaries in the final period of the Socialist Republic⁶³. Of particular interest to this thesis is Prague-based Krátký film, where Třeštíková started her career and would work until the fall of the regime in 1989.

The Czechoslovak documentary industry was neither immune from purges in normalisation society nor the rigid ideological line which was enforced. Studios were accountable to the Central Committee of the KSČ (ÚV KSČ) and, like other institutes and offices, were subject to political appointments. In 1970, Kamil Pixa was appointed to manage Krátký film, and “built a giant enterprise out of

⁶³ Štoll 2000: 25.

KF, and with the support of the StB, acted as its owner and oversaw its ideological purity”⁶⁴. The ideological approach advocated bore a close resemblance to many values which existed before the liberalising 1960s, which according to the head of Czechoslovak Film Jiří Purš, should “portray the future results of building a socialist society; display the work and heroism of our people, the revolutionary tradition, the history of the revolutionary struggles of the working class; and the struggle of our peoples for liberation from fascist tyranny”⁶⁵. Furthermore, certain subjects of potential documentaries were restricted due to the prevailing political narrative that prioritised representations of the working class, meaning that “Socially disadvantaged families, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, those who find themselves isolated in prisons, psychiatric hospitals, retirement homes; long-term hospital patients, as well as people experimenting with drugs etc., had to disappear from the standpoint of the new socialist man, and therefore the canvas of cinema and television screens”⁶⁶. The direction for documentary, therefore, was to create films of very particular subjects, emphasising the Party’s political narrative, and often hand-in-hand with state-sanctioned notions of a happy, fulfilled population.

Helena Třeštková’s understanding of the priorities of documentary under normalisation arises from the bureaucracy and apportioning of subject matter that she witnessed during her time at Krátký film, in which:

Every year had a thorough plan which had to be balanced, meaning that attention had to be paid to various political issues such as KSČ-Communist summits, SSM - Svaz socialistické mládeže, the building of new factories and so on. Furthermore, there had to be certain amount of movies about sports, economy and culture. The tiniest part was given to the social problematic.⁶⁷

The notion that there was at least some place for more socio-critical discourses is acknowledged, which also corresponds to Štoll’s claim that “In spite of all the restrictions and propaganda films made at Krátký film, certain space for a limited author’s expression remained”⁶⁸. This is demonstrated by the case study

⁶⁴ Štoll 2014: 341.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 342.

⁶⁷ Třeštková and Třeštík 2015: 6.

⁶⁸ Štoll 2000: 25.

of *Manželské etudy* and other featured documentaries, particularly when social topics were explored further in the 1980s. As will be discussed later, the expansion into this area was intended as one where the KSČ could be presented as being at the forefront in problem solving, and plenty of themes were still unable to be covered. This, perhaps obviously, meant that Charta 77 could not be explored, but also included some more surprising topics - according to Třeštíková, “In the year 1988 a team of us wanted to collaborate on a project and our topic was ecology, and even at that time this topic was on the borders of acceptability. Ecology was somewhat of an anti-state theme”⁶⁹.

The censorship process at Krátký film and other studios also impacted directors in terms of filmed content which had to be omitted; with examples given by Třeštíková during interview suggesting that on many occasions this was arbitrary. In terms of censorship that the director faced herself, her remarks are consistent with what has been published in *Časosběrný dokumentární film*: where scenes requiring omission included a four-hour queue to buy a Christmas tree, and footage from the Czechoslovak ice-hockey team playing at the World Championships, as “one of the players playing for the team has emigrated and the shot had to be replaced by players who did not emigrate”⁷⁰. *Marcela a Jiří*, the only episode within the cycle that features a church, became another point of focus for the censor. Despite being instructed to cut this scene, it remained in the documentary, and “Nothing happened... That was really unusual, the most bizarre censorship intervention”⁷¹. The categorisation of these processes as “bizarre” is not without merit, considering the content that was permitted to be shot (and subsequently broadcast) revealed numerous social and economic problems for the cycle’s subjects, “Yet nobody was bothered by this... but the church bothered them”⁷². Another notable example is related to a colleague at Krátký film, Jana Ševčíková, who “made a film about shepherding, and then she asked him why he chose such a vocation; and he answered that he wanted to

⁶⁹ Interview, 7th March 2017.

⁷⁰ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 6-7.

⁷¹ Interview, 7th March 2017.

⁷² Ibid.

feel free. And she had to remove this, because why did he want to feel free in a society that is already free?”⁷³.

The arbitrary and bureaucratic nature of what was and was not censored during normalisation represents the difficulties in engaging with any topic and the subjective view of what may be depicted. As Purš desired documentaries to concentrate “mainly on a more detailed analysis of the current problems of the construction of a developed socialist society and on the artistic discovery of the processes of scientific and technological progress”⁷⁴, it was inevitable that some critical elements would be included in certain documentaries - and what was deemed unacceptable would be influenced more by Pixa’s leadership of Krátký film and the system of self-censorship than by a centralised censorship model. This helps to explain the inclusion of a number of socio-critical shots, statements and themes which can be found in the 1980s.

Despite a censorship model with inconsistent and unpredictable rules, numerous films produced by Krátký film conformed to the ideals of the state and possessed a similar form and construction. The *cinéma-verité* style of filmmaking, discussed briefly in Chapter One and an influence on much of the Czechoslovak new wave, was associated with 1960s liberalism and contrary to the regime’s preconceived notions of filmmaking; resulting in a phenomenon where “suddenly nobody talked in a synchronized way with the picture, nobody’s opinion was presented”⁷⁵. This expository narration was a hallmark of a significant quantity of ideologically conformist and overtly political documentaries, and the dominant technique employed in the documentaries of the earlier Czechoslovak Republic. Additionally, emphases placed on the relationship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union and the central role that the KSČ plays in the development and success of the state was evident. This was often in association with the Second World War in both historical and political

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Štoll 2014: 341.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 26.

documentaries as a means of justifying the continued military presence of Soviets on Czechoslovak soil⁷⁶.

Two documentaries evidencing this are *60 let Československa (Sixty Years of Czechoslovakia)*, dir. Josef Šuran, 1978) and *Gustáv Husák* (Studio Zpravodajských filmů, 1986). The differences in production year, remit (the latter serves as a biography of Husák as opposed to a full state history), film (black and white versus colour) and director do not fully mask the near-identical encoding that both features possess. By the use of expository narration combined with significant amounts of archival footage, they are constructed with an overt recognition of the ideological line they serve to communicate - conforming to the normalisation value system. Another common factor that exists is the use of official, highly propagandised speech, which declares that, for example, the KSČ was built as “the proletariat recognised that victory wasn’t possible without a revolutionary working class” (*60 let Československa*, 03:26).

It is interesting that the histories of *60 let Československa* and *Gustáv Husák* are visibly selective in their chosen representations. In a documentary that charts sixty years of the Czechoslovak state, *60 let Československa* fails to acknowledge T.G. Masaryk, the first president and non-communist, and favours an encoding where the establishment of the First Republic is featured alongside the Russian Revolution; in an attempt to link the two countries at the earliest opportunity. This is despite the characterisation that “Masaryk and Benes [*sic*] had oriented the new Czechoslovakia on western examples”⁷⁷. Furthermore, sections of each documentary engage (albeit briefly) with historical events that prove controversial for the communist leadership. A biography of Husák would be impossible without reference to the 1950s, where as part of show trials of Slovak communists, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, only to be pardoned in 1960. *Gustáv Husák*, out of necessity, mentions that he was “unjustly accused, and sentenced, (03:12), before rehabilitating him via his actions in the 1960s; as “during the crisis period, he actively fought against the mistakes and

⁷⁶ The role of resistance to fascism during the Nazi occupation was far smaller and less effective than in other states with Partisan forces. Nevertheless, the KSČ was keen to exaggerate domestic sabotage and resistance in the post-war environment for reasons of propaganda, particularly the Slovak Uprising which provided some “desperately needed ‘anti-Fascist’ credentials” (Heimann 2009: 143.).

⁷⁷ Skilling 1951: 109.

deformations which deepened the crisis within the party and society” (03:21). In *60 let Československa*, liberalisation is similarly glossed over:

What followed were years of industrious work, but also of Cold War. This was a period of overcoming the resistance of the reactionary forces, but also of our own errors and mistakes. But what was decisive were the results which we have achieved during the construction of socialism. (13:09)

These encodings, which rewrite, exaggerate and downplay events to correspond to the values of normalisation, share a recognisable approach with *Major Zeman*. The association of the First Republic with Bolshevism resonates with Zeman’s apprehending of the Mašín brothers, in that their inclusion is designed to project on the viewer a historical consequence or moment which is not supported by historical research. Furthermore, whereas *60 let Československa* and *Gustáv Husák* discuss the “mistakes” and “deformations” under Dubček⁷⁸ in the briefest terms, *Major Zeman* opted to incorporate it as a critical theme, with the protagonist being betrayed - and subsequently demoted - in 1967, only to be reinstated after the Warsaw Pact intervention⁷⁹. For these documentaries and *Major Zeman*, the ideological intent which places the KSČ at the heart of history and of society is evident.

Both aforementioned documentaries possess the additional feature of representing workers in a way advocated by the regime, then supplemented by others produced under Krátký film. The flow of *Gustáv Husák* is aided by the depiction of workers as the film moves to discuss socialism being built in the 1970s (4:21), in which coal miners, welders and grain collection appear in brief montage. This is testimony to the mistrust of intellectuals argued on page 93, and reminiscent of the mass industrialisation and collectivisation which dominated 1950s documentaries and newsreels. Images of work in Drahomíra Vihanová’s *Ženy socialistického Československa (Woman of Socialist Czechoslovakia, 1975)*, further these notions, particularly as emphasis is placed on women who the regime deems to be model workers. Footage of several women workers, all of them in the industrial sphere, are depicted in their

⁷⁸ Consistent within media and television of normalisation, Dubček is not mentioned. Although the events of the Prague Spring are occasionally referred to, they are often treated in the vague manner that both these documentaries display, the protagonists all but eliminated from any discourse.

⁷⁹ Bílek 2013: 54.

workplaces (most visibly a textile mill), before cutting to a ceremony where they are rewarded for their efforts. This harks back, again, to the idea of *úderník* workers and correlates to the narrative that continues to be put forward - that labour is repaid through better standards of living and other incentives.

However, the issue of gender in *Ženy socialistického Československa* is one that Třeštíková challenges within the *Manželské etudy* cycle. Representations of space in documentaries (and many entertainment programmes) of the 1970s and 1980s, by extension of the lionizing of the industrial worker, are heavily weighted towards either the workplace or other public spaces (including streets, meeting halls and, in the case of agricultural films, collective farms). This is also witnessed in Vihanová's documentary, with workspaces supplemented by footage of political demonstrations and KSČ events. By the representation of women in these spaces, the film commits to an ideological line that suggests that this is where women should be found: able, like men, to contribute to the building of the socialist economy. Indeed, levels of employment amongst women from post-war period to normalisation, have been much higher than in Western European countries, and their role in the workforce has been generally accepted domestically⁸⁰. Nevertheless, the notion of equality - or more appropriately, the regime's understanding of equality - continues to be gendered. The overriding narrative, which claims that women can achieve anything suggests a male-oriented gaze, particularly as the (mostly female-voiced) narrative is broken up by sections of narration from a man, in a documentary which is once again predominantly expository. Despite representing work and a historical past which discusses women "shoulder to shoulder with their brothers and fathers" in rebuilding the state following the war (3:01), the film quickly moves towards the role of women as mothers and child-bearers.

Ženy socialistického Československa's dualism of the women as both mother and worker correspond to several other documentaries and political practices of normalisation. The narrator's claim that "Above all, the woman feels primarily like a mother" (06:08), may on a denotative level be legitimised through the voice of a woman, yet this is not explored - instead favouring further shots of

⁸⁰ Wolchik 1979: 586-587.

mothers bathing babies, and a family eating a meal around a table. Images of the nuclear family are enforced in other works, including Petr Zrno's *Rodinné album* (*Family Album*, 1984), which documents a particularly large family and their process of moving house. Shots of the father in overalls are frequently cut to as means of counting down when the family will move in, reinforcing the idea of physical labour, yet the images of women within the short occupy a different position. Brief shots at the beginning of the film, opening the doors of various classrooms in a school, reveal that all teachers are women - the mother of the family, who has had over a dozen children, does not work. These, at times conservative, representations, are placed as a means of reinforcing a dominant-hegemonic understanding of what a woman should be according to the state - not in terms of prioritising one aspect over another, but highlighting a woman's duty to both be an active member of the workforce and a mother with a strong family orientation. Třeštíková's representations of family life during *Manželské etudy* becomes an interesting object of study between state-supported family portraits and the subversive arguments of the socio-critical piece. The upcoming section will tackle such points in more detail, yet what is noticeable is that conservatism, particularly in terms of work, crosses over to both projects. Images of *Rodinné album*'s mother, a significant proportion of which are in a domestic role (for example, preparing sandwiches for the family or making tea), are mirrored in the women of *Manželské etudy*, who are housewives and mothers; and on rare occasions where they become part of the workforce, are in stereotypical occupations which are dominated by unskilled women workers.

This changes somewhat during the latter stages of normalisation as demonstrated in the 1988 film *Dvě tváře ženy* (*The Two Faces of Women*, dir. Helena Sobotová). Rather than concentrating on industrial labour, the feature focuses on the experiences of two women, Ing. Jaroslava Koudelková and MuDr. Daniela Malinová, who are both in successful positions (production deputy for the SEMPRA firm in Kadaň, and director of Beroun hospital). Narration by the author, which unusually is replicated on-screen in the form of computer text, emphasises that "Almost 90 percent of our women in active age are employed, of which 75 percent are married women with children. Moreover, they devote on average three hours a day to the family and household" (01:18) Despite a different work focus than in *Ženy socialistického Československá* a similar effect

is achieved: that women occupy the dual space of mothers in addition to building the socialist economy (emphasised further by montage shots of women in various positions in science, medicine and technology), their ability to rise to the top a testament to the apparent gender equality of Czechoslovakia⁸¹. Several of these conclusions are challenged through *Manželské etudy*, in particular the notion of domestic work and childcare, which is portrayed as a full-time job for many subjects; and when employment is sought, they are part-time, manual roles.⁸² Whereas on the surface, *Dvě tváře ženy* may be seen as transforming and adapting from previous normalisation documentaries in its exploration of work outside of the traditional roles it has represented, the same conclusions which are drawn from the normalisation value system remain.

Documentaries outside the Propaganda Sphere

Quotes by Štoll and Třeštíková have recognised that although Krátký film was dominated by propaganda films, space existed for a number of documentaries to be produced which were not. Included in this broad category are films concerning sport and pastimes, apolitical pieces, and crucially a small number of socio-critical films. Furthering the earlier exploration of gender in the thesis, and noting the general gap in scholarship that exists in the critical analysis of women documentarists, investigation into the documentary output of normalisation reveals that Třeštíková was not the only woman who made films that challenged the hegemonic value system pushed by the regime. In exploring documentaries on social themes, several techniques are employed which can also be found in the *Manželské etudy* cycle, a testament to how criticism by both male and female directors could circumvent the extensive censorship process.

The career of Jan Špáta, whose work as both director and cameraman began in the late 1950s, left a profound influence on many Czechoslovak filmmakers;

⁸¹ It is revealed during the documentary that Koudelková, despite her achievements at work, would prefer to devote all her time to caring for her children. As Třeštíková argues in *Manželské etudy*, this is not a desire shared by all women protagonists.

⁸² See the section *Manželské etudy and Gender*.

leading him to be referred to as the “king of Czech Documentary”⁸³. His films are characterised by Štoll as “full of empathy and emotions, showing the beauty of life through pain, great exploits and courage... in difficult ideological conditions”⁸⁴, emotions which consistently feature regardless subject. 1964’s *Největší přání* (*The Greatest Wish*), one of his earliest documentaries as a director, evidenced this approach, providing plenty of shots designed to capture the reactions of subjects as he asked young people what their greatest wish in life was. Despite predating the abolition of the censorship office, several respondents are seen and heard to criticise the regime; and although this is balanced with comments that are not particularly hostile to socialism, it is clear that the project engages in several critical themes. It is interesting, for example, to reflect upon Špáta’s interview with a young student couple who have recently had their first child, which for the father has resulted in “financial problems, study problems... we don’t have a flat and cannot put the child into a crèche” (09:25). These comments echo the problems that subjects of *Manželské etudy* claim to experience, particularly the case study of Ivana and Václav, whose son is born while both are still studying at university. Not only does Špáta identify certain issues in *Největší přání* which arise two decades later in Třeštíková’s work, but he also revisits this topic in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution through *Největší přání II*, which will be discussed in Chapter Three. Although politicised comments appear throughout the documentary, the director’s focus on the joy of life is never far removed from the situation (or indeed any of his films). A smiling Špáta is often seen throughout *Největší přání*, most notably at the end of the film where he attempts to interview a young woman while on a fairground swing (28:42). These joyful moments, accompanied by suitably upbeat music, would become a hallmark of his future cinematography.

Alice Lovejoy notes that Špáta’s post-1968 documentaries “focused on ‘small’ human stories “and were “politically innocuous”⁸⁵; yet still maintained a strong emotional focus and a particular interest in the happiness of human existence. These themes are most apparent in *Matějská pout’* (*The Fair*, 1974) and several

⁸³ Spáčilová 2012

⁸⁴ Štoll 2000: 26.

⁸⁵ In Aitken 2012: 877.

travel films which he was permitted to make, following on from a number of overseas features that were made in the 1960s⁸⁶. Despite the closed nature of the regime, travel documentaries continued to be made by selected documentarists during normalisation. Špáta's coverage of Karel Gott's tour, which took in both socialist (Poland, the Soviet Union) and non-socialist (Japan, West Germany) countries, resulted in *Jdi za štěstím* (*Go in Search of Happiness*, 1979), which combines a focus of the artist's music with the emotions that it can cause - both for the audience, band members and Gott himself. Gott, whose socialist credentials had been displayed through his involvement in *Za nové tvůrčí*, was often employed by the regime for propaganda purposes, "as an index referring to an official culture that enjoyed authentic popularity across generational, class or gender divides"⁸⁷. His vast repertoire of songs, as witnessed in *Jdi za štěstím*, include several in English as well as German and Czech, referencing his versatility and his "willingness to adapt to the norms of each era in both its fashions and ideological precepts"⁸⁸.

The documentary contains visuals which can be strongly associated with the capitalist West (the commercialism, adverts and bright lights of Japan and Germany), yet there are also indicators that suggest normalisation's own values at work. In Čulík's discussion of *Žena za pultem*, which uses a plethora of subtleties in its suggestions that the regime affords both consumerism and a high standard of living, he argues that "the systematic use of jazz music" used in the series "hints that if you fulfil just a few minimal ideological requirements, you can enjoy entertainment which would be frowned upon in the other areas of the communist regime"⁸⁹. Gott's song choices, including several American staples, can therefore be regarded as the embodiment of such a narrative. Although it is important to recognise these signs, is it equally vital for them to not result in an aberrant reading, and differ from the authorial intent of Špáta. While such sequences exist, they do not remove the focus of *Jdi za štěstím* on Gott, his travelling party or his concert audiences. Considering the artist's own opinion

⁸⁶ Many of these features, by Radúz Činčera, Rudolf Krejčík and others, compared the lives of people in other countries with that of Czechoslovakia (Štoll 2000: 21-22.). Špáta's contribution to this genre included several films shot in the Soviet Union, and *Země sv. Patricka* (*St Patrick's Land*, 1967) which focused on Ireland.

⁸⁷ Bílek 2016: 235.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁸⁹ Čulík 2013: 114.

that “If I had stood against the system I would have been finished as a singer”⁹⁰, the interpretation of the documentary as a piece of socio-critical commentary is lacking. Nevertheless, *Největší přání*, and indeed other films including 1980’s *Odsouzení* (*The Conviction*, 1980), concerning car accidents and the people who cause them, and the pre-normalisation *Respice Finem* ([*Latin*] *Consider the End*, 1967) which looked at elderly widows in the countryside, do reveal an engagement with social issues - yet, are again secondary to Špáta’s long-standing concentration on the emotions of his subjects.

Odsouzení is one example of a number of documentaries on social themes that were created during the 1980s as part of a turn towards these subjects becoming more tolerated. The question the regime began to ask was “how to build socialism when social problems cannot simply be banned, eradicated and abolished? How can we be silent and not inform of them when we need to warn against them?”⁹¹. Documentarians, therefore, began to engage further with issues rarely tackled through official channels - including alcoholism, crime and delinquency - that would often have resulted in strict censorship or outright prohibition. This is not to say, however, that the role of the censor became absent, as analysis has and will show. Neither did this change in focus necessarily indicate that communist-dominated propaganda was further welcoming to dissenting voices, as “each of these topics carries an informative and agitational component, and an example of how the state and party are taking care of the problem”⁹². The role of local KSCĚ committees, for instance, was at the heart of solving issues between neighbours in Jaroslav Černý’s *Docela slušní lidé* (*Quite Decent People*, 1984), which also displayed instances of anti-social behaviour and petty theft. The narration, recognisable as that of well-known actor Rudolf Hrušínský, encouraged viewers to be the *Quite Decent People* that the film refers to in its title.

Drahomíra Vihanová and Olga Sommerová have been recognised as fellow Krátký film directors who explored several social topics through their work⁹³. Sommerová, alongside Třeštíková, has been regarded as part of “a remarkable

⁹⁰ In Molloy 2009: 109.

⁹¹ Štoll 2014: 346.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Štoll 2014: 348.

group of female authors, who naturally began to be interested in the world of women”⁹⁴. For Vihanová, the space to investigate the problems of socialism offered a different environment to explore social issues. A graduate of FAMU in 1965, her debut *Zabitá neděle* (*A Squandered Sunday*, 1969) was proscribed and she was subsequently banned from making feature films under normalisation⁹⁵. As a director of documentaries and shorts, the conformist *Ženy socialistického Československá* hints at the degree of commitment needed to obtain funding and production in the 1970s. Yet 1984’s *Otázky pro dvě ženy* (*Questions for Two Women*), which investigates “two different women, two different destinies” (02:50), looks at gender in an altogether different way.

Otázky pro dvě ženy’s two subjects, microbiological chemist Alena Konečná and railway station worker Ališka Zlatníková are represented as occupying two different class and generational positions. Konečná, who has a young family, a modern flat in Olomouc and an affinity for fashion, is contrasted with grandmother Zlatníková, living in a country cottage and selling train tickets for thirty years. Whereas Konečná has won prizes for her scientific research (resembling the aspirational image of women presented in *Dvě tváře ženy*), her counterpart is more familiar in respect to other, more domestic, representations, particularly due to numerous shots where she is cooking. Such differences are emphasised further by Zlatníková’s hobby as an amateur poet, featuring (both in her poems and speech) a certain amount of linguistic capital that resonates with the regime - stating her wonder at the abundance of goods and resources when cargo trains pass the station, and that her “greatest aim is to do my duty” (16:06). Such language can be readily identified as pro-regime sentiment, when taken to signify the abundance of goods that the state allegedly has, and the concept of doing one’s duty in building socialism. When discussing her poems, this specific type of language continues, asking for them to be judged by “professionals positioned” as opposed to peers (10:55), indicative of seeking confirmation that her poems conform to the correct ideological standards. In contrast, Konečná’s apolitical narrative is dominated

⁹⁴ Ibid., 344.

⁹⁵ Liehm 1993: 62.

with the discussion of work, yet conspicuously lacking the ideological zeal in which this subject is approached in other non-fiction works around such topics.

Vihanová makes it apparent that the documentary is constructed in terms of an argument on both gender and fulfilment. Whereas a number of the documentaries analysed have addressed the work of women subjects and their role as mothers, the “two different destinies” - depicted as the loyal communist or a woman obsessed with work - are expressed through the contrasting practices and personalities of the protagonists. The apolitical nature of Konečná is absent from her narrative, yet abundant from Zlatníková who occupies a lowlier societal position. Furthermore, a significant metanarrative shot is delivered during an interview with Zlatníková where the camera pans around the room, revealing both director and sound technician (06:42). This shot should be regarded as a continuation of the film’s opening sequence, featuring the director once more, while her own narration discusses the project she is undertaking. Reflecting back to the idea that this technique calls into question the construction of film itself, Vihanová simultaneously claims her authorship over the film while placing herself as a participant inside it - questioning if the representations of Konečná and Zlatníková represent the two choices of a woman (such as her own) in Czechoslovak society⁹⁶.

There are certain similarities between this shot and the camera exposing Třeštíková and crew in *Ivana a Václav po dvaceti letech* discussed in the next chapter, yet *Otázky pro dvě ženy*, lacking any longitudinal aspect, differs from the latter in intent. As Třeštíková’s insertion as a subject into her documentary cycles reflects the deepening relationship between director and subject, this shot is purely to reinforce Vihanová’s overall argument on gender roles. Furthermore, as the metanarrative strongly suggests the constructed nature of documentaries, this raises the issue of whether all documentaries are like this, a particularly relevant notion when considering the propaganda of the state at a time where “not many films on Czechoslovak Television could be marked as documentaries, since television was the main tool of propaganda”⁹⁷. By raising

⁹⁶ This reflects her claims of film authorship in an interview from 2016, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUBE4YoNk6M>.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 25.

the question of construction, it is possible for the viewer to approach the argument in terms of negotiated code: going against the dominant worldview put forward by the regime (what Stuart Hall refers to as “grand totalizations”⁹⁸), yet strongly suggesting that, like all other documentaries, *Otázky pro dvě ženy* itself is subjective but oppositionist in its conclusions.

Another factor to be considered in *Otázky pro dvě ženy* is the sense of banality that is often addressed, which both Konečná and Zlatníková communicate through their own practices (the former’s prioritisation of work, the latter constantly cooking or discussing poetry). This theme is further explored by Olga Sommerová in *Zkus to dokázat* (*Try to Prove it*, 1987), which takes place in a rehabilitation clinic for women who have drug and/or alcohol addictions. The banalities exhibited here are due to the militaristic nature of the daily routines of the women, often contrasted with eloquent dialogues of their addictions and emotions directly to the camera, which was operated by Jan Špáta. This - at times bleak - image of the service users appears to contrast with the notion that the Party is solving all social problems. Whereas *Zkus to dokázat* features subjects who leave the clinic, and fleeting moments of hope and optimism when a mother is reunited with her child (13:10), there is no overbearing narrative that places successes as an achievement of the KSČ or regime, such as the conclusions made in *Docela slušní lidé*. It is therefore subversive when considering the overall approach during the 1980s, where the regime:

when it could no longer keep silent on social issues, had to be seen to promote not only its care, but to exclude the audience from the mourning of sadness and nihilism... The Socialist man is optimistic and cheerful, determined to overcome all the difficulties of building.⁹⁹

The optimism of *Zkus to dokázat*, in its subjects and their own personal agency, is contrasted with their surroundings, evoking a sense of personal development and perseverance as opposed to that of the state helping or adequately caring for them.

⁹⁸ Hall 2006: 172.

⁹⁹ Štoll 2014: 348.

The final years of normalisation in documentary can be noted for further explorations of these topics, with an absence of normalisation's values in explaining or alleviating the situations faced by subjects. Třeštíková's shooting of a juvenile detention centre in Libkovice, beginning in 1989, would lead to *René*, but this project was not completed while the KSČ was still in power. This was an active period for director Vladislav Kvasnička, who directed several documentaries of subject matter considered taboo some decade before, including the explicit and open exploration of homosexuality in *Zapovězená láska* (*Forbidden Love*, 1990), shot during the final year of the regime. The rise in numbers of young parents is the central theme to *Nezletilé matky* (*Underage Mothers*, 1989), which often resembles the style of *Zkus to dokázat* in terms of both institutionalisation of subjects (many of these underage parents are in social care) and direct interviews, again eschewing the reliance on expository address. However, the experiences of one couple mirror many of the issues that consistently appear within *Manželské etudy*. Financial worries, which effect all of Třeštíková's couples to varying extents and similar concerns raised in *Největší přání* two decades earlier, is once again apparent, considering that the young family "sleep[s] three or sometimes four in one bed" and "the biggest problem is financial" (06:59; 07:21).

In line with several of the films referenced here, and indeed the entire normalisation cycle of *Manželské etudy*, solutions to the issue represented are not answered by either adherence to, or the political line, of the communist system. Kvasnička's work, sharing a focus upon subjects and their situation in the socialist world, has been deemed an "approach to reality" based on recognising "something wrong in society... let's begin by showing specific examples"¹⁰⁰. It is evident from such examples that although regime propaganda would continue up until the Velvet Revolution, the final years of documentary filmmaking during normalisation was able to exploit the turn towards acknowledging certain issues and problems, and were able - on mostly a connotative level - to distance itself from the desired conclusions which the Party intended to draw. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that the well-established system of censorship and self-censorship prevented documentarists

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 346.

from going beyond a covert encoding of their films in subverting the normalisation value system, something recognised by Třeštíková in both monograph and interview concerning the censorship office's relationship with the *Manželské etudy* cycle.

Manželské etudy

The six documentaries which comprise the first *Manželské etudy* cycle were initially broadcast on ČST in 1987, with each instalment lasting between thirty and forty minutes. Each individual episode follows the first years of one of six young couples married at the Town Hall in Prague, starting from preparations leading up to the wedding, and ending approximately five years after these events. Information on the respective couples is delivered through the use of intertitles at the start of every episode, before representations and narratives are developed by means of regular visitations from Třeštíková and crew, in line with her method of long-term observation. The intertitles also function in progressing the chronological time in each documentary.

The cycle comprises the following:

Episode 1: Ivana and Pavel

The opening episode of the cycle follows Ivana (22), a sales clerk, and Pavel (21), an industrial locksmith, from their wedding in January 1981 to June 1986. A significant focus of this episode is the development of the couple's flat, formerly Pavel's grandmother's, and the difficulties in making it habitable for a small family. Pavel's role in a small amateur theatre group in Prague also reflects an interest by the director in the lives of subjects outside of traditional work roles.

Episode 2: Mirka and Antonín

The documentary follows Mirka (17), a bookkeeper and hairdresser, and Antonín (20), a transport manager, from their wedding in November 1980 to September 1986. A key theme in this episode is that of the balance of work and recreation.

Antonín, who is interested in motorsports, dedicates much of his free time to working on a racing car, while Mirka, who is on extended maternity leave, is unhappy with her life as a housewife and longs to return to hairdressing.

Episode 3: Zuzana and Vladimír

Construction workers Zuzana (23) and Vladimír (21) are followed from two weeks before their wedding in February 1981 to September 1986. This is the only episode in the series where Třeščíková follows a couple for longer than a day before the wedding ceremony. In the latter stages, Vladimír's desire to change career to become a professional photographer is explored, and attention is paid to the arguments and emotional support of partners married and living together.

Episode 4: Zuzana and Stanislav

This episode charts the wedding of Zuzana (18), a high school student, and Stanislav (19), an electro-mechanic, from December 1980 to September 1986. During the filming, Zuzana is the only subject who is still at school, and in the process of studying for her leaving exams. Whereas Stanislav is subsumed in both his work and hobby projects, Zuzana is increasingly isolated as a stay-at-home mother to two children.

Episode 5: Marcela and Jiří

Episode five follows Marcela (20), a horse trainer and rider, and Jiří (20), a telephone engineer, from December 1980 to September 1986. This episode is noteworthy as the only documentary where the couple divorce, and the film follows proceedings through the divorce courts, following strained relations between the couple. *Marcela a Jiří* subsequently focuses on the issues Marcela faces as a single parent during normalisation. As this chapter goes on to explore, emotional fulfilment is particularly apparent as a theme.

Episode 6: Ivana and Václav

The final part of the series involves Ivana (21) and Václav (24) from their wedding in December 1980 to September 1986. As architecture students, they

are the only subjects represented who do not come from a background in manual or industrial work. Other themes that emerge during the documentary include the bureaucracy in trying to renovate the couple's flat, and Václav's departure for national service.

The selection of these couples for *Manželské etudy* was, according to the director, completely at random, based on initial visitations to the registry office¹⁰¹:

We picked our main protagonists at the town hall where they went for arranging their date of marriage. The condition was to film the young people between 18 and 24 years old, which was the average age for marriage at that time. Moreover, it had to be their first marriage, they wouldn't have any children from previous relationship. We asked around 20 of the couples and 10 have made the consent to film them. At first, we arranged a meeting with each of the couples who agreed, later on we tried to sort them out according to their social class - university students, high school and apprenticeship students.¹⁰²

Chapter One, which discussed both *Manželské etudy* and Michael Apted's *Up* series as longitudinal pieces, highlighted a contrast in the selection of subjects - whereas Apted based his upon the British class system (initially as a standalone documentary which would evolve into a longitudinal project), Třeštková's initial approach fulfilled a different demographic. The result of this, however, was all but one couple coming from what could be considered an everyday, working-class background. Within the Czechoslovak context, commonly-understood notions of class in English-language, predominantly British, discourse do not apply to a state allegedly working towards the abolition of a class-based society, but can instead be understood based upon education and university access. For example, statistical data on class composition in Czechoslovakia cites 880,000 people as "capitalists" in 1945, only for these numbers to have disappeared on surveys in 1961 and 1979¹⁰³. In 1979, a year before filming on *Manželské etudy* began, 62% of Czechoslovak workers were categorised as "factory workers", with 28.6% white-collar "office employees"¹⁰⁴. It is clear that the state put more importance on the role of the industrial workers, as this chapter has argued.

¹⁰¹ Procházka 2005

¹⁰² Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 8.

¹⁰³ This reflects the change of the Czechoslovak Republic to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1960, inferring that socialism had been successfully built in the country.

¹⁰⁴ Staar 1982: 83.

Although notions of class or socio-economic position may not have been considered priorities for Třeštíková, the prospective couples were still arranged according to closely related factors such as education.

Due to certain filming restrictions, numbers were then reduced:

The process started with 10 couples being filmed on 16mm film which allowed more space for storing material (the ratio between useless film material and the “real” film footage). This was four and a half times more than on 35mm film. After two filming stages, we had to reduce the number of couples down to six for financial reasons. The more communicative and cooperative couples have remained. We visited them roughly three times a year spanning over the duration of 6 years and recorded their contemporary events on a camcorder.¹⁰⁵

According to the director, cooperation and willingness to communicate from the six couples in the documentary took precedence over class and social status. This is important for the success and longevity of any longitudinal project, as “Just as oral historians coax from volunteer informants their personal memories and recollections of past events, so do long doc filmmakers encourage their subjects to embark on similar memory flow”¹⁰⁶.

Třeštíková’s quote additionally highlights the financial issues that a project of this scope was liable to face. Although not dependent on any expected commercial revenue, the majority of documentary funding within studios such as Krátký film was apportioned to films associated with the KSČ, its values or governance. Despite the choice to film on 16mm to allow a greater amount of footage to be filmed, the ten couples proposed for *Manželské etudy* still needed to be reduced to six. Furthermore, an additional method of circumventing the finite amount of 16mm film available was to employ a runner to communicate important milestones in the couple’s lives and relaying them back to the director. Pavel Maurer, then a journalism student, took the role of researcher and would be in dialogue with the subjects; allowing Třeštíková to be briefed before arriving on location and starting to shoot. This cut down on the amount of film needed, and led to less questioning, as the subjects inevitably revealed the changes or developments to their lives that had just happened. By employing

¹⁰⁵ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 8.

¹⁰⁶ Kilborn 2010: 21.

Maurer, Třeštíková “then went to shoot prepared, and it was not me who answered first”¹⁰⁷.

Chapter One, which introduced narrative technique within *Manželské etudy*, mentioned that the majority of questions asked by the director are unvoiced and off-camera. On the infrequent occasions they are vocalised, they are open in nature¹⁰⁸. Although these serve to briefly acknowledge the presence of the director, the lack of questions - and the absence of any voiced expository commentary - centres episodes squarely on protagonists, prioritising their monologues both visually and aurally. The inclusion of certain questions, however, does demonstrate an understanding of reflexivity, in this instance the director’s recognition of her own part in the construction of the documentary. This is further developed in *Po dvaceti letech*, which as the analysis will demonstrate, incorporates Třeštíková further into the cycle as author-subject, due in part to the relationships that have developed through the longitudinal approach; and is at its most evident in *René*. Furthermore, the inclusion of some open questions affords the viewer an understanding of what is typically asked, even if the majority are unvoiced.

According to Nichols:

...it especially behooves the documentary film-maker to acknowledge what she/he is actually doing. Not in order to be accepted as modernist for the sake of being modernist, but to fashion documentaries that may more closely correspond to a contemporary understanding of our position within the world so that effective political/formal strategies for describing and challenging that position can emerge.¹⁰⁹

This is demonstrated by Třeštíková, not only in the rare examples where she is heard on camera, but by eschewing expository direct address in favour of prioritising subject narration - different to most other Krátký film documentaries. By adopting this method, the opposite effect of the model normalisation film, where “nobody’s opinion was presented”¹¹⁰ is achieved, as

¹⁰⁷ Červinková 2012.

¹⁰⁸ This includes, for example, “So why are you getting married?” to Zuzana in the opening sequences of Episode Four.

¹⁰⁹ Nichols 1983: 18.

¹¹⁰ Štoll 200, op. cit.

the majority of dialogue is addressed to the camera from subjects who speak in front of it. This in itself operates as a challenge to - or a subversion of - the archetypal documentary. Such a strategy exists in numerous longitudinal works. As those involved in the *Up* cycle “have not been slow to recognise that the requirement to be reflective is part of the unwritten contract they have entered into when they became involved in the project” and “to give their considered views on a range of more or less predictable questions”¹¹¹, Třeštíková’s employment of brief, open questions likewise encourages her protagonists to engage in discourse at length, on topics that can reasonably be expected to reflect marriage, parenthood and their material conditions. Nevertheless, this style, which allows the subjects to discuss the issue or question to the extent that they wish to, can lead to the director “not interrupt[ing] disturbingly simple-minded utterances and does not ask any investigative question to force the interviewee to reflect upon reality in a more complicated and complex way”¹¹², something also noted by Hličišin Dervišević, opining that the answers given by Marcela suggest an incompleteness of information¹¹³.

