



SEVENTH CONTINENT

film education program for schools and kindergartens
Kids Meet Art Association

TEACHER'S RESOURCE PACK FOR THE DOCU-FICTION FILM *FIUME O MORTE!*

DIRECTOR: IGOR BEZINOVIĆ
(RECOMMENDED AGE: 14 +)



AUTHORS: MARIJA KRSTANOVIĆ & ANTE ZLATKO STOLICA

VALUES WE RAISE AWARENESS OF AND DEVELOP THROUGH THE FILM:

- The relationship between the individual and the collective
- Distinguishing between aesthetic value and ethical responsibility
- Critical thinking about history
- Civic activism

HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES FROM THE RESOURCE PACK:

Before the screening: [First activity - \(historical\) character for a film](#)

After the screening: [First activity - art and morality](#)

Independent work: [Task two - history is written by the winners](#)

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ABOUT THE FILM

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE FILM

DIRECTOR: Igor Bezinović

SCREENWRITER: Igor Bezinović

PRODUCERS: Vanja Jambrović, Tibor Keser (Restart)

COMPOSERS: Hrvoje Nikšić, Giovanni Maier

About the Authors

Igor Bezinović is a filmmaker who was born in Rijeka, which is now part of Croatia, but which at the time of his birth was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—before that, part of it belonged to the Kingdom of Italy and part to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (and to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes before that), before which it was part of the Free State of Fiume, and part of the Italian Regency of Carnaro before that, and part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before that...

His films include *The Blockade* (2012 Oktavijan Prize for best Croatian documentary), *Veruda* (2015 Oktavijan Prize for best Croatian documentary), and *A Brief Excursion* (2017 Big Golden Arena Prize for best Croatian feature film), along with many short films of all shapes and sizes. His work has been shown internationally at events including IFF Rotterdam, DOK Leipzig, IDFF Jihlava, CPH:DOX, Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean, Venice Biennale of Architecture (with Hrvoslava Brkušić for Pulska grupa), Museum of the Moving Image, and Guanajuato IFF.

He graduated from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb with a degree in film direction, and from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb with a degree in Philosophy, Sociology and Comparative Literature.

He is a member of the Croatian Film Directors' Guild and Black Belt judo club.

Awards and Recognitions

- Rotterdam International Film Festival 2025 – **Winner of Best Film Award** (Tiger competition program); **FIPRESCI Award**.
- Pula Film Festival 2025 – Croatian Program – **Vedran Šamanović Award; Golden Arena for Best Director (Igor Bezinović); Golden Arena for Makeup (Ivana Pralija); Golden Arena for Costume Design (Tajči Čekada; Manuela Paladin); Golden Arena for**

Scenography (Anton Spazzapan); Golden Arena for Casting (Sara Jakupec); Golden Arena for Production (Vanja Jambrović; Tibor Keser).

- Innsbruck International Film Festival 2025 – Documentary Competition – **Best Documentary Film.**
- Croatian Film Days 2025 – **Audience Award for Best Film; Grand Professional Jury Award for Direction; Grand Professional Jury Award for Music.**
- Budapest International Film Festival 2025 – **Audience Award for Best Film.**
- European Film Awards 2026, Berlin, DE – **Award for Best European Documentary Film.**
- And many others—the list can be found here:
<https://restarted.hr/film/dugometrazni-filmovi/fiume-o-morte/>

Interesting Facts About the Film

1. The Croatian premiere of the film was held on 8 February 2025 at Rijeka's Art-kino cinema, and those who attended say the atmosphere more closely resembled a sporting event than a cultural one. After just one month of screening and record attendance, *Fiume o morte!* was declared the most-watched film in the 16-year history of this cinema.
2. It became the most-watched Croatian documentary in cinemas since Croatia's independence, with an impressive 27,952 viewers at the end of distribution.
3. It was chosen as the Croatian candidate for the 98th Academy Awards (Oscars) in the Best International Feature Film category, which is the first time a documentary has held this nomination for our country.
4. Cineuropa, a popular portal dedicated to promoting European cinematography, ranked the film sixth on its list of the 25 Best Films in 2025. Justification: "Despite everything happening in the world, and especially in Europe, with ideologies and policies that destroy freedom and stifle culture growing stronger on the political front, examples of creativity, presence, acceptance, and correctness in the field of culture and art are perhaps stronger than ever."
5. The unexpected relevance of the historical episode it describes is certainly one of the reasons for the film's popularity with the audience. The right wing is gaining strength in Europe, but also across the Atlantic—just a few days before the film's world premiere in Rotterdam, where it won the main award, Elon Musk raised his right hand in what appeared to be a fascist salute at the inauguration of US President Donald Trump. Just over a hundred years earlier, it was in Rijeka that this salute was caught on film for the first time!

