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Cinema Komunisto: cinema as a memory site

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CINEMA KOMUNISTO - Cinema as a memory site

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A Commentary submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Westminster
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

(by publication)

March 2015

Abstract

Cinema Komunisto is a documentary film about the use of the cinematic image in the creation of the political narrative of socialist Yugoslavia, taking as its starting point an abandoned film studio that had once been the crown-jewel of the Yugoslav film industry. An intensive five-year research process resulted in a story told through a montage of clips from fiction films and exclusive documentary archive, interspersed with interviews with key filmmakers, actors and studio bosses, as well as President Tito's personal projectionist.

In the introduction, a brief historical overview establishes the central position of cinema in socialist Yugoslavia, its contribution to the 'imagined community' in it's articulation of political myths and the narration of the common past. Transitioning over to the present-day, the commemorative function of cinema is discussed in the context of post-war and post-socialist public discourse.

A theoretical analysis of the relationship between cinema and history follows. Beginning with the concerns over the use of cinema as historical document, it extends to challenges faced by filmmakers seeking to 'revision' the past (Rosenstone, 2006) through the making of historical films. Starting with the *Annales* historians, such as Marc Ferro, and their contribution to the liberation of film from the requirements of written historiography, the argument is made for separating visual historical discourse from historical evidence (Ernest, 1983) and the challenge of making films with cinematic language (de Baecque, 2008)) is taken on. The final theoretical section discusses the impact of the 'memory turn' on the meeting between cinema and history, and argues for adopting the key concepts of cultural memory, such as it's present-day operation, instrumentality and mediality as useful tools for this inquiry. Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* proves fundamental as an analytical tool of the analysis of films as 'memory sites'. The memory turn is then situated within the context of post-socialist societies, such as Yugoslavia, where films become a useful means of representing the 'transition of meanings' taking place.

Adopting the concepts of Robert Rosenstone, the next section responds to the challenge of developing 'rules of engagement' that would allow for a particular 'historical understanding.' By situating *Cinema Komunisto* within the tradition of refractive

cinema (Corrigan, 2011), particularly the use of cinema as an expression of history (Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma*) or of history written by decree (Marker's *The Last Bolshevik*), I set out to assess and build on aesthetic and philosophical concepts developed by Marker and Godard. Closer to home, inspiration is drawn from filmmaker Dušan Makavejev and his approach of developing 'theory in practice' in *Innocence Unprotected.*

The elaboration of rules of engagement involves re-working the visual material, including the free mixing of documentary archive and clips from feature films, de-contextualising and interrogation of images. Use of concepts such as that of intentional disparity (Baron, 20014) allows the subversion of the intended use of images. The section on narrative voice questions the establishing of the right critical distance and subjective positioning of the author as narrator. Following the decisions to eschew an all-knowing voice-over, and to rely on character-narration, the editing approach becomes vital. Montage allows the elaboration of a philosophical approach, invoking Benjamin's concept of the dialectic image land the rapprochement of historical fragments to provoke critical reflection. Finally, temporal disunity and spatial articulation are discussed as narrative strategies. Temporal non-linearity and parallels in the dramaturgy add the ability to chart transitioning historical meanings into the present-day, tying back to concepts of social memory as the traces of the past in the present. Spatial narration is discussed in light of situated testimonies in geographical *lieux de memoire*, and the narrative and symbolic meaning of ruins, as markers of social forgetting. Both strategies prove to be valuable as 'rules of engagement', in particular because of the political dimension of constructing memory texts.

In conclusion it is argued that the historical understanding achieved by the adoption of the discussed 'rules of engagement' achieves a reconciliation of subjective truth and intimate lyricism, with the philosophical and pedagogical aim of a critical reflection on conventional historical narration. As a memory text, *Cinema Komunisto* positions memory before historical truth, and ultimately managing to find meaning in ruins.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Cinema Komunisto is a documentary film born out of my search for meaning in ruins. Robert Frost once wrote that every poem starts as a lump in the throat, and this was the case when I decided to make a film about an abandoned film studio that had once been the crown-jewel of the Yugoslav film industry. Making the film was a cathartic process. More than once I filmed places which were being destroyed or closed, or captured testimonies of people who died before the film was finished. And while the five years I spent researching and writing what was my first feature-length film represent an artistic coming-of-age, a parallel process was taking place. Beyond the lyrical reflection on the themes I was interested in, there were philosophical arguments I wanted to make. They stemmed from a dissatisfaction with the public conversation I grew up in, one that proved unable to address the profound political and social disruption we had lived through. The field of history seemed ill-equipped to meet the challenge of expressing or critiquing events, and the language of politics seemed woefully inadequate. I was searching for another language with which to join the conversation. This is how, in addition to the artistic decision to make a film, I decided to expand my research into the academic sphere as well. My motivation was to go beyond questions of aesthetic expression, to analyze my film as a work of reasoning, and to anchor it to a current of thought I felt was running through films of people whom I consider my artistic ancestors.

1. Research questions

Avala Film, the former Central Film Studio of the now former Yugoslavia, sits on top of a wooded hill, not far from the city center of Belgrade (once capital of Yugoslavia, today capital of Serbia). From its creation in 1947 until it stopped producing films during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990's, Avala Film produced 49% of all feature films shot in Yugoslavia - yet no book or academic study has ever been published about the state-run studios. There is no archive of Avala Film, no trace of the scripts, documentation or stills of the more than 200 Yugoslav feature films, 150 international co-productions, and 400 documentary films made there. Once a proud centerpiece of a cultural policy of the

socialist regime of President Josip Broz Tito, today Avala Film has become a ghost town of abandoned film sets and dusty labs. As all that remains at the 70-year old film studio is discarded as junk in preparation for a privatisation sale, it is an example of a trend visible all over the former Yugoslavia today: an unconcerned rejection of the Yugoslav cultural heritage, along with its monetisation and privatisation.[1] Along with the economic rapaciousness comes a political agenda. With the various successor states of Yugoslavia struggling to establish their legitimacy and define their national identity via new historical narratives - involving a re-telling (or complete erasing) of the Yugoslav 'episode' - memory *is* politics.

President Josip Broz Tito (1895-1980) came to power in Yugoslavia while leading the partisan struggle against German occupation in the Second World War. From the establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until his death in 1980, Tito was the central figure of the Yugoslav project, an attempt at building a Yugoslav state on the twin principles of a socialist political and economic system coupled with a federation uniting six republics around the notion of 'brotherhood and unity'. Public discourse and cultural life were from the outset dominated by the construction of a political narrative of the new Yugoslavia.

Following the terminology established by Benedict Anderson,[2] Yugoslavia could be seen as an 'imagined community' which came together as a nation by the forging of shared political myths. Andrew Wachtel (1998), who has written extensively on the pre-eminence of culture in the formation of national identity in Yugoslavia, joined Anderson's argument that in studying a nation emphasis should be placed on the development of national culture. For Wachtel, the national culture was the vehicle for the expression of "well-articulated national visions" (Wachtel, 1998:3), such as the ideology of a socialist society united by a common shared past which would supercede disparate ethnicities through brotherhood and unity. Accordingly, Zala Volčić highlights the central position of the Yugoslav cultural space, which she describes as "a civic space

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[1] Reuters: 'Tito's pet studio at risk of Yugoslav fate', May 7, 2013, accessed Jan 24, 2014: http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/03/07/entertainment-us-serbia-film-idUSBRE9260CM20130307

based on the socialist culture of daily life", stressing that "in particular, pan-Yugoslav films (and later, television shows) were crucial in mobilizing a sense of Yugoslav identity" (Volčić, 2007:23). Indicating that this was indeed a project consciously mounted by the Yugoslav political elite, Wachtel highlights that the socialist period was "the only time in Yugoslav history that the government was centrally involved in cultural policy making" (Wachtel, 1998:9).

In her analysis of how a common national imagination is forged, Naomi Greene writes that "reigning political myths are perpetuated by cinematic images" (Greene,1999:6). Greene even describes a certain period of French cinema, when cinematic images exemplified "a vital moment of[...] political life and culture. In their deep connection to national life, such images entered the realm of "moral existence"(Greene, 1999:187), an apt description of the position of Yugoslav films. Indeed, from the end of the Second World War the 'Story of Yugoslavia' was given its visual form in the creation of Yugoslav cinema. A seminal study published in 1985 by Daniel J. Goulding analyses the development of ideological and aesthetic principles that "moulded the content and direction of Yugoslavia's young Marxist-socialist cinema" and argues that for Yugoslav post-war leaders cinema catered to "the needs of socialist construction by fostering appropriate attitudes" (Goulding, 2002:7). The state support in the creation of the film industry (film studios, film schools) and distribution networks (state-sponsored film festivals, construction of cinemas) extended into prescriptions of thematic areas that filmmakers should address, creating a cinematic 'canon'. Goulding identifies themes in Yugoslav feature films that are devoted to the glorification of the revolutionary past, the reification of Tito as Yugoslavia's supreme leader, and "the reinforcement of revolutionary élan in the construction of a new socialist state" (Goulding, 2002:xiv) - thus identifying what are essentially the founding myths of the Yugoslav state[3].

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[2] See: Anderson, B. (Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. (1991). Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism (Revised and extended. ed.). London: Verso.

[3] Film historian Nevena Daković calls the series of partisan films, including the spectacles *Battle on the Neretva* (Bitka na Neretvi, 1969) and *Sutjeska* (1973), "celluloid monuments" to the war and revolution in the former Yugoslavia. She writes: "From the 1960s onwards their aesthetic simplicity, total ideological loyalty, psychological and emotional schematism, political homogeneity and increasing budget were

Tito's Yugoslavia survived the ruler's death for another decade, coming to an end in a violent civil war that broke out in 1991, and with the break-up came a period of erasing of Yugoslav memory and re-writing of the Yugoslav narrative to serve the interests of the nascent successor-states. Dejan Jović describes how, in this period of transition and consolidation, the new political elites who came to power have also come to control the narratives of the past as "the bond between 'real power' and power to dominate over symbols, memories and forgetting remains strong" (Jović, 2004:98). From being a haven of brotherhood and unity for various ethnic groups, Yugoslavia was (re-)described as 'prison of nations' in which freedoms of political and religious practice were subjugated to the federal state and the socialist political system. The public iconography of a political culture that had heavily relied on the commemorative was rapidly dismantled - monuments to Tito and other WWII heroes were taken down, schools, streets and other public spaces carrying the names of the partisan revolutionaries were renamed, public holidays were changed.

The processes of reconstruction of social memory taking place across the former Yugoslavia today are a mirror image of the quest for new political identities. In light of the changed political realities and power relations, the break-up of Yugoslavia has left contemporary historians and researchers seeking new ways of contextualising and narrating the processes of representation and the politics of the image that took place in socialist Yugoslavia.

These considerations frame my five-year research process that culminated in the production of *Cinema Komunisto*, a feature-length documentary film on the way cinema was used in communist Yugoslavia to illustrate an official narrative of the country, and the type of memory-texts those films play today in a post-Yugoslav context, in mediating both official and private memories of a country that disappeared. The opening quote in my film from Jacques Rancière offers a key for viewing the film: "The history of cinema is the history of the power to make history"(Rancière, 2007:55). Would it be possible to 're-vision' the image, particularly that of fiction films, reading from it a visible evidence

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aimed both at glorifying the socialist revolution and at silencing the uproar of social criticism." (Dakovic 2008:14)

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of the history of socialist Yugoslavia, while at the same time de-constructing its use within a politics of memory? Does cinema itself offer a means to illustrate and at the same time analyse the implications behind this postulation, and can documentary film offer a new method for doing so?

The **research question** underpinning the making of *Cinema Komunisto* was to investigate how one can develop a cinematic method to offer 'an alternative historiographic practice' (Benelli, 1986) that can look at the use of cinema as a 'memory site' (*lieu de memoire)*. Furthermore, what are the rules of engagement in using images from fiction films as opposed to those that are indexical documents (audiovisual archive in the form of documentary film, actuality films/newsreels, TV reportage and news, photographs), and will their re-contextualisation lead to different outcomes in terms of their use as commemorative practice?

A wider question frames this research that needs to be addressed first - namely the relationship of cinema and history. While evidently, cinema can be the subject of historical study, and conversely, the study of history can be the subject of cinema, when making of a film on history, or vice-versa, the tracing of history in films, one is immediately dropped in the midst of a troubled relationship.

2. The film

Cinema Komunisto is a film that took me five years to research and complete. Lack of funds, but also the nature of the project, meant that I worked without an archive researcher, so that in addition to writing the script and directing the film, I also conducted the search for all historical materials. The film was produced by my production company in Belgrade, and received financial support from the Serbian Film Center/Ministry of Culture but relied primarily on development and funding in the European context. The project was selected for several MEDIA-funded programs, including ARCHIDOC in 2005, the Discovery Campus Masterschool in 2006, IDFAcademy Summer School in 2008. International development and funding of the project had natural implications for the content, as the narration of the film had to be

geared towards a foreign spectator, and the story of filmmaking in Yugoslavia needed to provide a new and unusual insight into what the country was and how it collapsed from an angle that would transcend the interest of a local audience.