This gap of complete information can be explained in several ways. Considering that “From the filmmaker’s point of view, the decision by a long doc participant to withdraw from the project is potentially far more damaging than a subject’s withdrawal from virtually any other form of documentary”¹¹⁴, longitudinal directors will often be more accommodating to subjects in order to ensure their continued participation. The importance of subject-director relationships, discussed in Chapter One, has been integral to Třeštíková’s work, leading to the argument that certain avenues may not be explored, or subjects pressed, to avoid either a problematic working relationship or withdrawal. This passivity by the director, in that gaps of information are not followed by additional enquiry, could be argued as a “reaction to openly propagandistic narratives, which were omnipresent in Czechoslovakia at the time”¹¹⁵, yet this has to be viewed in relation to the overall technique exhibited during the cycle. Třeštíková, who deals with this exact question in *Časosběrný dokumentární film*, states that “For

¹¹¹ Kilborn 2010: 77.

¹¹² Škapová 2006.

¹¹³ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 81.

¹¹⁴ Kilborn 2010: 14.

¹¹⁵ Švecová 2011: 20.

me, the ideal is to use the director's questions rarely, only in such cases when the answer would be hardly understandable"¹¹⁶. From this it can be inferred that the approach to questioning is designed, alongside the lack of expository address, to create work that stands in contrast to most normalisation documentaries, such as the examples provided earlier.

Incomplete information, by its very nature, appeals to the imagination of the viewer, and serves as an impetus to continue watching. Although Třeštíková does not employ expository narration in *Manželské etudy*, or indeed any of her documentary projects, there are other narrative procedures that are used in the crafting of the cycle. For the longitudinal film, chronology is important in the progression from wedding day to some six years later. This is achieved, as Chapter One touched upon, by the use of intertitles. Such a strategy serves to further emphasise and prioritise the dialogue of subjects, and identifies the moment in biological time when interviews with the married couples take place. Whereas intertitles occupy an expanded, even ironic function in *Po dvaceti letech*, their use in *Manželské etudy* is mostly descriptive. The beginning of each episode introduces the subjects with simple black-on-white intertitles with their name, age and profession. To aid the progression of the films, they are subsequently used to relay the date of the next meeting between Třeštíková and subjects, and the length of time since their wedding day. As "Reflexive texts are self-conscious not only about form and style, as poetic ones are, but also about strategy, structure, conventions, expectations, and effects"¹¹⁷, their employment works alongside unvoiced questioning to reduce the privileged position of the director, thus continuing her intense subject-oriented focus.

It is important to remember that intertitles themselves are constructed - although they are not voiced, they are still narrative utterances. Nevertheless, their adoption into the cycle serves the purpose of continuing Třeštíková's strategy that foregrounds the subjects and limits the overt role of the director. This in itself provides a challenge to normalisation film, expanding the role of

¹¹⁶ 2015: 19.

¹¹⁷ Nichols 1991: 57.

subjects past that of restricted and selective *vox populi*, favouring a longitudinal investigation of both the lives of the protagonists, and the spaces they inhabit.

The Employment of Private Spaces in *Manželské etudy*

Analysis of documentaries and television programmes earlier in this chapter drew several conclusions in terms of space. In particular, both films produced in Czechoslovakia during the 1950s-1960s and of the normalisation period showed a tendency to occupy spaces in the public sphere; including inner cities, workplaces and public demonstrations. It was hypothesised that there were several reasons for these regular occurrences:

- (i) that due to prioritising representations of the industrial working class, workers would be depicted within their respective workplaces;
- (ii) that the pro-regime hegemony in Czechoslovakia was built around events designed to be public affairs, such as rallies and demonstrations;
- (iii) that due to the political and cultural strategies of the KSČ, the public sphere was dominated by propaganda and censorship.

Although numerous documentaries of Czech and Slovak normalisation and post-normalisation feature private space, Třeštíková's decision to prioritise them, almost to the extent of exclusivity in *Manželské etudy*, reflects importantly on the intent and practice of the director. Furthermore, spatial representation within the cycle is central to the director's observations on fulfilment. While *Po dvaceti letech* and the standalone feature documentaries explored in Chapter Four develop the idea of fulfilment as cyclical, the first cycle assumes a more subversive role in its relationship to the regime, afforded by the uptick in social issues within documentaries during the 1980s. Spaces, therefore, serve to reflect critiques of the regime on a connotative level - as a means of passing comment on narratives the regime upholds, and to call into question the structure and approach of propaganda-dominated normalisation documentaries themselves.

When considering space in the documentary, it is necessary to acknowledge that “space visually symbolizes the realities that dominate in the films”¹¹⁸, but is still constructed on the part of the director - representations by Třeštková are carriers of meaning to put forward an argument of what she believes is the reality for young married couples. As “the basic premise of documentary, that it trades in hard facts, is deceptive - self-deceptive”¹¹⁹, it follows that the ‘realities’ which are contained within Třeštková films are persuasive elements that have been decoded by the model reader. Spatial awareness on behalf of the text’s reader, particularly if a model reading is to be attained, recognises the semiotic properties of the locations that she uses in the cycle, and their ability to subvert the treatment of space in propaganda works. The question for the interpreter of *Manželské etudy* therefore rests upon identifying these spaces and their encoding in contrast to the dominant representations in other documentaries, and how they contribute to the director’s overall position on fulfilment of citizens during normalisation.

Private Spaces as a Challenge to the Propaganda of Work

The majority of interviews which take place in the cycle are situated in the home, taking several different forms depending on the situations of each couple. In *Ivana a Pavel*, the flat bequeathed to them by a grandmother is in a noticeable state of disrepair, requiring a significant amount of work to become habitable; resulting in the couple living with their parents until it is renovated. After her immediate separation from husband Jiří, Marcela and baby daughter Ivana are visited by Třeštková at her parent’s home, where she occupies the living room alongside her sister and her own young family. These issues, which also affect the other subjects within the cycle, point to one of several arguments in challenging the assertion of fulfilment in the normalisation value system. Additional interviews and footage that appears in the final edit vary depending on the specific interests and situations of each constituent couple, including the pursuit of hobbies (*Ivana a Pavel*, *Mirka a Antonín*, *Zuzana a*

¹¹⁸ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 150.

¹¹⁹ Jarvie 1987: 239.

Stanislav), attending university (*Ivana a Václav*), and the divorce courts in the case of separation (*Marcela a Jiří*). Although images of work feature a prominent role in the *Po dvaceti letech* cycle, they occupy a marginal position within the initial series of documentaries overall.

Certain parts of the cycle engage with the issue of work more than others. *Mirka a Antonín* pays attention to Antonín's changing employment and desire to earn a better living for his family; in addition to Mirka, a former hairdresser, yearning to return to her past role instead of remaining on maternity leave. Both Zuzana and Vladimír, of the following documentary, work in construction; and over the six-year observation Vladimír attempts to change his career in favour of becoming a photographer. Whereas *Mirka a Antonín* and *Zuzana a Vladimír* feature and reference work more than other couples within the cycle, most footage from these documentaries remain inside the private sphere. More often, employment is fleetingly referenced: Pavel's work delivering bottles is only mentioned towards the conclusion of *Ivana a Pavel*, and at this point only visually. Despite opening intertitles stating that he is an industrial locksmith (00:25), footage of this work or his workplace are never seen, nor are there discussions about this change of career. Instead, Třeštíková conducts interviews and shoots footage at the home of Ivana's parents, at the couple's flat during and after renovation, and with the theatre group that Pavel participates in. This phenomenon is similar in other episodes - the viewer understands that Stanislav (*Zuzana a Stanislav*) works in electronics, and footage exists of the protagonists engaging in this field, but this is mostly as a hobby and confined to the couple's flat. Once again, his workplace is absent.

Representations of the workplace often exist hand-in-hand with the representations of work itself. As shown in films such as *Hutě volají*, and later through depictions of labour in *Ženy socialistického Československa*, the dependence on the place of work - be it in an iron foundry, factory or collective farm - was important for the regime in disseminating its ideological values. The elevated level of the industrial and agricultural worker over other professions in Czechoslovakia was therefore closely linked to the idea of working for the state and thus the mutual benefit of the class. By abandoning this focus in favour on

concentrating on private spaces, Třeštíková proposes a challenge to representations put forward in normalisation propaganda on several levels.

On a subject-focused level, there are encodings that reveal that attitudes of protagonists do not replicate the emphasis on work that exists in the documentaries of the period. Interviews with Pavel, for example, reveal that “It’s hard work at the soda bottling plant, and I wouldn’t want to stay there. Maybe I’ll get inspired, finish school and find some other work” (28:30). This is a view which also resonates in the third episode of the cycle, Vladimír commenting that “I don’t want to keep doing what I do [*construction work*]. I’d like to do more” (23:31). These utterances indicate that far from the prestige of manual work suggested in propaganda pieces, subject occupations are either not highly regarded, or viewed as income rather than fulfilling practice. It is also apparent that, either for the subjects themselves or for Třeštíková, work is not as engaging or interesting as their other activities, hence a lessened representation.

Consequently, the diminished visual role of the public sphere (in this case the workplace) in *Manželské etudy* corresponds to a surface reading that frames work in these aforementioned terms, despite intertitles that introduce subjects by name, age and profession. Rather than the heroism of industrial work, fleeting discussions and visual representations communicate a strong sense of banality on the part of either subject and director - a reluctance to expand on work further due to its uninteresting nature. Despite changing attitudes towards employment over time, evidenced in *Dvě tváře ženy* and its representation of women in managerial positions, social mobility within one’s own workplace is lacking within *Manželské etudy* - impetus for career changes are overwhelmingly motivated by access to higher wages as opposed to esteem. These encodings steer the viewer towards a conclusion that work is not an area where Třeštíková’s subjects derive a lot of fulfilment from.

The stated intentions of Třeštíková to “capture reality as authentically as possible”¹²⁰ can reflect why images of workplaces are kept to a minimum. If the cycle presents a deeper focus on the protagonist and a subversion of the value of

¹²⁰ Třeštíková and Třeščík 2015: 34.

work, it is therefore reasonable to expect that representations of factors such as employment would coincide with the level of priority that the documentary's subjects place on them. Yet by viewing *Manželské etudy* as a text, the meaning of this is both developed and expanded. As the complexity of text "is that it is run through with *what is not said*, in other words what is not manifest on the surface, at the level of expression"¹²¹, space is afforded to the reader to interpret (but as the methodology notes, not overinterpret) such gaps as part of the overall decoding. In terms of the documentary, this could be rephrased to also reflect *what is not seen*, further challenging why work occupies such a limited role in the cycle.

The absence of said public spaces therefore becomes a carrier of meaning in accentuating the focus on the private sphere. This is subversive act on behalf of the director: alongside an emphasis on the subject (and favouring what the subject *says* over expository narration) and the longitudinal approach, the de-emphasis of work in a documentary of the normalisation era challenges the construction, and the content, of these existing films - a significant observation when considering the second research question of the thesis. As this chapter argued earlier, a large number of propaganda films under Husák followed the same general formula based upon the normalisation value system and in terms of structure. In contrast, the *Manželské etudy* cycle assumes a role of opposition to this format, including how work is represented and treated within it. One of the answers to the second research question, which asks how Třeštíková's films are constructed in comparison to normalisation narratives, not only rests upon the ability to represent through the depiction of space, but to use this space to distance (and thus subvert) *Manželské etudy* from the ideological domain of the workplace.

Private Spaces in Challenging Normalisation's Fulfilment Argument

The dominance of the private sphere in *Manželské etudy* is integral to furthering its oppositional role and creating a counter-narrative. Although reading the

¹²¹ Caesar 1999: 121.

documentaries on the first level may confirm the domestic representations as merely relating to marriage and the family home, the strengths of these images and their creative treatment - alongside narrative techniques - is multifaceted. This was evidenced in the last sub-chapter's observation that the diminished role of the public sphere carried a connotative meaning that opposed normalisation's lionization of the industrial worker. The continued focus on accommodation and its relation to the subject's life experiences, however, is not exclusively used to critique the regime in terms of work. Rather, it additionally moves towards a more holistic engagement with the values espoused through the state's propaganda efforts: the result of which inevitably leads *Manželské etudy* to explore other aspects of well-being amongst the protagonists.

By giving due attention to the private sphere, the accommodation and living standards of the subjects are incorporated into Třeštíková's view of Czechoslovak society. This is clearly reflected in shot choices that exist throughout the cycle, in locations such as the family home. The use of medium and close-up shots during interviews focuses the camera on the faces and upper bodies of protagonists, often at the centre of the shot, and usually from a seated position: although "it is not visually attractive in any way", "ask[ing] for sincere statements in a position that is unnatural for an interview only brings bad results"¹²², and once more highlights the subject focus claimed by the director.

Subjects are treated with shots that concentrate on themselves precisely for the reason that their experiences as young married people are the primary object of attention. Yet as Třeštíková herself states, it is also "necessary for the camera to look around and not only focus on the characters. From the scenes recorded, characteristic signatures of different eras come to the surface, which wouldn't be so obvious without a total overview"¹²³. Based on the portrayals of the couple's homes, and how both parties - the subject and film crew - interact with these spaces, an argument is developed which poses a question on the quality and availability of private spaces for young people and families during normalisation.

¹²² Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 22.

¹²³ Ibid., 29.

The previous section briefly outlined the various living situations of the *Etudy* couples, often involving living with in-laws while a flat is sought or being renovated. In many cases, and certainly due to the time process involved in longitudinal works, cycle episodes feature several different manifestations of this - an example being *Marcela a Jiří*, which counts among its locations the homes of both Marcela and Jiří's parents and of Marcela's own flat after the separation. For several couples, including *Ivana a Pavel*, *Zuzana a Vladimír* and *Ivana a Václav*, the cycle documents the work that takes place to bequeathed flats to make them suitable for the subject's needs. Based on revisiting subjects several times a year, the longitudinal approach often reveals that the modernisations and repairs are a drawn-out process. These renovations are burdened by financial and bureaucratic concerns, alongside problems which arise from repairs (mostly carried out by the subjects themselves) being dependant on time outside of their jobs. Trouble with bureaucracy, and the expense of renovation for two students with a child, is noted in Václav's visit to the city planning office (*Ivana a Pavel*, 07:35), which after a rather unproductive meeting, turns to footage of him working on the couple's bathroom (08:24). *Ivana a Pavel* depicts a similar situation, with a flat that lacks efficient electricity and utilities: "I have a flat but I don't have the money for it. I have to keep plugging along, so I'm working on it with friends, and I hope we'll get it done together" (10:36). As the frequent visitations highlight, Pavel's ambitions to have the house completed to a rudimentary form within a year of the wedding do not come to fruition.

On the other hand, the ability to attain a flat without applying and joining a waiting list is regarded as fortuitous. Both Pavel ("Few are lucky to have their own flat. I have friends who don't and they have to live with their parents", *Ivana a Pavel*, 07:15) and Václav ("We're lucky to have our own place thanks to grandma", 05:06) clearly regard it as a privilege in their interviews. Issues with finding suitable accommodation is also raised as a factor in Marcela and Jiří's relationship, particularly as it starts to break down. The inability to obtain a flat, at first as a couple and then for Marcela as a divorcee, is an issue which runs throughout a majority of the episode in question, including being on a waiting list for over two years, leading to the assertion that "My greatest wish

[is] to have my own flat” (29:42)¹²⁴. A certain emphasis is placed upon these points through the spatial representations that occur throughout the film of the homes of her and Jiří’s parents. It should be noted that the living situation is communicated primarily through the narration of Marcela, but consistently aided through the work of the camera.

As Marcela explains, presumably to a social worker, that three adults and two children sleep in one room (26:22), the camera makes use of close and medium shots in which bed space is seen to take up half of the screen. This effect, which also details other items (a close shot of a shelf at 25:25 shows it is packed with objects, inferring that these have been collected by several people), is regularly employed in *Manželské etudy* to focus upon the subject and their emotions, yet here it reinforces Marcela’s dialogue and the cramped conditions that her and her family experience.

Another technique is exhibited when Třeštíková and crew visit Pavel at work on his flat. As they enter, and the camera pans around the lobby, a combination of poor lighting and various sounds picked up by the microphone¹²⁵ (15:28) serve to emphasise the renovations that are taking place; and the quality of the flat which was left to Pavel and his wife. Consistent with the experiences of other couples, money is presented as a key barrier to completion, with the visual and aural combining to create a full and overt picture of the housing problem. This leads to an inevitable contrast with how accommodation was portrayed in other normalisation films. Despite the very large family represented in Zrno’s *Rodinné album*, the living space that the subjects occupy - particularly the new home they move into - is large, bright and spacious. Although the father discusses the financial constraints that having so many children can bring (08:24), this has not been a barrier to the building and renovation work which was undertaken; and an entirely different situation than that of *Ivana a Pavel* or *Ivana a Václav*.

¹²⁴ Accommodation is raised as a problem by Jiří at the very beginning of the film (00:33). That this issue consistently occurs in the narratives of the cycle is to argue that the provision of accommodation is never resolved by the state throughout the decade.

¹²⁵ In particular, these sounds are indicative of the finite space presented - as a cameraman, sound engineer and director accompany Pavel into the flat, certain objects are heard to be moved as sufficient space is negotiated.

When viewed alongside other films, the questions Třeštková raises concerning accommodation are not unique. As *Největší přání*, and the more contemporary *Nezletilé matky* reveal (both in their narration and the chronological gap between releases in 1964 and 1989), concerns about suitable housing have existed from pre-normalisation onwards. For Třeštková and Kvasnička's treatment of the subject, neither director identifies the regime or party as being part of the solution - an indictment of normalisation's provisions and a clear oppositional contrast to the values it propagates.

In terms of the fulfilment narrative, several extracts from the cycle develop the thesis further to include ideas of what private space represents to the subjects themselves; notions which are particularly apparent in *Mirka a Antonín* and *Zuzana a Stanislav*. It has already been mentioned that Mirka, a hairdresser before her maternity leave, wishes to return to work; expressed several times through the dialogue. Additionally, Zuzana, who marries her partner Stanislav while still studying in high school, does not experience work before becoming a mother and housewife. The issues of gendered divisions of labour and gender equality will be explored further in the next section, as they further reflect upon the role and representation of women during normalisation. Yet in terms of space within the *Etudy* cycle, Mirka's desire to work and Zuzana's lack of any waged labour must not be solely interpreted from a financial point of view. For these women, the interaction with their homes as a private space is one which increasingly regards this space as being cut off from the outside world. This fits into the wider understanding of non-financial fulfilment which will be addressed later.

The male subjects of *Manželské etudy* are, on several occasions in each film, featured outside of the family home; and on balance much more often than their wives, who all become stay at home mothers. Once again, the combination of interview dialogue and camera work combine with the intention of representing the isolation that some protagonists feel on screen. It is noted that Mirka does not appreciate Antonín's hobby of working on cars, particularly as it leaves him outside of the house and not contributing to the domestic chores while she is "stuck at home with [daughter] Lucie" (14:43). These notions are enforced through the windows and walls of the house being presented as a physical

barrier; with Jan Malíř filming the couple's daughter from the outside behind a window (14:06), and again, from the inside facing outside (15:41). The latter example places the camera behind Mirka and her daughter, who are looking out the window as she says to "Say hello to Daddy, you haven't seen him all day" (15:46). The spatial contrast here, which places husband Antonín as being far more able to access the public (or outside) sphere than his wife, is an important factor in the argument that Třeštíková makes concerning normalisation's gender divide. Furthermore, it is a rare example of the metanarrative in the first cycle: Mirka's narration which is addressed to her daughter as opposed to the camera, highlights Nünning's understanding of metanarrative as "accentuating the act of narration"¹²⁶, leading to two conclusions which can be drawn.

The first is again consistent with Třeštíková's desire to shift agency towards that of the subject. Whereas this chapter has previously dealt with the shot choice and format of interviews as methods of maintaining focus on the couples, this change in representation showcases a further technique which is exhibited further in later cycles and will become a key repetitive image as Třeštíková develops a cyclical argument of fulfilment. Secondly, and crucially to fulfilment and its representation, is the potential decoding of the sequence as indicative of *Manželské etudy*'s construction in opposition to the values of normalisation. When taken alongside propaganda documentaries and their construction as a means of disseminating regime values, this segment raises the idea of the entire cycle as one which embraces different formal techniques to achieve a similar goal - except this goal is the communication of a counter-argument to propaganda's encoding of fulfilment. Whilst "this interior setting was communicating the social statuses of subjects, existential struggle and overall life in a given period"¹²⁷, thus challenging the regime's assertions that Czechoslovak citizens were happy, equal and provided for, it is apparent that the use of space is not exclusively thematic - and that the metanarrative serves to question *how* narratives are employed and for what effect. By suggesting that *Manželské etudy* is a construct, the director argues that *all* documentaries of the

¹²⁶ op. cit.

¹²⁷ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 16.

normalisation era are - and thus require a decoding which recognises this to be the case.

The relationship between isolation and the private sphere in *Mirka a Antonín* is also a significant theme of *Zuzana a Stanislav*. For Zuzana, isolation comes in two forms - firstly from living separately from her husband in a small town while he works in Prague, and then from her confinement in the family home when they finally obtain a flat together. In the cases of both couples, shot choice offers a visual aid to the understanding of this distance, particularly the use of long shots of mother and child that occur in the two films¹²⁸. The contrast, where most medium and close-up work is held in the private sphere, shifts to several long shots when the subject is outside with a small child or pram. Not only does this contrast with the more confined area of the home, but also evokes the separation of the subjects from the outside world - the world of work and leisure in particular, which is more frequently accessed by the male protagonists of the cycle.

Spatial representation within the first *Manželské etudy* cycle therefore challenges normalisation in several ways. In addition to the prolific focus on private space questioning the importance of work amongst Czechoslovaks, the rendering of these spaces exposes the difficulties that subjects experience in both finding and renovating their homes; countering normalisation notions of abundance and material wealth which occur in existing film and television. Furthermore, the brief metanarration that exists in *Mirka a Antonín* offers the possibility to decode the sequence - and consequently the episode - in a way that compares to the construction of normalisation film itself, by indicating that the cycle is also designed to carry an ideological argument in the same manner.

***Manželské etudy* and Gender**

Representations of gender within the cycle are closely related to the spatial contrasts previously discussed, and occupy a central role in how Třeštíková

¹²⁸ Particularly at 10:33 and 18:43 in *Mirka a Antonín*, and 17:49 in *Zuzana a Stanislav*.

crafts an argument around fulfilment. This is based not only upon the representations made within *Manželské etudy*, but its relationship to the normalisation value system which runs through numerous documentaries and broadcasts. Earlier in this chapter, several key characteristics of this value system were identified, including:

- (i) that Czechoslovak citizens enjoyed a high standard of living, with a wide variety of consumer goods;
- (ii) that the role of the worker, particularly those in historically working-class or industrial positions, was revered;
- (iii) that women are equal and able, yet carry an additional responsibility as child-bearers and mothers.

Based on analysis of existing television programmes and documentaries, and particularly those from the Krátký film archive, all three of these points can relate to the wider issue of gender. This is particularly apparent with regards to point iii - women are represented as both workers and mothers in *Ženy socialistického Československa* and *Dvě tváře ženy*, where protagonists and narrators place equal value on both roles. Motherhood additionally features in films which do not conform to the political line of normalisation, including the concerns of mothers in *Zkus to dokázat* and most notably in *Nezletilé matky* due to its subject focus. In *Manželské etudy*, gender and the experience of women subjects is a significant focus, particularly as it refrains from conforming to a model where the regime is heralded as the alleviator of various social problems.

The diminished role of work in the cycle offers a decoding that subverts normalisation's fixation on labour (as in point ii), but work itself - important in terms of providing an income as subjects look to start and maintain their families - is not eliminated entirely from the project. However, representations which are included are subject to Třeštíková's argument on the divisions that exist between men and women. Unlike depictions of women workers that exist amongst documentary films of the time, a key contrast is presented in *Manželské etudy* in that no woman protagonist works full-time, although part-time employment is addressed through Mirka (briefly returning to hairdressing) and both Ivanas. Whereas Ivana (*Ivana a Václav*) sells handicrafts at a local market,

representations of the other Ivana's (*Ivana a Pavel*) part-time job as a cleaner possess strong gendered connotations, particularly as shots are combined with additional footage of her husband playing ice hockey in his spare time - evoking the understanding that Ivana's "free" time away from taking care of her son is working. Furthermore, the brief shots of the office that Ivana is cleaning is staffed almost entirely by women, symbolic of the accessibility to certain job markets during the 1980s, and a far different representation of the industrial worker crafted in *Ženy socialistického Československa*.

For the male subjects of the cycle, engagement with various hobbies acts as a compensation for the diminished focus on work. In contrast to the public space of the workplace not being valued in the cycle's encoding, the public space of recreation is often expanded upon. Pavel's hobbies of football, ice hockey and theatre are observed at several junctures, while a key theme in *Mirka a Antonín* is Antonín's interest in cars, expressed through significant footage placing him outside of the family home in the garage or at the racetrack. Notions of separation also play a part in *Zuzana a Stanislav*, as Stanislav's various electronic projects render him reclusive. Distance between husband and wife, fostered by living remotely, are revisited when both subjects finally move in together, and Stanislav converts a spare room to a workshop where he spends much of his time outside of work.

All of these examples function in the encoding of *Manželské etudy* as a signifier that space and work are gendered notions in the family. Childcare and domestic work, often represented and vocalised due to the prioritisation of private spaces, are confined to the home and are full-time activities for the wives of the cycle, with only occasional childcare support from either husbands or relatives. Interview footage indicates that this separation is understood - and indeed tolerated - by some protagonists. Whilst doing laundry in one shot, Zuzana expresses her frustration at her husband not helping with the housework, before conceding that "It's not like he can really assist with anything... He's still quite young, so let him have his hobbies" (16:09).

In investigating this issue further, Kevin James has observed that domestic labour and paid work were treated as distinct and separate gendered entities during normalisation:

The reality of the situation under Communism was that little investment was made on the part of the state to facilitate the socialization of housework. Household time saving appliances were not given any priority in the scheme of production. Furthermore, in practice, many household tasks cannot be shared and one person must take charge to accomplish them. This person was inevitably the woman in Czechoslovakia during Communism. The almost sole responsibility for many extremely time consuming household jobs inevitably gave women a lower status in the work place. This was the case because women had less time to devote to work and they would be the ones to have to take off work to take care of sick children or parents. These domestic jobs were unpaid and the time they took often directly conflicted with advancement in the workplace.¹²⁹

James's research correlates to the representations of work and space in the cycle. By means of extended representations of women during the cycle - which are mostly concentrated in and around their homes - domestic work and childcare become central activities that leave little room for recreation or salaried employment. Třeštíková's encoding thus functions as a refutation of *Ženy socialistického Československa* and *Dvě tváře ženy*. Whilst these documentaries both exhibit the dual role of women as workers and mothers, their profession is represented and portrayed first, reflecting the value placed on employment by the state. This value is shared by subjects in terms of necessity as opposed to prestige, with Škapová identifying the "material poverty" and "critical shortage of money" experienced by subjects at varying chronological moments¹³⁰. Financial concerns are accentuated considering that James also makes the point that in many cases the need for two incomes for a family forced both partners to work¹³¹, and that this only occurs sporadically in the cycle. The issue of compulsory military service, removing male subjects from the workforce, is therefore regarded in economic terms by the couples, with Mirka and Antonín particularly concerned with the impact it may have on their already meagre wages. As it is understood that the women will be left at home to care for the children (in turn diminishing opportunities to access the labour

¹²⁹ James 1996: 49.

¹³⁰ Škapová 2006.

¹³¹ James 1996: 50.

market), it becomes another example of an accepted division of labour based on gender, affecting all families and the wives of the cycle in particular.

This reading of the documentary reveals the intersectional issues that influence fulfilment and shows how Třeštíková engages with this concept - which is of particular interest to the third research question of this thesis. It can be argued that there is an equality between all six subjects in the cycle, in that all subjects profess at some stage to having difficulties with money (and challenging the normalisation value system which states that citizens have a high standard of living), yet it is women who face the majority of the socio-economic issues that arise from employment; be this the inability to access further work or possessing the necessary space in order to participate in hobbies.

It should be noted, however, that the regime's ideas of gender were not based on absolute equality. As the analysis of films from the Krátký film archive has discovered, the unapologetic dualism of the role of women and their differences to men are apparent in a number of documentaries that touch upon the subject - the majority of which also concentrate heavily on employment. Once more, this focuses the regime's values towards the representation of a model citizen as worker. Rather than acknowledge challenges or issues affecting women, such as the lack of socialisation of housework or childcare, these are regarded more as responsibilities and duties than pressing concerns. Kateřina Lišková, who has written extensively on gender and sexuality in Czechoslovakia, characterises the state's attitudes under normalisation as "Men and women are different and marriage only works if men are superior to women. If gender arrangements are different from this, women will suffer a pain similar to sexual dissatisfaction. It is the nuclear family and your spouse that are your only safe social bond"¹³². Furthermore, "While women's equality enjoyed its discursive heyday in the 1950s, the 1970s returned to a traditional parlance connecting women with housework and childrearing"¹³³. Not only are these conservative attitudes apparent in several filmic narratives already explored within this chapter, but are also revealed through *Manželské etudy's* subject interviews.

¹³² Lišková 2016: 212.

¹³³ Ibid., 227.

Třeštíková's initial interviews with the six couples take a similar formula, with an unvoiced question asking why they are getting married¹³⁴. In these opening sequences, both Mirka and Zuzana respond that they are getting married "because [they] have to", (00:35; 00:20). These utterances are contrary to earlier, radical notions of marriage that were contained in official literature, but evocative of a social conservatism that was rediscovered in Husákism. In the early years of the communist ascendance to power, there was a movement to redefine marriage on socialist terms and to move away from what was described as "bourgeois marriage", where "the woman was assigned to the household and childrearing" and "Economically, she was completely dependent on her man"¹³⁵; yet the entirety of the first cycle clearly represents marriages that fit into this bracket. It is not surprising, therefore, that partners who are already expecting a child feel a degree of coercion to marry - either due to a societal expectation or the security of a male breadwinner in a union where gender roles are clearly defined¹³⁶. By attempting to attain such economic fulfilment, Třeštíková's interviews and on-screen representations argue that this comes at a cost to a social or emotional fulfilment. Antonín, for example, cannot imagine his wife abstaining from a social life to work and care for their children if he is conscripted (12:37). Furthermore, gender roles occur in situations where there is an alleged parity - both Zuzana and Vladimír (who do not have a child until September 1986) work full time in the construction trade, yet it is Zuzana who prepares all the meals.

These examples are not isolated occurrences. The gendered use of language - or the understanding and acceptance of roles within the family unit along gender lines - are regular utterances within *Manželské etudy*. These deployments are not merely subversive, but correspond to the idea that normalisation fostered a traditional view of men and women as a married couple with specific duties. Despite normalisation documentary crafting a narrative of the working woman, this is never totally removed from the image of the wife as primary carer of

¹³⁴ The exception to this is *Zuzana a Stanislav*.

¹³⁵ Barták, Dobiáš and Nedoma, in *Ibid.*, 217.

¹³⁶ This is also seen in *Zuzana a Vladimír*, as the couple discuss marriage as a means for them to organise their lives for themselves, and "eventually we'll start organizing it for others" (00:51). If this was not already obvious, Zuzana's hand motions whilst delivering this statement clearly communicate that having children is inferred.

children, and the individual who bears the most responsibility in terms of domestic labour. Footage also suggests that skills traditionally associated with women are viewed as desirable aspects for protagonists within the cycle - Václav's commentary on his wife's ability to cook¹³⁷ reveals a belief of this as an attractive development, and is also mentioned by Marcela and Zuzana (*Zuzana a Stanislav*) in their respective films. A hands-on approach to childcare is eschewed by Stanislav, who "doesn't participate too much" because "those kinds of tasks, like bath time, [are] better for the child when done by the softer woman" (15:51).

It is interesting that private spaces and normalisation interpretations of marriage have been discussed by Eva Věšínová-Kalivodová, who comments that

...in contrast with the proclaimed socialist collectivism, many single private worlds based in families became spaces where people really lived. These spaces may have given many women, who embraced their traditional role of mothers, wives and homemakers, a better chance of self-fulfillment than men. It was so because this phase of Czech life under communism generated a convinced re-appreciation of women's nurturing role that was felt as attacked and debilitated by enforced socialist principles. Then, it was this role of women that was emphasized as essential for creating an emotionally healthy and humane family environment that could defy the large-scale social devastation.¹³⁸

The argument, that turning to traditional gender roles within the family unit functioned as an opposition to state socialism, is difficult to support when these roles were embraced by the regime itself - Lišková's analysis on the subject corresponds well to representations made in *Ženy socialistického Československa* and others. This can also be extended to notions of self-fulfilment that can potentially be fostered by women staying at home. Věšínová-Kalivodová continues this line of enquiry, noting that "many men, frustrated by the lack of opportunities in the ideologized public life, sought substitutes for their traditional activities"¹³⁹, serving to explain the recreational activities pursued, and looking back earlier to earlier in this chapter, the reluctance of the director

¹³⁷ "Ivana is doing her best" (05:17); "Ivana learned to make dumplings. At first they weren't edible, but our grandmas, I mean our mums, taught her the trick. I ate them and even liked them" (16:05).

¹³⁸ Věšínová-Kalivodová 1998: 363.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*,

to focus more on the public spaces within normalisation's domain. Yet on the other hand, economic and social fulfilment of *Manželské etudy*'s women is lacking, particularly due to a diminished ability to access the public sphere for both work and recreation. These arguments are once again built upon when Třeštíková turns to the emotional aspect of fulfilment.

Emotional Fulfilment

The interconnection of space, gender and fulfilment now well established, it is important to turn to the emotional side of fulfilment as the final factor in Třeštíková's overall encoding of the cycle. Mirka and Zuzana (*Zuzana a Stanislav*) have previously been mentioned in this chapter as being unhappy in their marriages due to the curtailment of opportunities through it (not being able to work for Mirka; marrying young for Zuzana and the distance between her and her husband). This echoes back to the idea of autonomy as a universal need in the production of well-being, which was analysed in the introduction's definition of fulfilment. Another crucial condition is that of relatedness, which touches upon Zuzana's experiences of isolation away from Stanislav, and the distance also felt by Mirka emphasised through camerawork separating her from Antonín. The ability to relate to a partner - particularly to subjects that experience a degree of loneliness in *Manželské etudy* - is an essential contributing factor to emotional well-being; something that is recognised by Le and Agnew's work in the field where "dependence upon one's romantic partner to fulfill (*sic*) relationship needs was hypothesized as being related to emotional experience"¹⁴⁰. Although all couples rely on the husband in terms of income, this is only one need; and certain communication breakdowns or the unequal distribution of labour, which have led to the unhappiness professed by Mirka and Zuzana, indicate that emotional well-being is not remedied by the act of marriage alone.

This topic has not been explored in any great detail in any of the documentaries procured from the Krátký film archive. Rather than look into the specific strands

¹⁴⁰ Le and Agnew 2001: 435.

that comprise the overall well-being of the individual, they are treated in more general terms - that happiness is achieved by hard work, that Czechoslovaks enjoy a higher standard of living during normalisation, and the maternal nature of women provides a high level of fulfilment through motherhood. On the other hand, emotional fulfilment is strongly suggested in the dialogue of Alena Konečná in *Otázky pro dvě ženy*, particularly concerning the brief separation with her husband, which corresponds to Le and Agnew in discussing need fulfilment and emotions within a relationship¹⁴¹. Emotional fulfilment, or the lack of it, also serves to underpin the bond between women and their children in *Zkus to dokázat* against the backdrop of the strict regime of the rehabilitation centre.

In *Manželské etudy*, the strongest example of emotional fulfilment comes with the narrative of Marcela, whose divorce of partner Jiří is a major theme of their documentary. As Marcela becomes a single parent, and therefore experiences the economic problems that befall much of the cycle's protagonists, a strong pattern in terms of economic fulfilment continues, yet the emotional and romantic isolation depicted in *Marcela a Jiří* is an issue that is never completely resolved. Furthermore, as the development of a cycle of fulfilment emerges in *Po dvaceti letech*, the concept of emotional fulfilment, and the narrative of Marcela, continues further.

The acrimonious divorce court proceedings between the couple, which Třeštíková records inside the courtroom, offer a denotative level of decoding that indicates that the relationship between both parties has been irrevocably damaged. In these scenes, footage of the divorce court and child custody hearings work alongside back-and-forth dialogue between (former) husband and wife in their respective settings and create a fully-rounded impression of how these legal battles dominate this period of their lives; resulting in the cramped living conditions for Marcela while she waits for a flat. Despite the consequences of significant problems with accommodation and income, it is the interviews with Marcela that underpin the importance of companionship and emotional support in her life, noting that "That's my greatest wish - to have a little place

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

to live, and a nice man as well. Someone kind, who'd love us..." (29:43). This is emphasised in the subject writing to a 'lonely hearts' column in a newspaper, with the candid admission that a "Twenty-two-year-old dark eyed brunette seeks nice dad for her eighteen-month-old daughter, and a friend for herself" (30:03).

As Marcela is not often filmed doing housework in many shots (despite being in a domestic environment), there is a different emphasis on what fulfilment criteria is the most important to her, and enforces the differences between this emotional isolation and the separation of other *Manželské etudy* couples; who are predominantly represented as separated by the duties that both wife and husband are expected to fulfil. This is not the only filmic technique employed in the documentary to highlight such contrasts. Towards the end *Marcela a Jiří*, the subjects begin to slowly rebuild their relationship, firstly through meeting due to the visitation agreements for daughter Ivana, and then form fragile steps towards getting back together as a couple. The narration over a shot of the trio at a children's playground ("Before we couldn't agree on anything, but now it's not so bad" (36:36)) presents an interesting scene to the viewer, as the vocalised concept of reconciliation is matched with a distant shot of Ivana in-between mother and father (briefly holding both of their hands), suggesting that a gap is being bridged. As shots up to this point in the section have been mostly confined to indoor settings, the natural light of the outdoors emphasises the general positivity of this progress, alongside the intimate sequence shown on screen. However, this is a fleeting moment, emphasised by the lack of light in subsequent visits to Marcela's home, and the striking admission that "I often think it might be better to take a bit of rope and end it all. Sometimes I think about it, but I'd never do it, for Ivana's sake" (37:37).