6. In the opening scenes, the author states in a voice-over: "My Italian colleagues told me not to mention fascism too much in the introduction, so I'll stop here." This seemingly casual remark opens an important layer of the film, as it directly points to the presence of self-censorship conditioned by market logic.
7. The young Benito Mussolini was a great admirer of D'Annunzio, whose political and aesthetic expression had a significant influence on Mussolini's later public and ideological performance. Mussolini adopted many elements of D'Annunzio's symbolic repertoire, most notably the song Youth (Italian: Giovinezza). It is heard being performed in the film, and it was Mussolini who adopted and institutionalized this song as the official anthem of the Italian fascist movement, thus further strengthening the link between D'Annunzio's poetics and fascist political practice.
8. When asked if D'Annunzio was a fascist, Bezinović replies: "He was never a member of the official fascist party, but the fascists considered him a spiritual leader. D'Annunzio was a hard nationalist and imperialist. He wanted to conquer the eastern Adriatic and used military force to achieve his desires. For me, that is enough to call a person a fascist."
9. The film was shot in the actual locations where the historical episodes took place: in Rijeka where D'Annunzio's occupation actually occurred, in Trieste, at D'Annunzio's residence *Vittoriale degli Italiani* in Gardone on Lake Garda, and on the Italian part of the Karst plateau.
10. About a hundred people from Rijeka participated in filming, mostly non-professionals (Naturshchiki), including members of minorities who speak the Fiuman dialect—a local variant of the Italian language shaped over centuries by encounters between Italian, Croatian, and other cultures in the city, and which is slowly dying out today.
11. As many as seven actors alternate in the role of D'Annunzio, linked only by one physical trait—baldness. In this way, the character of the occupier is shown with an ironic distance, stripped of the aura of a unique historical figure.

Film Summary

Fiume o morte! (lit. Rijeka or Death!) is a docu-fiction film by Rijeka native Igor Bezinović, in which the director and screenwriter uses a creative style to describe a controversial historical episode in Rijeka that is unknown to the broader public. In the film, the citizens of the city of Rijeka—known as *Fiume* in Italian—recount, reconstruct, and reinterpret the bizarre story of the 16-month occupation of their city in 1919 by Italian poet, dandy, and military leader Gabriele D'Annunzio. Poetry, cocaine, dynamite, rifles, football, airplanes, furniture flying through windows, concerts, prisons, sunbathing, thousands of soldiers, millions of bullets, endless speeches, and even a platypus... all are part of one of the most bizarre occupations in the history of mankind. Through this film, 100 years later, the citizens of Rijeka have been given the opportunity to take history into their own hands and tell their version of events.

Film Synopsis

Although Rijeka's position and focus on industrial development made it a target for the expansionist pretensions of many countries, Bezinović's film is dedicated to the lesser-known moment of the city's capture by Gabriele D'Annunzio, his short-lived rule, his break from official Italy, and his attempt to establish an independent free state.

At the very beginning, the film takes us back to the time after World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when the so-called *Rijeka Question* arose—the issue of Rijeka's ownership, negotiated by the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of SHS (later Yugoslavia). Although Rijeka was not included in the 1915 *Treaty of London*—which promised parts of the eastern Adriatic coast to Italy—famous Italian poet and radical nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio believed it belonged to them. Despite opposition from the Italian government, which did not want to violate international obligations, on 12 September 1919, D'Annunzio marched into Rijeka with a group of about 2,500 paramilitary legionnaires with the intent of annexing it to Italy.

A year later, on 8 September 1920, D'Annunzio—using the slogans *Fiume o morte!* (*Rijeka or death!*) and *Viva l'Italia!* (*Long live Italy!*)—proclaimed Rijeka an independent state, calling it the Italian Regency of Carnaro. This eccentric visionary attracted many young, dissatisfied, and unemployed men from Italy to serve as his soldiers. During this period, Rijeka became an experimental space for his authoritarian ideas—including a cult of personality, mass propaganda spectacles, the glorification of violence, and military parades. D'Annunzio's rule lasted 16 months, until the so-called *Bloody Christmas* at the end of 1920, when the Italian army (which did not recognize his self-initiated occupation) attacked Rijeka and ended his rule.