Cinema Komunisto is a journey through the fiction and reality of a country that no longer exists, and may never have existed, except in movies. The cinematic story of Yugoslavia is meticulously reconstituted with clips taken from hundreds of fiction films which are freely mixed with archival and original material. The historical story told in the film is framed by flash-forwards to the present time, with scenes filmed in many locations in the former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia) which are today sites of commemoration or contestation of the 'story of Yugoslavia', allowing for a contrast between the past and the present-day. While the film has no voice-over, the story is contextualised by witness accounts of key figures of Yugoslav cinema, namely, a film director, an actor, a film studio boss, a production designer, and President Tito's personal projectionist of 32 years, Leka Konstantinovic, who screened for Tito a total of 8801 films. Interweaving their memories, the film tells the story of how President Tito gave form to the post-war federal state of Yugoslavia, while at the same using the film industry to create the narrative of the new country.

As the extent of President Tito's cinephilia is revealed in the film, so is the megalomaniacal scale of the state-sponsored film productions - with stars such as Richard Burton, Sofia Loren and Orson Welles adding a touch of glamour to the national effort, appearing in super-productions financed by the state. "No problem" was the standard answer for whatever a director needed – with soldiers serving their entire tour of duty as extras on war films, and in one case even destroying a real bridge to re-create a famous episode from the war for an Oscar-nominated film.[4]

From the ghost town that remains of the massive state-run Avala Film Studios, to the privacy of Tito's screening room, we meet a man who obsessively watched a film every

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[4] Film historian Dinko Tucaković estimated that in the shooting of 'The Battle of Neretva' the military contribution to the film was 6,000 soldiers as extras, 75 armored vehicules, 22 planes, 5,000 guns. "The greatest endeavor in the first century of cinema: Neretva", Vreme broj 469, 1. januar 2000.

night, and spent his days reading, and even editing, scripts while also running a country. Written documents and photographs provide evidence of the way President Tito and the communist regime were involved in the creation of these films revealing Tito's role in a new light—as Chief Illusionist, at once both director and biggest fan of the story taking shape on the screen.

Historian Rastko Močnik has posited that Tito was much more than a political phenomenon, that he was a mass-psychological one, which required much more than politics to be achieved - it required art. Essentially, Močnik claims, the cult of Tito was not a political or an ideological one, it was a visual cult[5] (Pejić, 1999). Tito's visual cult, powerfully expressed in cinema, would open the door to an examination of cinema's role in the construction of political myth.

Rather than discount such films as pure propaganda, Evgeny Dobrenko, a scholar of Soviet cinema, encourages us to shift the subject of inquiry by

> referring not so much to 'propaganda' through art, as to the culture forming function of these artefacts. Cinema, as the most constitutive and advanced artistic practice in [Stalinist] culture, is examined here in its role as *institution for the production of history* (Dobrenko, 2008:8, emphasis mine).

Approached from this perspective, cinematic images offered me a way to deconstruct the production of history in Yugoslavia, but also it's reconstruction today.

3. Archival sources

The images of Yugoslavia are scattered across the former republics that used to make up the federation, with some of the archives such as the one in Sarajevo destroyed by the ravages of the 1990's war. As a reconstruction of the audiovisual legacy involved a search across the three principal capitals (Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana), archive research started at the very beginning of the script-writing process, and was a parallel

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[5] "The image of Tito's face and his body became the bearer of the Yugoslav founding myth and of the fiction of the continuity of the Yugoslav community […] His real, natural body was not only the

activity that often informed the filming of the interviews. The primary search was for audio-visual materials. The second step was searching for documents, newspaper clippings and photographs, which often, rather than being systematically archived in institutions, are in private collections.

Starting in 2005 I conducted detailed research in every major audio-visual archive in the former Yugoslavia for materials connected to the construction of the Central Film Studio, film shoots and the relationship between Tito and film stars. The exhaustive list of keywords included viewing film festivals, film premieres, commemorative screenings, congresses of film workers, the work of government committees on cinema, film censorship, visits of film luminaries and foreign film shoots in Yugoslavia. While in many archives the paper catalogue is in the process of being digitised, enabling computer searches of keywords, none or very little of the audio-visual material itself has been digitised, which meant that all of the archive research was conducted on-site, with viewing and selection done from 35mm and 16mm prints on flat-bed editing tables.

Archives I researched were:
- the **Yugoslav Cinematheque** (the fifth-largest cinematheque in the world, and legal depository of films in socialist Yugoslavia) in Belgrade
- the **Yugoslav Newsreels** and **Radio Television Serbia** in Belgrade
- the **Croatian Cinematheque** and **Radio Television Croatia** in Zagreb
- the **Slovenian Cinematheque** and **Radio Television Slovenia** in Ljubljana
- and the **Bosnian Cinematheque** in Sarajevo

Working on the hypothesis that Yugoslav cinema attracted significant international attention, particularly in the period of the success of Yugoslav films at international festivals, and during the making of co-productions shot in Yugoslavia, further research was conducted in major European archives (INA and Gaumont Pathé in France; Archivio Luce in Italy; BBC Motion Gallery, ITN and British Pathé in the UK; Bundesarchiv in Germany, RGAKFD Krasnogorsk in Russia and finally UCLA archives

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embodiment of central power; paradoxically, it was the name and the face of what was supposed to be the continuous social body of the Yugoslav State" (Brkljačić, 2002:105).

in the USA). Often I discovered materials that had not been seen in over 50 years, and occasionally had never been shown publicly before, particularly in the INA archive in France. Official photographs and documents were researched in the Archive of Yugoslavia and the Museum of Yugoslav History, TANJUG (the Yugoslav News Agency), the Library of the Yugoslav Cinematheque and the archive of Radio Belgrade.

In terms of documentary evidence, one of the key discoveries was in the KPR fund[6] (*Kabinet Predsednika Republike* - the Cabinet of the President of the Republic) - the repository of documentation from Tito's cabinet. Whilst the fact that Tito had been a great cinephile is widely known, it belonged more to the domain of urban legends. Following leads from his personal projectionist, the material I discovered in the Cabinet files was a real find. From copies of film scripts where he wrote his notes in the margins, to telegrams film directors sent him from film labs reporting on the first print of a film, it constituted tangible proof of President Tito's involvement in filmmaking that has never been publicly shown. Particularly useful were the transcripts[7] of his conversations with filmmakers following screenings of rough cuts, or during script discussions, which gave insight into his personal taste, but also his rapport and behavior towards film directors and movie stars.

4. The database of fiction films

The heart of the research was the collecting of over 300 Yugoslav feature films (out of around 880 feature films shot in the period between 1945-1991), and development of a method of visual analysis for their coding. While the Yugoslav Cinematheque in Belgrade was the legally nominated depositary for all Yugoslav cinema production from 1945, and thus (hypothetically) houses a copy of every Yugoslav film ever made, they are underequipped and understaffed, which made it impossible for me to gain access to view the films. Even setting aside the fact that the Cinematheque did not have the staff or a place in which someone could have projected hundreds of films for me to watch, I

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[6] At the time of research the fund was housed in the Museum of Yugoslav History. In 2009 it was re-located to the Archive of Yugoslavia.

would have still faced the financial problem of paying for over 600 hours of viewing, and, more importantly, I would have had to make a selection of clips to be transferred to me solely on the basis of my viewing notes. I needed to find another approach to obtaining the films. I was obliged to created a private collection of Yugoslav films, obtaining copies from collectors, producers and on occasion even online, a process that was complicated as a limited number of Yugoslav films is in circulation (I managed to gather around 300) and the quality was often very poor (VHS recordings from the 80s when the films were broadcast on TV, etc). When the edit of *Cinema Komunisto* was completed, and picture was locked, I returned to the Yugoslav Cinematheque with a detailed list of clips from fiction films I ended up using, and these were then licensed, and telecined, with the resulting high-definition clips then being replaced in the film.

During production, over a period of several years my method was to watch the films, conducting a detailed time-coded transcribing of their content, and then select clips from the films that met certain criteria for a dialogue theme, a scene, or even a symbol (eg. scenes depicting the creation of the new country, worker's meetings, young people talking about joining the Communist Party, or the Yugoslav flag, salute, or image of Tito). These clips were entered into a FileMaker Pro database that I designed and indexed by keyword, dialogue, as well as film information (production company, year, filmmaker, etc). In this way fiction films would serve as the raw material from which I would try and build a cinematic method of alternative historiography, one that reveals the power of image (and image as power) while still interrogating its value as visible evidence. As part of my research work, the plan is to complete the database and make it accessible online, thus enabling other researchers to build on the index of fictional images that I have constructed.

5. The filmmaking process

The research and filmmaking process behind the making of the *Cinema Komunisto* resulted in a 100 minute film (with an additional 20 minutes included on the DVD as

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[7] During the 1999 NATO bombing of Belgrade, part of the depot of the Museum of Yugoslav History was damaged, destroying the chance of using the audio recordings of these conversations, and leaving us

bonus scenes), and the database of fiction film clips. In parallel to the archive research, the shooting process began with an exploration of the Avala Film Studios with the aim to document and film every hidden corner. The spell of the place was strong - old costumes, rooms full of old posters, screening rooms used as storage space, scripts and production stills littering the floors. Over the years of filming, the shooting took on the additional value of documentation, often extending beyond what I required for the film, as many of the places I filmed I was both the first person to enter them in years, and also the last to record what was there, before it was destroyed (often before my eyes).

Simultaneously, I began to interview dozens of old Yugoslav film workers, talking to them about their memories, but also looking for clues to how cinema played a role in shaping Yugoslav society. Around 50 people were interviewed, and around ten of those interviews I filmed as research material. Some of my interviewees were experts and theorists of Yugoslav cinema, as well as film critics, but despite finding their insights valuable, early on I made the decision to 'cast' only direct participants of the events I would cover, rather than commentators, in order to obtain witness accounts.

More than a year into the filming, and quite by chance, I met Leka Konstantinović - Tito's personal projectionist for 32 years. Konstantinović had given only one interview in his life, and was at first very reticent about talking on camera, mainly because he felt that Tito and Yugoslavia had been unjustly disowned even by those who were closest to Tito during his lifetime[8]. Ultimately his participation in the film provided its emotional centre, the intimate, up-close view that really ties together the big historical events with a key-hole view of the man shaping them. Throughout, the accent was on the small stories, the trivial 'side roads' of history, as opposed to the sweeping narrative of history.

Having been inspired by ruins to begin with, I decided to follow this thread of abandoned places as chronotopes of post-socialism, and stage my film in the symbolic space of a disappeared country. Hence the decision to shoot the interviews on location,

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only with the paper transcripts.

[8] Unfortunately, Leka Konstantinović passed away a few months before the premiere of *Cinema Komunisto*, and thus never saw the film.

and to take the spectator beyond the Avala Film Studios to other important places which form the 'remaining sets' or *lieux de memoire* of the Yugoslav film story. While not always feasible to take our aging characters there, we filmed on Tito's private residence of Brioni, his bombed residence in Belgrade, and his grave; the War Museum; the old Metropol Hotel (returning to document the final days of its closing); the Roman Arena in Pula, Croatia, once site of the Yugoslav Film Festival, and even going to the camp for political prisoners on Goli Otok where we also found a cinema. A special moment was the shoot on the Neretva river in Bosnia, the site of a major WWII offensive, where we found ourselves in the middle of a pilgrimage of both veterans from the actual battle and extras who had acted as soldiers in a 1969 film on the battle that was shot in the same spot. Observing an iconic site that had conflated into being a memorial for a real historical event as well as its filmic recreation, I was convinced I had found the right entry-point through which to consider the questions of cinema and history.

1. Cinema and history

1.1 The problem of cinema as historical document

For historians, cinema poses a problem of interpretation. This applies both to the historical analysis of preexisting (archival) audiovisual materials from the past as artefacts of their time (the time of which they are evidence), and to the creation of historical films, that is, films that treat history - very often using and repurposing those preexisting filmic images. Historian Robert Rosenstone wrote that "visual media have become arguably the chief carrier of historical messages in our culture" (Rosenstone, 1995:3). Yet while historians acknowledge the role that film and TV play in shaping people's historical consciousness, they "have had difficulties in deciding what to do with history communicated in [particularly fiction] films" (Falbe-Hansen, 2013:1). This effectively invalidated the use of film as a historical document for a long time.

The debate started in the 1970s when Marc Ferro, one of the leading early scholars on this topic defined the essence of the problem in a landmark work in the field of cinema and history *Le film, une contre-analyse de la société?* published in the *Annales* in 1973, by asking 'of what reality is cinema really an image'? Ferro belonged to a generation of post-structuralist historians "challenging the distinction between real and imaginary events, and in particular a pre-supposed notion of reality" (Ernst, 1983:400). The hypothesis Ferro stated was "that a film, be it an image of reality or not, document or fiction, authentic plot or pure invention, is History"[9] (Ferro, 1973:113).

Ferro's and Rosenstone's writings, along with those of Pierre Sorlin and other historians opened the door that elevated cinema's status as historical document - they came to call this the study of film as '*agent de l'histoire'* - an agent of history, where films "were perceived as offering a window on the time during which they were produced" (Falbe-Hansen, 2013:1). As Ferro points out

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[9] As noted by Jaimie Baron, perhaps not coincidentally, Ferro's essay came out in the same year as Hayden White's book on the constructedness of historical representation, one of the first texts of the New Historicism (Baron, 2014:173).