It is apparent that Třeštíková's argument of fulfilment expressly identifies Marcela as an individual who has particular difficulty in attaining any emotional fulfilment, a further issue on top of the economic fulfilment that is lacking across all the cycle's participants. In a scene of a similar nature to Mirka and daughter looking outside the window towards their father (pp.10), the camera is positioned outside of Marcela's flat and watches her smoking a cigarette alone in her kitchen (37:19). This visual encoding serves alongside interviews and the chronological progression of the cycle episode - the constant switching between

reconciliation and rejection demonstrates the turbulent relationship that she has in her attempts to develop intimacy and emotional stability with a partner. That these issues are exacerbated by problems of accommodation and income expose the intersectional nature of fulfilment as understood by the director, and contribute to the overall subversion of normalisation values within the cycle.

Chapter Conclusions

The analysis of television serials and documentary films of the normalisation period has revealed a number of aesthetic and ideological values that can be associated with the regime, and provide answers to the research question pertaining to how these values were constructed during this period. With many of these values originating from the post-war narrative of the KSČ, issues of gender - and particularly the role of women and mothers - sees the emergence of socially conservative attitudes that emphasise that women in normalisation occupy a dual role, which then disseminated in accordance with the medium employed. Although comparisons between documentary and pure fiction must be treated with caution, analysis of the two television serials in the section on propaganda as light entertainment reveal the distinct strategies that have been adopted by normalisation directors and screenwriters that embody the state's network of censorship and propaganda. Furthermore, the documentaries obtained from the Krátký film archive, which often blur the lines between documentary and propagandistic fiction, have been found to rely on similar formulas in the encoding of their texts; including expository modes of address and the use of authorised speech that mirrors that of the regime. In short, the normalisation value system uses the visual media to convey an image of Czechoslovakia as one that meets the economic and social needs of the populace; with a division of gender which is universally accepted. In the event that certain problems have arisen during the Party's tenure, the KSČ is then represented as a pragmatic, problem-solving organisation which exists to mitigate undesirable social issues for the benefit of all.

In contrast, Třeštíková's *Manželské etudy* cycle successfully subverts such values, both in narrative encoding and by the use of the longitudinal method. By prioritising interviews with the cycle's subjects, the director lends credibility and agency to their words, which are important in revealing the problems of income and accommodation, in addition to challenging the conventional state-authorised documentary by employing a radical different form by being longitudinal. Alongside the prioritisation of private space, this evidences the specific challenges of a critical encoding of film under censorship, and demonstrates how these can be negotiated through the connotative, rather than denotative, level. This is then furthered by narratives of fulfilment barriers that are portrayed as constant and interwoven throughout the cycle, and intersectional in nature - the lesser access to public spaces experienced by the women of *Manželské etudy*, their worries about income while their husbands are sent for national service, and their restricted access to the labour market combine to argue that income - and thus economic fulfilment - are gender issues.

By failing to provide for the economic and social needs of subjects (which propaganda film claims), Třeštíková posits that the regime acts as a catalyst in developing problems with isolation and intimacy experienced by subjects, who are disproportionately women. For the second research question, it is therefore clear that *Manželské etudy* is subject to a far different construction than normalisation documentaries, and that fulfilment plays an important role in the process of subversion.

As the *Manželské etudy* cycle is entrenched in the environment of the 1980s, the revisiting of subjects in *Po dvaceti letech* witnesses the expansion of the director's fulfilment analysis and the beginnings of an argument that lead to the understanding of the phenomenon as cyclical, engaging with the third research question in a different historical period. This second cycle will now be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three: Post-Normalisation Documentary and the Emergence of Cyclical Fulfilment

The pivotal year of 1989, which culminated in the Velvet Revolution, signified the beginning of the end for Czechoslovakia's state socialist system. As the introduction to this thesis noted, the large-scale demonstrations in Prague and Bratislava, which garnered international attention as part of the wider narrative of revolutions in the so-called Eastern Bloc, soon moved to covering other countries, particularly the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia; and although there was a brief re-appearance of the worldwide media during the dissolution of the state into separate Czech and Slovak Republics, the transition to a market-based economy did not fully capture the imagination of English-language reportage. A certain amount of scholarship since this period has helped to rectify this problem¹, yet this has mainly focused on areas away from the television and film industries. Moreover, many of these analyses discuss Czechoslovak and Czech cinema either in general terms, or with a sole concentration on feature film as opposed to the documentary - a gap in analysis which was recognised in the introduction.

1990's federal and parliamentary elections were the first since 1946 to offer a free, multi-party choice to the electorate. The victory of the oppositionist *Občanské fórum (Civic Forum, OF)* and its Slovak counterpart *Verejnost' proti násiliu (Public Against Violence, VPN)* over the KSCĚ heralded the end of communist majority rule in both constituent parts of the federation. As Triska comments, this change in political direction would be reflected in the economic approach of the state, as "For the first time, it was publicly spelled out that Czechoslovakia has no other alternative; the market economy and the democratic society generally associated with capitalism are the only option for our country. Therefore, the process of privatization received the full support of all of the most important political forces"². Overviews of the privatisation

¹ Scherpereel (2009), Shepherd (2000) and Wolchik (1991) all provide useful analysis into the economic and political transformations of the state.

² Triska 1991: 22.

process, and in particular the form of ‘voucher privatisation’ employed, can be found in Fawn (2000), Simoneti (1993) and the other sources footnoted in the previous paragraph. For film and television, privatisation and the fall of state socialism would radically alter not only the content and form of what appeared on-screen, but the means of funding and production. Although Československá televize would remain as a public service broadcaster (and from 1993 onwards Česká televize in the Czech Republic), industry subsidies would be cut and film studios given over to private ownership³. For documentarists who had worked at Krátký film or other studios during normalisation, and who were used to producing documentaries with funds apportioned by the state, this new model represented a comprehensive change.

Radical changes to the socio-economic and political system of the Czech state possessed interesting potentials and challenges for Třeštíková as a longitudinal documentarist. Like many of her colleagues, new methods of financing needed to be sought, and this would be further complicated by the nature of the director’s filmmaking; which due to her approach would often lack a definitive end date. Furthermore, systems of censorship and the abundance of propaganda narratives which were a hallmark of normalisation were no longer processes controlled by the KSČ. Whilst this theoretically opened up once-restricted avenues concerning freedom of expression, it would also give way to new considerations based upon returns of revenue. Since “In the early 1990s, the documentary, a relatively unprofitable area of filmmaking, was not a priority for the rapidly developing field of domestic production”⁴, the years following the end of state socialism, and the situation of Czech documentary cinema up to the present, requires a new evaluation.

Re-establishing the position of documentary in the post-communist Czechoslovakia and independent Czech Republic is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of Třeštíková’s work, and especially true of the continuation of the *Etudy* cycle, now in the form of *Po dvaceti letech*. Exploring this is key to examining how narratives changed after 1989, which is of interest to the first research question of the thesis. This second cycle, shot between 1999 and 2005

³ Hames 2000: 64.

⁴ Česálková 2014: 45.

before being broadcast on ČT a year later, revisited the six couples featured during normalisation⁵; and discusses the numerous changes (to the relationship between partners, children, the fall of the regime) that have taken place since the conclusion of filming in 1986. As the previous chapter argued, the exploration of private spaces and gender had served to both subvert the normalisation value system and to expose the conservatism of Husákism towards women; aided by a general trend towards exploring domestic social problems from the start of the 1980s onward. Through *Manželské etudy* and the discourses of sobriety represented, it is argued that young couples experience a lack of fulfilment - be this in terms of adequate accommodation, job satisfaction, income or emotional needs - and that women are disproportionately affected by this. This clearly shows the relationship between Třeštíková and fulfilment narratives that the third research question wishes to examine, but only reflects one of the two historical periods in the focus of this thesis. In returning to these subjects over a decade later, this chapter will explore how *Etudy* has developed and expanded the arguments concerning fulfilment in a different ideological terrain.

By analysing the new economic situation of Czech documentary after 1989, and the films of this period, a formulaic pattern emerges from which Třeštíková stands out as a longitudinalist. In turning to fulfilment, it will then be observed that the director continues to subvert fulfilment narratives by proposing a cyclical understanding of the term - inferring that the transition to a market economy has not necessarily affected *Manželské etudy*'s subjects for the better, and contrasting with specific post-normalisation discourses which claimed that the social problems would be alleviated through the new capitalist system. This is particularly apparent with the introduction of new subjects to the cycle, but also reflects upon protagonists who continue to experience barriers to achieving economic, social and romantic fulfilment from the previous normalisation era.

Furthermore, the development of Třeštíková's technique, and the deepening relationship between director and subjects, is reflected through her increased visibility and participation within the cycle, and employment of the self-

⁵ With the exception of Jiří, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

reflexivity in particular - something which is broadly consistent with the changing film environment of the Czech Republic into the new millennium. By establishing how Třeštíková films have changed before, during and after the transition process, and that arguments of fulfilment run through all of these periods, the fourth and final chapter of the thesis will then serve to validate these findings through the exploration of standalone documentary features.

Changes to Documentary After 1989

New Challenges in Documentary Funding

Jordanova's assertion of Central and East European documentaries being "the least explored cinematic form"⁶ again rings true in relation to the changes in film after 1989. More often than not, documentaries have been either counted alongside feature film or ignored altogether, leading to generalisations which are particularly problematic for several reasons. Not only were Czech and Slovak documentary films created for a variety of different broadcasting mediums (as previews before a feature film at cinemas, on the television, or for private and workplace screenings), but their position as asserted veridical representations⁷ and engagement with a genuine and not fictitious world render their purpose as significantly different from fiction film. Although certain shared values existed between the two - notably that filmmaking was not designed for commercial gain - production of documentaries mainly occurred in separate studios and under the auspices of different dramaturgs and managers, who oversaw the ideological content and function of the works in question.

In terms of economics, however, the transition to the market economy carried some similar consequences. Barrandov Studios in Prague, the centre of domestic feature film production, experienced rapid privatisation which resulted in all 2,100 staff being made redundant and debts of £14 million being acquired⁸. A

⁶ op. cit.

⁷ Or claims of 'reality', particularly important when considering the role and influence of propaganda.

⁸ Hames 2000: 71.

similar story emerged at Krátký film, “which not only deprived the Czech documentary of production facilities, but also of access to film archives, which were not properly maintained”⁹¹⁰. State subsidising of the industry was drastically reduced by three-quarters by the end of 1990, with a view to a complete phase-out within five years¹¹. Coupled with this lack of funding was the continued high cost of film material and the cessation of documentaries being shown in cinemas before the main feature¹². Domestic production of feature films (numbering twenty-eight in 1989, the majority from Barrandov Studios) virtually ceased in the years following the transition¹³ in favour of attracting foreign production teams to shoot at a Czech studio; and documentaries were not regarded as money-spinning ventures. For documentarists, these dramatic changes necessitated searching for additional outside funding, often alongside adopting new video technology as a cost-effective means of shooting a project.

Třeštková, who like other filmmakers shot projects on 16mm and 35mm film, would transition to using video in the 1990s as evidenced through *Po dvaceti letech*. Despite footage from the first *Manželské etudy* shooting being made into the cinema-length *Z lásky* (1987) and *Hledání cest* (1988), the director’s work during normalisation consisted of short films and documentaries intended for television broadcast. Another project during the transition process, *Řekni mi něco o sobě*, was plagued with funding concerns and envisioned as a standalone film, before the amount of footage shot causing a change of direction¹⁴. Beginning in 1989, the project, which aimed at a longitudinal exploration of several offenders at a youth detention centre in Libkovice, saw the start of a new funding model taking place. According to the director, funding at Krátký film, which previously apportioned money for projects from state budgets, “stopped officially [*after 1989*] but kind of continued for another two years. It was clear that there was going to be less money”¹⁵. Reacting to the decimation

⁹ The transformation to the studio as a joint stock company was completed in 1991 (Krátký film 2005).

¹⁰ Česáková 2014: 44-45.

¹¹ Hájek 1994: 131.

¹² Štoll 2000: 31.

¹³ Hames 2000: 71.

¹⁴ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 11.

¹⁵ Interview, 7th March 2017.

of the state budget for film and its unsustainability, the decision was taken by Třeštíková and colleagues to seek and handle finances by themselves, leading to the establishment of a foundation, Film a sociologie (Film and Sociology) in 1991 to formalise this arrangement.

The state broadcaster ČST (and later ČT) was to become Film a sociologie's main co-operator on documentaries following the demise of Krátký film as a public enterprise. The seeming unprofitability of documentaries commercially, and the elimination of their use as previews for feature films, meant that only four documentaries would appear in Czech cinemas in the 1990s; all in the latter half of the decade¹⁶. On the other hand, it was agreed that some fifty million Czech crowns of the state broadcaster's budget would be given to independent projects, fifteen million of which was secured by the foundation¹⁷. Additional funds could be secured through the State Fund for Cinematography, which generated money through affixing a small charge of one Czech Crown to every cinema ticket in the country¹⁸; another resource which Film a sociologie took advantage of.

Films of the Transition and Beyond: The 1990s

As the example of *Řekni mi něco o sobě* indicates, the nature of Czechoslovakia's transformation after 1989 meant that a number of documentaries shot and produced under the previous regime would be finalised and ready for broadcast after the KSČ were no longer in control. Of particular interest here are works that continue with the trend from the beginning of the 1980s, where social issues were covered in more depth, and the reactions to the new environment that documentarists - and their subjects - found themselves in.

A fascinating starting point is to consider the continuation of Jan Špáta's *Největší přání*, which Chapter Two cited as an early example of critical voices towards the regime. As analysis of the *Manželské etudy* couples revealed, a

¹⁶ Česálková 2014: 45.

¹⁷ Interview, 7th March 2017.

¹⁸ Štoll 2001: 65.

plethora of arguments found in Třeštková's encoding echoed that of subjects from twenty years earlier. Shot in 1989, with the last day of filming coinciding with the events of the 17th of November, *Největší přání II* would be completed the year after; and follows the same format of the 1964 film, including snippets from the original documentary's material. This second version, now shot in colour, again focuses on demographics first seen in the 1960s - involving students, young workers and teenage parents - alongside newly emerging groups such as the punk rock community. Several subjects first interviewed in 1964, re-appear within the narrative, giving the sequel a longitudinal focus.

The first impression left by *Největší přání II* relates to its relatively straightforward encoding. The responses of many subjects to the question of their greatest wish, particularly in the early stages of the documentary, are interspersed with the original film footage, evoking the notion that many goals and dreams (a good job, to be happily married, to pass university exams) remain the same. As noted in the previous chapter, although some subjects appeared to be loyal communists, a significant number of responses detailed criticisms of the regime; with the communist-run youth movement a main target of this opposition. It is understandable that some interviewees in 1989 are hesitant to express their true feelings due to impositions of censorship up until the end of the year, and this is explicitly recognised: as one member of the punk subculture opines, "I mind that this piece [*the film*] won't get among the people. And if it does it will be in such a form that it won't be quite right" (51:22). However, the production and broadcast of *Největší přání II*, occurring once the KSČ had relinquished absolute power, suggests that censorship - either at the institutional level or above - was of no concern in terms of what could be included and omitted.

This gave space for the inclusion of a blunter, more denotative employment of language at junctures, including a young man in a pub who is "pissed off" by the "red fiends" (27:48); and footage of the protests on November 17th, which would have certainly failed to bypass any censor had the regime endured. Due to the arbitrary nature of censorship at normalisation film studios, the question of what other footage would have been cleared for inclusion is a matter for debate. It is interesting to note that *Největší přání II* also includes a section where young

religious people are interviewed, openly discussing their wish “to carry out God’s will” (17:47), contrasting sharply with the issues around the inclusion of church shots in *Manželské etudy*.

Several themes that occur throughout *Největší přání II* continue to resonate with normalisation filmmaking, and are presented in a more open form. Military conscription, a considerable concern to the *Manželské etudy* subjects, are included, this time at the barracks themselves - where ideological questions asked of new recruits contrast sharply with the dominant narrative of opposition possessed by the numerous subjects of the film¹⁹. Youth pregnancy, institutionalisation and broken homes, which were explored by Sommerová in *Zkus to dokázat*, and by Vladislav Kvasnička in *Nezletilé matky*, also appear within this work. In similar fashion to these aforementioned documentaries, subjects do not present the KSČ or the state system as being at the forefront of alleviating social problems.

The argument that the communist system does not aid the fulfilment of young people - a notion shared amongst several documentarists including Třeštíková - is further enhanced through revisiting subjects initially interviewed for the first project. A young man who wanted to travel to Paris and the Louvre was subsequently unable to obtain state permission or the necessary funds for the trip, and regards the gap between featuring in the documentaries as “twenty years lost” (23:25). Such feelings are shared amongst all subjects who reappeared in *Největší přání II* to varying degrees. It is apparent that the year of broadcast, and the end of shooting in November 1989, has allowed Špáta to include footage that could have potentially caused problems with the censor; and despite the reservations of several subjects, a significant number of interviews are open and frank in their views. Nevertheless, as a documentary during this transitional period, the result witnesses a continuation of many of the practices and focuses shared by oppositional documentaries of normalisation, with the advantage that self-censorship and formal censorship has been diminished.

¹⁹ “Are you a member or candidate of the KSČ?”; “Do you have relatives abroad?” (1:09:11)

Rapid alterations to censorship and content are reflected in the eleven-minute short *Volby 1990* (*Elections 1990*, director uncredited), broadcast after Občanské fórum's sweeping victory in June. Stylistically, the short contains certain similarities with the past, in addition to the changes which will be observed in future documentaries of the decade in the narrative approach. The use of expository narration, in common with the bulk of propaganda documentary films, continues; yet there is a noticeable and effective gravitation towards on-the-spot interviews, demonstrating a departure from a style where the voice-of-God narrator's opinion is absolute.

Opening shots of citizens on political demonstrations, which includes Václav Havel speaking from a platform, evolve into various campaign events and rallies. Footage of these events which occur in public spaces that were once the exclusive ideological domain of the KSČ, are now represented as part of a flourishing multi-party system. If the entrance of an opposition into the public domain is reflected through the street protests that *Největší přání II* represents, then *Volby 1990* captures a sense of idealism and ownership of these new spaces by civil society. Consequently, the prepared statements and official speech that typified normalisation political coverage is lacking, now making way for the beginnings of a more investigative journalism. This can be seen, for example, in an interview with Miroslav Sládek²⁰, who is promptly questioned on his former professional role in the censorship office under the regime (05:31).

However, despite an expanded role for subjects in the documentary (compared to their diminishment in the previous two decades), a dominant expository narrative still exists - and delivers the authoritative closing statement that "their work [*the newly elected government*] should correspond to our electoral decisions" (10:44). Although the visual representations of *Volby 1990* correspond to the assertion that "Czech documentary films of the 1990's breathed a climate of freedom"²¹, this example serves to highlight that not everything about the

²⁰ Sládek, leader of the far-right and populist *Sdružení pro Republiku - Republikánská strana Československa* (*Coalition for the Republic: Czechoslovak Republican Party*) was a visible politician during the campaign; and although his party missed out on seats at the election, *Republikáni* representatives were elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1992 and 1996.

²¹ Štoll 2002: 60.

style of documentary changed, and that a new anti-communist, pro-democratic set of values could be disseminated using similar techniques.

Many documentaries throughout the 1990s continued to be formulaic and lacked in discernible experimentation. In some respects, this is understandable when considering the number of documentarists who had studied film under normalisation, or who had made films during this time and continued to do so after 1989. Zdeněk Tyc, who studied directing at FAMU between 1983 and 1990, was responsible for several documentaries, feature films and television serials after graduation. His two-part documentary *Dvořák v Americe (Dvořák in America, 1998)* serves as a good example of a rather standard construction of a historical non-fiction film - shaped as a biographical travel narrative, combining music and photographs with camerawork that emphasises large open spaces that reflect the journeys taken by the composer across the country. Although broadcast after the year 2000²², *Masky, šašci, démony (Masks, Jesters, Demons; dir. Rudolf Adler, 2000)* also refrains from experimentation and does not stray from a standard mode of expository direct address. A television documentary based upon village life in rural Bohemia and Moravia, it is a particularly visual celebration of the festivals and holidays that local communities participate in as a whole.

Nevertheless, the continuation of a style of filmmaking resembling the orthodoxy of previous decades was certainly not exclusive. Jan Špáta can be counted amongst directors who maintained their own specific approaches across the transitional divide; and a number of filmmakers from the 1980s would remain active while eschewing the Griersonian techniques that were employed as propaganda carriers. This once again includes Špáta's wife Olga Sommerová: the couple worked together on a number of films with Špáta as cameraman, and collaboration continued after the collapse of state socialism. One such vehicle for Sommerová to continue making films was participating in the emerging documentary cycles of the next decade on ČT. Two projects, *GEN* (short for *Galerie Elity Národa (Gallery of the Nation's Elites)*) and *OKO (The Eye)*, were weekly broadcasts imagined by Slovak director Fero Fenič, where different

²² The situation of Czech documentary in the new millennium is one where a variety of new approaches are demonstrated, as will be discussed later.

filmmakers would create portraits of either well-known or “elite” members of society (*GEN*²³), or concentrate on more social issues (*OKO*). Controversy around the name of the former, particularly with its original tagline of “The Elite of the Nation”, resulted in both the abbreviation being used exclusively, refusals of some subjects to participate, and public criticism by Milan Knížák of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague²⁴. The initial success of the format saw some instalments commanding an audience share of 70% - strongly suggesting that although documentaries may not be successful as a financial enterprise, there was still an interest from television viewers²⁵.

Sommerová’s first contribution to *OKO* reflects a continuation of her interest in institutions encountered in *Zkus to dokázat*. Filmed in Pardubice prison, *Máňa* (1993) is a twenty-minute short of director and crew meeting a woman who is a habitual thief, and has been in and out of jails for a number of years. Eschewing direct address, Špáta’s camerawork is typical of his style - with an intense emotional focus by prioritising the subject and their reactions in shot choice. The representation of *Máňa*, a toothless woman with cracked spectacles and prone to polarised mood swings (suggested by the editing), resonates with arguments that Třeštková will make in *Po dvaceti letech* and *René*: that despite the significant political and economic transition, material and emotional situations of subjects remains largely unaltered. This is made overt in scenes where the subject compares her uniform against what was worn during normalisation (11:50) and the theme of a mother separated from her child by incarceration, which the director has dealt with before.

One of the most important considerations in the documentary, however, is the inclusion of Sommerová herself into the film’s narrative as a subject. Throughout *Máňa* she is seen and heard (in addition to soundman Miroslav Šimčík), including sitting with the protagonist and offering advice. In the final segments of the piece, both director and Špáta are clearly visible (Sommerová in the subject’s embrace, and Špáta filming his reflection in a mirror). These self-reflexive

²³ The various “elites” represented through *GEN* ranged from former dissidents to writers, actors and sports personalities. *GEN*’s format has endured for over two decades, with the last (at this time of writing) broadcast - of doctor Marie Svatošová - airing on ČT1 on the 5th of November, 2017.

²⁴ Česká televize (Undated), “Příběh Galerie elity národa”.

²⁵ Štoll 2001: 66.

practices that run throughout the documentary provide an overt acknowledgement of the constructed nature of the documentary that undermines former KSČ authority and the propaganda narratives in pre-89 works. By acknowledging the participation of the director and the presence of a camera crew, there is what Nichols describes as “the truth of an encounter rather than the absolute or untampered truth”²⁶; where the viewer is challenged to question authenticity and validity in a way that did not occur in the previous decade. This adds to the persuasiveness of the overall narrative by exposing the background mechanics, and the acknowledgement of Sommerová as both author (and thus encoder of meaning) and visual participant - the documentary may be about Máňa, but also about Sommerová and how she represents the protagonist.

These ideas would be developed in *Sloužím (I Serve, 1996)*, where Sommerová focuses on a hospital for elderly women. The use of the verb *sloužit*, or *to serve*, reflects on the broader theme of the documentary, which explores service both in the army (conscription in the Czech Republic would end in 2004) and the civilian service taken as an alternative. Both of these decisions (whether to opt for the military or to work, in this example, in the hospital) are contrasted throughout the film in order to frame the motivation for each approach in the post-communist and post-Czechoslovak state. Whereas conscription was regarded as a duty in some normalisation narratives, and as a worry for families in the *Manželské etudy* cycle, the constitutional changes after 1993 (where the Czech Republic was an independent nation for the first time) led to a wider exploration of national identity. This can be witnessed in several documentaries discussed over the next few pages.

Sloužím's protagonists, the volunteer workers, are immediately represented in contrast to military recruits and against documentary subjects during normalisation. The introductory interviews, where this service was opted for as “I am a Catholic and against violence”, or “I think today’s type of army is good for nothing” (02:20), are very different to the official or permitted speech of the regime - considering once more the issues of religious representation encountered by Třeštíková. On the other hand, responses from soldiers are also

²⁶ Nichols 2001: 117.

atypical; particularly an early scene where a military drill is interspersed with dialogue from a respondent who “doesn’t feel any particular feeling of patriotism” (04:10). These are, like *Máňa* before, subversive notions fostered by Sommerová - the associations of the decade before, between the KSČ’s monopoly of power and serving that state through conscription, are now replaced with footage of soldiers and Václav Havel inspecting troops (07:06). From this, an argument arises that despite the transition process, many things have continued to stay the same: including the army, with the change of political leadership the only alteration. This understanding of duty, and the question of how it relates to identity in the newly-established Czech Republic (in other words, what state and what values the military is actually defending) is particularly pertinent in these early post-1993 years, yet *Sloužím*’s strength as a documentary is that it goes beyond this one factor to offer comparisons on a number of levels.

As conscription was designed only for men, there is the inevitable correlation between military service and the concept of masculinity - even a nurse on the wards of the aforementioned hospital believes that “all boys should go to the army” (09:10). However, these ideas are confronted with images of the hospital workers braiding the hair of old women (13:06) - in addition to the physical contrast between the shorter, noticeably frail service users and the tall, young men who care for them. Furthermore, far from dominant images of physicality (and violence) that can often be imagined through association with the military, the visual representations in the documentary show a low level of activity from recruits. It should be considered that the majority of the film’s footage takes place in the confines of the hospital, yet when Sommerová turns to the army, little is seen to actually happen aside from the occasional parade and drill. Conversely, the hospital workers are in a constant state of activity. This includes being far closer to death than any soldier in *Sloužím*: in one particularly graphic example, the naked and exposed body of a woman who has just died is removed from a ward in a matter-of-fact manner, before association with mortality is accentuated through the imagery of the cross on a church spire (15:03).

Like Třeštíková’s post-normalisation cycles, Sommerová proposes several arguments on fulfilment through this film. For the hospital workers, who have a

different concept of service than that of the army as a whole, there is the ability to achieve emotional and personal goals through their role. This includes the identification of a career (one subject asks to be kept on after formal service ends), but more important than employment is the “service to society and those who are socially deprived” (17:19), and thus require care. The isolation of the elderly women from their families and the outside world (there are no visits depicted) underpins the importance of the workers in attempting to provide emotional support and human contact. These are far gentler representations than the staff encountered in *Zkus to dokázat*, and the hospital is a lot brighter than the wards there, but both of these spaces (in normalisation and post-normalisation) are still isolated and cut off from the outside world. This gives the impression that the elderly women in the facility have been abandoned by their communities and families while the significant post-89 changes are still occurring in Czech society.

By this interpretation, Sommerová highlights that these transformations neither involve or affect every citizen - the isolation of normalisation still occurs after the regime has fallen, and those on the fringes, such as sick pensioners, are neglected. This encoding operates alongside the powerful contrast between the two ideas of service presented in *Sloužím*, offering the viewer an insight into wider questions of identity and community that arise in the post-normalisation context.

Both the *GEN* and *Okno* cycles were part of a wider documentary film culture in the 1990s which continued building on the social themes that began to be explored in the eighties, while simultaneously allowing issues (and figures) of the past and present to be reflected upon in relative freedom. The social conservatism of normalisation towards sexuality, a topic of particular interest to Kvasnička at the time, was picked up by Andrea Majstorović in *Právo na lásku* (*The Right to Love*, 1994). Compared to the graphic and voyeuristic nature of *Zapovězená láska* which was briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, *Právo na lásku*'s treatment of homosexuality is intended to argue for the normalcy and acceptability of same-sex partnerships. Once again, a subject-focused, interview-based approach, which minimises the role of the director, is favoured. Both *Sloužím* and *Právo na lásku* share in the use of self-reflexivity alongside

Máňa, as evidenced in closing shots revealing the directors in front of the camera. The importance of these shots, which occur regularly in both *Oko* and *GEN*, can be fully appreciated when contrasted with the bulk of normalisation documentary, as documentarists now began to claim greater ownership over their work through their representation inside it. This is part of what is deemed by Česálková as the “creative documentary” - as opposed to the wider use of the platform for the purposes of propaganda - where the author “does not oppress personal values, opinions, sympathies, antipathies and preferences in his or her films”²⁷. By acknowledging these expressions, both cycles seek to claim authenticity in narrative: but do so by focusing on how the director constructs the documentary (and therefore sees the subject for themselves) rather than engaging with whether or not a documentary can actually be ‘real’.

There are several *GEN* films (and the closely associated *GENUS* series) which serve as good illustrations of this. Jan Hřebejk, a director better known for his feature films, was responsible for four instalments of these cycles, including his portrait of writer Michal Viewegh (1995). The subject-focused approach is again evidenced through part of the documentary being filmed on a portable camera by Viewegh himself, the black-and-white images contrasting with the full colour Hřebejk uses. Yet despite the classic means of reducing directorial influence (intertitles, rather than direct voice, introduce locations; the subject’s voice is dominant) the director still features on camera in certain shots, and his off-camera position (to the side) makes the eyeline between the protagonist and director noticeable. The significance of this relates to questions of the metanarrative - narrating to the director, rather than directly to the viewer through the camera lens, strongly signifies that *GENUS: Michal Viewegh* is about Hřebejk’s interactions with the subject, reinforcing that this is indeed a portrait of the author on his terms.

A similar feat is achieved by Jiří Menzel in the highly stylistic *GEN: Bohumil Hrabal* (1994). Menzel’s lengthy relationship with the author stretches back to the 1960s, and this long-term cooperation has yielded several films based upon

²⁷ Česálková 2014: 44.

Hrabal's writing²⁸. This results in a documentary that features both a sense of intimacy and of interaction between subject and director. Like Třeštková, Menzel's portrait is incredibly visual, always focusing on the subject and prioritising full and facial shots. The clarity of Hrabal's facial features, and the choice of locations - predominantly at home or in his favourite pub - craft a representation of the author that is designed to frame Hrabal as an ordinary man rather than his more public status of celebrated writer; clearly demonstrating that issues of space have been explored by more than Třeštková alone. These combine with shots of a clearly experimental nature, including a fascinating sequence where Hrabal and Menzel are both in frame, with the latter narrating pieces of the author's work (04:25). Another refined sequence occurs later in the piece, where photographs of the author alongside Bill Clinton, Václav Havel and Madeleine Albright, create a flipbook-style effect in Hrabal's hands (11:32). This juxtaposes the representations by Menzel of Hrabal as his friend, and the 'normalcy' of his life that he sees, with the image of Hrabal as influential author and personality.

Although these latter films, and indeed the *GEN* and *GENUS* cycles on the whole, are designed as portraits, other documentaries served to either continue with the self-reflexive practices that they often employed, or to focus more on national identity - a topic of increasing interest in the 1990s. Alongside themes which were introduced in *Sloužim* (such as what would military recruits fight for), many documentarists wished to use the post-censorship era to re-evaluate the past and thus forge conclusions for the present-day Czech Republic. 1994's *Věrní zůstaneme* (*We Remain Faithful*, dir. Milan Maryška) attempts such an investigation in an orthodox fashion, with an interview-based film led by author and critic Vladimír Macura that uses a significant amount of archival footage. With the aid of suggestible music, army veterans are both interviewed and filmed attending a war memorial, interspersed with shots of exploding shells (05:51) and the Nazi occupation of the Sudetenland (13:44). Colour footage of modern-day Prague, which shows political soapbox speeches, street theatre and other activities, is then positioned alongside images of Gottwald addressing a

²⁸ Menzel's adaptations of Hrabal's short stories and novels has also endured post-1989; and includes the Academy Award-winning *Ostře sledované vlaky* and the more recent *Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále* (*I Served the King of England*, 2006), shot after Hrabal's death.

political rally (30:00) and the Prague Spring invasion (39:19). The construction of the documentary lacks the more sophisticated or experimental techniques witnessed in other films discussed here, but is equally important given the context of post-normalisation filmmaking. While some directors (Sommerová, Třeštíková, Menzel) would employ self-reflexive and metanarrative techniques to build upon earlier experimentations, and make claims towards authorship and the validity of their image, Maryška crafts a documentary offering a counter-narrative to communist interpretations of history, taking advantage of the dismantling of censorship.

The question of whether this interpretation of history is in fact correct is open to discussion, considering much of the immediate post-89 political direction was influenced by an opposition to communism. As analysis presented in Chapter Two on the normalisation value system argued, the narrative of historical events such as the Second World War was one that welcomed the Red Army as liberators, and the continued Soviet presence on Czechoslovak soil (a prime example being events post-68) was defended with rigour. In the years following the Velvet Revolution there has been no shortage of documentaries made which have re-addressed these themes, amongst them Alena Činčerová's contribution to another emerging cycle of films, *Jak se žije (How is Life)*. *Jak se žije po okupantech (How is Life after the Occupiers, 1998)* discusses the aftermath of the Warsaw Pact intervention from the perspectives of those living in Prague and the residents of Milovice, a small town to the northeast of the capital where Soviet troops were billeted.

Continuing the narrational themes observed in this chapter, interviews with subjects are favoured, in this case as oral histories. It is apparent by the encoding of the documentary that these are not uniform - a man from Prague is overcome by emotion as he describes being injured during the events of 1968 (06:50), while one Milovice resident blames Czechs, and not Soviet soldiers, for the town's state of disrepair (07:28). Nevertheless, it should be noted that this is not an approach that claims neutrality or balance, but aids the construction of an authorial argument - "The author poses questions to achieving certain goals and prepares his own attitude to a problem, to life, with the aid of answers of the respondents... by choosing the protagonists, by selecting testimonies and

their sequencing, by composition of various testimonies to a resulting whole he is heading towards audiovisual essays”²⁹. In this case, responses are combined with an exaggerated use of sound (gunshots over certain sequences, sounds from archival footage being employed over contemporary shots) and an intertitle ending which posits (after displaying statistics of Czechoslovak citizens killed or injured during the occupation) that fifteen million were “otherwise affected” by the intervention (13:20). It is therefore strongly suggested that the sympathies of the director, and the encoded argument, lie within the anti-KSČ, anti-Soviet, camp.

Despite a number of directors exhibiting a similar style and form to that of normalisation, Czech and Czechoslovak documentaries after 1989 built upon many approaches that began in the latter half of the 1980s. This can be attributed to directors continuing to hone their craft and further their own explorations of the genre, but also through the different avenues that were opened to filmmakers through the Czech national broadcaster and the various changes to funding models. As the previous sub-chapter concluded, this had numerous drawbacks, particularly for directors more used to feature-length documentaries; and it was necessary to adapt to new conditions and means of financing films. On the other hand, the new platforms through television, particularly Fenič’s documentary cycles, enjoyed high audience shares and reconfigured the Czechoslovak documentary to emphasise authorial control and expression. This resulted in the growth of an interview-based narrational style and the rise of self-reflexive documentary practices.

Czech Documentary in the New Millennium

The shift away from the cinema to ČT experienced *en masse* by documentary in the 1990s coincided with far greater changes to television broadcasting in the Czech Republic. One notable occurrence was the introduction of privately owned stations and the emergence of satellite television, the first channel of note being TV Nova in 1994. Unlike the public broadcaster, little if any documentaries

²⁹ Štoll 2014: 285.

were to be seen, as Nova specialised in foreign serials and Hollywood films intended for mass consumption. After years of limited access to Western programming, it quickly became popular and contrasted sharply with the numerous documentaries that became a staple of ČT2, Česká televize's second channel geared towards cultural broadcasting. Because of this, "ČT2 and its documentary production attained a hallmark of quality, cultivation and enlightenment. Documentary film was a sought-after genre and talking about documentary was considered apropos not just among intellectuals in cafés but also among ordinary people"³⁰.

This rediscovered appreciation for the documentary, and the direction that some directors were taking the format, meant that "the films of distinctive filmmaker personalities stood out in the deluge of TV production"³¹, from both foreign and domestic television series, and routine, unremarkable documentaries. The rise of this, the 'creative documentary', ushered in further developments in style after 2000, and heralded the gradual return of feature-length documentaries to cinema screens. As the films of Špáta could be easily recognised through distinctive camerawork, and Třeštíková by the longitudinal method, other directors with their own identifiable characteristics would soon emerge over the following years.

The establishment of Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival in 1997 served to provide influence from the documentary traditions of a wide array of countries, while simultaneously promoting and introducing Czech directors to a larger audience. As a festival, it has been seen to "profess the values of "artistry", "creativity", "provocativeness", and the value of "authorship" in its Czech version, calling for creativity in documentary film through the Czech *autorský document (auteur documentary)*"³². Many documentaries which have been premiered at the festival have subsequently appeared on ČT, or in later years, in cinemas. Support for non-fiction directors and their projects continued through the foundation of the Institute of Documentary Film in 2001, and in terms of funding, the accession of the Czech Republic to European Union

³⁰ Štoll 2002: 12.

³¹ Ibid., 13.

³² Česálková 2014: 42.

membership in 2004 allowed access to the MEDIA project which apportioned a purse for documentary development. These are all avenues which have been explored by Helena Třeštíková in the pursuit of funding for her longitudinal films, both televisual and cinematic.

Cooperation between Třeštíková and production company Negativ is also indicative of a general change and expansion to funding, both between normalisation and the post-89 years, and between the 1990s and 2000s. Over the next two decades the Czech-based Negativ and other, international producers, would work with and support domestic documentary projects - the results of which can be seen in the following pages of this sub-chapter. With international financing and other assistance, documentaries could return to the big screen in greater numbers, and “During the ten years from 2001 to 2011, the role of Czech Television as a co-producer of documentary films shown in cinemas gradually faded”³³, as it became more difficult for the broadcaster to fund a greater number of projects. This is not to say, however, that the resources provided through ČT disappeared. From a position of financing approximately fifty percent of cinematic documentary projects at the turn of the millennium³⁴, this continued to decrease, yet support for television productions endured, including an expansion in more recent years to a dedicated arts and culture channel, ČT Art, in 2013.