In *Fiume o morte!*, the director presents this episode not only as a little-known historical event, but as an important moment that saw the creation of ideas, symbols, and patterns of political action that would have a powerful influence later, even though these have been largely suppressed or forgotten in Rijeka's collective memory today.

2. ESSAY ON THE FILM

At noon on 12 September 2019, exactly 100 years to the day after he occupied Rijeka with his paramilitary units, a sculpture of Gabriele D'Annunzio was ceremoniously unveiled in the center of Trieste. The official report from the city hall session states that this monument celebrates the centennial of D'Annunzio's "Rijeka undertaking."

At the same time, an exhibition titled *D'Annunzio's Martyr* opened in a prominent museum in Rijeka—a series of personifications of Rijeka through which representations of the female body in art reveal the connection between nationalism, erotica, and violence against territory and women. This display alludes in parallel to D'Annunzio's pillaging of the occupied city, as well as his general treatment of women, which was marked by a relationship of power in which they would remain "physically and emotionally exhausted, just like the city of Rijeka."

The question arises—how is it possible for the same person to be considered a great poet, visionary, and national hero, while just 70 kilometers away they are simultaneously considered a tyrant, occupier, and maniac? Such phenomena, despite their contradictory nature, are not rare, and find footing in collective memory, or—more precisely—collective forgetting. Igor Bezinović had this in mind when he began his docu-fiction film *Fiume o morte!* by interviewing locals on Rijeka's Korzo and Velika Placa, asking if they knew who the famous D'Annunzio was. Although most of them did not, this served not as an obstacle but an incentive for the director to quickly transition to the reconstruction of this bizarre historical episode—with these same people as **non-professional actors (Naturshchiki)**.

This **participatory process** is not just a formal quirk of the director—it is the key interpretive framework of the film, which consciously destabilizes the idea of history as a fixed narrative. Instead of historians interpreting the past or archival footage giving it an appearance of untouchable truth, here the citizens of Rijeka are placed in the forefront as those who re-perform history and connect it with the present. The suggestion is thus that history is not exclusively the domain of experts, but a living social process in which those who continue to live with its consequences have the right (and even the duty) to participate and bear the responsibility for knowing, understanding, and passing it on. This opens space in which to question not only what is remembered, but also who remembers, as both links are important in shaping collective memory.¹

The next inevitable aspect of this film's narrative strategy is **humor**; it not only relieves tension and makes this controversial episode accessible to all ages, but also serves as a fundamental

¹ It is important to emphasize that the participatory method here does not stem from a lack of research, but quite the opposite—from exhaustive research that subsequently enabled this kind of playfulness. Bezinović built the film on extensive archival work, using a rich collection of historical photographs (over 10,000 of them), recordings, and documents from the period of D'Annunzio's occupation, as well as consultations with historians, theorists of fascism, archivists, and experts on Rijeka's history. This layer of pre-production ensured a solid factual foundation and prevented arbitrariness in the interpretation of historical events.

critical instrument. As people from Rijeka recite D'Annunzio's slogans and stage mass scenes of his legionnaires, their restrained, awkward, nonchalant, or caricatured performance reveals the emptiness behind the pathos of this "historical spectacle." The purpose is not to trivialize the seriousness of the events themselves, but to highlight the absurdity of the personality that gave rise to them—a personality still wrapped in the mantle of a charismatic leader in the minds of some. Humor thus becomes a means by which to deconstruct the myth of genius: it shows that "charisma" here is not an inherent quality, but a product of the situation, carefully planned manipulations, collectively coordinated choreography, and the emotional engagement of the masses.

By revealing that D'Annunzio equated his political activity to an artistic performance, the film's subtext presents a dilemma: must an artist be a good person for us to appreciate their art, i.e. is it possible to separate aesthetic value from ethical responsibility? Although this is a universal doubt, this film is a rare example of a work that asks this question not abstractly, but through a specific historical persona—an extremely influential author who was also a proto-fascist. Instead of an explicit answer, the film clearly shows the harmful consequences of prioritizing art at the expense of moral sedation, pointing out that there can be no complete understanding of art without ethical awareness. Ultimately, a question more relevant than "was D'Annunzio a great artist?" arises: "What did he do with his talent?"