> there is there the material for another history, which certainly doesn't
> assert to constitute a neatly ordered and rational overview, as History does;
> rather it would contribute to refine, or destroy... to discover an area of
> reality that is not visible"(Ferro, 1973:114).

Marc Ferro's theories of cinema and history were aimed at creating a distance from which to view a film as an object. "Through a kind of assimilation of films to writing, educated people tend to accept if absolutely necessary the evidence of the *film document* but not that of the *film as document*."(Ferro, 1976:80). What kind of documents are films and in particular, what kind of document is fiction? And how can films be used as historical documents?

In his attempt to develop a methodology in the use of filmic images that would open the door for historians to work with films, Ferro admonishes to "take the image, and images, as the starting point. Do not search them for mere illustrations, confirmations or negations of another form of knowledge, that of the written tradition" (Ferro, 1973:113). In writing on the treatment of imagistic evidence by his colleagues, historian Hayden White decries its use

> as if it were at best a complement of verbal evidence, rather than as a
> supplement, which is to say, a discourse in its own right and one capable of
> telling us things about its referents that are both different from what can be
> told in verbal discourse and also of a kind that can only be told by means of
> visual images. (White, 1988:1193)

But this should not be taken to mean the documentary can lay more claims to being 'real' than fiction film, in fact quite the opposite. As Rosenstone points out, the implicit claim of the documentary is that it gives us direct access to history "that what you are seeing on screen is somehow a direct representation of what happened in the past", because documentary images are "historical images" in that they have an "indexical relationship to actual people, landscapes, and objects, [and] can provide a virtually unmediated experience of the past" (Rosenstone, 2006:71).

Rosenstone joins historian Christian Delage in reproaching the "positivist cult of archives [which ascribes] to them the value of a photographic truth" (Delage, 1995:30, my translation[10]). Jaimie Baron writes that the very "idea of archivalness seems to provide a 'truth-value' which enhances the historical authority" of the document (Baron, 2014:6). This 'truth' is set up in opposition to the feature film which stages scenes that are then filmed. But Rosenstone dismisses such a position as mystification, saying that in a sense "the drama is more honest precisely because it is overtly a fictional construction" (Rosenstone, 2006:71). This view is shared by Natalie Zemon Davis, who writes that even though

> ostensibly more indexical and thus truer in its relationship to reality, the
> documentary also involves a 'play of invention', while the dramatic feature,
> despite fictive elements or being the product of imagination, can make
> cogent observations on historical events, relations, and processes. (Davis,
> 2000:5)

As Jacques Rancière said in an interview in 2011: "What is called documentary is in fact a form of fiction. Documentary film is documentary fiction. It is fiction because a fiction is an arrangement of signs, an arrangement of words and visual fragments and different elements" (Rancière, 2011:302). Reporting on a lecture given by film historian Ulrich Kurowski, Wolfgang Ernst quotes him as saying

> There is no such thing as 'documentary film' [because] the image cannot be
> reality. 'History between evidence and myth', is matched by 'the myth of
> historical evidence'. All documentary film is artificial by its inevitably
> having points of view. (Ernst, 1983:400)

Importantly, Ferro concludes this applies to all types of film-documents: "what is obvious for the 'documents', the newsreels, is no less true for fiction"(Ferro, 1973:113). In that sense for Ferro, fiction films "not only represent but convey reality" (Ernst, 1983:402) and they do this by offering an unintentional truth. In other words, controlled or not, films act as witnesses (Ferro, 1973:113).

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[10] Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French authors are my own.

Ferro creates the notion of film (and not only historical film) as cultural artifact, one which reveals society in a given time period, which he describes as a 'film museum', a museum of objects and gestures, of attitudes and social behavior (Ferro, 1976:81). Rosenstone also writes about this capacity of cinema for reality artifacts, 'thingness': "Because they tell us much about the people, processes, time, 'reality effects' in film become facts under description, important elements in the creation of historical meaning" (Rosenstone, 2006:16).

And thus, it is Ferro's work, and that of scholars he inspired, which provides a point of departure for this research. Ferro sums up the study of cinema not only as a language, but rather as historical material:

> Film is not considered from a semiological viewpoint here. Nor is it seen in terms of cinema history or esthetics. Film is observed not as a work of art, but as a product, an image-object, whose meanings are not solely cinematographic. Film is valuable not only because of what it reveals but also because of the socio-historical approach that it justifies. Thus, the analyses will not necessarily concern the totality of a work. They may be based on extracts, they may look for 'series' or create ensembles. (Ferro, 1973:114)

Thus liberated from their context, the images obtain a new value as document.

1.2 History as the subject of cinema - rules of engagement

Ferro might have created a place for **cinema in history** i.e. the historical research of films as documents, but this still left the question of reconstituting **history in cinema** - the way in which filmmakers venture the field of history by making (historical) films, which is our second entry point into the troubled relationship between cinema and history. Historian Hayden White called this the "challenge presented by historiophoty[11] to historiography", analyzing

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[11] Hayden White originally coined the term as a rhetorical device in response to an essay by Robert Rosenstone in the same issue of AHR entitled "History in images/History in words: Reflections on the possibility of really putting history onto film".

the relative adequacy of what we might call historiophoty (the representation of history and our thought about it in visual images and filmic discourse) to the criteria of truth and accuracy presumed to govern the professional practice of historiography (the representation of history in verbal images and written discourse). (White, 1988:1193)

Viewed from the point of view of the filmmaker venturing into the territory of history, Christian Delage (historian and film director) points out that the filmmaker acts in ways similar to the historian, "even preceding him in the discovery of an as-yet unexplored field. The facts that inspire his creations are not filled with any kind of historical weight in their relationship with reality" (Delage, 1995:29). He goes on to employ a distinction formulated by Roland Barthes, describing what the filmmaker is constructing as not so much "a *historical reality*, but a *cinematic reality*" (Delage, 1995:30).

Delage makes a crucial distinction: "it is in the reconstructing of the past, not in its reconstituting that the filmmaker joins the historian" (Delage, 1995:25). In enumerating ways in which filmmakers make the past meaningful, to the concept of 'reconstructing' Rosenstone adds another, that of 'revisioning':

> To *vision* history is to put flesh and blood on the past; to dramatize events. It is to give us the experience and emotions of the past - in this it is very different from the distancing and analyzing of a written text. To *contest* history is to provide interpretations that run against traditional wisdom, to *revision* history is to show us the past in new and unexpected ways, to utilize an aesthetic that violates the traditional realistic ways of telling the past, or that does not follow a normal dramatic structure, or that mixes genres and modes - all these towards the end of making the familiar unfamiliar and causing the audience to rethink what it thinks it already knows.(Rosenstone, 2006:118)

Furthermore, Rosenstone criticises the usual process in which historical films (both fiction/dramatic and documentary) are analysed against their historical context for how much of the film is 'true' and how much of it is mistaken or invented, because he says, these "brush against the question of how and where film sits with regard to traditional

historical discourse"[12] (Rosenstone, 2006:24). In this he joins Ferro, who was trying to define film as visual historical discourse, separating it from historical evidence. And for him, seeing a film in relation to the larger discourse is central - because historical films act "as a kind of commentary on, and challenge to, traditional historical discourse" and in that way add to our historical understanding. (Rosenstone, 2006:9)

Rosenstone has argued that instead of dismissing historical films for their inaccuracies, "it seems more judicious to admit that we live in a world shaped, even in its historical consciousness, by the visual media, and to investigate exactly *how film works to create a historical world*" (Rosenstone, 2006:12, emphasis mine). Rosenstone's argument is that having accepted that certain films count as historical thinking or contribute to historical understanding focus should be directed on what he calls "their *rules of engagement* with the traces of the past, and investigating the codes, conventions, and practices by which they bring history to the screen." (Rosenstone, 2006:12)

Historian and former editor of Cahiers du Cinéma, Antoine De Baecque, builds on Ferro's writings claiming that "provoking the meeting between cinema and history consists of making history with cinematic language", and he has identified a particular mise-en-scene that certain filmmakers have explored, in seeking a way of giving form to history, creating in effect a "cinematic form of history" - *forme cinématographique de l'histoire* (De Baecque, 2008:58, 2008b:20). Rosenstone called these cinematic forms 'the New History film' defining it as one that "finds the space to contest history, to interrogate either the metanarratives that structure historical knowledge, or smaller historical truths, received notions, conventional images" (Rosenstone, 1995:8).

Films that treat historical subjects, or in other words, historical films, according to Rosenstone roughly fall into three categories: the mainstream **'realistic' (melo)dramatic fiction feature** film, the **'compilation' documentary** ("a

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[12] Elsewhere Rosenstone goes further saying: "the accuracy of fact is hardly the most important question to ask". (Rosenstone, 2006:15)

compilation film[13], one which utilizes old, actuality footage and a voiceover narration (Voice of God) to tell the viewer what the images mean and to make the larger argument of the work", and the **'opposition' (or innovative) historical** film, which can be dramatic/fiction, documentary or a mixture. Their distinction is that they make different assumptions about historical reality, and utilize image in three different ways to create historical meaning - in other words, they have different rules of engagement. (Rosenstone, 2006:8,15)

Ultimately, the challenge is to "understand how these two representations of the world 'inform each other'" as Jacques Rancière put it (Rancière, 1998:45). "These are two representations of a past reality, at the same time captured in its eternal documentary present and formulated into a writing, be it visual or narrated"(De Baecque, 2008:55). And as Gilles Deleuze concludes:

> the meeting of the two disciplines is not achieved when one comes to ponder the other, but when one realizes that it needs to resolve for its own sake and with its own unique means a problem resembling that which is being posed in the other. (Deleuze, 1986:263-272)

1.3 History v. memory - cinematic 'memory-sites'

The academic debate on cinema and history has been informed greatly by what has been described as the 'memory boom' in history (Kansteiner, 2002). Summing up how this shift of interest has affected the field of history, Wulf Kansteiner writes that "through the concept of memory, we can demonstrate[...] how representations [of the past] really work and how the power of representations can be explained" (Kansteiner, 2002:180). This is achieved by placing emphasis on its **present-day** operation, the **instrumentality** of its formation, the **materiality** of its expression and its inherently **mediated** nature, so I will look at each in turn in order to show how the conceptualizing of memory impacts the analysis of cinema as a representation of the past.

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[13] As Baron points out, the term 'compilation film' dates back to the 1920s in the Soviet Union, where filmmakers began 'repurposing' preexisting film images "to illustrate new historical narratives and arguments". (Baron, 2014:5)

Precluding the possibility of a precise definition,[14] I will use sociologist Todor Kuljić's distinction that "remembrance relates to the archiving of the contents of the past, while memory is the actualization of this preserved content" in the *present* day (Kuljić, 2006:8). Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs was among the first to introduce this emphasis on the present-day operation of memory in his development of the concept of collective memory,[15] a collectively shared representation of the past, which he argued is "formed and reformed in the present for present purposes" (Olick, 2007:19).

This assigns collective memory with an instrumentalist agenda, one constituted in the tension between the official politics of memory[16] and private remembrance (Kuljić, 2006:6). "In this vein, research into the 'politics of memory' sought to demonstrate that behind every version of the past there must be a set of interests in the present" (Olick, 2007:20). What these interests might be was researched by historians such as Pierre Nora, who studied the articulation of French history through its official commemorative culture, arguing that there had been, in the past, a 'golden age' in which history played a sacred and pedagogical role in creating a national consciousness. What is particularly important in Nora's concept is the instrumental, or even political mechanism at work - for the alignment of the nation's historiography to memory serves to provide the community with a sense of unity and continuity. This allows us to delve into the role certain historical films played in the creation of political myths and the way they acted as a symbolic mooring of a political system.[17]

In his article on the 'usable past' Jeffrey Olick points out that while the vision of the past created through cultural memory is political, in the sense of strengthening elite

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[14] The increased theoretical consideration of the past and its uses was accompanied by a mushrooming of terminology, such as "collective memory", "politics of memory", "cultural history", "social memory", "collective remembrance", "public memory", "memory culture", etc.

[15] See Maurice Halbwachs, Les Cadres sociaux de la memoire (Paris:Alcan, 1925)

[16] As Daković reminds us: "Jan Assman does underline the point that collective and individual remembrance, not to mention historical facts do not overlap." (Daković, 2012:3)

[17] While Kuljić is right to point out that "how we remember and what we commemorate is a pretty reliable indicator of our political values and priorities" (Kuljić, 2006:5), a vision of the past thus articulated is not merely a mobilizing agent of ideology, but also a necessary component of social consciousness of non-ideological groups (Kuljić, 2006:6). Olick agrees that it would be too simplistic to say that "all changes in

justification of power structures (he refers to this as an analysis of "what we do with the past") or social, in the sense of constructing social identification and national identity ('what the past does for us'), there are other factors at play, such as trauma and the unconscious ('what the past does *to* us') which have been neglected in academic research on collective memory, but Kansteiner warns against a "facile use" of psychoanalytical methods in analyzing them (Kansteiner, 2002:180).

Kansteiner highlights that memory resides in the material and not in the consciousness (Kansteiner, 2002:188), and thus joins Halbwachs' emphasis on the materiality of memory. Of the four categories of collective memory elaborated by Jan Assmann,[18] it is the concept of cultural memory that consists of "objectified culture [...] the texts, rites, images, buildings, and monuments which are designed to recall fateful events in the history of the collective" (Kansteiner,2002:182). As memories are "material and mediated phenomena" (Kansteiner, 2002:190) analysis focused on the network of social channels (the state, political parties, mass media, cemeteries, etc), through which institutions and media construct a shared past, as well as its representation through symbols (state insignia, party colors, etc).