Documentaries of the early 2000s, like the decade before, were varied. With focus on the concept of the “creative documentary” through Jihlava, films exploring history, contemporary culture or social issues would combine with a more visible, self-reflexive and metanarrational approach to filmmaking. This resulted in films that could be strongly associated with a particular director, attempt to validate specific encodings to boost persuasiveness, or simply further exploration in the documentary medium. These meetings of old and new are apparent in *Maturita v listopadu* (*Graduation in November*, dir. Jiří Krejčík), which was nominated for best Czech Documentary at 2000’s Jihlava festival.

³³ Ibid., 48.

³⁴ Ibid.

Although released and screened in 2000, the origins of the documentary are much older. After receiving a letter from high-school students from Česká Třebová in the Pardubice region, Jiří Krejčík travelled to the school in an attempt to follow-up accusations levelled at their headteacher. According to the letter, a number of students were threatened with being barred from taking leaving exams and reported to the StB as a reaction to participating in demonstrations against the regime. The documentary was prepared with a view to broadcast in 1990, but the suicide of the headteacher shortly after filming led to requests to postpone or cancel the production. *Maturita v listopadu*'s final cut now includes an introduction and conclusion by Krejčík, his occasional supplementary commentary from after the event, and select brief interviews with student protagonists ten years after the event.

What makes the documentary fascinating is the authorial style that runs through it, where Krejčík makes little or no attempt to hide himself or his influence over proceedings. The footage of the director as subject himself, in the middle of a gym hall addressing school students and staff, is raw and feels unedited, reflecting the original lack of support for the project³⁵; and bolstering an encoding where, as Nichols points out, a “sacrifice [of] conventional, polished artistic expression in order to bring back, as best they can, the actual texture of history in the making”³⁶ takes place. In his role as mediator between the students and various staff members, parents and the local StB agent; he is not afraid of voicing his own opinions of the unfolding situation. These viewpoints range from the “respect” he has for the headteacher for remaining a loyal KSČ member (rather than changing due to the relinquishing of power) to the constant motif of raising the gravity of the situation by referring to “serious allegations” put towards him. This is mixed with direct narration to the camera, emphasising the awareness of the viewer, his role as author-subject, and challenging conclusions to be drawn from it³⁷.

³⁵ According to the initial monologue of the director, there was no financial support for any shooting of *Maturita v listopadu*, leading to Krejčí and cameraman Jiří Vojta going to the school on their own volition. The stripped-down nature of this is emphasised through the lack of any boom operator or sound assistant, leading to the director conducting interviews through a rudimentary microphone which often fails to capture the dialogue with absolute clarity.

³⁶ Nichols 1983: 20.

³⁷ 1:14:25 is a good example of this.

By appearing as a critical mediator who may or may not have his own personal biases³⁸ the director pushes an encoding which is designed to question the narrative of the documentary's main protagonists and also of the director - leading up to the ending of the film where he encourages the viewer directly to consider the implications and meaning of the film today. By doing this, a number of questions arise which do not need to be voiced, but originate organically from the proceeding ninety minutes of footage; such as if this was the main catalyst for the headteacher's death, or if these events were widespread throughout the country. The central role of the director, rather than attempting to disseminate a clear expository or Griersonian commentary, instead becomes one of the most thought-provoking elements within the documentary.

The aforementioned characteristic of the director as author-subject was a noticeable feature from the early 2000s onwards; both in the volume of documentaries of this type and the success of several feature-length releases. Such a participatory mode, where directors are often centralised (in some cases with documentary narratives being based entirely around them) would often go hand-in-hand with reflexive practices that make clear the constructed nature of the film. Perhaps the most notable of these has been *Český sen* (*The Czech Dream*, dir. Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda, 2004), which has enjoyed success on a domestic and international level. The final project of two FAMU students, the premise of the documentary was to create an advertising campaign for a new hypermarket, to the extent that a fake construction of the building's façade was put in place, and to host a 'grand opening' for this establishment. As both Klusák and Remunda explain directly to the camera in the opening minutes of the film:

The intro you're watching is sort of like an ad for our movie. We're in a parking lot situated next to a meadow where we'll build the front of our hypermarket. One that will never exist. It will just be a front wall. We called the hypermarket the Czech Dream... You might be asking why we want to do all this. Why fool thousands of people into going to a fake hypermarket which is more like a meadow than a hypermarket? We won't answer, hoping that the film will answer that for you. (01:48)

³⁸ It should be noted that although Krejčík assumes the role he does, he makes no claims to being either objective or subjective.

By being open about their intentions with the viewer, and the process on-screen where a transformation from FAMU students to sharply-dressed hypermarket managers takes place, the directors offer an interesting case study into documentary representation, which is often “the desire for performance that is not performance” and “performance stripped of the training, rehearsing, and directing that normally accompany it”³⁹. In other words, by Klusák and Remunda’s performance as businessmen rather than filmmakers, they seek to elicit a more authentic response from subjects, while developing an overall narrative that deals closely with consumerism and fulfilment.

This is alluded to throughout the documentary: the hypermarket logo being a bubble “that will burst soon” (05:12), real supermarket goods being rebranded with *Český sen* packaging; and an advertising campaign based on negative slogans, including “don’t come” and “don’t wait”. Moreover, the creation of a fake documentary, *Hypermarket s lidskou tváří* (*Hypermarket with a Human Face*⁴⁰) is employed as a means of eliciting subject responses before the revelation of the hoax towards the end of the feature. Not only does this aid in the viewer’s understanding of issues that *Český sen* aims to explore, but raises the question of a multi-layered metanarrative: the families depicted, who have been part of an open casting calling for families who “have repeatedly experienced entire days in hypermarkets” (12:36), are in front of a camera with the ‘businessmen’ directors behind it. Rather than being employed for the purposes of the fictitious documentary, the subjects are unknowingly addressing viewers in the wider context of the *Český sen* supermarket, the creative treatment not being particularly sympathetic to the narrative of rampant consumerism⁴¹. However, what is revealed is a parallel between shopping and the fulfilment of individuals, apparent in the interaction between the directors

³⁹ Nichols 1991: 121.

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that this is a play on the term “Socialism with a Human Face” coined by Alexander Dubček during the liberalisation period. By using it here, the directors evoke an interesting historical comparative, between the political situation of the past and present, encouraging the viewer to think about the ‘human face’ of consumer capitalism.

⁴¹ The use of this footage by Klusák and Remunda, which includes a shopping spree at Tesco for selected participants, conveys a significant amount of irony. This ranges from the hypermarket manager’s anecdote about queueing for bananas during normalisation, and the linguistic associations between hypermarket shopping and terms which include “freedom” and “harmony”.

and the represented families, who often discuss with relish spending multiple hours browsing and buying.

The fulfilment argument is a crucial element to the success of *Český sen*, emphasised in the false advertising for the hypermarket and subject interaction⁴². This is both in the lead-up to the launch and the execution of the hoax, which several thousand people turn up for. One sequence involves asking a young couple what their dreams are (43:30) and possesses strong parallels with *Největší přání*, both in the interview process and response. The answer, which involves completing education, earning a steady income and - most interesting of all - the ability to move out of the family home as a couple, reveal that barriers to fulfilment, which have been observed as far back as the initial Špáta documentary (and continued in the first *Etudy* cycle), are near-identical across generations. A holiday abroad, something now attainable in terms of the political situation of the Czech Republic, is possible, but it is clear from the subject response that this is something not currently in reach financially. Later in the film, a pensioner's motivation for attending the hypermarket opening ("What else can we do? We browse the stores." (58:23)) reveals a perceived lack of resources and social space afforded to him and his generation.

Public space, once the exclusive domain of the KSČ and allies, has now been taken over by superstores and multinational businesses of which *Český sen* seeks to represent, and thus proposes an argument in terms of the new, capitalist ideology which has entrenched itself. It should be noted that this takes on another dimension when considering the debates on EU membership at the time, and questions raised within the national discourse pertaining to the use of advertising firms and vast expenses of the government's 'yes' campaign⁴³. Upon realising that the opening of the hypermarket was indeed a hoax, several subjects are heard to pass comment connecting the event to the EU referendum

⁴² Television adverts for the supermarket are based on the question "Imagine the hypermarket of your dreams. What would it be like?"; and a jingle commissioned for the opening emphasises the "dream" in the name of the hypermarket.

⁴³ Seán Hanley's research into this topic, "A Nation of Sceptics? The Czech EU Accession Referendum of 13-14 June 2003" (2004) provides a detailed analysis that this thesis cannot discuss in terms of space.

and political discourse⁴⁴, alongside other comments which are split between threats to the directors and people who take a more philosophical approach. This is continued in the television debates and news items that are incorporated into the documentary, including a panel where Prime Minister Vladimír Špidla is confronted about the amount of public money spent on materials supporting a ‘yes’ vote.

Various techniques and avenues of enquiry found in *Český sen* continue to appear in subsequent documentaries by Klusák and Remunda. Most apparent is the recognition of the documentary as construction (on numerous occasions apparatus is seen in shot) and a willingness to become author-subjects within the film itself. The use of television news broadcasts and other programmes in the documentary is also interesting, not only to underpin the particular issues in which their films focus on, but serving the additional function of a wider societal debate.

Although the director’s role as subject is minimised as compared to *Český sen*, 2010’s *Český mír* (*Czech Peace*), which serves as a sequel of sorts, continues to evidence an approach that epitomises the duo’s filmmaking. Controversial plans for the Czech Republic to host an American anti-missile defence base around the Brdy hill range, which led to a number of protests and direct-action initiatives, are covered in the feature-length documentary; focusing in particular on the mayor and residents of the small town of Trokavec. It is interesting that the documentary is presented as “A comedy about the radar” (01:41), which could therefore be conceived as deliberately scripted and fictionalised in order to produce laughs, but in execution it serves to demonstrate the dry sense of humour that runs through many Klusák and Remunda works - the ‘comedy’ elements of *Český mír* are the attitudes and responses of the political elites who are faced with public opposition to the radar. By claiming to be a comedy film, the ‘voice’ of the directors are exposed, offering their assessment of the various behaviours of subjects featured.

⁴⁴ “Is this how we join Europe? Nitwits joining Europe, a bunch of blockheads and idiots” (1:04:28); “Our politicians do worse things than that... Our politicians make fools out of ten million” (1:11:32).

Despite not featuring in a more centralised role as protagonists (although at certain junctures they are visible), there is still an authorial point-of-view communicated. This again accompanies deliberate self-reflexive moments that make obvious the process of documentary construction, such as the regular observance of camera and sound apparatus in shot, and a scene where the directing team have to deal with a sound engineer walking off (33:59). By drawing attention to the issues of documentary - be it the relationships that occur behind the camera, or making overt the intentions of the documentarists - the directors achieve a style that “provide(s) a metacommentary on method and procedure while remaining within the realist, as opposed to poetic, sensibility”⁴⁵; firmly being based upon the discourses of sobriety whilst making it very clear to the viewer the considerations taken in both process and editing.

This is at its most explicit in the ČT documentary *Život a smrt v Tanvaldu* (*Life and Death in Tanvald*, 2013). The premise, which is to explore the events around a young Roma man’s death in a town with heightened racial tensions, becomes a platform to investigate documentary ethics. An interview with the family of the victim (where, once again, there are no attempts made to edit out questions) turns into a debate between directors concerning the appropriateness of the camera focusing on the victim’s young son⁴⁶. Shots then alternate through the cameras they are operating, offering a clear awareness of their position within the film; and relationships that are forged not only between author and subject, but between Klusák and Remunda themselves.

These ethical considerations are important to consider in relation to Třeštíková during shooting with Marcela, as pages 207-208 note, but with the difference that discussion of ethics is not fully incorporated into the narrative of *Marcela a Jiří*. However, it again offers indication of an increasing trend in post-2000 Czech documentary where the processes of documentary construction are made apparent, and there is an increased willingness to employ self-reflexive practices to the extent that directors become subjects. Furthermore, the discourses in which Klusák and Remunda take interest in often closely resemble

⁴⁵ Nichols 1991: 70.

⁴⁶ “Filip, don’t be angry, but this is too much for me. It seems to me that this is beyond the limits of taste. Shoving the camera in the face of an orphan” (29:21).

fulfilment narratives, contrasting with Třeštíková due to the predominance of featuring the public sphere. Factory closures and a lack of work in the north of the country are seen as catalysts to underlying tensions in *Život a smrt v Tanvaldu*, the encoding of *Český mír* is deliberate in its argument that the political elites are letting down the public, and *Český sen* casts a critical eye on the idea of consumerism being a means of fulfilment in the post-communist context - themes that also emerge in *Po dvaceti letech*.

Documentary works by Ivo Bystřičan have similarly showcased self-reflexivity and participation, particularly in his film *Mých posledních 150 000 cigaret (My Last 150,000 Cigarettes, 2013)*. In this case, the wider issue of the tobacco industry is explored by the director through his own personal decision to quit smoking, and as such contains a mixture of shooting on both professional and handheld video cameras (the latter being used as a video diary of Bystřičan's day-to-day life without cigarettes). This is supplemented by several infographics concerning the dangers of tobacco consumption and the legal status of tobacco companies in the Czech Republic. As author-subject in the documentary, the director's personal journey to stop smoking is accompanied by several comedic scenes where he attempts to interview subjects (members of the public, parliamentarians and industry officials) whilst dressed in a cigarette costume.

Compared to Třeštíková, who was unaware of comparable longitudinal projects when starting to make films, the widespread popularity of international and English-language television and film, including the use of the internet, has meant that documentaries are far easier to access in the post-2000 environment than in earlier decades. It is therefore worthwhile to acknowledge the similarities between *Mých posledních 150 000 cigaret* and Morgan Spurlock's *Super Size Me* (United States, 2004), an award-winning documentary which has enjoyed international acclaim. The film, where Spurlock only consumes food from McDonald's for a month, using this as a means of launching into a critique of the fast food industry, is near identical in the approach taken by Bystřičan in form, encoding and narrative technique. This performative mode, which emphasises the subjective nature of the director in addition to his/her dominance in the visual image, can therefore be seen both internationally and domestically; and alongside further self-reflexive techniques serves to highlight

the diversity of documentaries after 1989, and again after 2000, in the Czech Republic.

This diversity has meant that contemporary documentarists have, despite questions still existing over funding, often experimented with various forms and subjects in the construction of projects. After the performative *Mých posledních 150 000 cigaret*, Bystřičan would direct *Dál nic* (*Byeway*⁴⁷, 2014), concerning the missing 16km stretch of the D8 motorway connecting Prague with northern Bohemia. *Dál nic* sees a return to a more observational and interview-based documentary, where the impact of the uncompleted motorway (namely noise, congestion and pollution arising from lorries using smaller country roads) is assessed through the responses of local residents; and of a representative of the environmentalist *Děti země* (*Children of the Earth*) group, who have been delaying proceedings by launching a string of legal challenges. In an interesting encoding, there is a subversion of the wider canon of social issue documentaries, as *Děti země*, who openly admit that their attempts to block construction are to prove a point and nothing more, are seen in a negative light - as opposed to civil society groups being characterised as a type of vanguard against perceived injustice. Consistent with the arguments this chapter has made concerning content and argument, fulfilment is a consideration yet again, as interviews suggest diminished quality of life for local residents due to the ongoing situation with the motorway.

Fulfilment, and the employment of different strategies designed to enhance the persuasive aspect of the documentary, can also be seen in the collaboration between Miroslav Janek and orphanage children in *Chačipe* (*Kha Chee Pae*⁴⁸, 2005). Shot primarily in a Czech children's home, the children are given access to video cameras and script a number of stop-motion animations and short stories which take a dominant role in the film's narrative. It is probable that several of these stories, which contain references to alcoholism and violence (7:00, 19:42) may be based or influenced by the real-life experiences of the subject-authors, and this view is bolstered with additional narration from

⁴⁷ The English title is a deliberate misspelling in order to capture the pun of *Dál nic*, *Dálnice* being the Czech word for 'motorway' and the title roughly translating as 'going nowhere'.

⁴⁸ This is a nonsense title in both Czech and English, and reflects a sound used in one of the short stories depicted in the film.

children that is addressed to certain individuals in their lives (often in the form of letters to a parent). By accompanying several of these darker images with footage of children playing with the cameras, or the employment of comedic skits and humorous animations, a crucial balance is struck by Janek which leads to a more rounded encoding - inferring that the lives of these children are struck with happiness as well as sadness. Furthermore, the often-grainy footage of handheld cameras and lack of lighting again refers again to understandings of textuality argued throughout this chapter, designed to enforce the reality of the lives lived as seen through the cameras of both the director and the young protagonists.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the developments of fictional elements within the documentary itself. The use, for example, of dramatized elements or re-enactments is not a new one; yet several filmmakers have experimented with the use of fictionalised elements or professional actors to create either artistic pieces or affecting social investigations. The boundaries which exist between documentary and fiction have led to a new category to exist - that of the hybrid film. Such “genre-bending” films, Porton suggests, “challenge the rigid limitations of fiction and documentary... and oscillate between genres with great finesse”⁴⁹. Although this observation is rather basic, it reinforces the important point that genre need not impose restrictions on directors, and questions the very nature of documentary itself. In particular, this poses the question as to whether a documentary which uses actors or fictitious elements is any less ‘real’ than other modes.

Alda (dir. Viera Čákanyová, 2009) demonstrates the difference in genre, as the diaries of a woman living with Alzheimer’s disease are imagined through a professional cast, with Magda Weigertová playing the main protagonist Mrs. O. Several techniques are used by the director to bolster authenticity and to aid a narrative progression, which often rewinds and repeats to encapsulate the deterioration of memory experienced by a person living with this condition; by

⁴⁹ Porton 2011: 10.

means of multiple cameras, different protagonist narrations over identical scenes⁵⁰, and flashbacks.

By blurring the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction cinema, Čákanyová is able to sidestep ethical issues which may arise (for instance, if a woman with Alzheimer's disease can adequately consent to such a project) and also include sequences that would pose a real-life danger to subjects (the possibility of a fire after a chicken is forgotten about in the oven (19:13)). On the latter point, the 'bending' of genre permits the author to use dramatic recreation for effect, and to provoke an argument; in the same manner as technical manipulations are used in other observational or reflexive documentaries. Although such a blend of fiction and non-fiction does not entirely relate to Třeštíková's filmmaking⁵¹, the significance of the hybrid documentary in the 21st century Czech Republic is the full departure from the more rigid documentary form that dominated for large parts of the normalisation era; and the continued desire, despite adverse funding conditions at times, for documentarists to take a more experimental or creative approach.

Developments in Czech documentary after 2000 can therefore be characterised by an expansion of mode, a willingness for directors to use different techniques to find their authorial 'voice', and a focus which relates to Třeštíková's exploration of fulfilment. Self-reflexivity amongst directors, which saw an increase in the 1990s, has been further witnessed in the 21st century as further attention has been drawn to the construction of the documentary itself. Whether this is by constant directorial reflection of the project at hand (Krejčík's direct address to the audience about his experiences and what he looks to achieve) or numerous shots featuring camera equipment (Klusák and Remunda's shot choice), they serve as a progression from the more rigid normalisation film. Instead, this (at times radical) departure has deliberately

⁵⁰ Much of this is based upon the relationship between Mrs. O and her neighbour Pavlíček, a member of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. Her deteriorating condition, and former experiences where the KSČ would not permit her to study, sees her fluctuate between contrasting positions in relation to him ("You don't talk to commies, is that clear?" (13:37)); "They say there that all people should be equal. I like that. I don't understand why nobody came up with this idea before." (39:18)

⁵¹ Nevertheless, as the following sub-chapters will show, shot choice, editing and an increase in self-reflexivity operate in the *Po dvaceti letech* cycle function as means of enhancing the directorial point-of-view.

favoured shots where the crew are seen in the hands-on construction of the non-fiction film, or in a more performative style where filmmakers become the focal point of their own films, assuming a role of author-subject. Furthermore, the linking of documentary topics to fulfilment characteristics (be it financial security, accommodation, or political and social rights), has become more explicit. From this it is clear how documentary has evolved over the years represented in this thesis, and in relation to the first research question, the narratives of non-fiction film have certainly changed. What once could be interpreted as an ideological conformity, where the majority of documentaries adhered to the normalisation value system, the post-communist transition has led to films which critique both the historical past and the direction of the present; thanks in part to the abolition of censorship.

In spite of these transformations taking place, the continuation of the longitudinal style that Třeštková continues to embrace means that she continues to stand out as a director - while simultaneously altering specific aspects of her style as a means of encoding an argument based on fulfilment in the post-communist age. This will now be addressed as the chapter turns to *Po dvaceti letech*, and observes the influence of self-reflexivity and a cyclical fulfilment analysis on the creative treatment of the six couples.

Manželské etudy po dvaceti letech

The return of the *Etudy* cycle to Czech television in the form of *Po dvaceti letech* in 2006 was the culmination of shooting that took place from 1999 to 2005. Although the first cycle was popular, a change of staff at ČT was required for the director to recommence work on the project, after being labelled as “too megalomaniac” by the previous dramaturg⁵². Work on the second installment also involved cooperation with the production company Negativ - in similar fashion to the first cycle, the standalone film *Marcela* would also be created out

⁵² Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 13.

of the footage⁵³. The motivations for Třeštková to return to the project are rooted in her initial approach to documentary filmmaking - a curiosity to see the developments of a changing narrative over time, similar to her desires to revisit the mother and child of *Zázrak*. “The more intuitive” desire to “organise shooting sessions just time to time when some event came across in Jana and Honza’s life [*mother and child*]”, rather than a more organised or premeditated schedule⁵⁴ served as the beginnings of one of the longest projects completed in *Soukromý vesmír*, and a template to both film over a long period of time and to revisit subjects when initial work has been concluded. On the other hand, after years of honing a unique form of documentary in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, a number of different observational and narrational methods develop throughout *Po dvaceti letech* which do not always occur in the original six *Etudy* episodes.

This section of the chapter will explore the themes of the second cycle with a particular view to analysing the third research question on the understanding of fulfilment. It will argue that the increase in self-reflexive practices witnessed in many Czech documentaries of the new millennium also occurs in *Po dvaceti letech*, reflecting a deepening relationship between director and subject. This, alongside similar shot choices from the first cycle, the obvious differences in the lives of certain subjects, and the physical medium of filming, give a sense of both continuation and differentiation - reflecting the radical shift from authoritarianism to that of a liberal-democratic market economy. It is against such a backdrop that Třeštková asserts that many fulfilment barriers which affected the initial six *Manželské etudy* couples either still affect them some two decades later, or continue in a generational loop where they are experienced by their children. As this section will show, the cycle of fulfilment - Třeštková’s argument that fulfilment issues are still present after 1989 - is encoded in the representations of both original cycle protagonists and the next generation of subjects.

⁵³ Further work with *Negativ* also resulted in *René*, *Katka* and *Soukromý vesmír* that are discussed in Chapter Four.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

Stylistic Changes Over Time

As previously addressed, the significant gap between the *Manželské etudy* and *Po dvaceti letech* projects witnessed multiple changes in the technology available to documentary filmmakers. Consistent with the wider documentary industry, the switch to colour video allowed a far larger amount of footage to be shot, in addition to being cheaper than physical film. Although not a consideration by Třeštková at the time, the contrast in terms of camera offers a clear distinction between the normalisation ‘past’ and the contemporary post-communist ‘present’. This is accentuated as a particularly strong difference when considering the form of both cycles has remained roughly the same, with the director revisiting the couples (and their families) multiple times between 1999 and 2004. Intertitles, used to aid chronological progression and minimise direct address on behalf of Třeštková, continue through to *Po dvaceti letech*, in addition to the existing format of interviews between director and subjects.

The differences which exist between *Manželské etudy* and *Po dvaceti letech* are important indicators of the development of Třeštková’s own style, the new opportunities afforded by the post-communist environment, and the existence of the director herself within the lives of the subjects she observes. Some of these differences were previously discussed in Chapter One, where a developing self-reflexivity and intertitle usage were briefly addressed. Whereas *Manželské etudy*’s intertitling did little more than provide chronological details, the second cycle employs them in a way that introduces a certain amount of irony and additional detail. Hličišin Dervišević characterises this usage as being “aimed to accentuate the positions of some of the subjects and their attitudes regarding the additional filming of their lives”⁵⁵, and is useful in both allowing the director to feature certain sequences without sacrificing more of the documentary’s running time; and to relay other necessary pieces of information⁵⁶. As some episodes of *Po dvaceti letech* concentrate on specific themes that have arisen over the gaps in filming (divorce, raising a family, depression or emotional

⁵⁵ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 24.

⁵⁶ “Vladimír did not open the Studio in Tel Aviv”, *Zuzana a Vladimír* (22:30).

strain), the increase of intertitles and their function emphasises points which are either made on-screen or to enhance the narrative - an example of the latter being their use in explaining Jiří's refusal to be filmed after allegations of child abuse. In relation to the former, this is often intertwined with irony, such as Vladimír's failed ventures in the Czech Republic as a photographer and "image maker", repeatedly communicating how plans have fallen through.

Another noticeable feature concerns Třeštíková's insertion into the documentary itself. As observed in Chapter Two, the first cycle adopted a style where interactions between director and subject were kept to a minimum on-screen. Nevertheless, Třeštíková is a far more significant presence in *Po dvaceti letech*, both in voiced questioning present in the documentary audio, and in some situations on camera. Furthermore, there are times in the second documentary cycle where director and subject engage in conversation or call-and-response dialogue in a manner missing from the first six documentaries. Supplementing this are a number of instances where Třeštíková is revealed to the camera, either within the process of the construction of the documentary (in other words, seated as a director) or as an interactive element engaging with subjects.

The significance of these shots confirms observations in Chapter One which noted the influence of Dziga Vertov on the director, particularly the idea of combining aspects of *cinéma vérité* with the longitudinal approach. As the intentions of *Manželské etudy* were to create a documentary cycle which featured both private spaces and the 'ordinary' representations of young Czech couples (a challenge to normalisation narratives), an increased aural and visual presence is additionally required to depict the rather 'extraordinary' nature of life as part of the project; and the impact that Třeštíková and her crew has had on these lives. This view is supported when considering the wider context of longitudinal documentaries, where "filmmakers will often elect to become a visible presence rather than a structuring absence" in order to "enter into a kind of dialogue with the audience about the conditions under which the film was constructed and the role that the filmmaker had in setting the agenda"⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Kilborn 2010: 161.

As Chapter One discussed, the isolation of Czechoslovak documentary from the wider international community saw the longitudinal approach evolve from Třeštíková's fascination with biological time-lapse films and personal diaries rather than inspiration from comparable documentaries overseas. Coupled with the specific challenges to documentary filmmaking during the normalisation period and the new environment after 1989, the inclusion of the director during the *Po dvaceti letech* cycle takes advantage of the difference in available resources, access to spaces formerly in the KSČ's ideological domain, and a recognition that this is shared existence being observed. The cycle is primarily concerned with the couples and their families, but also serves to acknowledge that Třeštíková herself has experienced this dramatic transition.

Moreover, the dismantling of the state socialist system affords the director space and presence to both evaluate the past and contrast it with the present, without the corresponding fears of repercussions or obligation to self-censor that were hallmarks of authoritarian control. Issues of censorship after 1989 have not been brought up in any interview with the director, signifying that this was now of little concern. Despite remarking that "it is not my intention to end my career in front of the camera... I will always try to be 'beyond'", recognising that presence and contact with subjects is the result of "an intimate connection" over a long period of time⁵⁸, the aforementioned rationale for increased self-reflexivity is one which strengthened the persuasive element of the documentary - particularly the idea of fulfilment being cyclical.

The ending sequence of the first *Po dvaceti letech* instalment, *Ivana a Pavel*, is a good illustration of the impact of Třeštíková in the eyes of her subjects, and the new presence of the director:

Pavel: I'm really glad to know you [Třeštíková], that we met way back when I was arranging the wedding. When I see one of your documentaries, I always think of similar situations that we had together which were very interesting, and I thank you very much.

Třeštíková: Do you realise we're finished again?

⁵⁸ Interview, 7th March 2017.

Pavel: I think you're going to call again. I look forward to when you come filming again in twenty years' time. Maybe some things will change. (53:50)

This closing interaction is the culmination of an episode which employs self-reflexivity extensively. The introductory sequences of *Ivana a Pavel* witness a shot where the family, including director, pose for a photograph (05:55), in an encoding that underpins the connection between the subjects and Třeštková over such an extended period where “The protagonists become part of my life and I become part of theirs. Mutual relationships reflect both sides”⁵⁹. Insertion into the second cycle at such an early juncture acts as a strong indicator of narrative approach between *Manželské etudy* and the new documentaries. This is especially true of the aforementioned aural presence of the director (with more voiced questions and interaction), but also applies to sequences which emphasise the construction of the film itself.

Exposure of the camera team and apparatus in shot has been raised in the previous two sub-chapters, where it has been argued that they are deliberate inclusions for means of drawing attention to how the documentary itself is made - noting that documentaries do not show reality, but a representation of it. This equally applies to *Po dvaceti letech*, and makes overt the interaction between director and subject, specifically what form interaction takes. Marcela's son Tomáš asking about camera equipment and staring directly into the camera lens, with a visible microphone in the corner of the shot (03:40, 07:19, *Marcela a Jiří*), overtly places the presence of the crew (or even the concept of filming in the eyes of the viewer) into focus, communicating the integral part it plays in the creation of a documentary. Whereas Marcela is more used to the presence of a camera crew, and her relationship with Třeštková is one where certain emotional shots (such as weeping in front of the camera) can be captured, Tomáš, who is new to the project, will not experience the same reactions - and such an extreme 'opening up' by Marcela is not seen from the newer subjects in general.

In a similar and more visual fashion, an important sequence occurs in *Ivana a Václav* where Ivana's dialogue is interrupted by a telephone ringing in an

⁵⁹ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 26.

adjacent room. The protagonist leaves to take the call and the camera zooms out to reveal both the director and microphone operator in shot (38:16). This particular example is used by Švecová, who asks “Did Třeštková want to imply by leaving this in the film that her work is only an artificial construct? The structure of the film does not seem to imply this - the shot feels incongruous in the film and looks like a mistake”⁶⁰. Based on factors previously discussed in this section, and a wealth of other documentarists embracing these practices, there is a clear argument that these are deliberate moves by the director designed to enhance the encoding of the cycle.

The spontaneity of the telephone ringing, unplanned, and the cessation of filming so Ivana can take the call, evokes the “life caught in action” that is referenced on pages 31-33; and reflects upon Třeštková’s desire for authenticity - the legitimacy of the encounter and the acknowledgement of the steps taken to capture it. This is clarified by Třeštková stating that “documentary cannot work with fantasy, and it cannot make up any situations or lines which would be needed for the building of a story; long-term documentary cannot even reconstruct that which has objectively passed, but has not been recorded”⁶¹. Considering the arguments of the nature of documentary explored in the first chapter, and Vertov’s use of numerous techniques as means of achieving his understanding of *kino-pravda*, this should not be confused with pure, unadulterated observation; but rather the use of editing and encoded argument to deliver what she believes to be the ‘reality’ of life. Such self-reflexive practice is therefore a tactic to be used in achieving a representation that can be deemed authentic.

Refusals of Filming

Considering that the success of a longitudinal documentary cycle is heavily based on the necessity of the subject to relay information, several refusals to be filmed should be taken into account. These have occurred either partially (at

⁶⁰ Švecová 2011: 24.

⁶¹ Třeštková and Třeštkík 2015: 46.

certain times or in certain locations) or in full for entire episodes, where a subject from the first cycle does not feature at all in *Po dvaceti letech*. For the latter, it is only Jiří who refuses to be filmed for the duration of the second project, as explained by the intertitles outlining the allegations levelled at him. Although Vladimír is the dominant subject of *Zuzana a Vladimír*, due to Zuzana refusing filming up until 2004, he does not consent to the filming of his home, or initially of his children. Not only are these refusals (aside from a brief vocalised lack of consent in *Ivana a Václav*) unique to the *Po dvaceti letech* documentaries⁶², but offer one of the strongest examples of the expanded role of intertitling - evolving to convey information outside of minor details and chronological progression.

Whereas subject refusals over a longer period may have a significant impact if experienced in the first cycle, the new subjects of *Po dvaceti letech* - the growing families of the original couples - ensure that enough relevant footage is attained. Nevertheless, withdrawal or refusal adds an interesting dynamic to *Po dvaceti letech*, taking the form of questions concerning the relationships between protagonists. According to Třeščíková, this was not entirely unexpected, as “they [*the subjects*] always say that they have certain issues in life and they can’t continue, but I think the problem is that now they are becoming aware of their media representation and they are afraid. Maybe it is also a question of being a particular age, that a certain age group does not like to be filmed”⁶³. The popularity of the cycles, to the extent that subjects have become recognisable and synonymous with the project over time, makes this a pertinent observation, and particularly rings true in the case of *Marcela a Jiří* where a separation and serious accusation of child sexual abuse has rendered Jiří absent from the project. This is understood through Marcela’s dialogue and the use of intertitles running below the shot, in contrast to their usual deployment on a black background.

A contrast between instalments then takes place due to the difference in the treatment of Zuzana’s refusal in *Zuzana a Vladimír*, where the constant refusals of filming occur frequently and are not fully explained. As Vladimír dominates

⁶² These refusals have also been seen in the upcoming *Po třiceti pěti letech* cycle.

⁶³ Interview, 7th March 2017.

the dialogue with his experiences of work in the United States and his present ventures in Prague, little time is afforded to the discussion of his current marital status or relationship. Although family members are referred to in passing, and the couple's daughters are eventually revealed, it is only from halfway through the film that the family is discussed at any length. Even at this point, it is still within the location of a photography studio rather than a domestic setting - a point which will be returned to when discussing both space and work in the second cycle.

Despite the subject's assertion that "The family is totally fine" (24:08), the question of why Zuzana has refused to be filmed lies unanswered, as does his own unwillingness to be filmed at home. Questions can be asked as to why the director does not press Vladimír on these points (or if this occurs and are subsequently cut in the editing process), something which is also picked up upon by Hličišin Dervišević in relation to the stand-alone documentary *Marcela*, asking as to why Třeštíková allows some statements by the protagonist to "hang", rather than be explored in full⁶⁴. However, due to this lack of exploration, Zuzana's introduction into the second film appears more impactful and direct. Although there is a time progression from when Vladimír talks about his family being "fine", her opening statement that one of her biggest changes is divorcing him (27:54) becomes weightier within the context. Regardless of intention to follow-up these questions or not, these instances of participant withdrawal or refusal add a new twist to the narrative which did not appear in the original *Manželské etudy* cycle.

The Expansion of Space Post-89

In its investigation of public and private spaces, the previous chapter argued that Třeštíková's use of the private subverts the communist orthodoxy in an approach seldom seen in propaganda documentaries, while providing a more authentic representation of the lives of 'everyday' protagonists - where away from pro-regime narratives, citizens do not experience the same financial and

⁶⁴ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 76.

emotional fulfilment that the state claims to be universal. With the elimination of state socialism after 1989, the significant changes to Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic which followed could also be felt in the updated style witnessed in *Po dvaceti letech*. This has already been seen in the expanded roles taken by intertitles and the presence of Třeštíková herself, and of equal importance is the question of how spaces are reimagined and renegotiated for the second cycle. This is necessary to the continued focus on how Třeštíková narratives are constructed in relation to the dominant encodings of other documentaries of the time.

In the first *Manželské etudy*, interviews and shots being centred in the family home has already been documented, as has the connection between these places and the director's own explorations of gender and motherhood. Representations of work, and the spatial contrasts that derive from them, also reveal that job satisfaction is low, and often subject to gendered divisions in access to the labour market. It is interesting, therefore, that focus on private space still continues throughout *Po dvaceti letech*, but in a diminished role. As Třeštíková has herself said, locations for filming - be it at work or at home - "have to be led by the actions of the protagonists"⁶⁵, for the reason that subjects are more comfortable and that locations reflect more upon their lives. For example, not only was importance placed on the family home in *Manželské etudy* to differ from the KSČ-controlled public domain, it was also an area where the young couples, particularly the women, would spend most of their time as a consequence of their domestic role.

This relationship with space differs in the second cycle, as work starts to be treated differently by subjects. Vladimír's refusal to allow filming at his home contrasts sharply with the first *Zuzana a Vladimír* where the majority of filming takes place in the couple's flat; and the public spaces in *Ivana a Pavel*, which mostly consisted of Pavel's recreational activities, now document his various businesses ventures. *Marcela a Jiří*, which in the second cycle becomes a documentary about Marcela as a single parent, was to feature a specific shot of the protagonist at Slovanský dům where she regularly danced, but this was

⁶⁵ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 22.

unable to feature due to consent being needed from every person featured in the footage⁶⁶. Issues around group consent when shifting to a public focus presents a new challenge that did not previously exist, yet the amount of content included in *Po dvaceti letech*, and the use of a very similar shot to the previous example in *Marcela a Jiří*, indicate that these have been problematic yet not insurmountable problems.

Keeping such factors in mind, the opening up of public spaces, particularly towards work, is indicative of several important transformations in Czech society. The introduction to *Ivana a Pavel* begins in a manner faithful to the original set of documentaries, with shots introducing the viewer to the family home and the new participants of the documentary. *Zuzana a Vladimír*, the only documentary where this approach is not witnessed, is introduced by Vladimír opening the door to a flat which is being turned into a photography studio; and is therefore consistent with his refusals of filming. Depending on the new situations of subjects, space is then adapted in order to reflect further on their lives.