The critical attitude toward D'Annunzio in the film is further strengthened through **distance**—both temporal and ideological. The citizens performing the scenes do not lose themselves in their historical characters: their contemporary awareness constantly breaks through their performance, creating the so-called **alienation effect** (*Verfremdung*), signaling to the viewer that this is not a glorification of the past, but an analysis of its mechanisms. In this way, temporal distance allows for a reflection on the reconstructed events in the context of today's ethical and political landscape, while ideological distance prevents identification with or submission to authoritarian power. Through this process, the responsibility for interpreting history moves from the director to the community—specifically, to the viewer. This is a film that does not offer conclusions, but creates conditions for critical thinking.

Critical reflection is the starting point of this film, whose ten-year creation involved the active contributions of roughly a hundred of Rijeka's citizens. It is important to emphasize that *Fiume o morte!* does not function only as a finished work of art, but also as a project that already had significant social impact during its formation. In a way, it represents an act of justice, and even an act of revenge—occupied Rijeka returns to the hands of its citizens so they can now shape it as they see fit. This gesture most clearly materializes in the closing credits set in the context of the Rijeka Carnival. The historical fact that D'Annunzio banned the carnival during the occupation gives this decision a strong symbolic charge: carnival, as a space for collective subversion, is directly opposed to authoritarian logic, so its return to the streets marks not just the restoration of a centuries-old tradition, but also the return of a key form of social freedom.

Finally, let us underline that the importance of this film is not just its transmission of a historical situation, but the indication of its symptoms and side effects—the realization that history is not

a distant chronicle, but a mirror in which we recognize patterns that can repeat. In the words of director Igor Bezinović: "It was important to him (D'Annunzio) that this occupation be remembered, as it is to us who are making this film."

3. METHODOLOGICAL PACK: INTRODUCE, ANALYZE, AND REVIEW

Fiume o morte! is fundamentally suited to history classes due to its subject matter. It can be analyzed in the specific context of events in Croatia during and after World War I, which are taught in primary school Year 8, vocational secondary school Year 2, and gymnasium Year 4. However, the theme of this film has distinct cross-curricular potential, especially in the segments of personal and social development and civics. The film is also easy to imagine in Politics and Economics classes, as it interprets the relationship between the individual and the collective in an highly original way and provides authentic insight into social upheavals amidst political chaos. For similar reasons, the film can be used as teaching material in Sociology, Philosophy, and Ethics, as well as within broader topics concerning anti-fascism, tolerance, and civic activism. Of course, *Fiume o morte!* can also be analyzed in the context of media culture in Croatian Language classes as an example of a hybrid film based on archival material that also uses narrative elements. Here, we will approach the film in precisely this manner.

Methodological analysis includes an introductory class prior to screening the film, one class for analysis and interpretation, and research project tasks. This analysis can serve as a starting point, guideline, and inspiration for designing the class in accordance with the givens of the teaching process. Goals will vary depending on the conception of the class; some possibilities are listed below.

Goals

- Domain: Culture and Media
- Key Concepts: film genres, hybrid film, archival material, film narration, vox populi, film reconstruction, actors and non-professionals, metacinema techniques; Gabriele D'Annunzio, Rijeka, World War I
- Educational and Functional Tasks: understanding and evaluating art film; mastering individual elements of film language; researching and presenting selected topics using film
- Teaching Forms: problem solving, individual and group work, research work, discussion
- Teaching Sources and Resources: film, photograph, textbook, internet, PowerPoint presentation
- Correlations: Intradisciplinary—literature, media culture; Interdisciplinary—history, politics and economics, ethics, philosophy, sociology

3.1. ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE FILM SCREENING

Motivation

At the beginning of the film, the director asks his fellow citizens if they know who Gabrielle D'Annunzio is. Despite being from Rijeka, the vast majority of them have never heard of D'Annunzio or know very little about him. Guided by this small survey, we can easily assume that students in any part of Croatia would answer similarly. How then to present this film to them and how to pique their interest in a historical episode they might never have looked into themselves?

First Activity

Imagine a Hollywood producer offers you the chance to make a film about a historical person. Recall the History material you studied this year and in previous years and think about who that person would be.