In writing about the relationship between memory and history as it relates to France, Nora creates the concept of "*lieux de mémoire*" or 'memory sites' which are a "significant entity, whether material or nonmaterial in kind, that has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of a given community, as a result of human will or work of time" (Nora, 1996:15). Thus in seven volumes[19] Nora compiles a list of 'sites', both physical (monuments, battlefields, museums) and symbolic (flags, commemorative

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collective memory result from efforts to use the past to attain present goals and can thus be debunked" (Olick, 2007: 20).

[18] Assmann identifies 4 categories in collective memory: 1) mimetic memory, relating to the transmission of concrete, practical knowledge from the past; 2) material memory of things, including the transmission of material goods and objects from the past; 3) communicative memory, which is transmitted through language; 4) cultural memory, which represents the historical consciousness, which is the transmission of meanings and conceptions from the past (this one is what others most often referr to when speaking of collective memory) (Assmann 2005: 22–23).

[19] Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de memoire*, vols. 1–3. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992).

events) at which the 'national essence' is expressed through memory[20]. Crucially, it is not sufficient that a place or object has a souvenir value, there needs to be what Nora calls a *'volonté de mémoire',* a will behind the existence of a *lieux de mémoire*, "one that is to stop time, block forgetting, preserve a state of being, immoralise death and materialise the immaterial"(Delage, 1995:27).

Halbwachs observed that because collective memory "unfolds in a spatial framework" it is explicable only by interrogating how the past is "preserved in our physical surroundings" (Meusburger et al., 2011:204). Symbolic spaces are produced by social relations, with the inscription of narratives of memory into places, and Kansteiner defines the role for the image in spatial representation: "Closely related to these concerns with spatial expressions of memory are attempts to record the images that make up our collective visions of the past" (Kansteiner, 2002:191).

Astrid Erll has argued that (fiction) films have played a "decisive role in stabilizing the memory of historical events into *lieux de mémoire*" (Erll, 2008:395), because they "create images of the past which resonate with cultural memory" (Erll, 2008:389), and "they serve as cues for the discussion of those images, thus centering a memory culture on certain medial representations and sets of questions connected with them" (Erll, 2008:396). In writing about French national cinema as *lieux de mémoire*, Naomi Greene claims that "film offers the most visible evidence of a widely shared fascination with national memory and history. But in addition to its visibility, cinema also offers a privileged site, a very special perspective, from which this fascination may be explored" (Greene, 1999:5). Film historian Nevena Daković has argued that Nora's idea of "memory sites" bears particular resonance in the case of film texts: "The interpretation of film text as a memory site, constructed of intertwined images/imagining of personal, collective, public pasts and eventually of a dialectical play of documentaries and fiction, vividly encapsulates the object of this analysis" (Daković, 2008:2).

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[20] Scholars from both the fields of anthropology (E. Said) and geography (D. Gregory, E. Soja) have enriched this concept by looking at the 'creation of geographies', the recognition and understanding of 'symbolic territories' and the 'cartographies of identity'.

1.4 The memory turn and post-socialist transitions

Along with other historians, Nora has posited that in the late 20th century there has been a break between the nation and collective memory, leading to a questioning of the legitimated practice of history. Historians began to analyze their own processes of narrating history. Peter Burke argued that

> neither memories nor histories seem objective any longer. In both cases we are learning to take account of conscious or unconscious selection, interpretation and distortion. In both cases this selection, interpretation and distortion is socially conditioned[21]. (Burke, 1989:89)

'Social conditioning' took the form of writing the past by decree in single-party authoritarian regimes, as Todor Kuljić notes (Kuljić, 2002:3). It is not a coincidence that the nascent multiplicity of narratives and the intensified academic study of their construction happened at the time of the collapse of the Cold War ideological blocks, which had provided a general culture of memory. "The implosion of European socialism opened a new future, but also a new past, which became increasingly more unpredictable" (Kuljić, 2002:3). This profound change (compounded by a traumatic break-up of a unified country in the case of Yugoslavia) can be traced through the transitioning meanings and challenges to the *lieux de mémoire*. What were once the sites of construction, become places of deconstruction of narratives of the past. As Tanja Petrović claims

> a redefinition of symbolic geographies - new landmarks and new orientation sites - emerged [where] the creating of new important landmarks in national spaces simultaneously implied the erasure of some other landmarks that functioned in the broader space of the common country (Petrović, 2007:267).

This 'transition of meanings' can also be traced in films, which alongside being a repository of memory, are at the same time evidence of the fabrication of memory, and it

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[21] As Kansteiner concludes, "perhaps history should be more appropriately defined as a particular type of cultural memory" (Kansteiner, 2002:184). Writing on cultural memory, Astrid Erll sums this position up: "Seen in this way, history is but yet another mode of cultural memory, and historiography its specific medium[…] the historical method has developed into the best-regulated and most reliable way of reconstructing the past[…] thought it may be complemented by other modes". (Erll, 2008:7)

is this duality that offers rich analytical ground. In his study of Soviet cinema and its role today Evgeny Dobrenko views films as both an instrument in the construction of the narrative of history which was to mobilize the Soviet audience, and at the same time a "museum of the revolution", that is, a source for the same images of the past for the contemporary post-Soviet societies (Dobrenko, 2008). He writes: "The Soviet museum of history is a kind of metaphor for those transformations which the past underwent in the process of de-realisation in Soviet ideological doctrine" (Dobrenko, 2008:11). "As a result, the means of representation that facilitate this process provide the best *information about the evolution of collective memories*, especially as we try to reconstruct them after the fact" (Kansteiner, 2002:190, emphasis mine). This is what the (re)use of clips from fiction films would help me achieve in *Cinema Komunisto*, a way to look at the "evolution of collective memories" in Yugoslavia. Because of this, memory concepts for me were not only a useful approach to access and analyze filmic images of the past, they were also useful tools with which to construct my film about the past.

To end this section on the rise of memory studies, and their impact on the analysis of cinema it is important to note that a similar 'memory turn' has been happening within the domain of film as well. Historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet described the challenge as "putting memory into movement, basically to do for history what Proust did for the novel"(Vidal-Naquet, 1988:208). Rosenstone points to this parallel evolution in history and cinema by describing:

> A small body of films about the past which, more than almost anything done on the printed page, would properly fit into a category labeled post-modern history[...] These are histories which do some or all of the following: foreground their own construction; tell the past self-reflexively and from a multiplicity of viewpoints; forsake normal story development, or problematize the stories they recount; utilize humour, parody, and absurdist as modes of presenting the past; refuse to insist on a coherent or single meaning of events; indulge in fragmentary or poetic knowledge; and *never forget that the present moment is the site of all past representation*. By using such offbeat tropes and techniques, these works issue a sharp challenge to both the practices of the

mainstream drama and documentary and the traditional claims of empirical history - a challenge parallel to that issued by post-structuralist theorists, only here the challenge is embodied (or envisioned) in works which combine both a new theory and a practice of history. (Rosenstone, 2006:19, emphasis mine)

This challenge to envision a combination of "a new theory and a practice of history" completes the theoretical framework within which I positioned the philosophical foundations of *Cinema Komunisto*. The aim was not only a conceptual attempt to create a film with which to achieve a reflection on the historical filmed image as document, or to posit filmmaking as an alternative way to write history, but to undertake a fruitful inquiry into memory processes that are taking place in the present, one defined by post-socialist transition. Having examined how historians learn to look at and historicize image construction, and how filmmakers endeavor to assess and join the construction of historical narratives, I was searching for a cinematic form that foregrounds memory processes. What are the *rules of engagement* required to achieve this will be examined in the next chapter.

2. Developing the rules of engagement

2.1 Referenced works

Among six different types of documentary films named by Bill Nichols in his writing on documentary modes of representation,[22] (Nichols, 2001) the historical documentary had for many decades most often been characterized by the expository mode. As noted above, in a category distinct from the traditional historical compilation documentary (and distinct from the fiction or dramatic film), Rosenstone identifies the opposition or innovative historical film, which he himself confesses is a "'baggy' category", defining it as a collection of both fiction and documentary works "consciously created to contest the seamless stories of heroes and victims that make up the mainstream feature and the standard documentary" (Rosenstone, 2006:18) and "the idea of History as a single story with a clear (moral) conclusion" (Rosenstone, 2006:19). Rosenstone's description of what such films have in common is that

> they are, at the same time, part of a search for a new vocabulary in which to render the past on the screen, an effort to make history (depending upon the film) more complex, interrogative, and self-conscious, a matter of tough, even unanswerable questions rather than of slick stories. The best of these films propose new strategies for dealing with the traces of the past, strategies that point towards new forms of historical thought, forms that need not be limited to the screen. (Rosenstone, 2006:18)

In this chapter, two film projects serve as formal and philosophical inspiration for the cinematic language developed in *Cinema Komunisto* - Chris Marker's *The Last Bolshevik / Le tombeau d'Alexandre* (1993) and Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1989). Both are essentially interrogations of the 'Story of History in Cinema' - how cinema serves as an expression of history, that is to say, both are cinematic contemplations on cinema and its methods of representation. Both clearly fall into Rosenstone's category of opposition or innovative film, because as one of the filmmakers

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[22] Nichols identifies six different documentary 'modes' in his schema: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, and performative, remarking that they can often be overlapping between modalities. (Nichols, 2001)

points out "underlying the narrative approach is a clearly perceptible self-consciously theoretical dimension" (Godard and Ishaghpour, 2005:vii).

In attempting to develop a cinematic apparatus that would answer my research question, I investigated the mode of construction in Marker's and Godard's films as well as an early work of Yugoslav filmmaker Dušan Makavejev, *Innocence Unprotected* (1968), and the way in which all three treat feature fiction films as primary material. These authors looked at the historical film not for its historical veracity, but to reconstruct the history of a fiction and/or a political myth – seeking to inverse the parallel. In re-constructing and 'enhancing' the first Yugoslav sound film, shot during the German occupation of Belgrade in the Second World War, Makavejev employs a "process of conceptual association" in which "this narrative becomes the basis for, and of, a history of wartime Yugoslavia" (Benelli, 1986:33).

Makavejev, who in *Innocence Unprotected* also mixed in images from a fiction film with documentary interviews and archive, posits that "it is the dialectics of densely intertwined facts and fiction that challenge existing historical accounts of the past" (Daković, 2008:2), pointing a way to a documentary method that can achieve an investigation of the (fictional) cinematic image, with, in this case, the explicit intention of deconstructing political myths.

In *The Last Bolshevik*, through the life of Soviet filmmaker Aleksander Medvedkin, "Marker asks us to see the Soviet cinema - a kingdom of shadows - as running parallel to and reflecting Soviet history, as the shadows of a kingdom" (Foster, 2009:10). Marker achieves a double interrogation of the image, by conducting an "interrogation of Soviet cinema as an expression of Soviet history" (Kelly, 2002). The film is structured around a series of letters written by the filmmaker to Medvedkin, and interviews with his contemporaries as well as film scholars.

Godard's investigations of the cinematic image are in some ways more pedagogical, as in *Histoire(s)* he develops his treatise on the nature of cinema to *"monte et montre*

ensemble" - '(at the same time) edit and reveal together' what was cinema and what was the century (De Braecque, 2008:26).

From this approach came the central concept of *Cinema Komunisto*. As described in the Introduction to this thesis, fiction films played a central role in commemorative culture of socialist Yugoslavia, and these practices were at the heart of a politics of memory (mostly focused on the Second World War) which was central to the project of constructing a 'Yugoslav' identity. To make a "film which interrogates films", which is Timothy Corrigan's definition of 'refractive cinema' (Corrigan, 2011) would offer a way to shift the perspective on Yugoslavia.[23]

It was precisely the nature of 'refractive cinema' that allowed Marker to find a distance and perspective from which to view Russian history which "speaks to both the illusion of cinema and the illusions that maintained and exercised Soviet power" (Foster, 2009:8). Corrigan notes that at their best, refractive films rise above being artistic commentaries and instead reenact art as open-ended criticism:

> Rather than supplement a primary text or truth with a redundancy of commentary, criticism creates a subjective encounter with and through another representational language or medium as a questioning of the possibilities and limitations of that discourse (Corrigan, 2011:188).

As Godard notes on his *Histoire(s),* it's essentially a work of art, not a discourse - with no listing of dates, names and facts, no methodical cataloging (Godard & Ishaghpour, 2005:4). The aim in *Cinema Komunisto* is not to recount the history of Yugoslav cinema, or provide a chronologically accurate and complete account of its development[24]. My aim in this research is to deconstruct the culture of memory present

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[23] The telling of cinema history through cinema, or making 'films about films', can be seen as an exploration of Jean-Luc Godard's thought that 'only cinema can narrate it's own history' (Godard, 2005:41). Dimitrios Latsis adds that cinema is "an art that was arguably born self-reflexive", pointing out that while the first visual history of cinema was probably *The Film Parade* (1933) by J.S. Blackton, Edison's principal assistant, the tradition of the 'montage essay' on the history of film was perhaps pioneered by Julien Duvivier in *La Machine à refaire la vie* (1924). (Latsis, 2013:776)

[24] Dimitrios Latsis argues that "the majority of visual historiographies of the seventh art[…] could be summarized as follows: (i) a documentary treatment with pedagogical intentions, (ii) a serial/linear approach to the narrative that was manifested as either a strict chronological, developmental order or a thematic (genre, auteurs) classification[…] and (iii) a literalness, in other words an examination of the

in Yugoslav fiction films from the socialist period, as a function of identity-formation, and to show the present-day (dis)continuities in preserving memory, by charting the transient place of Yugoslav fiction films in public and private memory. In *Innocence Unprotected*, Makavejev was attempting a similar strategy, to show the continuity of the socialist image, across a period of almost 30 years, by intercutting original fiction material with material from other films. Film historian Nevena Daković claims that his film works as a manifesto in which the filmmaker has "enunciated his theory in practice or *theory as practice*" (Daković, 2014: 84) - something I was attempting as well.