In the case of *Ivana a Pavel*, the family home is not seen following the introductory sequences, as the instalment mainly focuses on Pavel and his work - and is completely absent from *Zuzana a Vladimír*. On the other hand, the size of the Strnad family in *Ivana a Václav* leads Třeštíková to conduct far more interviews at home, as Ivana balances work as an administrator for the family's furniture company while looking after a family of seven. *Zuzana a Stanislav*, one of the three documentaries where a separation has taken place (or in the case of *Zuzana a Václav*, will take place), witnesses a division of private space between Zuzana, who remains in Bělohrad, her former husband in Prague, and the couple's children who leave the family home to work and study in the capital. This space is then further divided, particularly in Zuzana's case, by representations of work as a cleaner.

The question of how work space is further depicted in *Po dvaceti letech* is crucial to the development of the cyclical notion of fulfilment which is advocated by Třeštíková. Chapter Two, which observed that the lack of

⁶⁶ Ibid.

emphasis on work during the first cycle served as a reaction against the significance placed upon it by the Czechoslovak state, fails to carry over to *Po dvaceti letech*, where a growing sense of pride emerges from some subjects towards their work and the use of it as an identifier. The case of Pavel serves as a striking example of this, particularly as an opener to the new cycle. Pavel, who was noted for his wide range of hobbies in the 1980s, still enjoys acting and sport, but images of these activities have diminished while still maintaining the visual focus on the public space that they reflected. Instead, the significant amount of public-space footage in *Ivana a Pavel* is taken up by an exploration of his various business interests; which includes running a billiards room, leasing out entertainment equipment, and an indoor archery range. Whereas footage of Pavel's work during the first cycle was overdubbed with dialogue from his amateur theatre company (the suggestion being that the latter is a priority and a means of attaining fulfilment socially), the evident contrast twenty years later is his self-identification as an entrepreneur and the widening space afforded to him - not only places for recreation, but also places to conduct business.

These open spaces are encoded in such a manner that they communicate openness and personal liberties that were never witnessed during normalisation. The works van driven during the first cycle is now replaced with a motorcycle, symbolic of the post-89 transformation which has led to the rise in private vehicles, and is indicative of the emergence of a socio-economic divide amongst the subjects over the whole project. Whilst the six *Etudy* couples experienced broadly similar challenges during normalisation (in terms of employment, accommodation and aspirations), the differences that begin to emerge after twenty years are represented through a number of different signs. Whereas these are often vocalised and expressed in a denotative fashion, the documentary as a form is still a text, or "a lazy machinery which forces its possible readers to do a part of its textual work"⁶⁷; essentially calling on the viewer of the cycle to interpret the symbolic meanings of images and references in order to fully comprehend Třeštková's encoded argument.

⁶⁷ Eco 1981: 36.

As it becomes clear that Pavel has done well for himself in the transition to the modern market economy, the motorcycle becomes synonymous with an increased freedom of movement and the independence of a private vehicle, exemplified in shots where he is driving around Prague. Shots of the camera operator which are occasionally witnessed in the wing mirrors (06:32, 22:03) reinforce the construction of the image, signalling the importance that the director places on this transformation between normalisation and the present. However, a private car or motorcycle is not a luxury afforded to all. Zuzana's (*Zuzana a Stanislav*) commute between work and home is on a pushbike⁶⁸, and Marcela, in an instalment which maintains focus on her material poverty, makes occasional use of public transport - secondary to her journeys around the city on foot.

Representing Work and Space

Notions of space and work in *Po dvaceti letech* are linked for the precise reason that they are recognised by the subjects as connected. This is acknowledged through both connotative and denotative signs, in the creative treatment of shots (such as the self-reflexivity of the motorcycle shots), and expressed dialogue. As previously noted in this thesis, the spatial contrast between both cycles is borne out of the public space no longer subject to the political restrictions and communist hegemony witnessed in the Czechoslovak 1980s, and the expansion of space is representative of an increase in relative terms of political freedoms. The prioritisation of work by some subjects - in addition to other subjects being introduced back into the workforce - combine with the occasional refusals to film within private spaces and thus provides a general explanation as to why the shift to the public domain becomes a critical theme in *Po dvaceti letech*. However, in order to analyse what this means for Třeštková's filmmaking, and how this provides a canvas for greater exploration of fulfilment narratives required for the third research question, it is necessary to understand

⁶⁸ This is also contrasted through Stanislav, now with his partner in Prague, also having access to a private vehicle.

why the importance of work has shifted from the state to the individual in the documentary.

Such a process is not exclusive to the *Etudy* project. Indeed, the analysis of post-89 and post-2000 Czech documentaries revealed a new ideological terrain which has been occupied in part by anti-communist rhetoric, increased support for consumerism and a re-evaluation of work in general; although balanced by a number of socio-critical works. Nevertheless, *Po dvaceti letech's* discussion and depiction of these practices establishes it as a significant theme which, although discussed in the first cycle, was seldom visualised. Both visual and oral narratives are helpful in discovering the shift, particularly as the cycle reveals subjects who have either remained in a precarious socio-economic position, or who have become a part of the post-89 middle class.

The notion of hard work as a requirement for success and social mobility is absent from the original *Manželské etudy*, yet could be found in a plethora of normalisation documentaries where the concept of industrial labour was held in high regard. A number of ideological narratives, witnessed especially in pure fiction programmes such as *Žena za pultem*, were encoded to argue that communist Czechoslovakia and its productive labour force resulted in a higher standard of living and an increased availability of luxury goods and services to be enjoyed by its citizens. It is therefore interesting to note that this concept reappears in the post-communist context and is raised by one of Třeštková's protagonists:

For me, nothing has changed. If I want something I have to work for it. Nobody ever gave me anything for free, and it always takes a long time, effort, thinking and work. I'm used to it, so the opening up of the country only really helped me in that I can now travel out of the country, go to Germany. I don't even need a passport nowadays. (Pavel, *Ivana a Pavel*, 49:59)

The idea of little changing between normalisation and the present day for Pavel and his family is arguably highly selective, considering the lived experiences of accommodation and low job satisfaction that were observed. It is true that when compared to other subjects, he has done moderately well in the post-communist environment - although still living in the rather modest flat first encountered in the first *Etudy*, he is free to pursue both business and work projects; with

income to provide both a car and motorcycle in addition to necessary living needs. In light of the long-term observation that has taken place to this point, Pavel's narration is striking considering his past at the bottling plant, a job communicated as being unfulfilling with a minimal chance of progression in terms of social mobility. Further questions arise when considering the bureaucracy faced by Ivana (*Ivana a Václav*) in her applications to sell handicrafts at market during the normalisation years, with this experience indicating that - contrary to Pavel's assertion - that the two eras at least differ from the perspective of business. On the other hand, with "basic family needs met" (*Manželské etudy: Ivana a Pavel* 27:18) and the successful refurbishment of the family's flat - a long and drawn-out process - Pavel may be able to look back on the previous regime with more fondness than some.

A further constant which is shared between both cycles of *Ivana a Pavel* is the gendered access to space. Whereas Pavel, by having a full-time job and recreational activities, was afforded greater access to normalisation's public sphere than his wife, there is a continuation through to the second cycle as he maintains the role as the family's main income earner. Despite Ivana's regular appearances in the instalment (which is again in the public sphere, as she takes her daughter to ballroom dancing events), the significance that Pavel now places upon his entrepreneurial career renders him the dominant subject. This is echoed in subsequent parts of the cycle, with Vladimír's continued attempts at establishing himself as a photographer necessitating public spaces to make this happen, while Zuzana assumes a more minor role. Antonín's enthusiasm for cars, a source of frustration for Mirka in *Mirka a Antonín*, is now transformed into a vocation as a salesman in the industry.

Despite the significance all three of these protagonists now place on their employment, *Po dvaceti letech* also raises the obverse situation which again connects with the treatment of work in the past. In terms of economic fulfilment, the previous chapter highlighted the numerous instances where financial worries affected all six couples in the cycle. Although this has been alleviated for several subjects in *Po dvaceti letech*, it remains a pressing and at times urgent concern for others. This leads to sequences of significant length in *Marcela a Jiří* where Marcela and her daughter Ivana attempt to find work, while

Zuzana (*Zuzana a Stanislav*) is constantly worrying about rising bills and her ability to pay them on a cleaner's salary.

The prioritisation of work witnessed in *Mirka a Antonín* has the additional function of reflecting on Mirka's unhappiness and isolation at leaving her hairdressing job to become a full-time mother. With children Lucie and Tomáš now older, Mirka has now been able to return to her trade at a salon that she runs herself. This revelation of a family business (where Lucie also works) is once more reflective of the new market economy which embraces private enterprise and business. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Antonín, who held a number of jobs during the first documentary, is now employed at a firm selling alloy car wheels, a job which he professes to enjoy despite working long hours. Both husband and wife discuss their working hours at several points during the episode:

Now I'm doing a job I enjoy, but I don't finish till eight, and I no longer work for myself but for someone else. (Antonín 11:42)

We're both rushed off our feet. I mean, I like my work, and that's why I do it. And Tony likes his and that's why he does it. But I was expecting things to be more like they used to be, when I was young, when my parents would get home from work at three or four, and they'd sit down with us and chat and tell us about their day. But that's out of the question. We simply have too much work. (Mirka, 14:10)

Mirka and Antonín's continual references to work make clear on a denotative level that not everything has transformed over the years. The latter stages of the first cycle were particularly effective in demonstrating the significant work commitments undertaken by Antonín to earn money for the family, and their employment throughout the second documentary works to make explicit that this has remained. Work may be more fulfilling for the subject in terms of self-esteem, enjoyment or prestige, but sacrifices in other areas such as family and social contact continue to be barriers in achieving a satisfactory work-life balance. Like *Ivana a Pavel*, footage of Antonín delivering goods and Mirka driving her car reflect a more open environment as compared to the previous series (and the luxury of a private vehicle), while offering a visual accompaniment to the vocalised stress placed on work. As representations of Antonín in his various roles was afforded more space than other subjects in the

first *Etudy* - to demonstrate the effects long working hours and his fixation on racing cars has on the family dynamic - *Po dvaceti letech* is able, by offering further exploration into the couple's jobs, to deliver a particularly strong comparative observation.

The critical theme of Mirka's isolation and desire to return to work is then balanced with her life in the new cycle, which is dedicated to the ownership of her salon. This narrative is particularly useful in the construction of the cyclical argument of fulfilment in respect to the couple's daughter, who (as pages 210-213 argue) follows a path similar to her mother some two decades previously. By enriching this with a number of textual clues and subject address (including similar shot choices between the two cycles and admissions from Mirka that marriage has not turned out as she expected or hoped for), Třeštková's overall observations on fulfilment continue to be developed throughout the piece. The longitudinal approach allows the building of a fulfilment argument to be elaborated upon over time, and embrace the new factors of a different political and economic system which will influence it - a key strength of this method.

Further evidence that supports these notions of a cycle - or the idea that the transition to a market economy has not dramatically altered the life experience - can be found in *Zuzana a Vladimír* and *Ivana a Václav*. Earlier in this section it was noted that Vladimír's dominance of *Zuzana a Vladimír* centred the documentary predominantly upon Vladimír's several studios and work spaces. Space again comes into play when contrasting his experiences with that of Pavel, who although runs a billiard hall is often represented in external, outside spaces indicative of his freedom of movement. Vladimír, who spends most of the documentary internalised in his studios, differs from the former protagonist as all of his various projects end up in failure. The pace of the documentary, for instance the switching of workspaces within the first five minutes of the film and the expanded function of intertitles seen in *Po dvaceti letech*⁶⁹, serve as the opposite of the speed found in *Ivana a Pavel*; where the encoding emphasises the busy, fast-paced nature of Pavel's work. There is a blurring between the public and private when considering the photography studios - they are a place

⁶⁹ "Project Alesh did not succeed in the Czech market" (16:43).

of work and subject to gala openings and outside protagonists, yet with the lack of a home represented, function as a private, secluded space for Vladimír. This is further muddled by the treatment of this space being reminiscent of the accommodation in the normalisation cycle.

Třeštíková and crew visit these studios in similar fashion to their visitations of the couples after marriage, starting with the opening of a door (the very first shot in *Zuzana a Vladimír po dvaceti letech*) and moving into the space. As the beginning of this documentary does not state whether the property in question is a house or studio (the intertitles highlighting the refusal of home filming occurs afterwards), the strong resemblance to previous shots of homes is maintained; with the disrepair on the inside evoking the poor standard of housing faced by the couples who then undertake the lengthy, time-consuming process of making the space liveable. This is then assisted by Vladimír's own dialogue to the camera, which aside from a few sentences, relates entirely to work and particularly his experiences as a photographer in New York once the borders were opened.

Zdena Škapová's article on the documentary cycle raises an important point in terms of post-1989 work and business ventures, namely that "We see that some pay for their success by becoming exhausted, neurotic, and by suffering damage to their personal identities. Some exaggerate their achievements, and become workaholics and victims of consumerism as they try to have everything they previously missed out on"⁷⁰. This serves as a concise illustration of Vladimír's attitudes in the post-communist environment, at least as represented through the documentary. With no home as a private space and no input from the rest of the Gdovín family until much later, *Zuzana a Vladimír* centres upon the subject's attempts at a career in the Czech Republic, his constant monologue on work, and footage of his various meetings and shoots. When the rest of the family are introduced, they occupy a very different position to that of the main protagonist, with shots in a garden and car (Zuzana), or mother and daughters at a bowling alley. By other family members being located in public spaces closely associated with leisure, a specific coding is achieved; interpreted as Vladimír's

⁷⁰ Škapová 2006

lack of access to any recreation⁷¹, and the physical separation that is occurring inside the family. It is this separation in *Zuzana a Vladimír* that fosters the image of the protagonist as obsessed by his career - evidently not prospering in his ventures - and detachment from his family, particularly his wife who ends up divorcing him⁷².

Returning to Škapová's quote, the contrast that becomes apparent within *Zuzana a Vladimír* when exploring space takes on a further, international, dimension once Vladimír's dialogue turns to his work as a photographer overseas. The question as to whether or not these are "exaggerated achievements" is left to hang due to the effective contrast between the protagonist's voiced anecdotes and his visual representation, which then leads to considering the extent to which the Czech Republic has transitioned. Similar questions to this success were explored in *Český sen*, which observed the explosion of Western-style consumer capitalism in the country and the increasing role of advertising and branding companies which did not exist previously. Therefore, the subject's narrative asks the viewer to evaluate whether or not Vladimír is being truthful, or if a Czech version of the "American Dream" is able to be achieved so soon after the change to a market economy. The number of different studio changes and proposed ventures is a constant reminder of this, yet conclusions never fully materialise. The book he hopes to produce about shooting models for *Playboy* magazine is not completed in the duration of the documentary - the final intertitle of the episode, stating that "The book "The Playboy Journals" hasn't been finished yet" (58:00) is employed ironically, inferring that it may never be put to print. Another venture concerning a nude photo studio in Tel Aviv (19:20) is discussed but never opened (again communicated through intertitles), as is a magazine programme for television about photography.

Ivana a Václav, the final documentary in the cycle, addresses several of the themes discussed in relation to balancing work and raising a family. As the two longitudinal subjects who were not regarded as strictly 'working class' by being university students, both husband and wife complete their architecture degrees

⁷¹ On certain occasions, where the protagonist is observed in a café or at a launch party, it is related to his business interests and not to his ability to relax.

⁷² Vladimír and his daughters are only together in one shot during the documentary, at the grand opening of Studio Famood, another studio internship that does not endure.

during normalisation and are revisited from 1999 onwards in their family business, selling designer chairs. Son Honza, the couple's first child and eighteen at the start of filming the second cycle, is one of five siblings who live in the family's large, bespoke house in Prague. In contrast to many other houses in the cycle, it is open, bright and spacious; as is the business' showroom, which occupies an old neo-renaissance building in the capital. Another continuation of past documentaries is evident in the progression of this renovated building, from the construction and refurbishment to its opening - mirroring (similar to *Zuzana a Vladimír*) the repairs required to make old, dilapidated flats hospitable during the first cycle, but now for the purpose of business. While certain facets of the new, post-communist Czech Republic are different, some things (albeit for different purposes) remain the same - a constant thread through both *Manželské etudy* and *Po dvaceti letech* projects, and the bedrock of Třeštková's fulfilment argument.

Despite the relative affluence of the surroundings and the historic building where the Strnad's showroom is located, the family business has not been as positive as the experiences of business owners and workers in other films. For Pavel, work is intertwined with the effective employment of space to disseminate notions of personal liberty and control of one's destiny; whereas Vladimír's relationship with the spaces around him has been far more restricted, reminiscent of the images of accommodation during normalisation. In this instance, the two businesses which feature in *Ivana a Václav*, the furniture shop and the brief representation of Ivana's handicrafts store, are seen differently. The former, which is the primary financial concern of the couple, exists throughout the documentary. Despite the work of the camera, which again shows the shop to be spacious and open (particularly due to the lighting of the space in question) this contrasts with dialogue of the subject which outlines a number of concerns:

The business must keep going because we have to pay the loan. We have commitments so it has to keep going. (Ivana, 38:00)

The future of Czech industry: China, Malaysia, Indonesia. It would be best to close since no one marries or buys furniture and the old folks are happy if they can afford a roll. I can't close it because I believed that after that fifty year pause the country would expand. But that after 15 years we'd be in a situation

where someone who worked all his life and raised three kids wonders whether he or she should buy one or two rolls, that's not what I wanted to think and it's a personal loss. (Václav, 53:19)

Václav's comments on the state of industry are not explored in full aside from this interview at the end of the documentary, and is contrary to Pavel's understanding of the changes to the Czech state as detailed on page 192. As *Ivana a Václav* is the concluding episode of *Po dvaceti letech*, it exists as a rather obvious enforcement of one of the cycle's basic arguments - that the fulfilment gap, reasonably consistent amongst all of the six couples (each having issues with social and economic fulfilment) during normalisation, has now widened between subjects. The opportunities that have arisen after 1989 are again represented as not inherently positive - Ivana's issues in selling her handicrafts during normalisation is not something that is encountered anymore, but the expansion of the market has also come at a cost of a lack of trade protections for domestic industry.

Similarities between the Strnad family and Vladimír's experiences continue when assessing the work-life balance previously explored in this section. Whereas the latter occupies specific spaces that are encoded as isolate from the rest of his family, this is not the case with Ivana and Václav: although Václav is most often occupied within the space of business and the building site which came before it, shots also involve him in the family home, particularly when he is off work with a broken leg. Like Vladimír, dialogue ("All I think about is work", (12:14)) makes much of the stress and obsession with work overt, but it is Ivana, and how she is represented within these two locations, that reveals much more about the strains put upon the family.

Not only does Ivana take on the administrative duties of the furniture business, but also the day-to-day domestic tasks required for such a large family: "What do I do? I clean, cook, do laundry, iron, do accounting" (09:30). Consistent with the first cycle, most of this activity continues to be carried out in the private space of their home, which is large enough to contain an office room. The lack of separately defined work and family spaces is helpful in placing emphasis on the interconnected nature of the family business, while making another connection between the past and present. Differences towards domestic and

salaried work during normalisation noted that it was “inevitably the woman in Czechoslovakia” who took “almost sole responsibility for many extremely time consuming household jobs”⁷³. As it is Ivana who does almost all of the housework, and within spaces which are strongly connected to this, an additional argument surfaces which questions the extent to which changes have occurred across the time period represented.

As this sub-chapter has argued, representations of work and space in the second cycle of the *Manželské etudy* project function as part of the overall encoding of the documentary in terms of comparison and contrast. The expansion of Třeštíková’s subjects into the public sphere, particularly the visualisations of subjects at their respective workplaces, is a noticeable departure from the previous cycle’s practice of minimising these spaces in favour of a more intense focus on the private. This has been both the result of public spaces no longer being the exclusive domain of the KSČ, but also of a shift in attitudes brought on by the transition to a market economy. This also replicates a number of post-89 documentary films, which show an increased representation of public space now that there is room for non-communist narratives to be constructed.

In addition, the reluctance of subjects to define themselves by profession during the first cycle has now switched, while often working equally as hard and with no guarantees of success. The increased visibility of public spaces is therefore a reaction to the changing priorities and schedules of *Po dvaceti letech*’s subjects with regards to work, yet a number of examples also serve to craft an argument that fulfilment is cyclical, and the problems experienced during normalisation are not necessarily alleviated by the country’s socio-political and economic transformation. This will now be explored in depth in the following sections addressing the fulfilment cycle in full, seeking to answer the question of fulfilment arguments put forward in the introduction.

⁷³ op. cit.

Subjects and Developing the Fulfilment Cycle

Marcela and Zuzana: Economic and Emotional Fulfilment

Several of the differences between *Po dvaceti letech* and the first cycle have been documented in this chapter so far. The switch to colour video, along with the physical ageing of subjects, who now exist in a far more open and public-space on camera, are signs signifying the gap between cycles and the new terrain of the post-89 Czech Republic. One factor which is still to be discussed at length is the introduction and insertion of new subjects into the documentary's narrative, and how their employment aids Třeštíková's encoding. Yet there has been, in equal measure, a number of features and practices which exist in common. As the previous section on space and work argued, the gendered divisions of space first encountered in *Manželské etudy* continue to exist amongst subjects; and although work may be a more enriching experience for some, there are still evident fulfilment barriers which endure. For Marcela, who will be discussed later, the struggles of being a single mother after her divorce from Jiří carries on into the 21st century, alongside her constant worries about money and her increasing loneliness.

These latter examples provide some insight into the wider argument that carries through the entirety of the second documentary cycle. Previously, the longitudinal approach and focus on private lives was effective in subverting the normalisation value system to present what Třeštíková considered the 'reality' for these subjects outside of the propaganda sphere. With regime values no longer existing by the time of *Po dvaceti letech*, and the longitudinal approach to filmmaking known for its difficulties in sustaining a set ideology, the second cycle begins to observe how subjects have transitioned on a personal level to citizens of a market economy. This leads to inevitable comparisons between past and present. Such juxtapositions occur in the day-to-day experiences of protagonists and how they differ, if at all, with those from before 1989 (access to services, daily routines and other factors which can impact fulfilment on a person); yet an extra dynamic occurs through the children of the original cycle, many of whom have come of age at the beginning of shooting for *Po dvaceti letech*. By observing the access to the private sphere, accommodation,

employment and relationships of the new subjects, a comparable analysis can be attained when looking back to how the previous generation fared under authoritarianism; developing the initial observations of fulfilment by Třeštková and leading towards a comprehensive answer to the third research question.

The encoding of the filmic 'text' with the representations of new young subjects, and specific scenes which are reminiscent of the initial cycle, lead Třeštková to question to extent of what has materially changed from one generation to the next. It can therefore be argued that the combination of memory work coupled with additional observations results in the director establishing a cyclical notion of fulfilment, where new subjects replicate experiences portrayed under normalisation *in addition* to barriers continuing to be presented for the original subjects.

With regards to the latter, the examples of Marcela and Zuzana (*Zuzana a Stanislav*) are crucial in demonstrating that social and economic issues can persist through the transition process. The divorce between Marcela and Jiří was a defining point during the first cycle: with Třeštková following the couple (though primarily Marcela) through the divorce courts, living as a single mother, and an ill-fated attempt at reconciliation. Jiří's refusal to participate in *Po dvaceti letech* is then coupled by the absence of another of Marcela's former partners, the father of son Tomáš, who no longer plays any part in the family's life.

A separation also occurs between Zuzana and Stanislav, with Stanislav now living in Prague with his new partner while Zuzana remains in the flat the couple had occupied since normalisation. Earlier in this chapter, the life of Pavel and his family post-89 was discussed, particularly regarding his ability to take advantage of the opportunities presented to build up a business for himself. In a similar fashion, Stanislav has been able to find a certain level of success, having been involved in the set-up of a small company before a new career as a translator for car manufacturer Škoda. Such opportunities can come with certain advantages, by way of financial benefit or working in an area of specific interest - a clear contrast to employment in the first cycle where work was portrayed as monotonous and unfulfilling. As analysed in the last section, and witnessed in

several documentaries since 1989, the development of private enterprise would have a transformative effect on some individuals; yet many other fulfilment barriers endure. When considering Marcela and Zuzana however, the viewer is also reminded that many low-paid, low-skilled jobs continue, and that problems relating to income still dominate significant amounts of the subject's narrative.

For both women, significant portions of filming take place in the home, in addition to footage of looking for work (Marcela) or at work as a cleaner (Zuzana) that were briefly mentioned on page 189. Representations of private spaces evokes the focus on intimate lives witnessed during the first cycle, and these are the same locations as before - the family home in Bělohrad and the flat in Prague that Marcela had to wait for on the housing list. Later in the documentary Marcela acquires a flat in Český Brod from her landlord (54:29). Whereas other flats in the second cycle, including Marcela's new accommodation, are somewhat updated, it is striking that not much has changed in either Zuzana or Marcela's original homes. This is indicated early in *Marcela a Jiří* where a sparsely-lit, gloomy kitchen is the shot focus (06:54), as is a bedroom occupied by Tomáš and Ivana where the latter (who is approaching adulthood) sleeps on a mezzanine above her brother (04:08) - the darkness enhancing the cramped portrayal of living space as a single camera moves into the room. The general condition of the flat, which is untidy and in certain sequences filled with cigarette smoke, aids in the attempt at authenticity by the director, as it feels like a natural setting as opposed to being specifically constructed for the camera.

Financial worries for Marcela and her family are once again revisited in the second cycle, and the search to find work is given significant presence in the documentary. A lack of a private vehicle, and the use of open public spaces, shifts the focus away from the sense of freedom encoded in *Ivana a Pavel* and slows the pace to one where running errands and searching for jobs is an arduous, time-consuming task - often interspersed with dialogue pertaining to the constant worry and pressure of financial precarity⁷⁴. Material items, taken

⁷⁴ "I mean, the rent's five thousand. If Ivana left us for some reason we'd have nothing at all" (35:31). "We live off my pay and, what Tomáš gets as an orphan. Ivana gives us a bit. It's not a lot, but we've known worse" (45:43).

for granted by other subjects, are regarded as luxury items in the minds of the family, continuing to build an understanding of the economic situation they are faced with - a loan which is taken out to buy a colour television is celebrated, and should be decoded as inferring that a black-and-white set was what they had been used to (15:14). There is another interesting contrast with regard to telephones, as all members of Pavel's family, including their young daughter, own a device⁷⁵; and the motif of a mobile phone occurs in *Zuzana a Vladimír* to emphasise Vladimír's various business links. This is juxtaposed with the proclamation that "We've never had a mobile and never will" uttered by Ivana while looking for jobs in a local newspaper (26:06). Later, when enquiring about a position, the call is made from a telephone box (27:07), a further sequence designed to highlight the lack of uniformity in achieving fiscal fulfilment. As technology continues to advance and renders certain goods such as mobile phones more readily available, Marcela and her daughter are seen to be left behind, existing in the same world as they did in the first *Etudy* cycle.

The case study of Marcela resembles how Třeštková employs space and narrative technique to relate Zuzana to the fulfilment question. As the previous paragraph indicates, the new Czech Republic has not had a successful impact on Marcela or her daughter in the same manner as other subjects. The public spaces which have opened up to some protagonists continue to elude Marcela and Ivana, who have neither the time or money to access them in any meaningful way aside from the occasional pub evening or trip. It is evident that Zuzana shares these same spatial and financial restrictions, despite clear differences due to the uniqueness of each couple's personal story: Zuzana has a job for the duration of the feature, and Stanislav's participation in the project allows for ideas of success and fulfilment to be measured between the two. Nevertheless, the majority of Zuzana's involvement takes place either at home or at work, with infrequent shots in-between these locations. Once more it is clear that the cycle of fulfilment, or lack of it, continues for Zuzana, who was visibly unhappy with her life during the first cycle. Like Marcela, Zuzana is never depicted at work during normalisation for the reason that she never had a job - falling

⁷⁵ These are both seen and heard throughout *Ivana a Pavel*, further emphasising a hectic daily routine. It is also revealed that son Dominik is employed as a mobile phone salesman, thus establishing the phone as a symbol of sorts for the market economy.

pregnant with her first child while still at school, and spending the duration of the film bringing up both son and daughter in Bělohrad⁷⁶.

In the beginning, representation and focus between Zuzanna and Stanislav relies heavily on dialogue, before further explorations of spatial contrast. This takes the form of a back-and-forth exchange from two separate interviews with the subjects, in which Stanislav concentrates on the changes he regards as important⁷⁷, and Zuzana blaming her former husband for the separation. It should be noted that in terms of how both these interviews are filmed, there is far more camera focus on Stanislav as opposed to his former wife - his head takes up significantly more screen space, whereas Zuzana sits on the sofa in almost a full-body shot. This serves to entrench Zuzana far more in her surroundings than her former husband, particularly as any interview with Stanislav at his new home in Prague lacks any identifiable features. On the other hand, the living room Zuzana sits in is clearly the same as in the original *Etudy* documentary, now being seen through colour video. As a stay-at-home mother, Zuzana's exclusivity in the private sphere during normalisation evolved to a growing isolationism in the confines of the flat she still occupies, which is only broken by going to work; images of which are strikingly similar to the brief and fleeting depictions of part-time jobs during the normalisation period.

Cleaning jobs in the first cycle, mentioned in the previous chapter, highlighted the gender divide that existed during the tenure of the KSČ. In the post-89 context however, these jobs are a reminder that these practices are still widespread. The repetitive structure of the interviews with Zuzana, which intersperse footage of work with footage of home linked by a bicycle journey between the two, encodes the images of manual work with a greater sense of monotony, and infers that this daily routine is rarely broken. Alongside *Marcela a Jiří*, where both Marcela and Ivana work unskilled jobs at a delicatessen counter and at a snack bar, they provide a visual anecdote to many of the jobs still filled by women - the several unskilled positions taken up by Antonín in the first cycle, for example, are never visualised. This representation correlates with the

⁷⁶ Stanislav, who worked in electronics, is also never seen at work, consistent with the prioritisation of private spaces in the first cycle.

⁷⁷ "Absolutely everything [*has changed*]: family matters, home, work... social status of course, thank God" (0:09).

understanding that “there is still a need for women in the work force as a source of cheap labour to drive the transition economy”⁷⁸, signifying that the experiences of women like Zuzana and Marcela have been unchanged. This is despite grander narratives and the larger history Czechoslovakia’s tradition to a new republic which is now part of the wider world market.

Nevertheless, economic fulfilment comprises only one aspect of fulfilment as defined in this thesis. Chapter Two addressed the emotional and romantic fulfilment of Marcela and Zuzana in particular, highlighting the void felt by Marcela following her divorce, and the isolation of Zuzana from wider public spaces and from her husband. In terms of the latter, Třeštková’s filming in Bělhrad casts focus on the emotional well-being of Zuzana within the context of the space she inhabits. Her interviews with the director are quick to apportion blame to Stanislav, with at times angry and tearful contributions relating to the time spent with him and their eventual divorce⁷⁹. During the cycle’s progression, this evolves into accusations that he is engineering Honza and Zuzana, their children, to turn their back on her, particularly their daughter. This point could be developed further in both dialogue and narrative, but is compensated by the use of space in particular.

It is apparent from the representations in *Zuzana a Stanislav* that the world occupied by Zuzana is small and restricted. When she is once again involved in a relationship, it is with a man who delivers goods to her workplace, and any time spent outside of work is spent watching American television programmes and serials⁸⁰. The combination of escapism through these channels, and references to most modern developments passing her by⁸¹, leads to the suggestion that she is “perhaps the most passive individual in the series”⁸². Although the question of passivity is difficult to quantify in respect to the larger questions posited by the

⁷⁸ James 1996: 52.

⁷⁹ “Back then he just did his own thing. I think they were lost years with him. I regret that because it’s 14 years and then the 4 years we were dating from when I was 15. That’s 18 years with someone who then abandoned me.” (05:41)

⁸⁰ This motif serves as a technological update of sorts, where her previous escapism was through romantic novels.

⁸¹ “I’m alone. I just keep doing my job. I’m not the kind of person who would go into business. I don’t like it: a mobile phone at your ear working around the clock. I just don’t have the stomach for it. I’d probably get ulcers from it.” (10:22)

⁸² Švecová 2011: 23.

fulfilment angle (it should be mentioned, however, that Stanislav and Pavel, who have been leading successful lives, do not share such passivity on screen), Třeštíková acknowledges that this comment, and thus the escapism and entrapment of Zuzana, is not an overinterpretation:

In the second phase, the most striking example was of a woman who was going for a divorce, and her husband was very active. She was passive, constantly sitting in front of her television and watching different TV serials. That was her life. She refused further participation [*in subsequent Manželské etudy cycles*] as she didn't like people telling her or complaining to her that she was passive. But at the same time this was not how we aimed to represent her, but this is as it really was with her.⁸³

This lack of emotional fulfilment and meaningful contact is heightened in *Marcela a Jiří* as Marcela continues to look for love. As in the first cycle, there is a sequence repetition of writing a 'Lonely Hearts' advert for a newspaper (48:26) as she looks for a partner. The preferred reading of this sequence is designed to supplement the more pronounced generational cycles of the subjects and their children which will be addressed in the upcoming case studies, putting forward the idea of non-fulfilment as a constant which has stretched over the normalisation and post-normalisation gulf. In other words, Marcela and Zuzana are strong examples of subjects who live in the perpetual cycle of non-fulfilment, which is expressed as the continual monotony of experience and routine in their lives, with little visible emotional or financial enhancement.

The most tragic of the represented circumstances in the cycle occurs with the death of Ivana in 2005. This is towards the end of shooting for *Po dvaceti letech*, and positioned following a sequence of both mother and daughter spending time together at a cattle ranch. A rather brutal contrast, which follows shortly after Marcela stating that "I wouldn't call myself unhappy... I mean all things considered... I've two healthy children, and that's the greatest happiness" (50:16), the deliberate nature of these shots being positioned close each other is reflected through the chronological gap between them (Autumn 2004 and November 2005). However, this period is represented in *Marcela a Jiří* in the space of a minute. That Třeštíková is on hand to shoot Marcela in the immediate

⁸³ Interview, 7th March 2017.

aftermath of Ivana's disappearance and subsequently her body being found raises certain questions on the ethics of such scenes, which are not within the remit of this thesis. Nevertheless, its occurrence in *Po dvaceti letech*, at the end of the documentary episode, introduces another cycle in Marcela's life where she is grief-stricken, further isolated and with no indications that her situation, be it economical or emotional, will improve.

New Subjects in Po dvaceti letech

The case studies of Marcela and Zuzana reflect upon the Czech transition process in a more negative way than the comparably better examples of subjects who have been able to achieve a good level of financial or emotional stability. In these cases, the cycle of fulfilment, or rather a cycle where there are constant barriers in place to being fulfilled, exists as a constant - a lack of access to the labour market or a lack of engagement with the public sphere during normalisation that still exists when the cycle progresses to the market economy. However, it is the children of the first cycle who now act as the true signifiers of Třeštíková's encoded argument. Upon regarding the life and career trajectories of these emerging protagonists, coupled with the creative treatment of the documentary medium, these stories emerge as important narratives to sustain *Manželské etudy's* focus on the impact of state socialism and free market thinking on the intimate, personal lives and relationships which feature. These are beneficial to understanding how Třeštíková understands fulfilment in post-communist times, which is required to address the third research question.

Kilborn remarks that "One of several consequences of the longevity of long docs is that viewers are, in many cases, able to follow subjects whom they first encounter as children through to the phase in their lives where they are bringing up children of their own"⁸⁴. This is not strictly true in the case of *Manželské etudy* - viewers of both cycles do have the opportunity to witness the children who are born from the six original couples, and for them to reach adulthood, yet the time between shooting both the original cycle and *Po dvaceti letech* is too

⁸⁴ Kilborn 2010: 89.

great and unrecorded, thus missing most of the younger, formative years of these emerging protagonists. Furthermore, as only Mirka and Antonín's daughter Lucie gives birth to a son, it is difficult for the cycle to assume a role "to draw viewers' attention to the way that successive generations have brought up their children"⁸⁵ at this stage⁸⁶. Yet the coming-of-age of many subjects lends favourably to contrasts between their own experiences of adulthood and that of their parents before them. Although not all of these subjects are useful (Zuzana and Vladimír's daughters, for example, are featured too briefly to extract any meaningful analysis), further strong case studies emerge which reveal noticeable similarities across the generational divide.

Ivana

The close-knit mother-daughter relationship between Marcela and Ivana, where both women live under the same roof and share identical experiences, can be witnessed over the preceding pages and culminates in her tragic accidental death on the way home from work. As the case study of Marcela demonstrated, this included both protagonists possessing limited access to the employment market - with both working in precarious, low-skill and low-paying jobs, sharing the same poor accommodation and both denied access to resources which other subjects in the cycle are able to utilise. In *Marcela a Jiří*, it is also revealed that Ivana and her then-boyfriend had been trying to conceive, with a plan to move with him to his parent's home in Měrunice if a child is born. These replicate - almost exactly - the history of Marcela during normalisation, with the exception that there is no discussion of the couple marrying. Like Marcela, who moved into Jiří's parent's house after marrying him, Ivana's plan is to do likewise, particularly as the family's current accommodation is in a poor condition. Until her life is cruelly cut short, there is a strong suggestion in the progression of the instalment that her life will continue to closely resemble her mother's, and thus establishing a cycle of fulfilment that is passed down and continues to endure.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ The third cycle of *Manželské etudy, Po třiceti pěti letech*, has now been completed, and was premiered at Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival in October 2017.

Lucie

One of the strongest examples of the life cycle of fulfilment in progress is presented in *Mirka a Antonín*, where the couple's eldest child becomes a key focus of the documentary. Both content, narration and several nuanced camera techniques serve to draw a full comparison between parents and daughter that goes beyond work; observing, like Ivana in *Marcela a Jiří*, that her life is mirroring that of her mother. Through this, the viewer witnesses the most overt argument presented in *Po dvaceti letech* on cyclical fulfilment, indicating that this concept is not driven only by the political system that dominates Czech society during the historical periods, but that many lives, either before or after 1989, rarely differ.

Turning once again to career choice, Mirka, a trained hairdresser, gave up her job in a salon in order to become a full-time mother. Her unhappiness in the documentary, a main feature in the argument around normalisation's inability to provide for young couples, often stemmed from her isolation as a stay-at-home parent and her desire to return to the workforce. In the post-normalisation environment of *Po dvaceti letech*, her daughter replicates this career path in working as a hairdresser for the family business. Like many of the other subjects introduced during the second cycle, Lucie also lacks any education above her High School leaving certificate, again mirroring the experience of her parents.