(This task can be done individually, but it is even more effective in pairs or groups. Also, this first activity can function as part of a teaching unit or as homework.)

Second Activity

Each pair (or group) will present the person they chose to the class. They must answer several important questions:

Did you consider any other historical figures?

Why did you reject them, and why did you decide on the person you chose?

What makes this person so interesting that people would go to the cinema to see a film about them?

How is this person relevant to the time we live in?

How is this person relevant to the place we live in?

Third Activity

In this activity, the task becomes slightly more complex.

You are not filming a classic biographical film following a character from birth to death—your task is to choose only one fragment of that person's biography. It could be one battle or an important event; it could be a period of a year or two, or it could be a single day.

Explain how you decided on the specific part of the biography of the chosen historical figure. What would your film look like? What film genre would it be—narrative, documentary, animated, hybrid, experimental? Explain your choice. If narrative is the genre, who would play the main role? Why?

Come up with a title for the film.

3.2. ACTIVITIES DURING THE FILM SCREENING

Introducing the Film

The film you are about to watch deals with an episode in the life of Gabrielle D'Annunzio—specifically, his occupation of Rijeka immediately after World War I. You probably haven't heard of this event, or of D'Annunzio himself, and perhaps this story doesn't seem as exciting as the ones you came up with in class. However, this film became the most-watched documentary in Croatian cinemas. Why was this the case? We will likely find out after we watch it.

Screening the Film

Screening of *Fiume o morte!* at a duration of 112 minutes.

Emotional-Intellectual Pause

A pause of several seconds to organize impressions and prepare for further work.

Free Sharing of Impressions

What impression did the film leave on you?

Which part of the film do you particularly remember? Explain.

3.3. ACTIVITIES AFTER THE FILM SCREENING

Sample lesson plan:

Introduction

- motivation (5 - 10 minutes)

At the end of film reviews, we often see a mark from one to five, similar to school—what mark would you give this film? Write the mark on paper and hold it up. Briefly explain the mark.

Many films have already been made about D'Annunzio, but none have achieved this kind of success—could you explain the success of this film?

Can you compare this film with any film or films you have watched? What is it that makes this film unusual?

Body

- learning activities (20 - 25 minutes)

In the main body of the lesson, students will become familiar with the film's external and internal dimensions. We will distinguish the film language that forms its structure before moving on to the thematic and conceptual layers.

Can you determine which genre this film belongs to? It is true that *Fiume o morte!* is usually listed as a documentary. However, many film critics and viewers will say it is a **hybrid film**. What might a hybrid film be?

A hybrid film combines two or more film genres to achieve specific expressive qualities in presenting the director's idea.

To understand exactly what this means, we can go back another step and ask a simple question—what is film direction? At the Pula Film Festival, *Fiume o morte!* received the award for best direction. What does film direction consist of, and why is it so good here?

The **story** of this film is quite simple—in fact, it chronologically follows the occupation of Rijeka month by month. This story has already been told by many, but each time in different ways. The way the story is told is direction. The **director** thus has various tools and procedures at his disposal to tell the story. In this film, these procedures are incredibly numerous. Split into groups of four; within each group, try to list all the **ways** the author presents this story to the audience. These ways are also called *film language* or *film form*. Describe them in your own words, and then we will learn some terms together that might be new to you.

After you've listed everything, a representative from each group will write one way of presenting this story on the board—and so on in a circle until we run out of them.

Archival Materials

Archival materials (photos and footage) form the backbone of this film. These materials are what make this film a documentary—they are real documents that the director decided to use to reliably tell what happened. Does the use of documentary material guarantee a film that will truthfully show what happened? Of course not. **Film editing** is always a form of manipulation—depending on what we show and what we omit, and depending on the **order** in which we present something, we always create our own story.



(ARCHIVE: IMAGE 1, VIDEO 1)

Reconstructions

The second layer in this film consists of **fictional reconstructions**. So, although the film is essentially a documentary, the director uses tools more typical of narrative films. Like in a narrative film, we have actors and actresses who play scenes according to the director's instructions.



Are they professional actors in this case? No, they are **non-professionals**, without film education or experience. Who are they, why did the director choose them, and does their non-professional acting bother us? They are the citizens of Rijeka, the city that is a constitutive element of this story—they are people who have the right to tell this story. That's why their sometimes "weak" acting doesn't bother us; on the contrary, it is justified and contributes to the charm of this film.