Invoking Godard's formalism by always revealing the projection, *Cinema Komunisto* is in that sense a meta-cinematic film, containing numerous scenes of Tito's projectionist running a film through a projector, a film being watched in a cinema or on an editing table, with the aim of making the spectator aware of the image. Extending Corrigan's notion of 'refractive' cinema, the constant juxtaposing of the camera and the projector, of the making of films with their screening, creates two parallel yet intertwined storylines in the film, showing us the screen and the behind the screen at the same time.

In rethinking cinematic history, that is the making of 'films on film', Nevena Daković argues that they follow the model of "historiographic metafiction" developed by Linda Hutcheon, referring to "works which consciously problematize the making of fiction and history, posing questions about whose "truth" prevails". For Daković

> the film texts are equally involved in reshaping history and in researching the history of representation, resulting in two strands within the film — historiographic and meta-fictional. The meta-fictional (and eventually meta-cinematic) layer gradually strengthens until it becomes of equal importance with the historiographic one. (Daković, 2008:3)

The aim, clearly, is not to create a genealogy, but to problematize the question of the role of state-sponsored Yugoslav cinema, because it offers what Christian Delage would call a *'laboratoire de reflexion*" on Yugoslavia (Delage, 1995:30).

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discipline of cinema like any other subject, that avoids analysis and comparison, and silences the meta-cinematic reflection that any such project inherently entails". (Latsis, 2013:776)

2.2 Methodology

With the aim of developing a cinematic apparatus to investigate the research question, my methodology built on the practices of Godard, Makavejev and Marker, as well as the theories of Jacques Rancière, who analyzed both Marker's and Godard's work. This involved exploring uses of filmic material and searching for the appropriate narrative agency as an author. In choosing the types of filmic material I considered ways of (re)using existing images (documentary and fiction) as well as original material (in the forms of interviews and scenes shot on chosen locations). In thinking about authorship and the role of narrative voice, having decided from the outset against the use of voiceover (for aesthetic and philosophical reasons discussed below), I had to explore alternative narrative agencies - forcing me to delve into questions of narrative logic (application of effects of montage), and uses of narrative time and narrative space .

2.3 Treatment of visual material

In the period between 2006-2012, a number of documentary series on Yugoslavia were broadcast by the national public broadcasters in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia[25]. Commenting on the fact that no less than five historical series were in production at the same time, and that they all positioned Tito as their central subject, one historian commented that

> though this might seem odd, its also understandable, as the passions that ruled these parts are slowly dying down. However, I doubt that any of them will succeed in giving *the real and complete picture of Tito* (emphasis mine). Not out of ideological reasons, but because the people working on these films are not capable of getting to the crux of the problem - after all, up till now historiography hasn't achieved that either.[26]

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[25] *Tito: Red and Black* (1943-1980) - 15x56', 2006, Serbia; *Tito* - 12x45', 2010, Croatia; *Tito, last witnesses of the legacy* - 13 x 56', 2012, Croatia; *Tito's secret services* - 2012, Croatia; *Yugoslavia, a country for a century* - 20x30', 2007, Croatia
[26] Mamić, Z. (04. mart 2006) Tito kao brend i fenomen, Novi List.

This skepticism might be easier to understand when one considers, for example, how Mića Milošević, the director of the series "Tito: Red and Black" (*Tito: crveni i crno*), described his approach: "the series was done without ideological addition or substraction, based on strictly authentic facts and motivated by the charisma of Josip Broz Tito, with the aim of offering objective answers to questions that not even historians have raised." What is particularly striking, and most relevant for a discussion of treatment of visual historical material, is that the biggest challenge they faced, as described by the historian working as consultant on the series, was the fact that the visual archives from that period are "apologetic, ceremonial and idolatory", an attitude echoed by the director who adds: "as all documentary material from this historical period is apologetic, there was a danger of falling into that matrix[27]". This reveals not only a sort-of fear of the image as something seductively dangerous that will entrap those attempting to illustrate the past with it, but also an enduring belief that cinema is to be a source of *"les images vraies"* - truth images. A belief Godard attacked in coining two aphorisms on cinema, one, that it's not a reflection of reality but the reality of a reflection and, two, that there is no `just image', there is only `just an image'.[28] (Landy, 2003:9)

In his writings on the nature of the image, Jacques Aumont distinguishes between the positivist way historians treat the image as a source of information, evidence or a document, contrasting it to an anthropological approach that sees the image as an original mode of production of thought and meaning, a "vector of thought" (Aumont, 2011:145). Thus, it is the empirical nature of the image that assumes documentarial importance: "by accepting the shortcomings of the image as truth, we can analyse the importance of the image as a constructor of sensory-experience" (Kelly, 2002:2). And hence images move from being the witness ('*image temoin*') to the actor of history ('*image acteur d'histoire*'), a distinction elaborated by Eric Michaud (Michaud, 2001).

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[27] Ast. S. (4. maj 2006) Televizija: Crveno i crno, Vreme, br. 800.
[28] In French, the observation on the nature of the image is that "*ce n'est pas une image juste, c'est juste une image*", with 'just image' meaning a true, accurate or right image.

The concept of the image as actor of history was very much at the heart of the visual language adopted in *Cinema Komunisto.* The work on re-using the image aimed "to raise one's vision of images to the level of a thought" (Didi-Huberman, 2010:70). This involved seeking documentary methods for its interrogation, the mixing of fiction/dramatic and documentary sources, and finally de-contextualisation of images in order to open them from previously closed ideological and semiotic readings. An example of this shift from exhausted (in an ideological as well as semiotic sense) to reinterpreted, are clips from the many WWII battle scenes used in Cinema Komunisto. While these underline the prominence of the partisan struggle in Yugoslav cinema, they also serve as a metaphorical representation of what Jović calls the 'battlefield of memories/forgetting' taking place in post-authoritarianism. (Jović, 2004:99)

The effectiveness of this approach relies on the spectator's awareness of the 'original intended use' of these images, an important concept elaborated by Jaimie Baron, in her analysis of 'the archive effect' (Baron, 2014). While acknowledging what she calls the "unruliness of the indexical sign" referring to the problem that the "document's original meaning alters depending on the interpretative framework" (Baron, 2014:4), Baron uses the term 'intentional disparity' to describe how, when the image of the past is re-appropriated

> the viewer is frequently called upon to "divine" the intention "behind" the document. When we attribute an "original intention" to the archival document, we may be attributing it not to a filmmaker but to a social milieu or rhetorical situation that is in some way "other" to that of the filmmaker [who is re-appropriating it]. The found image not only points to a previous production context but also to a previous intended context of use and reception. Moreover, our experience of intentional disparity [...] is based in part on our own extra-textual knowledge. (Baron 2012:111)

Importantly, for Baron this effect only occurs if the viewer of a given film perceives that archival documents (images and sounds) within that film come from another time, and served another function, thus carrying a trace of their earlier intended use. In the context of using archival material in *Cinema Komunisto,* the intentional disparity works

because the original intention of use of the images was to narrate and support the communist political project, whereas now they are being appropriated to subvert their primary intended purpose.

A second method involves the purposeful mixing of documentary (newsreel) and fiction material, in some ways "complicating the archival status of certain images", which as Baron points out, leaves the viewer uncertain of how much authority to give to an indexical source (Baron, 2014:30). My aim was to allow fictional material take on the function of, and to be treated as, documentary archival images, and vice-versa, in some ways liberating them from their indexical authority. Film scholar Catherine Lupton refers to this as the 'image-reality conundrum' which leads to the disappearance of the line between the real and the constructed, "making the documentary image less real and the fiction image less fake[29]" (Lupton, 2005:188).

Finally, there was the decision not to identify fiction or documentary images by title or year, in other words, to de-contextualise them. "Images are reinforced when transplanted" (Didi-Huberman, 2004:170) and this transplantation has been described by Rancière, who identifies it in the films of Alain Resnais and Chris Marker, as a *prélèvement*, or extraction and fragmentation (Rancière, 2011:296), which involves "making images strange/foreign, distancing them, by hijacking them from their native fiction, or the meaning they had in their original use" (Rancière, 2001:225). In writing on *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, Rancière observes

> Godard is trying to reconstitute a sense of the history of the 20th century with all those 'samples' that he cuts from a multiplicity of films[...] a form of *connection of the disconnection* and a way of perceiving history[...], the strategy of Godard is to *extract those images from their story so that they can make history*. (Rancière, 2011:299, emphasis mine)

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[29] Makavejev underscores how this changes perception of both documentary and fiction film, by claiming that inserting documentary fragments in a fiction film "makes them look far more documentary that in a pure documentary", whereas in the fiction image we start seeing "all those marginal remainders of the documentary – the way people eat, move, dress, their houses". Interview (in Cozarinsky and Clarens, 1988: 17) quoted in (Mazierska, 2014:18)

This process creates a problem for Godard, that Rancière observes in the work of Marker, but also in the work of Roland Barthes, which is the "shifting from a certain form of interpretation of the image to a sacralization of the image" (Ranciere, 2011:303). He explains:

> What Godard does is to take some of the elements, or parts, of a film and not only does he paste them – it's not simply a form of Surrealist collage – it's something different, an interpretive operation which transforms the very nature of those elements[...] he takes some shots from films which are shots which belong to a climactic sequence of action and transforms them into icons.
> (Rancière, 2011:297)

In *Cinema Komunisto* I renounced the manipulation of the image, for example by avoiding freeze-frames, double-exposition, split screens and other techniques used by Marker and Godard that go too far towards making the image iconic.[30]

As opposed to the iconic image David Foster uses the term 'thought-images' to refer to a method of "deploying images to hold them up to critical inquiry, but also to read through them metaphorically as a subjective investigation" (Foster, 2009:6), calling Marker an 'image-thinker'. Rancière recognises this 'double regime in the meaning of the image' in Godard's *Histoires* saying that "everything speaks twice: once in its pure presence and in the infinity of its virtual connections" (Rancière, 2001:178) - every image is at the same time a material-image (*image-materiau*) and an image-sign (*image-signe*).

Didi-Huberman situates the idea of the 'thought-image' into a wider reflection on the notion of a work of art elaborated by Walter Benjamin: that "only dialectic images are truly historical images" (Didi-Huberman, 1995:43). In contrast to the Serbian filmmaker from the beginning of this chapter, who is seeking to pin down and fix objective, complete and final truths of historical images, there are those who insist on the importance of the permanent dialectical movement of the images' meaning. Chris Kelly

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[30] The only way in which the archival images were manipulated was in creating a unified 16:9 aspect ratio, which meant cropping the top and bottom of newsreel footage (shot in a 4:3 aspect ratio), and occasionally increasing the letter-boxing on fiction films shot in Cinemascope/Vistavision. This was done to achieve the goal of blurring the distinction between the documentary and fiction images.

warns that: "it is important not to allow these images to reconstitute and thus reinterpret the past[31]" (Kelly, 2002:6). Returning us to the 'fear' of the 'apologetic' image voiced by at the beginning, Michael Renov concludes that

> no longer should a culture assume that the preservation and subsequent re-presentation of historical events can serve to stabilise or ensure meaning– it must remain in constant conflict with the past it represents but without avoiding meaning altogether.(Renov,1993:8)

Just as the historic 'truth' of an image cannot be historically fixed by a cultural context, the ability to read it requires an understanding of the circumstances of its creation. Astrid Erll suggests that to understand what makes some films into "powerful media of cultural memory" it is necessary to scrutinize "the cultural practices surrounding history movies", because these "constitute the collective contexts which channel a movie's reception and potentially turn it into a medium of cultural memory"(Erll, 2008:396). In *Cinema Komunisto* I tried to incorporate this understanding, by indicating the way in which films that addressed the themes central to the political system (the memorialization of the partisan battles in WWII, the introduction of workers' self-management, the youth participation in the country's modernization via worker's brigades) were often supported by the regime, and financed via political channels. Written documentation and eyewitness interviews provide the production context for the films. On the other hand, the story of the financing of the films also serves another function in that it also allows to understand how these films were perceived at the time. When in *Cinema Komunisto* it becomes clear the workers in factories are raising money to help finance the productions of war epics and that soldiers are serving their military duty as extras on film sets, it allows for a historical understanding of the perception of these films *at the time*, a reading that would be entirely lost from today's perspective which is highly skeptical about the genuine enthusiasm for the Yugoslav political project, and dismisses the historical films as ideological propaganda.