Like her mother, Lucie's marriage to nightclub bouncer Martin (another job not requiring higher education) occurs when she is young⁸⁷, and provides Třeštková the opportunity to film a wedding in the same manner as that of her parents. The wedding, from its structure in the film to the shots employed, is reminiscent of the six marriages of the first cycle, copying the existing formula - from asking the bride why she is getting married (which, like the original weddings, is an unvoiced question) (18:04); the secular wedding itself, where the camera focus on the registrar and his address to the couple has barely changed since the early 1980s (22:26); and the reception held at a local restaurant. The only acknowledgment of any difference occurs in the entrance music for the bride, as

⁸⁷ It is interesting that Lucie comments that Mirka "never had a youth" by marrying young (10:14), before getting married herself at a young age.

“nowadays, if you imagine a wedding in an American film, it’s the Lohengrin they enter to” (21:54); a rather minor alteration in an otherwise unchanged ceremony structure.

Traditional events such as weddings are unlikely to be heavily altered over the space of two decades, but it is once again noticeable that there is a lack of any religious theme in relation to it. The wedding scenes, however, are an important visual addition to the argument of the fulfilment cycle. Although a difference can be seen in the partial motivation for marriage (Mirka is already pregnant before marrying Antonín), Lucie and Martin have their first child only a year later, repeating patterns which are first witnessed in the original *Etudy*. Images of husband and wife walking with a pram are then supplemented with a question asking what their greatest wish is (26:18) - the choice of words mirroring that of Jan Špáta’s *Největší přání* cycle. As *Největší přání* argued that the wishes of many young people in the 1960s and in 1989 were the same, Třeštíková’s deployment of this question is specifically designed to query the fundamental nature of change amongst young adult Czechs. The couple’s answer, that their main wishes are “a place of our own” and “the most important thing is money” (26:18) are the same themes expressed by the original couples - and based on Špáta’s documentaries, even young adults from the pre-normalisation era. It is difficult, therefore, to observe through the narrative of *Mirka a Antonín* exactly how the lives of young couples has improved, and additionally the point that the Czech transition process has not stopped people from continuing existing practices which include marrying young.

Accommodation, which was a key concern under normalisation, resulted in husband and wife either moving in with relatives or acquiring a flat left to them by a grandparent. Yet again, this is repeated in the lives of Lucie and Martin; by living with Martin’s parents before the wedding and subsequently moving into a flat belonging to Lucie’s grandparents - recognisable as Mirka and Antonín’s former home. This allows Třeštíková to embolden the concept of a fulfilment cycle in a private space previously occupied by subjects, with a creative treatment that argues such spaces have not radically altered against the overall changes to space represented in the second cycle. Particularly apparent is the repetition of the metanarrational shot discussed on pages 135-136, where the

camera, positioned behind Mirka and a pre-school age Lucie, witnesses an address between them based upon Antonín, who is working on his car outside and visible through the window. This shot was particularly effective as a visible expression of the isolation of Mirka as compared to her husband, and demonstrated how Třeštíková was able to subvert normalisation values that allege fulfilment of families during this period. As the same shot is recreated in *Po dvaceti letech* (32:50), the obvious conclusion is that an argument is being encoded throughout the documentary with a preferred reading that the lives of Lucie and Martin mirror lives led by Mirka and Antonín. As the mother of her son Patrik, Lucie will spend most of her time at home, thus limiting her access to the public sphere, and this is subsequently observed through subsequent interviews mostly taking place in the flat.

The question of political freedoms which occur with the transition to a multi-party democracy are also referenced in this instalment of the cycle. *Mirka a Antonín* has been consistent in its twofold argument that the experiences of a new generation of adult Czechs often mirrors that of their mothers and fathers (in this case, almost identically), and that the post-communist transition has not necessarily alleviated barriers to fulfilment. The ability to fully participate in the political process, therefore, emerges as a distinguishing factor and one unattainable during normalisation. However, when interviewed on this issue, both Lucie and Martin express indifference to any political discourse, proclaiming that “I’m not the breadwinner, but politics doesn’t concern us much. At the last elections I was in the maternity hospital and Martin didn’t vote either” (Lucie, 29:22). This indifference is also witnessed in discussions around joining the European Union, with both subjects generally against membership, but lacking the motivation to actually vote against it.

Such a low level of political engagement is significant to Třeštíková’s portrayal of young people. For reasons of censorship and a preferred focus on private spaces outside of the KSČ’s ideological domain, the first cycle does not overtly discuss politics - despite the subversion of normalisation values being a political position. By taking little interest in a political culture that is regarded as a key difference between the new Czech Republic and the authoritarianism of the KSČ, the suggestion that Lucie and Martin’s situation would vary little during

normalisation is enforced; and exemplifying that a true cycle is taking place from one generation to the next. The political angle is one which also appears in *Ivana a Pavel*, which will be turned to next.

Dominik

As *Ivana a Pavel* is the first documentary of the *Etudy* cycle, the couple's son Dominik is the first child to be born and subsequently reach maturity by the corresponding *Po dvaceti letech* instalment. Like his father, and once again consistent with many subjects new and old, he lacks any formal education after finishing school, and instead opts to join the workforce as a salesman - first in industrial goods and then selling mobile phones. Accommodation is an early factor to be considered in the documentary, addressed during the introductory shots of the family home where he still lives with his parents, and in the same room as his sister (albeit on a mezzanine overhead). Although this is not as explicit a similarity as the example of Lucie, it is remindful of shots in the first cycle where many subjects all live under one roof, and that the flats inhabited during normalisation (and subject to the representations of space over *both* cycles) continue to be lived in.

It should also be noted that although Dominik works, images of him in this role are never presented in *Ivana a Pavel*, again favouring an interpretation in tune with the earlier documentaries - although he is featured far less than some other protagonists, due to Pavel's domination of the documentary, his life is seen as part of the ongoing fulfilment cycle as it is represented by the same means as during normalisation. This is in contrast to his younger sister Růženka, however, as she is overwhelmingly placed in the public sphere at places of recreation (notably at dancing events, the pool hall and the ice rink), reflecting the general success of the family post-89 and positing that a greater fulfilment may be possible for future subjects as they begin to assume a larger role in the project.

Turning once more to political dialogue, Dominik's political disdain produces a desire to vote against EU membership, "if I'm even going to go vote" (30:40), echoing the low participation seen in *Mirka a Antonín*. This disinterest is also proclaimed by Ivana in the documentary, yet it is Pavel, believing that

normalisation was a less difficult environment for young people than the present day⁸⁸, who supports membership, despite possessing “no faith in our politicians” (30:09). The Czech accession to the European Union is an important development in the transition process of the state, and this is duly referenced by the subjects here, yet it is used once more as another indicator of political attitudes. A lack of faith in politics and political leadership remains across generations, and it is interesting to consider that further integration into Europe (seen by some as a good thing in its distance from authoritarianism) is rejected by the young people of the cycle. A clear political shift from normalisation, the political freedoms that can now be utilised by young people carry less importance than other material factors such as income and accommodation.

Whereas the case study of Lucie is a clear statement arguing that a cycle of fulfilment is passed from older to newer subjects, Dominik’s representation lies somewhere in the middle. A number of factors, such as education and entry to the labour market, combine with the brief representation of space to project a similar experience to his father in the first cycle; yet the success of the family overall, and Dominik’s dialogue concerning his work (including working less hours to have free time, and not having any dependents), yields less vocalised problems than have been heard from other new subjects. In comparison, further fulfilment issues have arisen in the lives of Ivana (*Marcela a Jiří*) and Lucie (*Mirka a Antonín*), whose parents have seen less success than that of Pavel, again suggesting that fulfilment issues will keep being handed down to their children.

It can be argued that this serves as another reminder of the difficulties in maintaining a set ideology over the course of a long-term documentary project, as there are inevitably examples which do not entirely correlate to the larger observations posited by the director. Nevertheless, it succeeds in revealing that longitudinal documentary has the ability to observe across the political and social transition of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, while retaining a

⁸⁸ “It was easier having the flat from Grandma, having a job. Basically, if a person wanted to work, he worked.” (32:57)

sense of balance - the fulfilment cycle continues for some protagonists, breaks for others, and endures for Dominik in only some areas.

The Strnad Family

Ivana a Václav, the concluding documentary of the second cycle, is noted for the issues of balancing a family business and a large family; and focuses particularly on Ivana's role as mother and accountant for the furniture studio. Much of Ivana's strain comes from the relationship between the wider family and middle son Martin, who indulges in anti-social behaviour, petty vandalism and even theft from his parents. For half of the documentary he is conspicuous by his absence - staying with various friends and out of contact with his parents, with the viewer relying on anecdotal evidence from Ivana and Václav concerning his actions. His presence late in the duration of the documentary is visualised by him smoking a cigarette and listening to rap music in his room, contrasting with images of the rest of the group, particularly on the shop floor or in a more subdued household setting. Martin's older brother, Honza, also features in the documentary in a role that is more consistent with the life cycles of other new subjects, and as such subject to similar interview themes.

With three of the Strnad children still young, it is Martin and Honza who are the driving force behind the establishment of the fulfilment cycle here. Honza, who the viewer first encounters as a young child in the first cycle, emerges in the post-communist environment working for the family business as a driver and odd-job man, after withdrawing from university without a degree. Whereas both Ivana and Václav obtained their architecture degrees during normalisation, this has not carried over to their son; who is concerned that he may "end up moving chairs forever", despite it being "my lifelong goal to have a college degree" (40:47). This is supplemented by footage of him working in the shop, alongside dialogue identifying his father as being difficult to please - signifying that Václav's work ethic can supersede an emotional relationship with his children. The encoding here is straightforward, lacking metanarrative or self-reflexive techniques that have been required at other junctures to reinforce points, as it is clear that a lack of emotional fulfilment is affecting his son - not being able to

fulfil his ambition of a higher education, remaining in the family home and rarely encountering any validity from his work-oriented father.

These candid statements by Honza serve to provide a degree of context to Martin's life, which has noticeably lacked any form of order and stability until he enlists to the army. He has complete disdain for the rest of his family, describing his mother as "just pathetic" (50:23), and highlights the difference between himself and his father as being one of routine, where "he gets up, goes to work, watches the news, goes to bed", whereas "I want to enjoy life now" (49:25). It could be argued that this is a rather extreme form of escapism. The isolation and entrapment of Zuzana, for instance, leads to her residing alone in Bělohrad, daydreaming and watching soaps and serials - a passive escapism which she has demonstrated throughout both cycles. On the other hand, Martin emerges as a new subject who rebels through the rejection of his family's private space and their concept of work, emerging as an outsider presence and a strong personality.

It is ironic, therefore, that his entry to the army acts as a mirror to Václav's own conscription during normalisation. As army conscription was portrayed in near-universally negative terms during the first *Manželské etudy*, the voluntary nature of Martin's service⁸⁹ contrasts with attitudes, suggesting that for someone who is lacking in education and is frequently involved in anti-social behaviour, that this is one of the only means for him to escape the family fold or ironically develop a greater independence. In contrast with fulfilment issues that are voiced throughout *Po dvaceti letech*, most of the issues of fulfilment experienced by Martin are connotative, requiring a greater interpretation on behalf of the viewer to interpret his situation.

Both of Ivana and Václav's older sons have an important part to play in the construction of Třeštíková's overall argument. As children of the only university graduates, who have subsequently been involved in work and raising a large family, they are brought up in an environment where the work-life balance is often precarious. For Honza, his withdrawal from higher education and the unskilled nature of work - where he feels undervalued - echoes a cycle of

⁸⁹ "I didn't want to join the army. He wanted to go. He begged them" (Václav, 48:05).

unfulfillment which is not resolved for the duration of the documentary. This leaves a hanging question as to whether this will eventually change. However, it is the representation of Martin and his relationships that leaves a distinct imprint on *Ivana a Václav*, through his cycle of delinquency which takes an additional toll on his parents. As a reaction to his own unvoiced problems and a desire to 'enjoy' his life, his radical elimination from the private space eventually leads to the occupation of a space and role evocative of the previous generation - recruitment to the army that stood out in the first cycle for its negative impact on financial fulfilment and the separation of a father from his wife and child. Through these representations Třeštíková brings out another irony of the post-communist Czech Republic, which she continues to compare against normalisation due to the number of shared and repeating experiences of old and new protagonists.

Chapter Conclusions

The transition from authoritarian state socialism to the market economy after 1989 has been noted for a number of different changes to the socio-political and economic terrain of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. For documentarists, this signified an end to the normalisation value system propagated by the state, and the beginning of further political freedoms at the expense of a once stable centralised film industry. This necessitated directors to not only consider the construction of their documentaries, without the need to worry about political censorship or self-censorship at the behest of the KSČ, but also how their projects would now be funded.

As Krátký film ceased operations and the studio's back catalogue was sold off, Třeštíková and colleagues attained funding through their Film a sociologie foundation, utilising both public and private bodies to raise the money required to produce their documentaries. Many documentary films of the nineties were supported by ČT, who set aside a decent amount of broadcast time and budget for non-fiction programming. A significant proportion of documentary films of the 1990s were shot on video and designed to be broadcast on television, and

took the form of larger cycles continuing the focus on social subjects witnessed at the tail-end of normalisation (*Oko* being the strongest example), or portraits of people deemed significant by directors (*GEN*). Both the 1990s and the 2000s saw an increase in documentary films strongly associated with directors due to the use of self-reflexivity, signifying an increased visual presence of the director for reasons of authenticity and ownership. This expanded in 21st century directing by the embrace of interactivity and performance, with filmmakers (notably Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda) driving the narrative through statement-making stunts or video diaries of a personal challenge.

Fulfilment in the post-89 films explored in the chapter was not subject to the values of the previous regime, which emphasised a hard-working, content population; and instead focused on a number of factors arising in the post-communist context not greatly represented during normalisation. By observing the lives of people in their roles as hospital care workers, or local residents living beside a busy motorway, fulfilment is often measured in the present rather than the past, unless a direct comparison can be made - *Český sen*, for instance, is a critical exploration of the explosion of hypermarkets in the Czech Republic, but does not suggest that a return to authoritarian market socialism is the answer to any problems.

These clear differences to normalisation filmmaking aid the response to the first research question, and note the abundance of different narratives (and narrative devices) that have emerged after the end of state socialism. Although no longer necessary to stick to a particular homogeneous value system, there have been a number of documentaries that look back at the period of KSČ rule with a clear anti-communist encoding, or herald the modern-day socio-political environment as a universally positive development; yet these have also been balanced by several films referenced in this chapter that approach certain post-communist factors with a critical gaze.

The strength of the continuation of the *Etudy* cycle is that it offers a long-term observation which must inevitably investigate whether fulfilment factors have changed over time, and the evolution of technique as the longitudinal study continues. As question three requires insight into how the fulfilment argument is

approached and constructed, a lot can be gleaned from the continuation of the project into the new post-communist society.

Both subjects from the first cycle and their now-adult children in *Po dvaceti letech* are integral to Třeštíková's argument of a fulfilment cycle. The examples of Marcela and Zuzana (*Zuzana a Stanislav*), two subjects who experience financial hardships, the emotional stresses of separation from a partner and employment in unskilled jobs, serve to argue the director's first point - that the fulfilment cycle (or more accurately, a *lack* of fulfilment cycle) can be perpetual in the lives of some protagonists. Despite Pavel and Stanislav having successful careers in the post-89 environment, many of the barriers to fulfilment chronicled in the first *Manželské etudy* still remain concerns for others, particularly subjects who enjoyed limited access to public spaces during normalisation. Spaces, which were overwhelmingly private during the first cycle, expand further into the public sphere in *Po dvaceti letech*, particularly for subjects who take pride in their work and are increasingly defined by employment. This is apparent particularly in the world of business and sales, and a definite contrast from the previous documentaries.

On the other hand, jobs such as cleaning are still treated in the same manner as before, and remain occupied by subjects deprived of access to the public sphere during normalisation. In addition, these subjects do not possess as many skills as their partners due to spending most of the period raising children. For Mirka, who was in the world of work before spending time on maternity leave, the skills she acquired led her to return to her original profession, representing a cycle where a loss of fulfilment by the social aspect of work (and an escape from the confines of her household) is replaced with other concerns such as long working hours.

The other important motif which runs through *Po dvaceti letech* is that of the now adult children born during the first cycle. Although Třeštíková has argued a continual cycle of unfulfillment through protagonists that have already prominently featured, the case studies of an emerging cycle through these new subjects often suggest a near-identical representation of lives previously witnessed in the original documentaries. This can take the form of Marcela's

daughter Ivana, whose life strongly resembles her mother in terms of employment prospects and the occupation of a similar space; or the experience of Lucie, where like Mirka she marries and has a child at a young age. Any attempts by the director to communicate the changing political environment - namely that the normalisation value system has been usurped in favour of a multi-party democracy looking towards the European Union - is often met with an indifference to the state's current affairs outside of meeting individual and family needs.

The authoritarianism of the Czechoslovak 1980s, which lacked a meaningful democratic process, was reflected in the censorship experienced during the first *Etudy*, and serves to explain the lack of overt political dialogue featured. It is interesting that this is replicated in *Po dvaceti letech* through the actions of the subjects themselves, and serves as yet another point of discussion in how aspects of fulfilment keep repeating themselves across the chronological and generational gap.

Chapter Four

Třeštíková's Feature-Length Documentaries

The previous two chapters of this thesis, in their exploration of the *Manželské etudy* and *Po dvaceti letech* cycles, analysed fulfilment narratives in comparison to the existing documentary output of the two historical periods represented. In these case studies it has been possible to witness the important evolution of Třeštíková's argument from a subversive critique of normalisation to a cyclical hypothesis, which contends that the Czechoslovak transition has not universally altered the relationship between individuals and fulfilment barriers. Integral to this is the longitudinal method itself, which has shown its ability to adapt to developments in technique (for example, the increase of self-reflexivity in *Po dvaceti letech*) while - as evidenced by the development of the fulfilment cycle - also highlighting the difficulty of long-term observations to maintain set ideological narratives. Considering Třeštíková's prolific career as a longitudinal documentarist, it stands to reason that other projects, having been undertaken concurrently with others, will also reflect the observations that have been witnessed in the *Etudy* cycle.

Several projects by Třeštíková overlap due to the length of observation or a return to shooting after some time. As previously observed, extra footage from the first part of *Manželské etudy* led to the two standalone features *Z lásky* and *Hledání cest*; and 2006's *Marcela* bases itself upon the main protagonist of *Marcela a Jiří*, acting almost as an extended cut of the episodes from the two cycles. The three feature-length documentaries which form the analysis in this chapter are also based upon earlier works. The origins of *René* and *Katka* can be found in two different cycles in a similar vein to the original *Manželské etudy* series: René, a repeat offender who spends most of his life incarcerated, was originally discovered through the series *Řekni mi něco o sobě*. A later project, *V pasti* (*Trapped*, 2001) would feature the story of Katka and her struggles with drug addiction and homelessness. This is different to *Soukromý vesmír*, as the Kettner family, first seen in Třeštíková's graduation film *Zázrak*, started as

personal friends of the documentarist; with the 2011 film a culmination of thirty-seven years of observation.

The number of documentaries made over the director's career renders this thesis unable to cover them all with the attention that they merit, yet there are several other reasons for the selection of these three pieces as opposed to others. Firstly, the two distinct cycles of *Manželské etudy* covered in Chapters Two and Three have observed the private lives of subjects both pre- and post-89, but have not covered the transition *itself*, something which is a clear component of both *René* and *Soukromý vesmír*. Furthermore, these standalone films, each approximately ninety minutes in length, demonstrate a different format to the six-part cycles that have previously been analysed; allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the documentarist's approach across films designed for television and cinema. Lastly, both *Katka* and *René* explore social topics which, as Chapter Two argued, were formerly regarded as undesirable during large parts of the normalisation process. By turning to these issues now, it is possible to explore the creative treatment of these themes and compare them to how Třeštková observed the private lives of the 'ordinary' citizen living an 'ordinary' life.

This chapter is designed to complement the work which the previous chapters have undertaken in engaging with the three research questions put forward in the introduction. The extensive exploration of normalisation and post-normalisation documentary, which was conducted in the first parts of Chapter Two and Three, has provided comprehensive answers as to what narratives were constructed by filmmakers at these specific periods; with the discussion of the *Etudy* cycle positioning Třeštková's longitudinal practice and her encoded arguments within these contexts. Whilst the first research question has been fully addressed through the analysis of a number of different films and television programmes, the remaining two questions pertaining to the differences in Třeštková's narratives and understanding of fulfilment can be strengthened by incorporating the three films of this chapter. As the analysis of *René*, *Katka* and *Soukromý vesmír* will be studied using the same criteria as *Manželské etudy*, particularly in the areas of work, space and narrational technique, it will be

argued that all three of these documentaries exhibit clear fulfilment cycles which were also seen during *Po dvaceti letech*.

It will also be observed that the shorter format of the feature documentary offers a more visible example of the fulfilment cycle, as a number of themes are condensed into a ninety-minute format as opposed to a project which comprises several hours of footage broadcast over a number of weeks. As *Po dvaceti letech* observed that for many subjects (in this case, working families) the transition from authoritarian state socialism to the market economy did not have a dramatic impact on economic or social fulfilment, the same can be said for Katka and René, two individuals considered to be on the fringes of society. In addition, the documentaries examined clearly demonstrate the increased participation of Třeštíková due to the strong author-subject relationship that has been fostered over time, and the realisation by the director that she herself has become part of the narrative. Further developments of technique can be witnessed in the use of text and letters to the director as the main narrational device of *René*, while *Soukromý vesmír* demonstrates the use of personal diaries and archival footage. The result of these changes in technique are documentaries which visibly differ from both *Etudy* cycles. Despite these changes however, the director's understanding of fulfilment as a cycle continues as the dominant encoding of her longitudinal work.

Style and Form of the Standalone Documentary

As standalone works which are not part of a multi-episode cycle, the form of the documentaries featured in this chapter are different to that of *Manželské etudy*. As mentioned in an earlier discussion on post-89 funding models, *René*, *Katka* and *Soukromý vesmír* would all be supported through the Negativ studio, in addition to the State Fund for Cinematography and Česká televize, with the former bodies apportioning the majority of funds. With censorship issues having been alleviated after the end of normalisation, and noting that periods of authoritarianism are represented in both *René* and *Soukromý vesmír*, certain sequences may be considered as retrospectives on authoritarian Czechoslovakia.

This is without being subject to the censor, allowing for a frank discussion on the nature of this period. The result of this is that there would be no pressures to omit shots to satisfy KSČ-approved dramaturgs, yet simultaneously questioning if representations during the time of normalisation were authentic or subject to self-censorship on behalf of the director. Based on Třeštíková's own experiences with *Manželské etudy*, where umbrage to certain shots was seemingly at random, it is reasonable to discount this as a major consideration when observing these films.

Each of these documentaries, with their different subject matters, are useful indicators of Třeštíková's focus expanding from subverting normalisation narratives towards exploring social issues affecting individuals; and how these individuals interpret the Czech transition on a personal level. *René*, a longitudinal observation of habitual criminal René Plášil, begins in Libkovice Juvenile Detention Centre where the protagonist has been incarcerated for theft. The thematic plan of the documentary is one which follows René to various prisons, interrupted only by short bouts of freedom, while backgrounded by the various changes to Czech society occurring outside of the institutions. During his internment, the protagonist acquires a noticeable talent as a writer, resulting in books being published, yet struggles to cope outside of prison where he continues to commit crimes - including the burglary of Třeštíková's own flat.

This is followed up a year later with *Katka*, a documentary shot over fourteen years beginning in 1996, focusing on drug addict Katka Bradáčová, from an initial meeting in a rehabilitation community in Němčice to subsequent failures to quit heroin and a life of precarity, including becoming a mother while still addicted. The fractured (and at times violent) relationship between Katka and various lovers, and the influence of the director herself in attempting to assist the protagonist, further bring into question the interactions of author and subject in longitudinal filmmaking.

One relationship forged before any shooting had taken place was between Třeštíková and Jana Kettnerová, who had known each other since children due to the friendship between their mothers¹ and was the initial subject of *Zázrak*. A

¹ Česká Televize (Undated), "Helena Třeštíková".

history of the Kettner family, through normalisation to the new millennium and chronicled through husband Petr's own personal diaries of the period, results in the longest time period currently covered by the director, who demonstrates a different technique with the use of the diaries as narrational devices. This is alongside the employment of still photographs and television footage to progress the documentary through the years.

Changes in Narration

The specific style of longitudinal Třeštková documentaries, as previously noted, has undergone a number of transformations since the first *Etudy* cycle, where the director “poses the questions, imposes reactions, but only exceptionally makes it to the screen”². The question of self-reflexivity, and the increasing presence of the director within her films, will be expanded upon in the relevant subsection, yet it is necessary to point out that in line with this thinking, “[*the director*] mustn't interrupt the protagonist and remain silent for a certain amount of time... to be able to cut out the questions”³. This indicates that Třeštková considers the minimal visual and aural presence of the filmmaker to be optimal practice in many of the interviews which are conducted.

Nevertheless, the adaptability of Třeštková, particularly as projects increase in length, reveal how the longitudinal approach develops parallel to the formation of relationships, in that “the protagonists become part of my life and I become part of theirs”⁴. As relationships continue to be fostered, and life events occur which cannot be anticipated when shooting for such lengths of time, it is necessary for Třeštková to react in order to further her ideas of authenticity (akin to Vertov's belief of using the documentary medium to emphasise or develop the supposed ‘reality’), but also to develop the characters she represents in her films. The personal role that the director and crew have on the lives of subjects, significant in longitudinal documentaries, must also be taken

² Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 19.

³ Ibid.

⁴ op. cit.

into account. Changes to narration and structure can therefore be employed to reflect such developments.

This adaptability or change in function explains the modification of intertitles as purely descriptive tools in the first *Etudy* cycle, having served either a more ironic or self-reflexive purpose in *Po dvaceti letech* and subsequent documentaries. Nevertheless, the continued lack of a Griersonian expository voice continues to centre and prioritise the observations and dialogue of Třeštíková's protagonists as opposed to herself. It is worth keeping in mind, however, that changes to style and narration within Třeštíková's films do not exclusively relate to the subjects *per se*, but can be used to bolster the argument which is encoded within the documentary's narrative. Considering that all three of these documentaries make a number of observations about fulfilment - and particularly a fulfilment cycle - it is necessary to closely observe the approach that has been taken here, and to question how it relates to the overall argument that the director is making.

The narration of *Katka* is the closest to the style exhibited in *Po dvaceti letech*, with chronological progression remaining through intertitles - their use going beyond the merely descriptive when correctly interpreted. During the second cycle, *Zuzana a Vladimír* was noted for intertitles which emphasised both Vladimír's constant rotation of studios and a number of failed business proposals. Similarly, intertitles in *Katka* reinforce general points being made. This is best seen in the intertitle stating that "Katka leaves for a month's rehab in Plzeň", which communicates that yet again the protagonist is unable to last for the duration of a programme before giving up (1:08:42). Other intertitles reveal Katka's age alongside the date of a shot or encounter, which not only helps viewers to follow the documentary chronologically (there are several significant gaps in filming, including a jump from 2002 to 2007) - but leaves a strong impression where Katka may biologically age, but her problems remain the same. The bulk of narration is again at the hands of the protagonist(s), either between Katka and her partners with Třeštíková watching on⁵, or in various shots involving doctors, social workers and policemen - but differing from

⁵ Katka's two partners in the film neatly divide the documentary into two halves. The first, with Láďa, ends after allegations of physical abuse; and later with Roman, the father of her child.

the *Etudy* cycles where partners are often seated and talking directly to the camera.

However, both *Soukromý vesmír* and *René* exhibit narrational devices which are significant in breaking from the formula crafted through the *Etudy* films. The approach whereby Třeštíková visits subjects at regular intervals over several years has been dominant in the documentaries studied up to this point, but is secondary in *Soukromý vesmír* - instead based upon thirty-seven years of Petr Kettner's diaries, supported by family photographs and amateur camera footage. The more familiar technique of interviews and visits to various family members (including the director's son Tomáš Třeštík travelling to the Basque Country to film with Petr's son Honza) returns in the post-89 context, particularly into the new Millennium; yet is only an occasional occurrence during normalisation and the early 1990s.

Narration, which is overwhelmingly centred upon Petr, comprises him reading out his diary entries, supplemented with questions on location in the studio where the audio is being recorded. This retrospective approach, emphasised when archival footage (such as photographs, or the diaries themselves) cuts to shots of Petr speaking into the microphone, allows *Soukromý vesmír* to maintain a chronological progression whilst also reflecting on the smaller and larger histories of the period - the family's own situation and the historical narratives around them. Present-day discussions of events of both normalisation and the post-normalisation transition are aided by clips of various television programmes, with particular interest paid to the career of Karel Gott (ranging from singing on variety shows to a speech at *Za nové tvůrčí*) and developments in space travel and exploration. These insertions help *Soukromý vesmír* to document how the shared experiences of the Czechoslovak transformation impact upon the private lives of the 'everyday' family, in similar fashion to *Po dvaceti letech* measuring the effects of the market economy on the fulfilment of the cycle's six couples. The third-party footage from television, not witnessed in *Etudy* but which exists in *René*, raises important questions on these histories, which are explored in an upcoming subsection.

The combination of diary footage, alongside the director's questioning, encourages protagonists to reflect upon the past; while diary entries encapsulate "the truth of the day"⁶. This idea of 'truth' should not be interpreted as unquestionably factual, but rather as an accurate representation of certain details and feelings gathered at a particular moment. In addition, the use of photographs that often correspond to these entries helps to reinforce subject utterances as authentic illustrations of the period in question. As many of the details revealed in Petr's journals are either factual in nature (for instance, when his children get their first teeth) or with a degree of ironic commentary (a run-down photograph of a Liberec neighbourhood is hailed to be a "documentary photo on the current state of things" (31:47)), these 'truths' offer the documentarist a solid foundation in which to encourage further reflection.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Kilborn notices the similarities in this approach to that of oral history, as "just as oral historians coax from volunteer informants their personal memories and recollections of past events, so do long doc filmmakers encourage their subjects to embark on a similar memory flow"⁷. That this encouragement originates from the subject's own sources as opposed to a wider intervention on behalf of the director compares interestingly with the view of Ronald Grele, stating that "oral history interviews are constructed, for better or for worse, by the active intervention of the historian. They are a collective creation and inevitably carry within themselves a pre-existent historical ordering, selection and implementation"⁸. This is not to say that Třeštková does not construct *Soukromý vesmír*, but rather that a sophisticated balance has been struck between the director's authorial involvement with encoding and the construction of meaning, and of the space afforded to the Kettner family (and Petr in particular) in shaping their own narrative, privileging their own observations.

This connection to the written word, such as the shared interest in diaries between the director and Petr Kettner, is witnessed in a far different manner during *René*. The protagonist, who is a self-styled outsider, becomes a published

⁶ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 3.

⁷ op. cit.

⁸ In Kilborn 2010: 22.

author of several books during the time he spends in the Czech prison system, all based on his experiences there. This is mentioned here in terms of narration due to an extract from the book *Deník zapomenutého* (*Diary of the Forgotten*) appearing in intertitle form as the third shot at the beginning of the documentary. Within the first two minutes of *René*, it is firmly established that texts are of crucial importance to the narrative - the introductory shot of René writing in his prison cell quickly moves to footage of the subject standing at a train station (reflecting the cycle of prison and brief moments of liberty which will be seen throughout) beside a wall strewn with graffiti (0:07, 0:52).

The importance of the book extract should not be underestimated. Unlike *Katka*, it serves to demonstrate a yet further expansion of the intertitle function, in this case centring René's own work without any other visual distraction; and solidifying that the protagonist is far more complex (and intellectual) in nature as opposed to a representation which only concentrates on criminality. Clearly, these extracts are meant to be read, which is different from the diary usage in *Soukromý vesmír* - the entries are narrated by Petr, and although there are numerous pictures from the diaries themselves, it cannot be expected that viewers are to read from snippets which are not always clear. The significance of words and text in the documentary will be returned to later.

One of the most evident changes of narration to be found in *René* is the use of letters from the protagonist to the director, which are off-camera and accompany various shots of the subject and the environment he is placed within (be this in prison or in fleeting moments of liberty). The contrast with intertitles, which are designed to minimise the presence of the documentarist, is clear - yet her relationship with René and her own involvement in his life is cemented through the numerous letters addressed to "Dear Helena". This format is a crucial device in the evolution of Třeštíková into a subject, gradually leading to the event of René burgling her flat in 1992 (28:08). The occurrence of the break-in is communicated through an intertitle, and leads to a narrational switch where it is the director who now reads from one of his letters. It can be argued that through this "Třeštíková uses the letters and René's narration to

distance her involvement as a filmmaker and to build a story that is “made by René” and not “by the filmmaker”⁹.

This is a departure from the practice observed in Chapter Three, where the director’s technique in minimising her presence and furthering the agency of subjects she represents combined with self-reflexivity in acknowledging her role as filmmaker. However, in *René* Třeštíková relinquishes a certain amount of authorship in favour of the protagonist, in order to assume the position of an important subject in his own narrative; and this is augmented by René being given a small video camera on the pretence of contributing further to his own story¹⁰. It can be claimed, therefore, that *René* puts Třeštíková in a position that viewers of the *Etudy* cycle will be unaccustomed to, as several sequences centre attention on the relationship between René and Třeštíková as subjects rather than the conventional director-subject interaction. This will further be analysed in the next sub-chapter which investigates Třeštíková as author-subject.

Leaving this argument to one side, the yielding of a large amount of authorial control to René is also supplemented by the liberal use of television footage as a narrational tool. This has been witnessed before in *Manželské etudy*, where a Czechoslovak victory at the World Ice Hockey Championships in 1985 combines with footage of the Strnad family in the back of a car returning from the birth of their second child (28:22); and brief coverage of the 1986 football World Cup as watched by Pavel and son Dominik (*Ivana a Pavel*, 32:14). However, the volume of television clips contained throughout *René* (and *Soukromý vesmír*, which will be discussed later) have distinct functions which seek to develop Třeštíková’s fulfilment argument. These include the contrast in large and small histories (expanded upon on page 237 onwards), and the representation of René as an outsider (discussed from page 245), while also pertaining to strengthening the narrative of *René* through contrast and structure.

In terms of the structuring of the documentary, the television merely assists the pre-existing function of the intertitle in the progression of the film, providing a

⁹ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 98.

¹⁰ Despite this occurring, René doesn’t give the camera back to Třeštíková and claims it was only ever used to shoot pornographic material.

visual association with the historical date and the current affairs of the period - a further enhancement of the representation of Czechoslovakia's transformation. In addition to this, Hličišin Dervišević highlights television's important contribution to the process of narration with the following example:

...the time when Třeštíková was nominated as Minister of Culture was shown in the film in one of the jail scenes. René is watching television in a jail room when the television news announces the nomination; the scene continues with René's voice reading a letter he wrote to Třeštíková and saying that this might be the last letter of their correspondence due to her obligations now as Minister; he expresses how she made him feel that his life wasn't completely without purpose. This whole sequence was inter-edited (it looks like a staged action). It undeniably intensifies the relationship between the filmmaker and the social subject.¹¹

As news items represent the transformations of society and state on the outside, these contrast with the uniformity of René's day-to-day life in prison. As the transition to a market economy arguably passes by Marcela and Zuzana in *Po dvaceti letech*, René also fails to be impacted by many of the changes in political and social life which occur. This is emphasised through many repetitive shots from news programmes, where the face of Husák is replaced by Havel and then Klaus, and various democratic decisions (for example, the Chamber of Deputies election and the accession to the European Union) which the protagonist is unable to participate in. Furthermore, repetitive shots of certain scenes, the strongest example being the multiple presidential oaths taken for office, are a visual encoding of two cycles taking place - that of René's constant incarceration, and that of Czech politics, discussed further when this chapter moves to observing the fulfilment cycles at work.

Self-Reflexivity and Třeštíková as Author-Subject

The expansion of self-reflexivity in the *Po dvaceti letech* cycle was noted as being a product of both Třeštíková's impact on the lives of her subjects and a desire to draw attention to the construction of documentary filmmaking itself. Considering that the longitudinal method practiced by the director originated

¹¹ Ibid., 113.

without any external influence of other long-term filmmakers, and that this approach experiences the difficulty of unpredictability of what may or may not occur over the years, self-reflexivity has additionally afforded Třeštková the space to adapt. This includes the ability of the director to recognise her own role in the documentary transcending to that of a subject herself, either in a major or minor role.

As case in point is René's burglary of the director's flat in 1992, a pivotal moment which could not have been anticipated when filming began. As has been mentioned previously, this also signalled the introduction of Třeštková as a narrator in the documentary as she reads out a letter addressed to her by the subject. The letters that make up *René* have clearly been sent previously, and voiced on a separate occasion as part of the editing process. Not only is their employment designed to aid the construction and overall flow of the film, but consequently allow the director an entryway into the narrative as an important subject - remaining as director, yet emerging as a victim of René's crimes. By sticking with the story of René, described as a "bet on the unknown"¹², Třeštková unwittingly becomes a protagonist, and in turn this became the motivation for continuing to film once *Řekni mi něco o sobě* had been completed; as "He robbed our flat... I was very angry, but then I realised later that such an original act could only be done by a very unique personality"¹³.

It should be noted that subsequent filming, at least initially, was self-funded by the filmmaker, which launched the project into more uncertainty. This leads to a fascinating sequence, ten years after the robbery, where Třeštková believes that she no longer has the funds to continue shooting, leading to interaction between her and René considering his last words (49:28). Her statement here, that *René* "is your film, not mine" (49:55), evokes the question of ownership, explaining the motivation for the director to be seen and heard far more than in her other documentaries.

On the other hand, there is a balance between René's own narrative, how this is represented by Třeštková, and Třeštková's own narrative; noted by dialogue

¹² Křivánková 2008: 55.

¹³ Interview, 7th March 2017.

between the pair often straying from the usual lines of questioning encountered in the director's films. This is particularly apparent at three points during *René* - the aftermath of the burglary of her house, concerns about the continued funding of the project, and of René failing to return a video camera at the end of the film. Although not explored from the position of Třeštíková, the matter of her brief tenure as Minister of Culture is the subject of two letters by René, believing that these extra responsibilities would signal the end of the documentary. René's concluding letter, read by Třeštíková, is also effective in questioning these issues, writing that "I've had a long, hard think about the relationship between a director and her subjects. Have you ever considered what effect you have on your subjects' lives?" (1:19:58).