(RECONSTRUCTION: IMAGE 2, VIDEO 2, VIDEO 3)

Vox populi

Vox populi (Latin: voice of the people) is a documentary procedure most often used in journalism, specifically in news reports. It is most commonly used in public spaces to gauge public opinion through short interviews. The director uses it here as a legitimate procedure that also contributes to the diversity and wonder of this film.



(VOX POPULI: IMAGE 3, VIDEO 4)

Voice-over

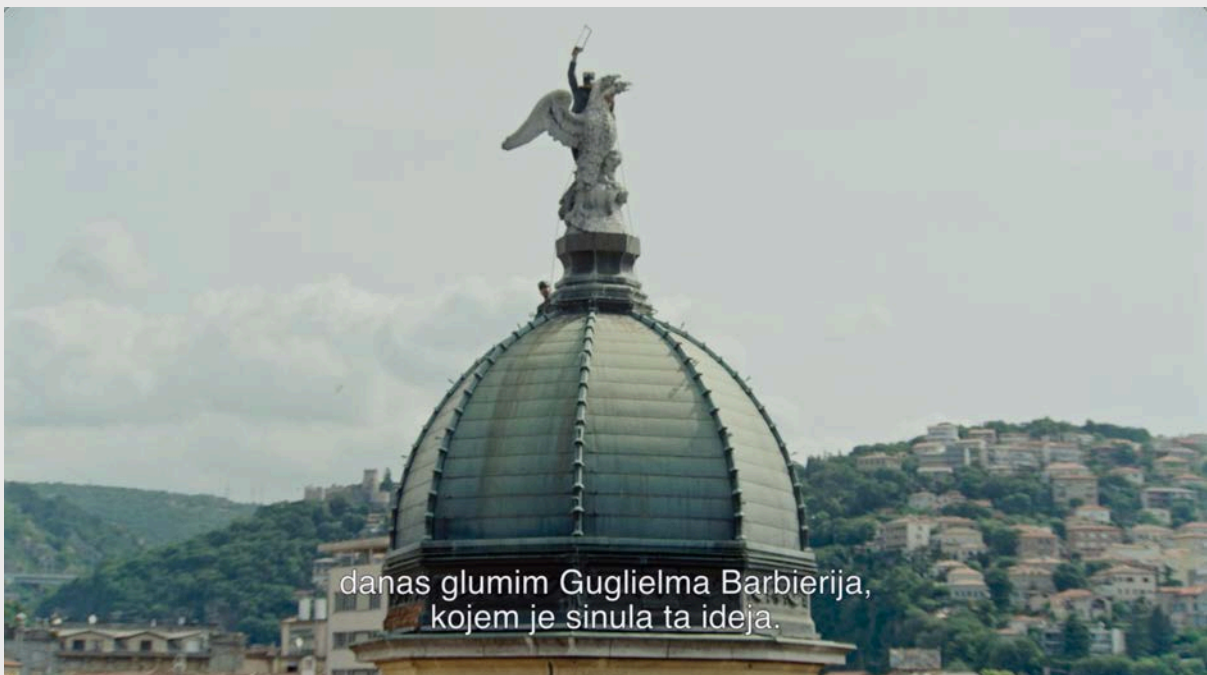
Who leads us through this story? Whose voice is it, or rather, whose voices are they? This film technique is called **voice-over**. We have several **narrators** here; they are also characters in the film who follow one another in this **relay-like structure**. The narration is opened and closed by the film's author speaking in Croatian, while all others use *Fiuman*—the dialect of the Italian national minority in Rijeka.



(VOICE OVER: IMAGE 4, VIDEO 5)

Metacinema techniques

Metacinema techniques run through this film at different levels. What is a metacinema technique? Most films we watch do not use this technique. If we watch, for example, *The Lord of the Rings*, we will forget that everyone we see on film is an actor, and we will forget that behind it all are cameramen, directors, set designers, etc. In short, we will surrender to the magic of the film—we will allow them all to "deceive" us. The metacinema technique works on the opposite principle—we are reminded of the film process taking place before us. That's why we can say this is a metafilm—a film about the making of a film.