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[31] Rancière admits the paradox of this process where in the first step images are recaptured "from their subjection to the stories they are used to tell" (p.171) because "getting them to speak means to refrain from manipulating them" (p.179), and yet in the second step, they are rearranged into other stories. (Rancière, 2001).

2.4 Narrative voice

As Baron observes, the 'destruction' of the image, that is, its "reduction to a visual document" achieves the effect of "making room for other voices" (Baron, 2014:136). It is important to consider questions of sound when analyzing methods of de-constructing the image. Responding to a system of double-guarantees between image and sound in which one 'confirmed' the other, the generation of filmmakers that include Godard and Marker sought to detach the image from the sound, often by introducing a voice-over, or *voix-off* (Faucon, 2010:117). There is no doubt that a separation of sound and image leads to an ability to perceive the image, and that the voice of a commentary performs a double role - that of distancing, but also a reflexive function, as Lupton describes Marker doing: "[his] role is to sort through it all, pondering aloud all the while about what this process of sorting out entails" (Lupton, 2005:11). Yet while in *The Last Bolshevik* Marker combines this personal reflection with other voices (mostly interview footage), the voice in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is the commentary of Godard. This type of voice-over was criticized by some[32] for retaining for itself all power, and all arbitrariness, by having 'no impact' on the images, instead only addressing itself to the spectator (Faucon, 2010:117). Oddly, elsewhere Godard himself criticises the tendency to 'speak over' the image: "that image was telling us something we didn't want to hear. We preferred to speak over it - like in those wretched sports commentaries" (Godard, 1996:29).

Rancière points to the heart of the voiceover problem when he notes that Marker's *The Last Bolshevik* "would be difficult to read without the commentary", calling this voice that is constantly spelling out for the audience the "imperialism of the voice of the master" (Rancière, 2001:168). "The documentary always plays with how the images and their montage, which should speak all by themselves, have to be referred to the authority of a voice that secures meaning at the price of weakening the images" (Ranciere, 2001:168). Even though, when questioned about his objection to the pedagogical voiceover, Rancière replied that "there is no necessary relationship between

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[32] See Serge Daney, *L'Orgue et l'Aspirateur*, Cahiers du Cinéma, n° 278-279, Août – Septembre 1977.

documentary voiceover and authority" (Rancière, 2011:303), it remains an unanswered question of how the "I" of the film stands in relation to the subject of the film.

The formal solution chosen for *Cinema Komunisto* was to eschew a spoken commentary, that is, the presence of an off-screen narrator, instead opting for 'character-narration' through a selection of characters with whom I filmed interviews.[33] The process of selecting the characters[34] was governed by the decision to focus exclusively on participants, that is actors and witnesses of key events, rather than specialists or analysts. This has both advantages and disadvantages - the ability to elicit personal recollections of historic events, and cross them with others' recollections of same events, but occasionally at the cost of the ability these direct participants had to distance themselves and analytically question these events, their own role in them, or theorize them in a wider context - and hence this formal choice means that the analysis of the historical dimension becomes a second or background layer.[35]

In analyzing strategies of narration in film Robert Stam writes that

> the term focalization was introduced by Gerard Genette to distinguish the activity of the narrator recounting the events[...] from the activity of the character from whose perspective events are perceived, or focalized [which allows a division] between the viewpoint established within the fictional world, the angle of vision 'from which the life or the action is looked at', and the narrator's recounting or presenting of the narrative world from a perspective temporally removed from the immediacy of the represented events. (Stam et al., 1992:89)

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[33] Another formal solution in the use of voice in *Cinema Komunisto* concerns the voice of President Tito. Segments of his speeches are used sparingly in the film, in order to achieve a cinematic displacement of Tito. Importantly, the framing of the way the speeches are used is also in the function of creating a critical distance. On both occasions (0:13:44 and 0:55:04), Tito's speeches segue into original songs from the epoch, whose lyrics produce an ironic stance toward Tito. Throughout the film music is used to provide either ironic distance or subjective proximity, never allowing the film to take a 'objectivising' stance towards the material.

[34] An additional element of 'Brechtian distancing' was the fact that I did not hesitate to pierce the interview - at several places in the film my voice can be heard asking a follow-up question.

[35] As Georges Didi-Huberman observes: "a formal solution - particularly when it is a radical one - always carries a related impasse - what one gains here, one loses elsewhere. But one cannot reproach a work of art for not keeping a promise it never made: to "teach everything" in the space of the film".(Didi-Huberman 2004:164)

This approach allows us to enter into the subjectivity of the character, their emotional and cognitive state, making them "centers of consciousness" or "bottlenecks[...] that convey narrative information"(Stam et al., 1992:89). At the same time though, by indicating a historical narration constructed out of personal memories[36], not 'objective' all-knowing history, they as well are denied a 'voice of authority[37]'. From the very beginning, with the introduction of characters in *Cinema Komunisto* the 'role they are playing'[38] is highlighted. As Stam points out "the value of distinguishing focalizaton from narration in film comes to the forefront when we consider texts that take an ironic stance towards the focalizing agent, or that manifest a critical attitude toward the focalizer" (Stam et al., 1992:92). This is achieved through the use of techniques for evaluating, ironizing, confirming or disconfirming the character's thoughts, perceptions and attitudes - as evidenced in the way the two contradictory testimonies of the destruction of the Neretva bridge are edited together (timecode: 1:12:53).

My approach to the interviews was influenced by the work of Claude Lanzmann, (Didi-Huberman writes that Lanzmann's interview techniques were in fact learned from Marcel Ophuls), and his way of always "bringing the interviewee to the moment of bearing witness" (Didi-Huberman 2004:165), and indeed, my approach to the process of interviewing could most accurately be described as an attempt to collect witness accounts. The characters are not subjected to interrogation, rather the aim is to trace the selectivity in their process of remembering, leaving an ambiguity to their beliefs. This is particularly achieved in scenes built on inter-cutting several witness accounts of the same event, showing how they are interlinked and how their paths crossed. These include studio boss Gile Djurić and filmmaker Veljko Bulajić each remembering the same moment in which President Tito decided the state should get behind funding the

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[36] Makavejev described this approach, one he also used in *Innocence Unprotected*, where the characters are people who participated in the making of the film who "reminisce on times spent on the set, the complicated story of the film's print and their subsequent lives" (Mazierska, 2014:21), as a way of reflecting the idea of history as Assman's 'communicative memory'.

[37] Pam Cook notes that "even though memory is tinged with subjectivity, it can still be regarded as authentic[...] their recollections are [invested] with an aura that transcends the knowledge that their experience is reconstructed for the purpose of current agendas, and endows it with authority and emotional power". (Cook, 2005:3)

[38] This includes techniques of pointing them out (and even circling or freeze-framing them) in the archival material, thus clearly situating them within the action, underlying their role as historical actors and not a disinterested or objective commentator.

epic "*Battle of Neretva*" (timecode 1:04:48) or scenes where characters comment on each others' role such as actor Bata Živojinović talking of the 'spying' Tito's projectionist did for the filmmakers, and the projectionist in question, Leka Konstantinović, evading answering the question (timecode 1:02:00). Often, the disassociation of the interview sound and image allows for an indeterminate temporality, further adding to a 'mise-en-scene of memory' (Faucon, 2010:117). Even in cases where the witness accounts are not brought 'face-to-face' editing will permit them to reflect on each other within the frame of the story.

An additional narrative strategy used in the interviews was to bring the subjects into contact with the 'archive', creating a sort of dialogue between the assembled images and the interview footage. The film features several such scenes connecting the character as witness with the archive (written documents, but also clips from films and photographs) - Ranko Petrić, the head of the film studio reading the letter of President Tito establishing the studios (timecode 0:11:46), set designer Veljko Despotović reading a film crew's telegram to Tito (timecode 0:27:51), actor Bata Živojinović reading transcripts from the discussions of the scene in which Tito is wounded in the film "Sutjeska"[39] (timecode 1:24:02). This permits the creation of a dialogue between the characters and the archival material, much in the way that Marker "formulates a historical discourse between the image as a form of historical document and the act of remembering as a method of interpretation within the text of the film" (Kelly 2002:4).

It was my reticence to use voiceover as it constitutes a way of instructing the viewer on how to read the images, and my doubt that it truly achieves the Brechtian aim of 'waking up' spectator, that made me decide against it from the very outset. But I was still searching for a way to achieve an expressive subjectivity in my storytelling. In his book on essay film Timothy Corrigan argues that "when lacking a clearly visible subjective voice or personal organizing presence, this act of [expressive subjectivity] can also be signaled in various formal or technical ways, including editing" (Corrigan, 2011:30).

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[39] In another scene, producer Stevan Petrović is shown holding an iPod, watching a clip from a 1964 film in which he acts in a scene (timecode 0:47:07).

According to Corrigan then, the director's point of view, or the subjective 'voice' of the film can also lie in the editing approach.

2.5 Montage

"Why montage?" Georges Didi-Huberman asks in a text on cinema and history. Because, he answers "the value of knowledge/understanding could not be intrinsic to a single image" (Didi-Huberman, 2004:151). This view of montage as an editing technique goes to the heart of Godard's theories (and practice) of montage, but also his understanding of cinema, which he expressed in an interview: "There is no image, there are only images. And there is a certain form of assembling images: as soon as there are two, there are three.. That is the basis of cinema" (Bergala, 1998:430). The joining of images has a direct effect on their reading - in other words

> the image acquires a readability that stems directly from the choice of montage
> - it is based on the *rapprochement* (a merger/coming together) of incommensurable things, but regardless produces an authentic 'historical phrasing' as Jacques Rancière put it so well. (Didi-Huberman, 2004:174)

Montage techniques then, construct a framework within the documentary that determines the reading of images, but as Didi-Huberman notes: "montage is only valuable when it doesn't hasten to conclude or to close: while it opens and makes more complex our understanding of history, instead of excessively simplifying" (Didi-Huberman, 2004:152). Thus the formal strategies that include "narrative disjunction, fragmentation, false continuity, and the de-linking of sound and image" are about eschewing synthesis and disabling a fusion of images, which is how Godard's approach "differs from the confident recreation of authorial vision, artistic harmony and narrative development"(Landy, 2003:11).

What kind of understanding is montage being harnessed for? Godard's simple claim is that "montage, is what reveals/allows one to see" (*le montage.. c'est ce qui fait voir"*) (Bergala, 1998:415). The 'seeing' he refers to is a cognitive one, situating the abilities of montage at the level of thought, claiming that cinema's original purpose was to make

one reflect/think, and that cinema should be a '*forme qui pense*' - a thinking form. "Montage intensifies the image and gives the visual experience a power that our convictions or habits usually appease or veil." (Didi-Huberman, 2004:170)

Knowledge through montage refers back to Walter Benjamin's concept of the dialectic image, which intended to borrow an aesthetic technique of the literary avant-garde and "carry over the principle of montage into history"(Pensky, 2004:185). Benjamin felt that

> historical fragments[…] can be constructed by removing them from their embeddedness in a particular context and "mounting" them in a series of textual juxtapositions – such that the juxtaposed fragments constitute a constellation. And this constellation, in turn, forms an image, not in the intuitive sense of a visual image (which would be, in the field of art, a mosaic and not a montage), but precisely in the sense of a new, necessary interpretation of the fragments' relationships with one another. (Pensky, 2004:186)

Godard used the word '*etincelle*' (spark) to describe this process: "to look at these images, and then all off a sudden, bring them together, to provoke a spark - that creates constellations, stars that come together and go further apart, as Walter Benjamin wanted" (Bergala, 1998).

The dialectic process leads us to the 'truth' Godard is seeking. In that sense for Godard it is montage that makes images 'true', because

> it is montage that confers upon images this status of articulation, which will make them, depending on the value of how they are put to use - just or unjust (true or untrue): in the same way that a fiction film can carry images that are so intense they are able to bring to the surface a truth, or conversely how a TV news report using documentary images can result in a falsification of reality. (Didi-Huberman, 2004:171)

This is effectively a rebuttal of a theoretical strand criticising the ethics of montage going back to Andre Bazin and Georges Sadoul who had equalled montage to lying. However, whereas Godard's use of montage aims to create a specific historical narrative, "the overall effect is of bringing together, of gluing, rather than cutting"(Mazierska, 2014:17). In contrast, Makavejev

does not look for similarities between different (hi)stories but rather for their differences and incompatibility[...] he collects what is discarded by grand histories: the quirky, the unusual, the eccentric, the embarrassing and the private[...] his usual point is to show that these private histories do not match the grand narratives. (Mazierska, 2014:17)

These considerations offer an insight into the challenges of using montage not as a form but also a philosophy. Godard's philosophy of montage is that in allowing '*rapprochement*', a coming together, history is achieved. "A rapprochement of something near, and most of all across time[...] One of the aims of cinema was to invent or to discover montage in order to be able to 'do' history"(Godard, 1996). Godard's famous example, from a speech given upon receiving the Adorno prize in September 1995 is:

> If you say that around 1540 Copernicus introduced the idea that the Sun no longer revolved around the Earth, and if you say that a few years later, Vesalius published *De corporis humanis Fabrica*, which shows the inside of the human body, the skeleton, and anatomy, well, then, you have Copernicus in one book and Vesalius in another. In one book, the universe is infinitely big. In the other, the inside of the human body is infinitely small. And then four hundred years later, you have the biologist François Jacob writing, "In the same year, Copernicus and Vesalius ... ," well, Jacob isn't doing biology anymore, he's making cinema. And that is what history really is. It is *rapprochement*. It is *montage...* Just as when Cocteau said, "If Rimbaud had lived, he would have died the same year as Marshal Pétain." You look at the portrait of the young Rimbaud, you look at the portrait of the old Maréchal of France in 1948, and your gaze moves from one to the other, and there you have a story, you have 'history'. That's cinema. (Bergala, 1998:296).