This passage functions as a clear metanarrative - whereas Třeštíková's earlier recital of a letter concerning her break-in emphasises the manner in which she has been brought into the story (a personal event that falls outside of a usual subject-director relationship), this letter, addressed again to Třeštíková, is read by her for the benefit of the viewer. In doing this, the director asks the viewer to consider the same questions that René has thought about, and of her own role within the documentary; demonstrating an awareness of the complexity of the relationship and cements the understanding that the documentary is still an encoded filmic text. Although the film is to an extent about her, meaning that she must also deal with how she represents herself, she also is responsible for the representation of René - and by raising this metanarrational point, she invites the viewer to consider how her interaction with him has influenced his portrayal.

Nevertheless, further authorial control on the part of René, signified by the above, has allowed him to craft an image for himself which other subjects have been unable to do in other Třeštíková films. In her review of the film, Darina Křivánková has commented that "in front of the camera, René tries to style himself in the role of a desperado"¹⁴, not looking for sympathy, but for people to hear his story. This is intensified by the narration of letters, where René often comments about his character and image. As much as the documentary may be

¹⁴ Křivánková 2008: 55.

‘René’s film’, there have been certain manipulations and edits on behalf of the director to project an image of the subject, and the extent of this being at René’s behest is a matter of debate.

The importance of self-reflexivity in *Soukromý vesmír* encourages reflection upon the relationship between director and subject which was fostered before a documentary project even began, and the degree of shared history experienced by friends over long and significant moments in history. Unlike *René*, the documentarist is not thrust into the role of subject through an event of any significant gravitas, but maintains a position that is more familiar to *Manželské etudy*; namely as a friend (with a pre-existing connection to the family) that so happens to take an interest in a private family history. Třeštíková, therefore, does not need to assume any position of subject within the documentary, but instead recognises her affinity to the Kettners and the impact that her filmmaking has on their personal lives.

As many of Petr’s diary entries mention her by name, there is a recognition of her presence - and the process itself - throughout the duration of the documentary, particularly as the diaries are supplemented by occasional pieces of film (either footage gathered from *Zázrak*, or later on location¹⁵). In this footage, Třeštíková is not to be seen, consistent with earlier productions, before emerging later in the documentary both visually and aurally. As the director’s son Tomáš meets Honza later in the film, he can also be heard putting questions over to the protagonist (53:35 being the first example). In practical terms, it could be argued that this is due to Třeštíková’s other film commitments in the Czech Republic (the nature of longitudinal filmmaking means that several films are often shot concurrently), and also to the quote referenced in Chapter One, where she “confine[s] myself to the Czech Republic, human interest stories and social issues”¹⁶; yet the cooperation with her son is a strong signifier of a shared history and a parallel family growing up through the same historical period.

¹⁵ One such encounter reminiscent of *Manželské etudy* footage collection occurs in August 1981 (25:18), accompanied with the narration “Afternoon with filmmakers. Torturing me and Honza”. Before this, previous shots resemble initial encounters where families show Třeštíková and crew around their homes.

¹⁶ op. cit.

Further combinations of images and text help to reinforce the self-reflective shared experience of Třeštíková and the Kettners. This thesis is not interested in weighing up the dissident credentials of the director outside of her subversive practice in documentaries, but it should be considered that in relation to her longitudinal work during normalisation, she notes that “I was not able to tell these people that we were reading samizdat [publications]”¹⁷. According to Petr’s diaries, and with the benefit of *Soukromý vesmír* being produced after 1989, the documentary reveals the family’s personal opposition to the regime, including travelling to Prague for protests in October 1988 and to “get a smell of the fighting spirit” during the events of the Velvet Revolution a year later (39:35). The diaries also mention that during the latter event, “we ended up watching TV at Hela Třeštíková’s”, suggesting the relationship that both families have with each other, and similar political sympathies.

This parallel family development can further be witnessed in the use of photography - old family pictures, such as of Honza as a small baby, are presented to the subjects, inviting them to reminisce upon earlier times; or merely as a point of emphasis concerning the length of the project. An image of Třeštíková and Jana together, holding a picture of themselves as children (1:19:53) is one of the closing shots of the documentary, and its placement towards the end serves as reinforcement of this point - that the director understands, and wishes to make clear, her own experience as ‘chronicler’ of her friend’s family.

The noteworthy examples of *René* and *Soukromý vesmír*, where self-reflexivity (and in the case of *René*, metanarration) plays a major role in the overall narrative, is not as overt in *Katka* - yet still serves to clarify the nature of the subject-author relationship. As with other post-89 documentaries by the author, there is a greater willingness to initiate discussion and to also become a participant in them. These reminders of her presence while filming cut through a lot of footage that could be deemed voyeuristic as opposed to interactive, and raise questions as to what responsibilities, if any, a director has in observing and representing a woman with a crippling addiction to drugs. There are a number of

¹⁷ Interview, 7th March 2017.

indications that there is a good degree of understanding between parties, notably the revelation that thanks to a telephone call from boyfriend Roman, the camera crew were able to film the birth of Katka's child¹⁸. Furthermore, Třeštková's monograph provides an insight into the relationship between protagonists and the ethics involved in a project such as *Katka*:

In the movie *Katka* I lead an "educative" dialogue that she should do something with herself, to do something with her life and start to take care of herself. I was one of the few dialogues filmed on his topic. This was one of the few moments like this filmed. From a long-term perspective, however, I can see that it does not fit there, it does not seem authentic. Some viewers pinpointed that remorse should have come earlier. The error is not in the thing that I told off Katka too late as I was telling her hundreds of times before; the mistake lies in the fact that this dialogue remained in the movie and didn't organically fit in.¹⁹

This statement requires a degree of dissection. Firstly, the dialogue in question, which appears at the end of the film, is one which can be decoded as possessing genuine concern for Katka, who is still clearly addicted and at risk of losing her parental rights. That these words of advice and support are alleged to have occurred throughout shooting, but only appear in full towards the documentary's conclusion, suggest that the director is reticent to occupy a larger role in the narrative - again preferring to give as much agency to the on-screen subjects as possible - while conveying to the viewer the gravity of the situations Katka finds herself in. In doing so, there is still a recognition of the level of influence she may have as a filmmaker after following her subject for fourteen years.

Nevertheless, there is still an amount of distance throughout the film, as statements such as "I still don't understand what people see in drugs" (46:40) place the director in a position beyond addiction, perhaps not fully understanding the mental and physical trauma involved in rehabilitation from substance abuse. This balance which has been struck allows Třeštková to observe and represent Katka's life without the story becoming dominated by ethical considerations and the dynamic between director and subject. As she states that she "will always try to be 'beyond'" in her documentaries²⁰, this is a

¹⁸ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 24.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁰ Interview, 7th March 2017.

deliberate strategy; yet flexible enough to understand, such as in *René*, where she has to occupy a larger role.

As the self-reflexive practices of Třeštíková acknowledge her own role as part of the wider narrative of the subject's lives, they too serve to strengthen the observations which are made throughout the documentaries - including those which relate to fulfilment. It is impossible for a documentary to observe or chronicle every interaction or experience, often resulting in tough choices to be made in the editing room as to inclusion or omission, yet what is clear is the selection of shots by the director which aim to offer an overall authenticity of the subject's lived experience. Because of this, it is vital that Třeštíková features as a victim of a crime by René that appears off-camera, or to offer her advice to Katka; as these provide more information and a deeper insight into the worlds which the subjects (and the director) inhabit. Thanks to these inclusions, it is possible for the director to deepen her focus on and observe the factors that act as barriers to fulfilment in the narrative - such as crime, addiction, or the post-89 transformation.

The Role of Television in Large and Small Histories

Třeštíková's embrace of the television in the narratives of *René* and *Soukromý vesmír* aids the progression and rhythm of the documentaries, while providing an important contribution to the argument of cyclical fulfilment. This argument, which was introduced in Chapter Three, hypothesised that the transition witnessed between the *Manželské etudy* and *Po dvaceti letech* cycles reflected an evolution in not only Czechoslovak (and Czech) society, but the position of the director; who adapted her original encoding of subversion to the normalisation value system to reflect the growing changes taking place in private and public life. The cyclical argument of fulfilment posited that the market economy, which had replaced the KSČ's authoritarian state socialism, did not necessarily have a positive impact on the cycle's subjects, and that the next generation of protagonists largely experienced the same barriers to fulfilment (financial, emotional, etc.) as that of their parents. This will be

returned to later in this chapter, when a number of factors explored in this and following pages are measured in relation to Třeštíková's understanding of cyclical fulfilment. It nevertheless bears repeating when considering the emergence of the television as a new means of conveying argument in these documentaries.

The first instance of television in *René* aids in setting the scene and concretising the historical period, as a group of inmates at the detention centre watch a news programme which is clearly of the normalisation type; and due to the first meeting with the subject occurring in 1989, is the only broadcast possessing a pro-regime narrative. Subsequent clips are included in the same manner - a television set being on in the same room, with *René* either paying attention to it or not, at various historical junctures. The most notable of these occurrences are of the swearing of Oaths in Prague Castle by various politicians, followed by the national anthem which carries on over footage of the protagonist in prison. These sequences, and what they intend to represent, have been explained by the director:

While we were making *René* the Velvet Revolution came, and we filmed in the prison; and the requirement was that all prisoners had to watch the news. At that moment, Václav Havel took the Presidential Oath. He gave an oath as President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Then he was re-elected again and gave an oath as the President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic; and then the oath as President of the Czech Republic. Then I realised that this is such a good punctuation, that René was sitting in the prison as if nothing was happening, but behind the bars history was roaring to life, and constantly somebody is promising something, and René doesn't make any promises, and doesn't stick to them either.²¹

Whilst René remains in prison, where nothing significant changes, there is a great deal occurring on the outside - from the Velvet Revolution to free elections and entrance into the European Union - and television is the only carrier of this information. This effectively communicates the isolation from the outside world experienced when jailed, and the relationship between René and the wider historical events of the years represented. Not only have these significant events passed by the protagonist, but as the visual encoding of the documentary indicates, there has been little change to the day-to-day

²¹Interview, 7th March 2017.

experiences of the subject and his fellow inmates. A distinction, therefore, can be made between the larger history of the Czech Republic and its direction; and the smaller, personal history of a man who spends much of his life in the country's legal system. Such a contrast was also forged in *Po dvaceti letech* thanks to the use of space, where access to spaces reflected varying access to the transition processes taking place, and thus access to the benefits of the new economy (as typified by the example of Pavel). René's physical removal from public spaces *outside* of prison severely limit his opportunities to interact with the changes which are occurring, and instead these images on television operate as absurdities, an argument which will be returned to in the next sub-chapter.

The contrast between large and small histories is exemplified in *Soukromý vesmír*. Unlike *René*, television footage appears on-screen as opposed to a standalone television set in a room or bar. Content is also far more varied - with broadcast footage over a longer period of time - and includes speeches by Gustáv Husák, Yuri Gagarin and the space race, light entertainment programmes, and political events. In similar fashion to *René*, these programmes are separate from Petr's diary and narrative, with minimal overlap; and are intended to supplement the family history as opposed to superseding it. Honza's fascination with cosmonauts is therefore reflected in increased footage of space travel, and there are regular appearances of Karel Gott at various stages of his career. Gott, who is depicted as "a constant who survives every regime"²², is pictured singing on variety programmes. He is seen making a political speech at the KSČ's behest, appearing with oppositionist folk singer Karel Kryl during November 1989, and even as part of a news item post-89 where he has been nominated for President.

In addition to a certain irony communicated through these representations (in other words, the political transformation from loyal communist to dissident), Gott serves to enhance the wider narrative that the lives of Czech and Slovak people - be them 'ordinary' citizens or celebrities - are not suspended during significant events. This encourages the viewer to consider the wider correlations

²² Přivřelová 2011: 315.

between private and public experiences, and crucially, if anything has actually changed due to the transformation after the fall of the regime.

Engagement with past and present political processes, a clear trend in Czech documentary cinema after 1989, is treated in an altogether different dynamic by Třeštíková here. Important (and not so important) events are clearly represented, but not at the expense of relegating her interest in private histories of people or families. Television allows the parallel ‘larger’ history to come into view, complementing certain narratives while not overriding personal stories. Despite functioning as a different technique to that seen in the *Etudy* cycle, it confirms the director’s main interest as a filmmaker continues to lie in intimate, private lives; expanding to analyse if changes impact the ability of subjects to be truly fulfilled.

Fulfilment and Space

The varying representations of public and private spaces in Třeštíková documentaries has led to a significant proportion of analysis in this thesis being directed towards it. Spatial contrast witnessed during normalisation reflected a concentration of the KSČ’s ideological values in the public sphere, where censorship and authoritarian practices sought to monopolise the political narrative. By prioritising family life away from public spaces and instead in the homes of subjects depicted, Třeštíková was able to subvert the regime’s dominance on Czechoslovak society, and encode *Manželské etudy* to argue that the experiences of the ‘ordinary’ citizen is far different from the narrative propagated through the normalisation value system. In *Po dvaceti letech*, where authoritarianism was no longer a concern, there was an opening up of spaces which reflected a newly-discovered importance placed on work by subjects (as opposed to the KSČ as before), in addition to demonstrating that access to these areas can also be restricted depending on a number of mitigating factors.

It is therefore necessary to analyse *Katka*, *René* and *Soukromý vesmír* in a similar manner, while taking into account the different approaches that have

been taken in the construction of these documentaries. By analysing the use of space, it can be applied as further criteria to Třeštíková's continuing fulfilment argument, and whether these depictions are similar to what has been witnessed in *Manželské etudy*. Space, and the interactions of subjects within it, can be regarded as similar and different to what has been discussed in previous chapters; particularly as the notions of 'public' and 'private' blur in the examples of *René* and *Katka*, and the Kettner's own archival material represents a significant percentage of *Soukromý vesmír*'s representation.

The focus on space and fulfilment, alongside a wide variety of other techniques, aids the researcher in understanding the arguments made by Třeštíková which exist across a far wider narrative than one cycle or documentary alone. Richard Kilborn's observation that "Seriality is, if you will, a part of the generic DNA of long docs"²³ succinctly describes the component of longitudinal films that have the potential to be never-ending stories. This can be seen in Třeštíková continuing to observe *Manželské etudy* subjects, with the recent premieres of *Manželské etudy po třiceti pěti letech* in October 2017. As the introduction to this chapter stated, the three documentaries discussed here are standalone works based on earlier projects, yet there is a significant degree of overlap in the historical periods that they represent. If, as Chapter Three has argued, Třeštíková's encoding of *Manželské etudy* evolves - from subverting the normalisation value system by highlighting the fulfilment barriers which exist, to hypothesising that these barriers continue after 1989 - then it is reasonable to expect that this cyclicity will also feature in other documentaries shot at the same time.

When viewed as a complete body of work (taking into account the impossibility of analysing all of Třeštíková's documentaries in one thesis), there is the potential for these longitudinal documentaries to offer a comprehensive hypothesis on fulfilment based upon a wide number of subjects occupying different positions in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic; and this is needed to successfully respond to the third research question. As this next section of the chapter will show, this has been achieved in a number of different ways.

²³ Kilborn 2010: 134.

Issues of Fulfilment and Themes in *René*

René and the Writing on the Wall

The use of the written word within *René* has been noted as an important narrational device in the documentary. Not only do letters between director and protagonist play a significant role in the documentary's voice by developing the relationship between Třeštíková and her subject, but the textual elements which are clearly visible in the film are parts of the encoding process for the larger placement of René in the wider world. This occurs in both directions - the writing used by the protagonist in terms of forging his own identity, and the words that exist around him which are used to develop the representation of Czech society at different junctures.

Words and text feature throughout the documentary, and at all important transitional points within it. The detention centre at Libkovice, where René is first encountered, features a Klement Gottwald quote affixed to the wall²⁴, which serves as a strong visual reminder as to the ideological expectations placed on offenders to reform according to the normalisation value system. His release from detention after a Presidential amnesty brings the protagonist face-to-face with the opposite sentiments, as banners and placards proclaim "Havel for President" and "End the Criminal Government" (07:15). In some cases, these even overlap, with anti-communist slogans plastered over former KSČ billboards (13:07). Although the protagonist may look on at the Wenceslas Monument, now covered in numerous pages of text and posters, there is no engagement or interaction with what has been written.

This is telling of where René sits within the two very specific linguistic markets of Czechoslovakia during this period of transition. The language of normalisation, which was discussed in Chapter Two, is also relevant here; as "the official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and social

²⁴ "The republic needs people with ability" (03:26).

uses”²⁵. René’s criminality, and his position as an undesirable element in the eyes of the regime, renders him at-odds with the official values and language encompassed by the Gottwald quote, whilst simultaneously being denied access to the language of the opposition by being behind bars. Consequently, his existence is of one of an outsider to both markets during this time, not possessing the linguistic capital of the KSČ or the newly emerging official language of anti-communism which is becoming the mainstream.

It is clear from the following meetings with René that this is something which remains unchanged during the years observed by Třeštíková. The television footage of election cycles, or of Havel and Klaus taking the presidential oath, serve as reminders of democratic processes taking place, almost exclusively while René is in prison. During a live television broadcast where the Czech Republic officially enters the European Union, he opines that “I doubt that much will change” (1:02:30), a rare political statement from the subject which confirms a wider disinterest in the socio-political situation of the world outside.

For René, these messages - either written or expressed on television verbally - are absurdities. An earlier shot, where Libkovice inmates crowd around a television to watch a news programme, leads with an item concerning a meeting between Husák and the Mongolian Foreign Minister (03:37); and a later release from prison in Valdice sees the subject sitting on a bench in front of a billboard where the image of Klaus and his party are vandalised with the words “liar” and “thieves” (39:40). It is apparent that neither the Mongolian minister or an upcoming election campaign has much to do with René, with prison life continuing relatively unchanged (the same can be said for representations in Sommerová’s *Máňa*). This is emphasised through extracts from the subject’s books, which deal with his own experiences and eschew any wider political commentary. The video camera, which René is supposed to use to shoot supplementary footage for the film, also contributes to this absurdity; considering that filming is outside of his comfort zone of writing, and the aforementioned programmes on television mean very little to his life.

²⁵ Bourdieu 1991: 45.

If further clarity of the relationship between René and the written word was needed, tattoos ensure that text is inescapable from representations of the subject. The tattoos, which are first touched upon during a meeting in 1991, appear as a further reflection of his outsider status, as “I never much fancied tattoos, but now I couldn’t give a shit” (21:55), and the explicitness of certain pieces make this apparent. For most of the documentary, it is impossible to observe René without also showing the phrase “Fuck of [*sic*] people” on his neck, and is discussed in a section of *Deník zapomenutého* which appears as an intertitle (1:14:27). This provocative nature of this statement further distinguishes René from mainstream society and builds his depiction as an outsider, of interest to the discussion in the following sub section.

The near-omnipresence of written texts in *René*, alongside letters between the subject and Třeštíková as the main narrational vehicle, emphasise the importance of words in the encoding and crafting of René’s character. When in his hands, words act on his terms, and of the reality he sees around him - reflected in his books, letters and tattoos. However, this language is one which contrasts sharply with emerging narratives on the outside of prison, with René’s inability and disinterest in acquiring the linguistic capital of either the normalisation or post-communist periods. Much of the texts around René which do not originate from him exist as absurdities, with little relevance to his present situation and in far different linguistically than his own words. The focus paid to these contrasts have allowed Třeštíková to accentuate the representation of ‘the truth of a day’ in a similar way to Petr Kettner’s diaries - still possessing a chronicling function, but of narratives which René cannot relate to due to his history. It is evident that this approach is taken in *René* to develop the complexity of the subject and the space he inhabits in Czech society through letters and words, much like a journal or the subject’s own books.

René as an Outsider

The use of written texts throughout the documentary are one of several ways in which René's outsider status becomes apparent. How he has constructed his identity, and the extent to which this identity has been developed by both the director and wider Czech society, holds a number of clues concerning the level of fulfilment he has been able to attain. His position within society, both inside prison and on the outside, equally demonstrate a correlation between René as a 'desperado'-like figure and the spaces where he is observed during the film; and highlight the interconnectivity of the themes which are addressed within this chapter.

Earlier, a quote by Darina Křivánová succinctly conveyed that René cultivates his outsider status in front of the camera, and this has been assisted by the subject possessing a larger amount of authorial control as opposed to other subjects in Třeštíková films. This could have increased had footage from the video camera given to him been retrieved, yet this fits in with the textual elements of the documentary which suggest that he is only fully able to express himself through his writing. This explains the numerous shots of René writing in his cell (or in the toilets of Valdice prison, the only privacy he afforded to him), a location of familiarity and predictability due to his long stretches of incarceration. When inside, and noting the uniformity of Czech prisons (where inmates are all dressed the same, and follow set schedules), his individuality is expressed through his prose and the prominence of tattoos on his body. The familiarity of surroundings breeds contempt, and there is a dislike and boredom of prison as a small, confined space which he can only leave upon release, and contrasted by René's inability to function on the outside without resorting to further crime. Because of this, there is an evident encoding that neither locations are conducive to René being fulfilled.

This reluctance to seek legitimate employment is the main reason perpetuating the life cycle of the protagonist, brought on by spending more time jailed than at liberty. His claim that "when I get out the only people I know are other criminals" (1:14:03), balanced with the assertion that compared with civilian life "there are no problems in jail" (42:35), encode a likelihood that René will

offend again, in addition to his physical appearance and reputation that distinguishes him. As there is an uneven representation between inside and outside of the prison, observations outside of Valdice are supplemented by the absurdities that continue to feature on television screens. The combination of meaningless news coverage and politics, and the lack of contacts on the outside, means that events of the new democracy pass him by, and that there is a genuine struggle to integrate back into wider society.

The wider world outside of prison may be more open and expansive, but it is neither represented on those terms nor does it prevent René's internalisation. Having had no contact with his father during the shooting of *René*, and with his mother now living in Germany with a new partner and life, he has no family to fall back on and thus no home to speak of. Rather than this being developed throughout *René*, it is something known from the very beginning - his return to his home town of České Budějovice sees the initial construction of a rebellious, outsider image on film²⁶. The issue of accommodation in *Manželské etudy*, which was noted as a key barrier to fulfilment, returns in the representation of René's home on the outside. Although not a squat, the home lent to him by the father of a partner has a lot in common with living areas witnessed in *Katka*, being unclean, untidy and poorly lit; in contrast to the warmth of his family home which is communicated through a dominance of orange and yellow colours.

Once the film develops and it becomes clear that the protagonist will spend the following years in and out of prison, these representations are taken over by a focus on outdoor and public spaces, communicating that René may be a free man, but with nowhere to go. This patently identifies a key issue in the lives of many prisoners - the cycle of crime and breakdown in family relationships means that on the outside René is without a home, marked out by his tattoos and unable and unwilling to adjust to a life without committing offences.

The monetary gain to be made from burglaries (the estimated cost of which is often communicated by dialogue from either René, police officers or judges) provides an unspoken incentive for committing crime, which is counterbalanced

²⁶ When discussing where he will live after his release, Třeščíková is told "It won't be with my dad. Not with my mum either." (07:52)

by a prison life which by necessity guarantees its prisoners a place to sleep and three meals a day. In this way, it is possible to regard theft as a financially fulfilling endeavour- René receives an advance of 5,000 Czech Crowns on his first book (which are mostly used to pay off his debts), yet he can make hundreds of thousands through burglaries if the courts are to be believed. The continued references to state's transformation through television footage act as reminders of a new economy in transition, yet the protagonist continues to commit offences which he began during normalisation. Although these thefts are still lucrative, the transition has afforded certain opportunities to engage in loopholes and low-level corruption - René's plans to start a business in Slovakia where he has no criminal record, or founding an anti-tobacco group with government grants (which as self-appointed president he uses to live off of). Nevertheless, in contrast to *Etudy* footage, concerns with money are not often raised by René. The rampant consumerism exhibited in *Český sen*, for example, could not be further removed from the experiences of René or his interaction with the outside world, even though these issues were being raised with an increasing frequency at the same time as he was being visited by the director.

Třeštíková serves to accentuate the outsider image of René through directorial technique. The use of music, a rarity in many other Třeštíková films, can be found throughout *René* in the form of compositions inspired by Ennio Morricone - a composer famous for his work on Westerns - and “underline(s) René's melancholy of a renegade”²⁷. The employment of these musical excerpts, particularly alongside future meetings between the subject and director transitioned to by the use of intertitles, aids in the encoding of a continued cycle of criminality. Associations between the abrasive, almost metallic, sound of the music evokes notions of the steel bars that are a mainstay of prison life; which can either strengthen the representation of the inside, or act as a reminder that René's lifestyle leaves return to prison a likely possibility. The focus on tattoos, which has previously been mentioned, are often subject to shot choices which place emphasis on his physical appearance - shots which highlight the subject-centred approach, and thus maintain a focus on René's face and upper body, cannot help but depict the confrontational “Fuck of [*sic*] People”,

²⁷ Třeštíková and Třeštík 2015: 38.

which he must carry with him. These are particularly strong in maintaining the caricature of a rebel, yet one of the most effective motifs within the documentary feature the protagonist at the train station, or in the process of travelling.

The significance of shots of René on a train (39:57, 1:17:35) are closely related to his loss of a home and a lack of purpose outside of prison. Essentially homeless, and with work that skirts around the edges of legality (and is never seen on camera), the viewer never sees where René is actually travelling to. This is at its most evident in a sequence midway through the documentary, when he tells Třeštková that he is unsure where he will go after his release. A number of repetitions exist, where the subject is seen smoking a cigarette and drinking a beer in the station (12:26, 53:55), which demonstrates the passing of time as a longitudinal film; and reflects the same processes taken by the subject, despite several years between these occurrences. It is notable that René is either in transit or a place associated with it, yet never seems to go anywhere besides a return to prison. Furthering this encoding, the one plan that does appear to be forged - a trip to Slovakia - is conveyed by a message left on the director's answering machine, and is accompanied by a stylistic change where footage of the station in Prague is now blurry and disorienting. This then leads to an intertitle which then reveals a prison door being unlocked, maintaining the cycle of liberty and incarceration which is the main cyclical element of *René*. As a subject who has no desire to work, and wishes to keep committing crimes, financial fulfilment is attempted to be attained through this and book publishing. On the other hand, René's 'desperado' image, crafted at a younger age and perpetuated whilst an inmate, has left him as an outsider who has continually been unable to fully re-enter society.

Whereas specific fulfilment barriers have been prioritised by both subjects and the director in various cycle episodes and documentaries, *René's* contribution to the fulfilment argument has the additional function of demonstrating the minimal level of impact that the market economy has had on the life of the subject; particularly a subject who resides on the fringes of society and who will continue to be ostracised by his image. The representation argued that the lifestyle of René, which is heavily dependent on crime to the detriment of

forging meaningful, long-lasting relationships, would likely continue irrespective of whether authoritarian state socialism remained as economic and political driving force of the Czech Republic or not. Although it is debatable that René would ever have books published if the former system was to endure, these opportunities have served to continue casting the protagonist as an outsider and undesirable, questioning if his character can ever truly be reformed. This is aided and abetted by his lack of linguistic capital, hypothesised in the section concerning textual representation, and culminates in the overall encoding of *René* which explicitly demonstrates the barriers to fulfilment which still exist in the post-communist Czech Republic.

Issues of Fulfilment and Themes in *Katka*

Katka and Life in Public Spaces

The issue of accommodation has been a constant theme which has emerged through Třeštíková documentaries, and have provided a clear argument as to opportunities afforded to young people in *Manželské etudy*. There is, however, a disparity between poor-quality accommodation - with various problems but a certain stability - and the lack of a fixed abode altogether, which renders *Katka* an obvious point of contrast.

For *Katka*, leaving the rehabilitation commune in Němčice at the start of the documentary leads to over a decade living hand-to-mouth, shoplifting and sex work emerging as the fundamental means to earn money. As an addict, a suitable place to live is a secondary concern to the main priority of obtaining drugs. Living spaces for the subject are mostly squatted properties, often strewn with rubbish; or a brief spell in an attic in her mother's old house. Like the squats, the attic lacks electricity and other important amenities, as demonstrated by a particularly effective scene where, clearly under the influence of substances, she struggles to light a paraffin lamp (26:30). This shot is preceded by her using a lighter to find the keyhole to let herself in, similar to the darkness experienced in *Ivana a Pavel* where a visit it paid to the couple's

flat while under renovation (14:50). That a similar choice of shot has been replicated over such a significant gap in time, and a different economic and political structure, highlights the advantage of the longitudinal approach in offering a wider critique of a society's historical development - by not altering the representation here, Třeštíková highlights similar poor-quality accommodation still exists some twenty years later.

Due to Katka's continued lifestyle, the streets of Prague are another important area represented in the documentary. As somebody with no fixed abode and no job to speak of, she can often be found in various locations around the city roaming the streets, preparing heroin for injection or even bathing in public fountains. The progression of the documentary, and the idea of round-the-clock homelessness, leads to depictions of these areas changing as the film goes on. Interviews with Katka and Lád'a outside during the daytime become replaced by Katka and Roman moving around the town in the darkness; and there are several shots where the protagonist is noticeably not fully conscious due to drug consumption. The treatment of the latter example sees a repeat of the disorienting camera shots that were seen when René attempts to leave Prague for Slovakia. This continued descent into addiction and destitution is therefore reflected by changes from light to darkness and of these shot styles; and this is mirrored in the squats inhabited, which "become progressively worse as the film proceeds: completely rundown flats with no windows and full of junk. The camera picks up more details in these squats focusing on garbage and other waste"²⁸. It is made clear that none of these spaces are secure, leading to Katka and Roman moving around under cover of darkness to squat abandoned buildings, and when they are forcibly evicted from them by the police (1:24:00)²⁹.

Looking back once more to the accommodation arguments in Chapter Two, it was shown that the *Manželské etudy* couples often faced a lack of money, time and bureaucracy in making their properties fit for habitation (*Ivana a Pavel*, *Ivana a Václav*); or faced long waits for flats which put a strain on their

²⁸ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 122-123.

²⁹ This is a rare sequence in *Katka* where Třeštíková is seen as well as heard, acting as a mediator of sorts between the police and her subjects.

relationship (*Marcela a Jiří*). In the post-89 cycle, where accommodation continued to be represented (noting that housing was rarely seen in *Ivana a Pavel* or *Zuzana a Antonín*), the same low-quality housing remained, particularly in the example of Marcela and her daughter who left Prague in order to attain an affordable replacement to their dilapidated apartment. Whilst concerns about accommodation emerge as a common and consistent theme, the main priority of Katka and her partners fluctuate between sourcing drugs and quitting them altogether, with worries of a permanent place to stay barely registering outside of the latter stages of the film (where being moved on becomes a fact of life). The initial anguish faced by Katka during her pregnancy, where she expresses a desire to enter rehabilitation and become a good mother, occurs alongside Třeštíková's spatial representation of where she lives, and no sophisticated encoding is required to communicate that such locations are ill-suited to bringing up a child. Although this is clearly a barrier to Katka's fulfilment, her desire at this point to stay with her daughter (rather than being put into state care) rests more upon her ability to abstain from drugs - a visit to an addiction counsellor indicates that temporary accommodation may be available, but only once the subject becomes clean, clarifying that the use of narcotics is the most pressing factor.

With observation in *Katka* starting in 1996, the question of public and private spaces as separate ideological domains is not something which affects the spatial representation of the documentary. The dynamic of husband and wife, which enhanced and restricted access to the labour market and to recreation, does not occur here, as addiction to drugs supersedes this factor as the biggest barrier to stability and financial security. Of greater importance here is how spatial representation enforces the cycle of deprivation and drug dependence, and the quality of Katka's life as she continues her addiction over the years with very little positive material changes.

The Cycle of Addiction

The visibility of the cycle witnessed in *René* is also apparent in *Katka*, reflecting the status of both subjects as ostracised, marginalised characters. Just as the structure of *René* alternates between prison spells of various lengths, the

representation of Katka's life showcases an interconnection between drug use, dependency, crime and destitution; which begins upon leaving the rehabilitation community, continuing to use heroin and forging relationships with fellow addicts. The longitudinal technique lends itself to effective representations of Katka's addiction, particularly as the biological advancement of time, and the focus on facial expression which Třeštková often uses, combine to present an image of a woman who is evidently ravaged by her lifestyle.

Such representations are important, considering the various legal issues that can arise by chronicling addiction to an illegal substance. On this point the director writes that "although it is not clear what Katka is living off, all mentions of her being involved in the production of drugs is removed from the film, as it is illegal"³⁰. This deprives *Katka* of any visual references to work (if one can truly categorise the manufacture and dealing of drugs as 'work'), in addition to sex work and shoplifting which Katka (and in respect to the latter, Lád'a) discloses as the main source of income, and understandably absent from being featured on screen. This is the same practice adopted in *René*, where the viewer does not see any crime being committed, or of René at work besides writing. The risks which are involved in this behaviour, however, do not have to be seen by the viewer to comprehend, as the continued sequence of accruing money to use on drugs has been well-established in popular discourse as a consequence of extreme addiction.

Sex work, which is particularly ungratifying for Katka³¹, is paired with shots of her tearfully watching her own depiction in an earlier documentary (21:28). When this is then followed by visits to a methadone clinic soon afterwards (23:01; 25:12), and a suggestion that her condition is improving³², the pace of the film quickly leads to visuals of her once again under the influence of substances (25:40). The significant jump which then occurs from 2002 to 2007, with no information about the years in-between, infers that this routine has continued. Whereas the dullness and lack of importance placed on work during

³⁰ Třeštková and Třeštk 2015: 21.

³¹ "I'll never like doing this. Never." (20:32)

³² The attic where Katka lives, while being dark and dirty, is at least a more stable living space than the streets; and the clinic worker is heard to comment that "You're looking better" (25:19).

normalisation in *Manželské etudy* leads to greater representation in *Po dvaceti letech*, due to the new-found identity associated with employment after 1989, it is of secondary significance when Třeštíková observes outsider subjects. As mentioned before, this is because of the dubious legality of the work undertaken, but additionally reflects that it is secondary to the main priorities of Katka and René, which are drugs and criminality. Fulfilment for Katka is therefore the ability to constantly obtain the drugs she craves, despite the clear cycle encoding that shows the detriment of addiction.

The relationships between Katka and other documentary subjects also relate to the social and romantic aspects of fulfilment which Třeštíková seeks to explore. “At the beginning of the story”, Spáčilová writes, “a pretty teenager portrays family traumas with a violent father and drug”³³ which immediately sets the context of the subject as a member of the rehabilitation community. These initial experiments with drugs, explained here as a result of a broken and unstable family dynamic, lead to her being kicked out of her home at sixteen, thus beginning the cycle which is observed. Two significant romantic relationships which take place, with fellow addicts Lád’a and Roman, are also epitomised by violence and instability. Both partners have been physically abusive to Katka - this is told to Třeštíková by her, and in the latter case confirmed by Roman - and supporting evidence aids in the visualisation of the issue of her safety. A written letter and interview with Lád’a evokes the style and setting of *René* as he is jailed for attempted murder (45:30), and the camera is on-hand to witness a particularly violent outburst by Roman against another addict at the main station in Prague (54:17).

Roman continues his verbal and physical abuse throughout the second part of *Katka*, and his own abortive attempts at rehabilitation - ostensibly to quit drugs for good and to become a father - revert to indifference by its conclusion. This is a clear demonstration of a gendered divide in the documentary, with Katka in a vulnerable position as an abused woman and (at least initially) harbouring maternal feelings towards her child, before this is superseded by pervitin and heroin. Although romantic fulfilment is promised by respective partners, they

³³ Spáčilová 2010, *MF DNES*.

are depicted as “elements of love, but without adult responsibility, and her eternal apologies and promises are no more than empty words without a blueprint”³⁴ due to drugs being ever-present. With her parents, and mother in particular, mentioned but never seen, Třeštíková argues that continued addiction traps Katka in a series of potentially dangerous situations and with no security in terms of financial support or stable accommodation. The loss of a home experienced by René is echoed in *Katka*, inferring that this is a widespread problem amongst those on the margins of society.

It is the drugs themselves which are therefore the main interest to the cycle which continues throughout *Katka*. Whereas television footage in *René* reflected the subject’s isolation from the larger history taking place around him, it is the location of the various hospitals and health centres she visits that “represent anxiety... surrounded by health and social workers but feeling uncared for”³⁵ that displays her inability to meaningfully engage with the public sphere and to get clean. The shot of Katka looking at herself in a mirror, which first appears in the opening few minutes of the documentary, is replicated on a number of occasions, from the residency in Němčice, to her attic room and finally in an abandoned shed where she is squatting (1:26:00).

The “pretty teenager” Spáčilová refers to becomes replaced by a woman in a deteriorating physical and mental condition, serving to reinforce the dominant encoding of a downward spiral that keeps repeating itself. Although drugs, and the feeling of taking them, is the main source of happiness for Katka, Třeštíková is clear in the argument that fulfilment and stability can only be achieved by the ability to abstain from drugs and become rehabilitated. Yet as an outsider, with a poor level of interaction with those who can treat her condition, there is a clear representation that this cycle will endure.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hličišin Dervišević 2014: 122.

Issues of Fulfilment and Themes in *Soukromý vesmír*

Private Spaces and Private Archives

Having already acknowledged the stylistic differences that are apparent in *Soukromý vesmír*, spatial representation in the documentary is heavily dependent upon archival footage, particularly as Třeštíková's more usual approach mostly exists in the latter half of the film. This is also related to the large and small histories discussed earlier, as the 'larger' histories of television and the Czechoslovak transition are predominantly depicted through the use of broadcasts rather than Petr's personal diaries. The personal space of the Kettner family home is mainly visualised through a combination of photographs with the occasional home video recording, accompanying Třeštíková and her camera crew as contributors. When this changes in the latter parts of the documentary, it is due to the lessening role of the diary (particularly once Petr and Jana's three children become adults), Tomáš Třeščík's meetings with Honza in the Basque Country, and the director's further meetings with the family as the project draws closer to the present. Interviews, which before were conducted in the recording studio with Petr and involved reminiscing about particular events that he had written down, are then replaced with interview footage at home. Public spaces, both inside and outside of the Czech Republic, emerge further at several junctures, often in connection with Honza and his partner.