At what levels do you notice it here? In the narration we hear, the author often speaks about the filmmaking process—for example, he says that the Italian producers told him not to mention the word *fascism* too much. Furthermore, within the film, we follow an audition for this same film. Additionally, many characters "slip out" of their own roles, suddenly behaving as real people and commenting on the filming process.

(METACINEMA: IMAGE 5, VIDEO 6)

Anachronisms

If we were to watch a film about Russian Empress Catherine the Great and see a detail that doesn't belong to the eighteenth century, we would certainly hold it against the authors as a lapse or error. We would describe this as an accidental **anachronism**. Is the director here trying to convince the viewer that the action is taking place in the early twentieth century? The director does the exact opposite—he lets the past and present intertwine freely, so the anachronisms are intentional here. What does this achieve? Can you list some examples?



(ANACHRONISMS: IMAGE 6, VIDEO 7)

Thematic and Conceptual Layer of the Story

This formal layer introduces us to the conceptual layer of the story.

Why did the director choose these specific techniques to tell a story that has been told many times before? Was it to make the film **look** as good as possible? That is certainly true. But are there deeper reasons why these methods were selected?

Let us recall these techniques once more: reconstructions involving the citizens of Rijeka, *Vox populi*, narrators who build upon one another, actors who interweave with the citizens. Reflect on what connects all these procedures. The answer is—the collective. The citizens of Rijeka played out and told this story. Think about why this is important.

To deepen this question, recall an event from your own life that was later retold in different versions. What was that event?

At least once in your life, you have probably had the experience that your version of a real event did not match the version told by a friend, sibling, neighbor, or parent. This is no longer just about **how** a story is told; it is about content, facts, and truth. In two versions of the same event, a friend from the back of the class can be both a villain and a hero. How is this possible?

Near the end of the film, we saw a monument to D'Annunzio being erected in the city of Trieste (only seventy kilometers from Rijeka). This raises the question: who has the right to the story? Or—who has the **greater** right to the story? Specifically, who has the right to the story of D'Annunzio's occupation of Rijeka?



What does the director achieve by insisting on the collective and involving citizens in almost the entire process of making this film? Did this participation allow us to get closer to the truth of a real event that happened over a century ago?

Regardless of your answer, this film calls for activity, participation, and responsibility. It asks us to get involved and tell our own version of the story. In doing so, it reveals art film as a medium that can resonate powerfully with audiences.



(TRIESTE / RIJEKA: IMAGE 7, VIDEO 8, IMAGE 8)

Final Part

- synthesis (5 to 10 minutes) - **student sheet 1**

The goal of the final part is for students to repeat key concepts and support them with examples outside of this film. This helps students clarify terms and teaches them how to apply them to films they will watch in the future.

(STUDENT SHEET 1 CONCEPTS AND FILMS)

3.4. RESEARCH AND DISCUSS

First Activity

Many remember Gabriele D'Annunzio as a precursor to the fascist movement; however, many others primarily remember him as a poet, writer, and artist. D'Annunzio even presented his own occupation of Rijeka as an artistic performance.

This places us on a "slippery slope" where aesthetics meet ethics. Consider these questions: How much does an artist's real life affect their art? Will we stop watching, reading, or listening to the works of artists who have done something that conflicts with our moral values? How should society position itself toward artists who have grossly violated certain moral norms?

Second Activity

Research which artists throughout history have scandalized the public with their biographies and how this affected how their art was perceived. Present your results in a PowerPoint presentation.

Third Activity

To learn how society deals with such cases today, research **cancel culture**. Investigate the situation globally and in Croatia. Conduct a survey among your school colleagues to find out their stance on this highly relevant topic.

4. FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

4.1. RESEARCH PROJECT TASKS

1. In addition to video and photos, this film uses another type of archival material: postcards. The director uses postcards to introduce us to the story. Your task is to find the oldest possible postcards of your city or town. Based on them, record a short film up to five minutes long.
2. Select an interesting lesson from a history textbook and compare it to a version of the same lesson from a textbook published 20, 30, or 50 years ago. Identify similarities and differences, and investigate the accuracy of the phrase "history is written by the winners". Present your findings in a short essay.
3. Choose a historical figure who marked your city or town. Record a *vox populi* (audio or video) on the street to see what citizens know and think about that person.