The principle of '*rapprochement*' opens the door to ways other than the use of disconnected images to "subvert and invite reflection of unifying strategies of conventional (historical) narration" (Landy, 2003:11). The choice of the organising logic for the montage is an authorial choice. Didi-Huberman identifies this difference in choices, for example by naming Claude Lanzmann's choice in *Shoah* as '*montage-recit*'

and Godard's choice in *Histoire(s)* as '*montage-symptome*' (Didi-Huberman, 2004). The organizing logic in *Cinema Komunisto* also draws from the principle of *rapprochement* - particularly in the temporal and spatial structure of the narration, and I will look at each in turn.

2.6 Temporal structure of narration

Benedetto Croce wrote: "History is always contemporary", and many filmmakers dealing with historical subjects would indeed concur that their aim is "not to represent any past 'as it really happened', but rather what 'it' really means today" (Ernst 1983:398). In terms of exploring possibilities of narrative agency for *Cinema Komunisto* I found the use of non-linear time a powerful instrument, not only in examining memory against history, but also of authorship. Robert Stam writes "the mastery of time is the privileged form by which the narrator manifests itself", by restructuring events to mark its viewpoint or introduce a guided reading[40] (Stam et al.,1992:118).

Examples of this approach in *Cinema Komunisto* are the way the story is constructed around flash-backs and flash-forwards between present-day former Yugoslavia that is marked by practices of forgetting, and socialist Yugoslavia which was characterised by commemorative practices.[41] So, for example, we go from images of the construction of the Central Film Studio to a scene exploring the meaning the studios retain today (timecode 0:11:18). In this way I follow Chris Marker's choice in *The Last Bolshevik* which also relies on a non-linear narrative structure, and a "constant juxtaposition of the past, present and future" (Kelly, 2002:1). Makavejev also used non-continuity, not necessarily as juxtaposition, but "as a means to connect people living in different times and places with the characters from the Second World War" (Mazierska, 2014:17).

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[40] In analyzing 'tense' Stam writes: "the relations of tense constitute one of the most important elements of narrative structure, providing a powerful artistic technique for rendering the story-world in a varied and aesthetically interesting manner. The category of tense refers to the temporal relations between the story and the *récit*, or the story and the discourse. At the level of story, events are conceived as occurring in strict chronological sequence, in a straightforward and linear order. At the level of the discourse, however, events may be presented in an order which deviates from straight chronology, in which the devices of flashback, parallelism and flashforward complicate the progression of the narrative" (Stam et al.,1992:120).
[41] Where the jumps in narration might have been too confusing I have used title cards to help the viewer situate the action in time.

In her book on the 'archive effect' Jaimie Baron calls this technique 'temporal disparity' describing it as "the perception of a 'then' and 'now' generated in a single text" (Baron, 2014:18). Throughout *Cinema Komunisto* events are used to bookend time - archive of the Military Museum opening and an exploration of it today, closed to the public, Tito's villa at its height and its bombed ruins today, archive of the Pula Festival's creation and closing. Non-linearity in the narrative brings us closer to the true functioning of memory but it also permits reflection, through a juxtaposition of story-lines. Paul Ricoeur claims this non-chronological approach provides a configurational dimension, which allows a "grasping together" (Ricoeur, 1998:178) - to follow a story and reflect upon it at the same time. Didi-Huberman, following Walter Benjamin, claims that "while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of Then to Now is dialectic" (Didi-Huberman, 1995:43). The idea "in the parallelism of the archival images and the traces/signs of the present, is to create a critical time - in a Brechtian way - amenable, not to identification, but to a political reflection"[42] (Didi-Huberman 2004:165).

This effect is particularly relevant to situate the viewer within the ideology of the present. Specifically films that are trying to come to terms with a socialist past, such as *Cinema Komunisto* or *The Last Bolshevik* are perhaps more an investigation of the present, the shifting ideological status of the image as a society moves from communism to capitalism, in much the same way that Marker speaks of "rooting the film in current events" (Kelly, 2002), making a film that is also about the present status of the communist/socialist image. In that sense the film is not an attempt at the reconstruction of either of the past depicted in the films of the time, but a representation of how the meaning of that past has shifted, and continues to shift.

The system of flashbacks permits an assumption that the spectator knows how the story of Yugoslavia ends - in other words, in *Cinema Komunisto* a dimension of reflection occurs at the level at which the knowledge of political events that come in between the past and the present is assumed. Thus, the historical end of Yugoslavia in a violent civil

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[42] Didi-Huberman traces this practice of shattering the historical storyline back to the work of Alain Resnais, who 'broke-up' the historical récit to better make us - the viewers - confront history (Didi-Huberman, 2004:165).

war of the 1990s, though briefly mentioned at the end of the film, is something that is very much the spectator's contribution to positioning the story within a context. In discussing the temporality of past/present narrative jumps, Baron calls this the 'temporal break' - the event that clearly separates the 'then' from the 'now[43]' (Baron, 2014: 22). In writing on narrative time Ricoeur points that this "sense of an ending" in which our following of the story is "governed as a whole by its way of ending", not only teaches us to "read time itself backward, as the recapitulating of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences"(Ricoeur, 1980:179-180) but also to establish human action within memory .

Film historian Nevena Daković writes that "rereading history in multiple time perspectives disrupts the unity and coherence of its official versions, unexpectedly bringing a touch of nostalgia" (Daković, 2008), and it is important to look at the issue of nostalgia evoke by *Cinema Komunisto*.

Researchers working on the question of the mobilisation of cultural practices in the former Yugoslav communities, such as Zala Volčić and Dragan Klaić, have theorised that remembrance lies between practices of nationalism/patriotism in the form of pseudo-historic fantasies and appropriations (Klaić, 2011) and those of consumerism, notably that of cultural tourism (Volčić, 2011). These two trends can be picked up in the documentary production across the former Yugoslav republics. The first approach, espoused by the documentaries listed at the beginning of this chapter, is one caught up in establishing 'objective' narratives of Yugoslavia as a historical fact and serves to (re)create stereotypes of the collapsed society. The second approach usually offers humorous remembrances of daily life under communism - consumer objects, social and cultural practices, ideological symbols, pop culture heroes and artifacts - which effectively trivializes, sentimentalizes and commodifies the Yugoslav experience (Petrović, 2012). In a way both approaches are examples of an exploitation of nostalgia

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[43] Baron acknowledges the existence of a third temporality, the now of watching the film (which could be years after the 'present' in which the film is made), but claims that the 'archival effect' happens inside the given text, i.e. inside the text of the film (Baron, 2014:22).

(or Yugonostalgia, to use the phrase coined by writer Dubravka Ugrešić) in the building of post-Yugoslav identities, by negating it as a political stance. As Petrović points out

> citizens of Serbian cannot refer to to their socialist past when negotiating their identity without being accused of nostalgia, irrationality and ideological blindness. Post-socialist subjects who approach their past with a great deal of emotional investment are presented as incapable or uninterested to articulate politically relevant messages and demands, and their attempts to build the Yugoslav experience into the policies of the future are rejected as sentimental, possessive and unproductive orientation towards the past. (Petrović, 2012:23)

Echoing Petrović's sentiments that "Yugonostalgia, as a specific configuration of affect and emotion *is* a productive analytic category and an important way to mobilise socialist heritage in political negotiations of the present and future", in *Cinema Komunisto* I sought to embrace rather than exclude the affective impulse, "precisely because of its ability to intervene in the present, to "disturb" and create fissures in normalized narratives"(Petrović, 2012:35).

The challenge in making the film was to balance nostalgia with the defamiliarization and sense of distance achieved using irony. Hence my use of emotional imagery followed what Svetlana Boym calls "reflective nostalgia", that leads to a self-conscious awareness of the longing, pointing to the gaps in the archive and informing the relationship between past and present (Boym, 2001). According to Boym, reflective nostalgia

> can be ironic and humorous. It reveals that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another, as affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgment or critical reflection[...] This type of nostalgic narrative is ironic, inconclusive and fragmentary. (Boym 2001:49)

The ironic is situated not in the level of text, but in the developing of the metafiction layer of the narrative. Intriguingly this also has the effect of multiplying the nostalgia

> nostalgia for the past is complemented by nostalgia for the created memories of that past, as experienced and "relived" through the "original" and its "representation" in a process which erases the differences between (real)

memories of the past, fictional memories and memories of the fiction. (Apor
and Sarkisova 2008:xii).

Jamie Baron identifies irony as the constitutive trope[44] of the archival document (Baron, 2014:40), recognizing that there is "no reason why irony and emotion should not co-exist" (Baron, 2014:12). "What irony and nostalgia share, therefore, is a perhaps unexpected twin evocation of both affect and agency - or, emotion and politics".(Hutcheon, 2010:49), and it was in their combination that I found my solution. In utilizing archive documents and positioning them within a present day perspective I maintained the ironic distance (particularly through intentional disparity) and resisted the 'affective' pull of archival images of a vanished world to lead to a romanticized nostalgic reading. On the other hand, the use of nostalgic discourse and imagery, helped avoid falling into the detached or cynical position, of knowingness and moral superiority that would dismiss the reception of these images as naive, bringing the sincerity of the emotional, of both my characters and myself, who had experienced the country that we were born in disappear. As Linda Hutcheon concludes "the ironizing of nostalgia, in the very act of its invoking, may [create] a small part of the distance necessary for reflective thought about the present as well as the past."(Hutcheon 2010:57)

2.7 Spatial structure of narration

Editing, in additional to creating a temporal continuum (or discontinuum), plays a role in the construction of filmic space (Faucon,2010:122). Such spatial articulation traditionally aims to allow for the comprehension of narrative space on the part of the spectator, and is usually referred to as the 'setting' of the story. In examining the use of 'setting' in cinema Martin Lefebvre writes that: "setting may be precise and highly detailed or it may remain rather vague and more or less undetermined. In either case, it still serves the same discursive function: it is the place where the action or events occur" (Lefevbre,2007:21). Beyond aiding a spectator to make sense of a narrative this creation of 'perspective' allows something else from a narratological point of view - it allows the

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[44] According to Hayden White, irony is the predominant trope of historiographical rhetoric of our time. (Ernst, 1983:401)

filmmaker to control the subject position of the spectator. Hence, Robert Stam argues that the place of the spectator is essential - because a unity and coherence of narrative space will lead to a unified subject position of the spectator. Certain directors, like Godard, practice the opposite, using setting to 'displace' (Lefebvre,2007:44), with the result that

> the eruption of a visible discourse, through a violation of perspective, a break-up of overall spatial organization or a contradictory narrative point-of-view, will fracture the unified subject position of the spectator, leading to a fragmentation of identity and self-coherence. (Stam et al.,1992:108)

How does this insight apply to seeking the rules of engagement concerning spatial articulation in historical films? This aspect of cinematic exploration is perhaps best understood when analysed at its most extreme. Filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, author of the landmark series *Shoah* (1985), formulated his 'rules of engagement' with the past by approaching history solely in the present. Lanzmann rejects the approach of using non-linear temporality to achieve the dialectic of Then and Now, but offers a different analytical dimension - that of 'place'. Lanzmann stated that *Shoah* was an investigation "into the *present* of the Holocaust, as opposed to its past" (Didi-Huberman,1995:44). Didi-Huberman adds that *Shoah* radicalises this point by a complete refusal "to use the 'contretemps' of archival images, in favor of a single dimension - the spoken word and the filmed places of the present[45]" (Didi-Huberman,2004:165). Didi-Huberman observes that in the way Lanzmann treats the 'place' it no longer retains any 'imaginary' or oniric qualities, because it imposes itself as a document[46] of the past"which far from excluding feeling, imposes it as a feeling of distance and of proximity at the same time, a mingled feeling of the strange" as despite there not necessarily even being physical traces of the past (in this case, the concentration camps or killing sites) "everything, here, remains, right in front of us" (Didi-Huberman,1995:38).

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[45] Lanzmann often referred to *Shoah*, not as a historical film but a 'geographical', or even 'topographical' film.(Didi-Huberman, 1995:42)

[46] Janet Walker clarifies this use of place as document: "a materialist spatial perspective is reasserted, such that location matters, but place is not essentialized or reified as a truth-telling topography. The stones don't speak except through a kind of critical ventriloquism, yet they are more than mere inert features of a fixed terrain". (Walker,2010:52)

While I did not opt to follow Lanzmann to the extreme radicality of his formal solution (nor indeed was I treating a subject of such trauma), I did aim to incorporate some of his filmmaking strategies. Adopted as an interview technique this elicits quite powerful testimonies, and the moment in *Cinema Komunisto* of Tito's projectionist returning to the villa of Tito (timecode 0:31:16), where he spent 32 years showing him films, only to find it destroyed, represents the cinematic shock that occurs when the witness arrives to a place and confirms 'this is the place'. As Janet Walker adds, such a 'situated testimony[47]' from a character does more than just verbalise, it also "incarnates...[a] film's core problems and critique" (Walker,2010:49).