The personal history of the diary is aided by segments similar in style to *Etudy* where the camera has been shown around the house (24:08; 26:09), and tends to focus on space in a familiar manner - the process of repairs and refurbishments is once again indicative of the quality of housing under normalisation and the measures that need to be taken. This further highlights a consistent encoding in Třeštíková's normalisation representations, which argue that the normalisation value system cannot adequately provide for young families. Unlike the other cycles however, normalisation footage does not heavily comprise of face-to-face interviews with the camera, as the use of the diary becomes the main narrational vehicle. Due to this difference, less film footage is afforded to the private space of the home (although photographs still remain), allowing public spaces represented both on-screen and television to develop further. The

ideological character of Czechoslovak primary schools (shown best when socialist literature is analysed in a grammar class (35:19)), addresses to the population from Husák (9:04; 38:34), and later scenes from public demonstrations against the regime (39:04), serve to communicate that there is a political divide between the public and private (further emphasised by the use of irony when the diary discusses such events). This replaces *Manželské etudy*'s intense focus on the private, but achieves the same objective of distinguishing the values held by the state and those who live under it.

Upon moving to a new flat towards the end of the 1980s (where Jana and Petr will remain throughout the remainder of the documentary), the switch to colour film and video offers a modernity which previously did not appear to exist - heightening, to an extent, the evolution of Honza from a child to a teenager and adult (his bedroom, which is covered in posters and graffiti, is far darker than the other living areas). In spite of this move - both to the new flat and towards a liberal democracy - ideology is still an important factor in how spaces are distinguished.

Footage, which now includes demonstrations by anarchists (46:47) and archival photographs of Václav Havel visiting Liberec, replaces the KSČ's once dominant narrative, and is a signifier of the political liberalism which the Kettners experience. Honza's room features an anarchist flag and slogans, with diary narration clearly indicating support for Havel and the Občanské fórum amongst the wider family. This is tempered, however, by the "reprivatisation, small-scale and large-scale privatisation, dissolving of companies, private businessmen, crooks as well as normal working people" (41:55) that is a consequence of the new socio-political system. The encoding here argues that the transition after 1989 means that families such as the 'ordinary' family of *Soukromý vesmír* have greater access to public space now that there can be a freer exchange of political ideas, and no mandatory adherence to one specific ideology. On the other hand, this comes at a cost of new economic practices which Petr clearly understands to have an impact on the job security experienced during the normalisation era.

Another consequence of the post-communist transition has been the opening of borders and a new freedom to travel. Třeštík's visit to Honza in the Basque Country pays close attention to his surroundings, and has been edited with politics again in mind. The documentary is not interested with the political situation of the Basque people in particular, but shots which introduce the viewer to Honza and his life there show a vibrant street movement with plenty of noise and bright colours (52:38). The home he shares with partner Eurne and her son Martin is also colourful, with an abundance of light (54:31), again contrasting with the dominance of black-and-white in the first half of the film. Space also serves to balance up these images - compared with *Po dvaceti letech*, there is no fixation on work in *Soukromý vesmír*, with the exception of Honza's employment washing dishes.

In contrast to the flat and to outdoor spaces, the kitchen where he works is compact and narrow, and the work monotonous - "when you stand there and wash, the movement is just mechanical" (56:56). By featuring this, space outside of the Czech Republic is given similar treatment, and therefore not radically different from post-89 shots in *Po dvaceti letech* or other non-Třeštíková films. Work under normalisation may have been ungratifying, and *despite* the dramatic changes of the Velvet Revolution may not have differed for many people, but this is not uniquely a post-communist phenomenon, evidenced by the pictures here.

Although *Soukromý vesmír* demonstrates a variety of different stylistic and narrational techniques that that of *Katka* and *René*, public and private space still offer a valuable insight into Třeštíková's crafting of the documentary. Unlike the extended representation of private accommodation as witnessed in *Manželské etudy* (noting the contrast with the development of public spaces in *Po dvaceti letech*), it is the strong political differences that differentiate the public and private sphere and access to them. This is thanks to the use of television footage combined with the concept of Petr's diary as a private space itself, and once the normalisation era becomes replaced by the strides towards a market economy this signals a greater access to the public sphere. Akin to the arguments presented in *Po dvaceti letech* however, space indicates that not everything has

changed alongside the political system; nor is unskilled, low-quality work solely a Czech problem.

As one of the only Třeštíková documentaries to provide an extended observation of a protagonist's life in another country, spatial representations fostered through Honza's life in the Basque Country reveal that parallel experiences also occur in other parts of Europe, thus challenging the notions presented in some post-89 documentary films that the market economy has righted the wrongs of state socialism - in other words, cycles of fulfilment continue to occur despite the new-found ability of Czechs and Slovaks to travel, and to access areas they were previously unable to. Public space has lost its ideological homogeneity, but questions remain as to how much, if anything, this has benefitted the subjects observed in the project.

Soukromý vesmír and Fulfilment across Generations

Over thirty years of observing the Kettner family has allowed Třeštíková to witness the birth, childhood and eventual adulthood of Jan and Petr's three children, of which Honza emerges as the dominant narrative. Throughout *Soukromý vesmír*, and particularly after the fall of the authoritarian system, Honza is of particular interest. This is due to him coming of age at the beginning of the 1990s, his unique personality which engages in a number of activities and subcultures that were previously unseen in the bulk of conventional normalisation documentary, and his travels abroad where he begins a family of his own. Akin to *Po dvaceti letech*, this long-term observation allows the documentary to investigate whether the lives of the new generation of Czechs replicates or mirrors the experiences of their parents, in the same manner as was seen in Chapter Three with the examples of Ivana, Martin and Lucie. This is advantageous in the confirmation of the pre-existing findings relating to addressing the third research question.

As a private history against the larger backdrop of normalisation and post-communism, there is consistency in Petr Kettner's job not being represented on-

screen. Akin to work representations in the first *Etudy* cycle, it is not a particular source of pride beside a means of providing for his family. With the latter stages of *Soukromý vesmír* becoming increasingly dominated by Honza's presence, particularly as Petr's diaries lessen in their influence as a detailed account of the family, greater attention is paid to the emerging relationship between Honza, partner Edurne, and her son Martin. Work for Honza, addressed in the previous section, is treated similarly, originally as part of a process where "you work a bit so you can travel on" (52:57).

For Honza's sisters Eva and Anna, work is never witnessed, and the role of Eva in particular is never fully developed. However, a family also emerges with Anna, who marries and has a child, indicating a continuation of the family past the years that are observed in the film. It can be argued that this depiction is deliberate considering that there is a similarity between Anna and her mother - Třeštková being present for both births of their children, and moving into houses that are both alike and require some work to be done. This resemblance is emphasised by both daughters and their mother watching footage from *Zázrak* together (1:06:15).

It has been usual to observe these factors as barriers to fulfilment - for example, the same challenges facing Ivana post-89 are the same as her mother Marcela's in *Etudy* - and when interviewing Jana, there is a sense that having children and raising a family was a matter of duty, as "I guess I've done what I'm supposed to do" (1:16:10). This is not shared by Honza, who professes to not want children, the birth of his niece having "released me from the duty to give our parents grandchildren" (1:11:42). However, the intimacy and close-knit nature of the family acts as a counterbalance to the narratives of *Katka* and *René* where such relationships are non-existent. There is clearly a lot of love between Petr and Jana evidenced in the diaries, and this is also true of the love between Honza and Edurne. The birth of Anna's daughter, therefore, represents a number of physical and visual similarities to that of Jana's experience, and this also suggests that, based on the history of the Kettners, that she will be brought into a loving environment.

Nevertheless, not all relationships are ideal. Despite a love for each other, Jana and Honza are both portrayed as possessing a strength of character that sometimes places them at odds; and this is particularly evident when Honza reaches adolescence. As “she proves herself being a democrat” (44:50) by supporting her son’s choice of haircut and tolerating other habits such as smoking cannabis, this hides a dynamic between the two where “I’m always happy to see my parents, but once I spend more than an hour with my mum we start fighting” (1:02:14). This is comparable to fifteen-year-old Martin’s relationship with his mother and Honza, who uses drugs and possesses certain anger issues.

Jana’s observation about her son, that “I guess we’re alike but he’s a boy living in different times” (46:40), can also reflect upon Martin, who has not grown up in a transition period between authoritarianism and democracy - inferring that this is a generational cycle, and not directly linked to the experiences of living in the Czechoslovak state. Any lack of fulfilment as an adolescent, in terms of relationships or interaction with the wider world, is not entirely brought on by the wider socio-political changes which are taking place. In this way, Třeštíková questions whether the parallel ‘large’ history of post-89 Czechoslovakia has any meaningful impact on family matters. The excitement of history taking place before the eyes of subjects, which can be witnessed in *Největší přání II* or *Maturita v listopadu*, is absent from most of *Soukromý vesmír* for this reason, and balanced by the repetition of Karel Gott, whose celebrity status endures unabated.

For the Kettners, whose own political sympathies are clear in the documentary’s narrative, the post-89 transformation has had a clear democratising influence, yet based upon this argument it is debatable whether this is a universal benefit or not, as *Po dvaceti letech* revealed that only a small percentage of subjects were able to take full advantage of liberalisation for their own gain. Whereas each documentary charts fulfilment and its relation to the subjects represented, the strength of Třeštíková’s observation is that it continues as a narrative that runs through all of her documentaries, leading to a sophisticated argument to be decoded by the viewer.

Honza and René as Rebels

When viewed alongside *René*, it is possible to compare Honza and René as outsiders. This has already been acknowledged by Spáčilová, who notes that *Soukromý vesmír* is not as “extreme” as *Katka or René*, but features Honza as a “lucky devil... a rebel, anarchist and globetrotter” who appears in front of the camera³⁶. The representation of Honza’s life journey from normalisation to starting a family of his own is subject to less scrutiny than René by the difference in medium over the two documentaries. Whereas detail is given to Honza’s teenage years and his initial travels across the world by Petr’s diaries (which includes an arrest in the Czech Republic and a month in jail in Romania for possessing cannabis), information is communicated directly to Třeštíková by René himself, either by letter or interview.

Honza’s rebellion as a teenager, where he engages in drug experimentation, drinking and finds an affinity with the punk scene, is far less reckless than René’s engagement in robbery, and with the crucial difference that the relationship between the subject and the rest of his family does not entirely break down. Although certain difficulties remain (as evidenced earlier), Honza has not lost his home and has been able to build up meaningful relationships which culminate in his partnership with Edurne. This change is one where a rebellious anarchist teenager has been replaced by “a somewhat overaged ‘hippy’”³⁷, and in stark contrast to the cycle of crime which is pursued by René.

Both are subject to different creative treatments by the director to reflect this. Unlike the use of music specifically designed to accentuate the image of a ‘desperado’, there are no musical accompaniments in reference to Honza, with the exception of archival footage of the subject with his friends singing along to a punk song. As a narrative heavily reliant on his father’s diaries, *Soukromý vesmír* also lacks an intense focus upon one subject which can be witnessed in *René*. However, the most important difference which exists concerns travel. This

³⁶ Spáčilová 2012, *MF DNES*.

³⁷ Kabát 2012, *Lidové noviny*.

chapter has previously discussed the representation of René at train stations, questioning where the subject is travelling to when he lacks any sort of permanent residence outside of prison; and the one example of an aborted attempt to go to Slovakia which is noted for a rather dizzying camera technique. On the other hand, Honza's representation is that of arrival - be it coming back home from travels as referenced in his father's diary, or of filming on location in either the Basque country or Prague airport after he returns to the Czech Republic with his family.

By making this subtle distinction, Třeštíková is able to define Honza as being far more capable of integration and re-integration into different worlds than the unrehabilitated René, as part of a wider observation that makes his family ties clear. For the fulfilment argument, and particularly relevant to the third research question of this thesis, it shows how different representations of subjects on film can be to the benefit of placing emphasis on the cycle. Although René endures a cycle of crime leading to further marginalisation, Honza's cycle - which clearly showcases fulfilment barriers - is one which repeats a generational cycle first witnessed during normalisation. Despite problems facing the Kettners, the family members possess a greater social well-being and emotional connection to each other, evidently lacking in *René* as he becomes further isolated from the world around him.

Chapter Conclusions

The idea of national histories or political revolutions, ushering in change which rarely affects the day-to-day existence of subjects, can be observed across the three documentaries discussed in this chapter. It is not the intention of Třeštíková to downplay these incidents or to disapprove of these changes actually happening - the continuation of censorship and normalisation narratives would ensure that a great deal of content within *René*, *Katka* and *Soukromý vesmír* would have to be omitted otherwise, and it is questionable if the lives of outsiders such as drug addicts could truly be represented if that were the case. However, by drawing a distinction between the private, personal histories of

subjects; and the highly visible, much politicised, and in the wider canon of Czech documentary, much *represented* Velvet Revolution and its aftermath, Třeštíková maintains her argument that fulfilment is a cyclical concept.

The transition to a market economy has had little effect on the life choices of René or Katka, who continue to be marginalised in the new society, and continue a cycle of existence of either crime or drug abuse. When dealing with the intimate history of the Kettner family, representation switches to that of the ‘ordinary’ citizen living through the transition process - a process which continues to be brought to the viewer’s attention (as with *René*) through the use of television footage. The thirty-seven-year observation here has the advantage of comparing and contrasting the generational experiences of subjects in a similar manner to *Po dvaceti letech*, again conveying the argument that the lives of parents through to their children continues on a comparable trajectory, while acknowledging the opportunities presented by the opening up of borders and the elimination of state socialist hegemony. The unique depiction of the Basque Country, the only shots of overseas travel and life in any of the documentaries of this thesis, serves to reinforce these notions by indicating that this is not an exclusively Czech phenomenon.

It is useful to take *Katka*, *René* and *Soukromý vesmír* into account as they exhibit different narrative techniques to the two *Etudy* cycles, while continuing to develop Třeštíková’s fulfilment argument. This includes the use of external footage through television and the employment of diary entries and letters as narrational devices. Furthermore, the profoundly textual nature of *René* and the development of further self-reflexive practices, which results in the director becoming a subject in her own right, aid in accentuating the supposed reality of what Třeštíková sees before her. Such techniques effectively represent René and Katka as marginalised outsiders, and the Kettners as the everyday family which endures as history changes quickly around them. As standalone documentaries, these films present the viewer with a more immediate depiction of cycles at work, more evident than the long-term emergences which have been witnessed through *Manželské etudy* as it continues at distant, if regular, intervals. This underlines the ability of the director to employ the longitudinal method in a variety of different ways, while maintaining her long-established focus on

financial, romantic and social fulfilment which continues to be a hallmark of her film projects.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this thesis, three research questions were offered in relation to the overall study of fulfilment narratives in Helena Třeštíková's longitudinal documentaries. In order to offer a comprehensive investigation of this topic, it was posited that the existing documentary films of both normalisation and post-normalisation needed to be critically analysed; which could then be contrasted with the unique approach to documentary construction seen in Třeštíková's work.

The concept of fulfilment, defined in the introduction as measurable units which impact upon the quality of life, was then identified as fundamental to the director's encoding and representation of themes; leading to the question of what this fulfilment is designed to communicate to the viewer about the lives of subjects during normalisation and the post-communist market economy. It was then argued that by addressing these themes, it was possible to fill the clear gaps in scholarship around documentary narratives and production during both periods.

The response to the research questions has therefore centred around three main elements. Firstly, Chapter One discussed a number of methodological considerations and made the claim that it was necessary to regard the documentary as being fundamentally textual in nature. Crucial to this was the observation that by focusing on the discourses of sobriety, Helena Třeštíková encodes specific arguments within her narratives; which can then be interpreted by a model reader to extract meaning. These encodings have been achieved in a variety of different ways, and therefore a number of textual and stylistic approaches - including self-reflexivity, narrational technique and the metanarrative - are discussed which will then feature in the documentaries studied. Secondly, upon establishing the archetypal normalisation and post-normalisation documentary, this methodology is applied to the longitudinal films of Třeštíková in addressing how her work differs from the wider body of normalisation and post-normalisation documentary. Finally, by identifying the role of fulfilment in Třeštíková films, there is the opportunity to discover what

the director wishes to say about the state of happiness and well-being amongst the subjects she represents.

The Narratives of Normalisation and Post-Normalisation

The first chapter of this thesis introduced several techniques which have been used throughout Třeštíková's filmmaking, and establishes a basic framework to the longitudinal approach to documentary. This is important when considering the uniqueness of long-term observations in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, and why the director considers herself as a chronicler who wishes to create (what she views as) accurate representations. It is because of this that a lack of expository direct address can be found, and the adoption of intertitles employed as a means of privileging the voice of the subjects themselves in interview. Later, a gradual insertion of the visual and aural presence of Třeštíková can be witnessed as the longitudinal projects continue, a deliberate device acknowledging her role in the lives of her subjects who are visited by her at regular intervals.

The approach of most documentary films during the normalisation period are rather different, as Chapter Two has revealed. A comprehensive (if arbitrary) system of censorship and propaganda throughout the 1970s and 1980s made it difficult for directors to create films which openly criticised the regime or went against the established normalisation value system, which disseminated an ideological narrative that Czechoslovak citizens enjoyed a high standard of living and that the KSČ's role in society was a popular force for good. Due to these pressures, a significant proportion of documentaries were formulaic and designed to promote the regime values which placed particular significance on the role of the industrial worker, friendship and justification of the Soviet Union, and a more conservative view on the position of women.

This conservatism took the form of clearly assigned gender roles which placed importance on work, but equally (if not more) on women as mothers who were satisfied in this domestic role. In terms of style, there was little deviation from

an established approach which favoured expository direct narration to push regime values onto the viewer. These films would also prioritise spaces which were firmly in the KSČ's ideological domain - public buildings and workplaces among others - which would serve to enhance the representation of the Czechoslovak state on the regime's terms. It should further be noted that due to the narrational technique, many protagonists were seen but not heard, the result of which was a domination of a Griersonian voice which imposed the state's narrative over the visual.

However, not all of normalisation's documentaries were of this type. Beginning in the 1980s, more space was afforded to exploring social issues and themes which the regime did not wish to address. Because of this, normalisation's encoding of certain anti-social behaviours was deliberately treated to place the KSČ at the forefront of eradicating these problems from society. This would be exploited by several directors (Sommerová and Kvasnička to name but two) who explored topics including addiction and teenage pregnancy, yet deliberately omitted the Party from any position where these issues would be alleviated. In contrast to normalisation values, oppositional documentaries cast light on similar discourses but with a different encoding. Whilst propaganda narratives claimed that Czechoslovaks were socially and economically fulfilled, these films argued that the opposite was true; with subjects on the margins of society, and citizens who were often deprived from sufficient income or amenities.

With the authoritarianism of the KSČ ending after democratic elections, both the content and funding model of documentaries would radically alter. Chapter Three, which went into detail about the challenges facing directors with the end of readily available state funding, identified the role of Česká televize as state broadcaster in the promotion of non-fiction film. In addition to ČT, a number of other bodies were in existence, and the disappearance of documentaries from cinema screens in the 1990s would gradually change upon entering the new Millennium. The normalisation value system, which once had a dominating role in cinema, ceased to exist; and was now replaced with variety of different narratives and discourses. Amongst these were documentaries which addressed aspects of history which could not previously be discussed (the Warsaw Pact intervention for example), or the nature of the state socialist regime itself; and

were often unrestrained in demonstrating their anti-communist credentials. These were complemented with certain films possessing a new set of values which promoted the democratic, market economy which was emerging. Nevertheless, this was also a period in which numerous directors cast focus upon social issues, and not necessarily with an uncritical encoding towards the current society. As the first half of Chapter Three shows, there have been documentaries criticising the rampant turn to consumerism, questioning the identity of the newly-established Czech Republic, or turning attention towards individuals or groups considered to be on the margins.

Alongside the different focuses taken by directors, the post-89 environment also began deviating further from the former expository mode of film narration. The concept of self-reflexivity previously analysed in Chapter One is particularly evident across a wide range of documentaries, as directors began to make further claims towards ownership in their work - echoed in the growing number of performative or interactive modes used. It can be argued that such developments reflect the open borders after the end of the regime, with similarities to - and influences from - other documentaries overseas, yet continuing to stick to Czech-specific issues designed for national, rather than international, consumption.

Třeštková's Documentary Narratives

By offering an in-depth analysis of the state of documentary during normalisation and post-normalisation, Helena Třeštková's longitudinal pieces can be placed within this wider context. It is, however, apparent that the narratives which are contained in these films differ from that of a typical pre-89 or post-89 film for a variety of reasons.

This is at its most evident during normalisation. Recognising the difficulties of longitudinal films in maintaining a specific set ideology, the length of time necessary to shoot and edit a long-term documentary project, and the uniqueness of the approach; there was little interest in adopting a similar

technique in the promotion of the normalisation value system. Furthermore, Třeštíková's focus on private, personal spaces evidenced in the first *Manželské etudy* cycle did not mirror the state's strategy of representing space rooted in the KSČ's ideological domain. Private spaces, and the observation of the 'ordinary' Czech couples in the cycle, had more in common with the oppositional documentaries which appeared in the 1980s, in terms of their employment to subvert normalisation values. Nevertheless, these documentaries often built around a larger social theme or issue than Třeštíková's desire to shoot the normalcy of existence in Czechoslovakia and the personal stories that accompany these experiences. In another departure from modes exhibited throughout the period, the eschewing of an expository narration, designed to prioritise subject utterances, is consistently adopted by the director - a technique which endures beyond the state socialist era.

These differences in the construction and style of the documentary are subversive acts in themselves, positioning *Manželské etudy* outside of the propagandistic sphere; but would count for little if there was not an encoded argument about the situation facing Czechoslovaks under normalisation. This is where the concept of fulfilment begins coming into play, with the couples of *Manželské etudy* exhibiting problems with attaining suitable accommodation, earning a sufficient income, and possessing equal access to public spaces and recreation. Gender roles crafted during normalisation, which portrayed women as fulfilled through motherhood, is countered here through a narrative which argues that the cycle's women are increasingly isolated and deprived of opportunities to pursue a career or maintain a social life. However, the domestic role of women which features in many propaganda documentaries can also be witnessed, with the majority of interviews being conducted in the family home - the key difference being that these representations are not treated in the same positive light. The overall encoding of *Manželské etudy*, therefore, argues that the narratives of the normalisation value system are untrue; and young couples are left unfulfilled despite the state's claims of a high standard of living.

Upon the return of the cycle in *Po dvaceti letech*, the use of self-reflexive and metanarrative practices had been further established amongst documentarians, while longitudinal documentary continued as a rarity in the Czech Republic.

Whether the increase of self-reflexivity by Třeščíková, either in *Po dvaceti letech* or the feature-length documentaries explored in Chapter Four, are the result of this wider trend is debatable. What appears more plausible, based upon the discussion of reflexivity in Chapters One and Three, is that this is a conscious choice by the director which recognises the issues arising from a continued, long-term observation. As these observations deepen, and relationships between subject and author develop, self-reflexivity enables Třeščíková to offer a reflection to the viewer of the interactivity and camera presence that is involved in the process of shooting a documentary.

Rather than minimising her presence, which could be observed during the first cycle, this signifies the desire of the director to capture the authenticity of an encounter - acknowledging that on-screen representations are not possible without a camera crew. Moreover, this is not only concerning the camera, but the rapport between Třeščíková and subjects, who have often become her personal friends; and hints at a shared history where both parties have the same experience of living through the Czechoslovak transition. These reasons all account for the inclusion of sequences which aid the authenticity of Třeščíková's post-89 documentaries - the words of advice given to the protagonist in *Katka*, or posing with the family for a photograph in *Ivana a Pavel*, would not feature in longitudinal pieces during normalisation; but enrich the post-89 works in communicating that despite being 'beyond', it is impossible for the director to be entirely separate from the narrative.

The clearest result of this goes beyond self-reflexivity to the point where Třeščíková assumes the role of author-subject in *René*. This is forced by the exceptional circumstances faced by René breaking into her flat - which like many events, cannot be anticipated in a longitudinal project. Whereas the *Etudy* cycle has remained relatively consistent in its format, noting the evident changes in terms of directorial voice, both *René* and *Soukromý vesmír* demonstrate significant differences in narrational technique. These take into account that these documentaries are unlike *Etudy*: Petr Kettner's diary entries dominate a large part of *Soukromý vesmír*, and René's letters from prison combine with the use of textual elements in *René* to develop his character, while additionally circumventing the lack of contact brought on by his long

prison spells. Along with *Katka*, René shows that Třeštíková is interested in observing beyond the 'ordinary' Czech citizen to also follow people considered to be on the margins of society.

Fulfilment and Cyclical Fulfilment

The initial exploration of fulfilment barriers which took place during the first *Manželské etudy* cycle remained with the project continuing through to *Po dvaceti letech*. Accommodation, income and romantic relationships, all measurements of fulfilment during the normalisation episodes, are once again returned to; with changes to space reflecting an openness not witnessed during the 1980s. This results in the six episodes of *Po dvaceti letech* engaging further with public spaces such as the workplace, which is indicative on the new values placed on work after 1989 - and not having to conform to a regime's value system to shoot subjects there. The advantage of this is that the two cycles are distinct in the historical periods which are represented (although still primarily interested in the private lives of subjects), and allow a further glimpse of work practices and economic fulfilment that are affected by employment.

Based upon the observations in *Po dvaceti letech*, which must also take into account subject withdrawals and the emergence of the new generation on screen, the idea of a fulfilment cycle emerges - a new turn of events considering that the normalisation documentaries were designed to subvert regime narratives.

It may be expected that the creative treatment of the second cycle would posit that the situations of subjects has demonstrably improved thanks to a change in political leadership and culture. This may be true of several individuals within *Po dvaceti letech* who have been able to forge successful careers, but for the majority of subjects, life continues as it had always done. In some respects, work may be a more gratifying task - and in areas of interest to the protagonists - yet this is met with longer working hours that deprive them of time with their partner or for recreation. For others, manual, unskilled and unfulfilling jobs

continue, with representations that would not seem out of place within the original cycle.

The issues of unemployment, non-existent in normalisation observation, are now approached in *Marcela a Jiří*, as both mother and daughter look for jobs which are low-paid and precarious. Marcela's separation from husband Jiří, and Zuzana's divorce with Stanislav, have left both women isolated and lacking an emotional and romantic fulfilment which they have not been able to fully address; and both remain in the same housing that they inhabited during normalisation. In the case of Marcela, this is to a poor standard and its employment in the documentary argues that housing issues have not been fully alleviated by the transition.

Chapter Three's analysis of *Po dvaceti letech* uses the cycle as a template where Třeštková's ideas of fulfilment can be developed. The barriers to fulfilment, once used in the first *Manželské etudy* to critique the regime, now expand to question if anything has fundamentally changed in the lives of the cycle's subjects. When it is established that these barriers often remain, it becomes apparent that a different economic and political system does not universally or necessarily alleviate the problems facing ordinary Czech people.

This concept is approached from two angles. Firstly, as indicated above, issues of economic well-being, housing and relationships which impact upon the subjects of *Etudy* carry through from normalisation to post-normalisation - the 'cycle' continuing from one regime to the next. Secondly, with many of the children born during the first cycle now reaching adulthood, fulfilment can be considered amongst the next generation. Two of the most evident examples of fulfilment barriers enduring are offered through Ivana (*Marcela a Jiří*) and Lucie (*Mirka a Antonín*), with the encoding of these documentaries designed to draw comparisons between parents and their children. In Lucie's case, this is near-identical: she marries young, falls pregnant, and lives a similar life to Mirka and Antonín in the flat which they inhabited during the first cycle. Despite the ability for Czech citizens to now participate in the democratic process, *Po dvaceti letech* notes that - akin to their parent's generation - there is little zeal for these newly-won powers, further associating these young people with the

lack of political engagement witnessed in the normalisation films (albeit for rather different reasons).

These fulfilment cycles intensify when examining the standalone documentaries in Chapter Four. Many of the themes which are addressed in *Soukromý vesmír* through the observation of the Kettner family relate to the *Etudy* cycle, both as studies of the ordinary family, and through the historical period that begins in normalisation and ends several decades later. Like the *Etudy* couples, the viewer watches new families emerge whose lives resemble many of the experiences of Petr and Jana Kettner, with the role of son Honza of particular interest as a rebellious teenager who eventually settles down. The larger history of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, included through television footage and contrasted with Petr's diary, reveals that family life remains largely unaffected through the transitional period and beyond; including possessing a clear love for each other which suggests that fulfilment on an emotional level can be retained. These larger histories through television are a significant addition to *René*, and similarly communicate that the protagonist's day-to-day life as a prisoner and criminal are unchanged.

Třeštíková's turn towards habitual burglar René and drug user Katka in the remaining documentaries provide evident visual cycles of criminality and addiction that emphasise how the director treats fulfilment. The shorter nature of these films as opposed to a documentary series, and the visibility of prison and drug usage, argue that fulfilment on a number of levels cannot be attained while these are ongoing practices. Although robberies can net significant amounts of money for René, they continue to leave him in jail; where he has cultivated an image of an outsider and desperado which further ostracises him on the outside. For Katka, her inability to get clean has meant she has lost all parental rights to her daughter, and lives in a number of appalling squats with an abusive boyfriend.

The end of normalisation has made it possible to shoot documentaries with an intense focus on these marginalised individuals, with freedom to include many shots that would not bypass the censor in earlier times. While this may be seen as relating to fulfilment in itself - in other words, Třeštíková can fulfil a desire

to make films about subjects such as René and Katka - the observation of the subjects continues to argue that many of the political developments are an absurdity when relating to the lives of protagonists. Despite shared experiences between director and protagonist (these are particularly evident in *René* and *Soukromý vesmír*), these longitudinal films maintain concentration on fulfilment in relation to the subject's narrative.

Whilst acknowledging that the post-89 transformations have had some degree of positive impact upon the lives of protagonists, evidenced for the most part in *Po dvaceti letech*; the director argues that market economy has either had a minimal effect on alleviating fulfilment barriers, or has even been somewhat of an irrelevancy in the provision of well-being through the criteria she has explored.

Implementations and Recommendations

The research and writing of this thesis has resulted in a study which is unique in English-language scholarship on Helena Třeštíková. This subject, as part of a wider field which remains underrepresented, offers a comprehensive analysis of fulfilment which has until this point been unrecognised in relation to Třeštíková documentaries; while simultaneously providing an in-depth review of documentary films during authoritarianism and post-communism. Central to this has been the position of longitudinal filmmaking in non-fiction film, a vehicle that has been skilfully employed by the director as an effective means of representing subjects according to her principles of authenticity.

Longitudinal documentaries exist, and continue to be produced, all over the world. As the methodology advocated in this thesis is not specific to the Czechoslovak and Czech historical context, it can be successfully applied to the study of this form (and indeed, other documentary modes) with minimal alteration; further contributing to the gaps in literature which were identified in the introduction. One gap which was particularly evident concerns the role of women documentarists, signalling the need for an increased study into the issues

of gender and documentary production - longitudinalists or otherwise. This thesis has not claimed to provide the definitive approach to documentary criticism and study, but plays a role in building on existing work undertaken, while also advocating for an increased interest in the discourses which it addresses.

Because of this, there is still a lot of work to be done. Turning once more to the example of normalisation and post-normalisation Czechoslovakia, discussion of the cultural environment of these two periods has been both minimal and heavily concentrated in Czech-language academia. Although this has been rectified to some extent by the contributions offered here, a greater detail is required which cannot be fully explored in this project due to the spatial constraints. This is also the case in reference to other Helena Třeštíková documentaries. As argued in the introduction, the documentaries which have featured in this study provide an example which can be replicated, yet it would be advantageous to develop the observations which have been made in this thesis by applying the methodology to further films. Additional projects which aim at understanding documentary films and television, and how they reflect upon the Czech transition, are to be welcomed.

Ultimately, the novelty of this thesis lies in addressing a number of different factors to do with history, culture and the longitudinal approach which have been neglected up until now. Třeštíková's documentaries offer the viewer a glimpse of how the different political processes are represented in non-fiction film, and how they relate to the lives of Czechs occupying different sections of society. As there has been little engagement with how this history has been depicted up until this point, this study has been valuable in challenging assertions that the post-normalisation liberal democracy has provided a fulfilment which was lacking under KSČ rule, and hypothesising that this is not how fulfilment actually works. On the contrary, Třeštíková makes the point that fulfilment exists as a cycle which continues through transitions and is passed down to generations; and although this cycle can be broken, it can also endure.

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- Alda* (dir. Viera Čáknyová, 2009)
- Amadeus* (dir. Miloš Forman, 1984)
- Apel* (dir. Vera Jocić, 1964)
- A Sixth Part of the World* (dir. Dziga Vertov, 1926)
- Augusta* (dir. Anne Wheeler, 1976)
- Český mír* (dir. Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda, 2010)
- Český sen* (dir. Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda, 2004)
- Chačipe* (dir. Miroslav Janek, 2005)
- Dál nic* (dir. Ivo Bystřičan, 2014)
- Die Kinder von Golzow* (dir. Winifried and Barbara Junge, 1961)
- Divorce Iranian Style* (dir. Kim Longinotto and Ziba Mir-Hosseini, 1998)
- Docela slušní lidé* (dir. Jaroslav Černý, 1984)
- Dvě tváře ženy* (dir. Helena Sobotová, 1988)
- Dvořák v Americe* (dir. Zdeněk Tyc, 1998)
- GEN: Bohumil Hrabal* (dir. Jiří Menzel, 1994)
- GENUS: Michal Viewegh* (dir. Jan Hřebejk, 1995)
- Great Grand Mother* (dir. Anne Wheeler, 1975)
- Gustáv Husák* (Studio Zpravodajských filmů, 1986).
- Hledání cest* (dir. Helena Třeštíková, 1988)
- Hoop Dreams* (dir. Steve James, 1994)
- Hoří, má panenko* (dir. Miloš Forman 1967)
- Hosté nejmilejší* (dir. Erna Friesová, 1951)
- Hutě volají* (dir. Karel Kabeláč, 1950)
- Jak se žije po okupantech* (dir. Alena Činčerová, 1998)
- Jdi za štěstím* (dir. Jan Špáta, 1979)
- Jen čtvrt hodinky?* (dir. Oldřich Mirad, 1959)

- Jestem mężczyzną* (dir. Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz, 1985)
- Jordbo cycle* (dir. Rainer Hartleb, 1982)
- Katka* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 2010)
- Kolya* (dir. Jan Svěrák, 1996)
- Máňa* (dir. Olga Sommerová, 1993)
- Man with a Movie Camera* (dir. Dziga Vertov, 1929)
- Manželské etudy - Ivana a Pavel* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 1987)
- Manželské etudy - Mirka a Antonín* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 1987)
- Manželské etudy - Zuzana a Vladimír* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 1987)
- Manželské etudy - Zuzana a Stanislav* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 1987)
- Manželské etudy - Marcela a Jiří* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 1987)
- Manželské etudy - Ivana a Václav* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 1987)
- Manželské etudy po dvaceti letech - Ivana a Pavel* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 2005)
- Manželské etudy po dvaceti letech - Mirka a Antonín* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 2005)
- Manželské etudy po dvaceti letech - Zuzana a Vladimír* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 2005)
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- Marcela* (dir. Helena Třeštková, 2006)
- Masky, šašci, démony* (dir. Rudolf Adler, 2000)
- Matějská pout'* (dir. Jan Špáta, 1974)
- Maturita v listopadu* (dir. Jiří Krejčík, 2000)
- Mých posledných 150 tisíc cigarete* (dir. Ivo Bystřičan, 2013)
- Největší přání* (dir. Jan Špáta, 1964)
- Největší přání II* (dir. Jan Špáta, 1990)
- Nezletilé matky* (dir. Vladislav Kvasnička, 1990)
- Obchod na korze* (dir. Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, 1965),
- Obsluhoval jsem anglického krále* (dir. Jiří Menzel, 2006)
- Odsouzení* (dir. Jan Špáta, 1980)

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (dir. Miloš Forman, 1975)
O slavnosti a hostech (dir. Jan Němec, 1966)
Ostře sledované vlaky (dir. Jiří Menzel, 1967)
Otázky pro dvě ženy (dir. Drahomíra Vihanová, 1984)
Právo na lásku (dir. Andrea Majstorović, 1994)
Řekni mi něco o sobě (dir. Helena Třeštíková, 1992)
René (dir. Helena Třeštíková, 2008)
Respice Finem (dir. Jan Špáta, 1967)
Rodinné album (dir. Petr Zrno, 1984)
Sloužím (dir. Olga Sommerová, 1996)
Soukromý vesmír (dir. Helena Třeštíková, 2011)
Super Size Me (dir. Morgan Spurlock, 2004)
The Day I Will Never Forget (dir. Kim Longinotto, 2002)
Třicet případů majora Zemana (dir. Jiří Sequens, 1974)
Twenty Years Later (dir. Eduardo Coutinho, 1985)
Up (dir. Michael Apted, 1964)
Urząd (dir. Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz, 1986)
Věrní zůstaneme (dir. Milan Maryška, 1994)
Volby 1990 (director uncredited, 1990)
V pasti (dir. Helena Třeštíková, 2001)
Zabitá neděle (dir. Drahomíra Vihanová, 1969)
Za nové tvůrčí činy ve jménu socialismu a míru (director uncredited, 1977)
Zapovězená láska (dir. Vladislav Kvasnička, 1990)
Země sv. Patricka (dir. Jan Špáta, 1967)
Žena za pultem (dir. Jaroslav Dudek, 1977)
Ženy socialistického Československa (dir. Drahomíra Vihanová, 1975)
Ženy v JZD (dir. Josef Soukup, 1951)
Žijeme lépe, žijeme radostněji (dir. Miroslav Hrubý, 1949)
Život a smrt v Tanvaldu (dir. Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda, 2013)
Zkáza krásou (dir. Helena Třeštíková, 2016)
Zkus to dokázat (dir. Olga Sommerová, 1987)
Z lásky (dir. Helena Třeštíková, 1987)