4.1. GLOSSARY

Naturshchiki (Non-professional actor) - An actor without formal training or experience, often chosen for personal characteristics (physical, social, etc.) that fit the film's theme. The term became commonplace in the 1920s (Lev V. Kuleshov) and was important in cinematographies that prefer natural, non-artificial acting (e.g. USSR, Italian neorealism, French New Wave). In Yugoslavia, non-professional actors (*naturščici*) were common in the '50s and '60s. The term

refers exclusively to live action films and often denotes actors who played roles close to their own personalities in several films.

Alienation Effect (german *Verfremdungseffekt*) - A Brechtian technique used to distance the audience from emotions, directing their attention toward rational choice.

Director - The primary creative figure; artistic supervisor of a film's creation with other artists (writers, actors, composers, cinematographers, scenographers, animators etc.); responsible for the final content and form.

Documentary film - In the broadest and literal sense, a film that depicts real (actual, true) events and persons, shown in the reality of natural, life, and social flows; this definition is a consequence of the fact that film, due to its technical characteristics, documents the phenomenal dimension of reality more faithfully, precisely, and "more documentarily" than any other instrument.

Hybrid film - A hybrid film combines two or more film genres in order to achieve specific expressive qualities in representing the director's idea.

Reconstruction - A procedure in which tools typical for feature films are used to stage a real event.

Vox populi - (Latin: voice of the people) A documentary technique most often used in journalism, specifically in news reports. It is most often used in public space to examine public opinion in the form of short interviews.

Voice-over - Narrator, an off-screen vocal statement that addresses the recipient of the narrative communication to guide them through the film. When the narrator is one of the film's characters, they can be a main or supporting character, and the narrative perspective changes accordingly. Since the narrator says what they already know, it is assumed that they are a kind of "know-it-all" or that they know more about the events than the viewers.

Metacinema - *a film about film*, or rather film dealing with film. Very early on, forms of feature film and documentary dealing with the themes of film production appeared, so-called *film about film* in the narrower sense (e.g. *The Cameraman*, 1928, by B. Keaton; *Silence is Golden*, 1947)

Anachronism - Placing, either unintentionally or intentionally, cultural achievements, historical events, persons, etc. in a time period in which they do not belong.

4.2. FOR READING AND RESEARCH

Useful websites and articles about the film:

- Video interview with the director (in Croatian):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVuF1tOYDcl>
- TV report about the film (in Croatian):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QK8NzdqvQHI>
- Film trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WoBtAMbDEI>
- Producer's film page (in Croatian):
<https://restarted.hr/film/dugometrazni-filmovi/fiume-o-morte/>
- Director's Website: <https://www.igorbezinovic.net/info/>
- An interview with the director (in Croatian):
<https://croatian.film/hr/filmmaker-of-the-month/40>

Useful websites about the use of film in teaching:

- Seventh Continent: <https://www.sedmikontinent.org/>
- Croatian Film Encyclopedia: <https://filmska.lzmk.hr/Projekt>
- Croatian Encyclopedia: <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/>

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5. ŠKRABALO, Ivo, 101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj, Globus, Zagreb, 1998.
6. TURKOVIĆ, Hrvoje, Pitanje medija i razgraničenje filma, Hrvatski filmski ljetopis, br. 56. / 2008.

6. LIST OF APPENDICES

1. List of Student Sheets*

Student Sheet 1

2. List of visuals

IMAGE 1 ARCHIVE

IMAGE 2 RECONSTRUCTION

IMAGE 3 VOX POPULI

IMAGE 4 NARRATION

IMAGE 5 METAFILM

IMAGE 6 ANACHRONISMS

IMAGE 7 TRIESTE

IMAGE 8 RIJEKA

3. List of video clips*

VIDEO CLIP 1 ARCHIVE

VIDEO CLIP 2 RECONSTRUCTION

VIDEO CLIP 3 RECONSTRUCTION

VIDEO CLIP 4 VOX POPULI

VIDEO CLIP 5 NARRATION

VIDEO CLIP 6 METAFILM

VIDEO CLIP 7 ANACHRONISMS

VIDEO CLIP 8 TRIESTE / RIJEKA

** Student Sheets and Video clips are available through the digital version on the webpage <https://www.sedmikontinent.org/zbirka/fiume-o-morte/>*

IMPRESSUM

TEACHER'S RESOURCE PACK FOR THE DOCUDRAMA *FIUME O MORTE!*

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