Lanzmann's techniques allow for a wider reflection on the narrative role of cinematic space in films treating memory, and theoretically speaking, the articulation of visual space ties into the recent inclusion of geography into memory research[48], in part because of the intrinsic spatiality of memory[49]. In developing his concept of collective (social) memory Halbwachs had suggested that it was dialectically linked to space: "just as the endurance of the social group, its internal cohesion and external identity, was dependent on the stability of the groups spatiality, so too the physical space itself was in a real sense dependent on the enduring memories of the group that occupies it"(Pensky,2011:65).

The answer to the question of how 'a space' becomes a 'place' is that meaning gets ascribed to it through the forming of social bonds and collective history. Marc Augé describes anthropological place as possessing two essential principles, "that of meaning for the people who live in it, and of intelligibility for the person who observes it"

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[47] Since Lanzmann, there has been a 'spatial turn' in trauma studies in cinema, with this type of 'situated testimony', which "realizes the materiality of retrospective witnessing in the power of place" (Walker, 2010:49) that has sparked a whole mode of 'documentaries of return'.

[48] The interest in analyzing the spatial perspective in films is perhaps symptomatic of a 'spatial turn' underway in the study of visual culture. Edward Soja writes: "If time and space (and by extension history and geography) are co-equal and mutually formative aspects of social life, what has caused the privileging of one over the other"?See Soja, E. (1996). Thirdspace. Malden Blackwell.

[49] "The geography of memory locates history and its representations in space and landscape. It answers the question, "where is memory," in terms of places and sites[…] geographers focus on the spatial, locational, and material patterns and dynamics of these commemorative practices, generally in public spaces" (Gregory et al. 2009:127). See Gregory D. et al (2009) The Dictionary of Human Geography, Hoboken: Wiley and Sons. And Gregory D (1994). Geographical Imaginations. Blackwell, Cambridge, MA, USA.

(Brunsdon, 2010:223). Cinema undeniably possesses this capacity for 'place-making', "read either within the fictional world of the narrative, or as part of extra-filmic narratives about the history of the [site]" (Brunsdon, 2010:219).

And thus, Martin Lefebvre describes the discursive transformation through which 'settings' can become 'landscapes' in films, as landscape is emancipated from its supporting role as background or setting to events and characters; "as a result, it establishes the condition of its emergence as a completely distinct aesthetic object", and "a semiotic resource in its own right" (Lefebvre, 2007:23). He writes: "landscape appears when, rather than following the action, I turn my gaze toward space and contemplate it in and of itself" (Lefebvre,2007:48). As landscape becomes mise-en-scene, it can make the land emblematic through its representation on the wide screen, something Jane Gaines refers to as 'scenic nationalism' (Gaines, 2005:286).

In mapping mediated memory sites within fiction films, places can almost be considered as characters, or quasi-characters (an often-cited example of this is Monument Valley in John Ford's films) where, Christian Delage observes, history becomes something of a geo-history (Delage, 1995:27). In the case of Yugoslav cinema, the bridge on the Neretva river,[50] site of a WWII battle, a 1969 film shoot, and today a museum to the battle, the film and the Bosnian war in the 1990s, offers an example of the constitution of Nora's *lieux de memoire,* that functioned as a place of symbolic mooring. In the same way Ford fashions Monument Valley as the original metaphor of the birth of the American nation, so the Neretva bridge serves a metaphoric and commemorative function.[51] What Delage points out concerning Monument Valley applies here as well - that if the bridge has come to symbolize a key political myth of Tito's Yugoslavia, "it was first through the aesthetic of its cinematic identity, and only then its progressive constitution into a *lieu de memoire"* (Delage,1995:27).

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[50] Even though the bridge on the Neretva is famous both as a location of a heroic battle in WWII and as the set of Bulajic's Academy-Award nominated film, very few people realise it's still there today. Yet the image of the bridge lying in the river was so iconic in socialist Yugoslavia, it was even on the front of New Year's greeting cards Tito used to send out.
[51] Not mentioning the further emblematic meaning the images of a destroyed bridge took on during the Yugoslav wars, with the traumatic images of the destruction of the historic stone bridge in Mostar in November 1993 (which is, coincidentally, further downstream spanning the same river, Neretva).

The process of constituting memory-sites is thrown into relief against a background of profound social change, such as the transition from communism to market democracy, or the re-drawing of borders following the collapse of a federal state. Robert Musil wrote that monuments are constructed to suggest permanence, and that as such "they are prime anchors in the political manipulation of history and the invention or reinvention of cultural traditions", but that these monuments "often take on a strangely invisible quality if the person or event recalled no longer resonates with current cultural or political concerns" (Meusburger et al., 2011:6). This is why, in conceptualizing the shooting of the scenes set in the present, I chose to focus on sites that have today acquired this 'strangely invisible quality', as it offered me a way to identify the disruption of meanings of sites, their 'move' from position of 'scenic nationalism' to that of ruins. For the filmic landscape of *Cinema Komunisto* is an analysis of 'emptied spaces' which today seem "empty of narrative" (Brunsdon, 2010:228).

In the context of post-socialist political upheaval the landscape does not provide traces of remembering, but the abandoned museums, hotels, offices, along with the bombed site of Tito's former villa offer evidence of forgetting ("landscapes of loss" to use Naomi Greene's phrase, or as Paul Virilio called it "topographical amnesia"). Charlotte Brunsdon, in her analysis of empty space notes that "bombsites and war damage provide imagery for disruptions in the social fabric which are both material and metaphoric" (Brundson,2010:225), which explains the importance of ruins in the filmic language.

Writing about ruins in the context of analyzing post-socialist nostalgia, Svetlana Boym refers to them as "off-modern", explaining that tracing them involves exploration of the side-alleys of twentieth- century history at the "margins of error of major theoretical and historical narratives" (Boym, 2007:2). But Boym stresses that present-day 'ruinophilia' is not merely "a neoromantic malaise and a reflection of our inner landscapes", and that "rediscovered, off-modern ruins are not only symptoms but also sites for a new exploration and production of meanings" (Boym, 2007:3). This view, that ruins do not "correspond to the withdrawal of memory but to its utter transformation" (Pensky,

2011:82) is particularly relevant in tracing the loss of identity across the former Yugoslavia.

Commenting on the loss of identity and confusion that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia, Tanja Petrović described the 'need to reorganize the mental maps of people", not only because "the territory on the other side of the border did not exist for creators of the [post-war] public discourse in Croatia/Serbia", but also because of the "discourse through which a national territory was becoming a symbol, the highest value of all those belonging to the Serbian, Croatian, Bosniak etc. nation" (Petrović, 2007:263). That is why a critical spatial perspective was an important element in the construction of *Cinema Komunisto*[52]. Almost all of the interviews and documentary scenes in *Cinema Komunisto* are shot on location, all chosen for their symbolic position within the map of Yugoslav realms of memory. Interviews are shot in the Military Museum, the Avala film studios, Tito's villa, Tito's private island, the Roman Arena (setting for the Pula festival), all the time crossing borders between Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia, as noted in the accompanying graphics, creating a topography of Yugoslav cinema and ultimately mapping a parallel between cinema history and (geo-)political history.

Francesco Mazzucchelli writes about the fact that the disassociation of political and geographic spaces in the former Yugoslavia has the effect of denying the past (Mazzuchelli, 2012:5). He draws on Tim Judah's notion of the existence of a Yugosphere[53], to prove that a unified perspective still exists across the territory of the former country, and that within this 'semiosphere' Yugoslav films, for example, are still 'read' the same.

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[52] In some ways the topographic nature of the film is emphasized at the very beginning of *Cinema Komunisto*, with the (animated) map of Yugoslavia (timecode 0:01:17). Writing about the use of maps in films, Tom Conley notes that it locates the geography of the narrative, but more importantly that it "ties the perception of cinematic space to the overall philosophical event" (Conley, 2007:7)

[53] The concept of the 'Yugosphere' was introduced by the British journalist and writer on the Balkans Tim Judah in a 2009 article for *The Economist* and a follow up study published by the London School of Economics, to describe regional trends towards a supra-ethnic and transnational re-invigoration of political, economic and cultural ties that had been interrupted by the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

The fact that the films are still viewed in a largely positive light, is illustrated in the ongoing legal battles between the republics for the right to add them to their 'national' filmography. Due to unresolved questions of rights to succession of the joint cinematic heritage, many of the newly-created national cinematheques and film centers are engaged in a battle over claiming production rights to the Yugoslav films, a process that is avidly covered by the 'Yugosphere' media. *The Battle of Neretva* offers a striking example of the continued interest in the Yugoslav cinema heritage. A 1969 film directed by Veljko Bulajić, a director who resides in Croatia (but is of Montenegrin origin), shot entirely in Bosnia, but financed by 'United Yugoslav Producers', *Neretva* was the subject of a heavily mediatised court battle over the production rights between the Bosnia, the location of shooting, and the former republic film studio of Croatia, Jadran Film, who had been executive producer. Public interest in the destiny of the film was proof of the film's continued popularity: on January 8th 2011, Croatian Radio Televion (HRT) broadcast the film in primetime, to an audience of 800.000 viewers, obtaining an 18% viewership share, breaking HRT's record. The continued popularity of films produced in Tito's time is visible in the introduction of KlasikTV, the "Turner Classic Movies of the area", a cable channel that plays old Yugoslav films 24-hours a day, that promotes itself as the "meeting place of regional cinema" and is visible in every single former Yugoslav republic, where it ranks in the top 5 viewed cable channels. Thus it could be argued that the visibility and popularity of Yugoslav films plays a role in sustaining the concept of the 'Yugosphere'.

In some ways, the 'politics of space' in *Cinema Komunisto* inscribes itself into this notion of the existence of a Yugosphere, and brings us full circle to the starting argument about cinema's ability to create a unified conception of space for the spectator. Thus, while the consideration of temporal non-linearity in the montage of *Cinema Komunisto* helped map the context of the image in terms of the temporality of Tito's Yugoslavia, the question of positioning the image within the spatiality/topography of Tito's Yugoslavia not only reveals the traces of the dramatic changes that occurred, but makes a political gesture as well. A film that comes to mind, which shapes an exploration of space into something that is not only a historical film, but a political film, is Patricio Guzmán's *Nostalgia for the Light* (*Nostalgia de la Luz*, 2010).

> The film's construction pushes us to acknowledge the ways in which the documentary itself participates in the spatial practice of making "the place" of the Atacama [desert...] Patricio Guzmán's marked dedication to documenting not only space-as-object but also space as productive and social moves us[...] the socio-political impact of the film cannot be dissociated from its spatial practice. (Bowles et al. 2011:2)

Guzmán thus shows that cinema is well poised to engage in a spatial politics, to be an art of space producing its own space or spaces, a rule of engagement I attempted to develop in *Cinema Komunisto*, ultimately concluding that while exploring narrative temporality allows us to be critical, it is perhaps the examination of narrative spatiality that allows us to be political in constructing memory texts.

3. Conclusion

"Entre le temps perdu et le passé retrouvé il y a l'oeuvre d'art."
(Between the lost time and the found past lies the work of art.)
Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 1988:208.

At the outset of this thesis, as a useful tool of inquiry, I adopted Rosenstone's challenge to formulate 'rules of engagement', in analyzing the creative inspiration I drew from the work of Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard, but also in applying Makavejev's concept of 'theory in practice' in *Cinema Komunisto*. In what way did development of certain 'rules of engagement' allow the creation of historical understanding in my film, and what kind of understanding emerged from the way images and sounds were put together?

The filmmaking strategies that are applied by filmmakers working in the innovative or oppositional documentary style (such as deconstruction of the image, the question of voice as point of view, metaphor as organising principle, montage as narrative strategy, temporal and spatial disunity and *rapprochement)*, provided useful conceptual devices while I was conducting my research, and during the script, shooting and editing process. Along the way I realized that the cinematic solutions I was developing added up to the formulation of my own response to the stumbling block imposed by the filmmakers around me who were also taking on Yugoslav history under the banner of establishing historical 'truth' through documentary film.

Filmmaker Werner Herzog referred disparagingly to the "truth of accountants" obsessed with facts, judging it inferior to an "ecstatic truth"[54] - a category taken up by Rosenstone, who distinguishes factual truth from narrative truth (elsewhere he refers to it as emotional/psychological/symbolic truth), claiming that these can be more characteristic and revealing:

> You may also see the history film as part of a separate realm of representation
> and discourse, one not meant to provide literal truths about the past (as our

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[54] "Fact creates norms, and truth illumination".Herzog's Minnesota Declaration on truth and fact in cinema issued at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota on April 30, 1999

written history can provide literal truths) but metaphoric truths. (Rosenstone, 2006:28 and 163).

In choosing to focus on the past of cinema as opposed to the 'real' past, I was seeking something else - to deconstruct how cinema functions as a "site of memory" (*lieux de mémoire*), its kinship with political myths and what it reveals about the social fabric it is created in. Ironically I find myself constructing a 'celluloid monument' at the same time as deconstructing their creation. Yet, perhaps rather than being a memorial to an erased country, it is a memorial to what I would call 'the erased image' - *Cinema Komunisto* itself becomes a 'memory-site' of images.

Metaphorised in the forgotten film studios, an abandoned place, emptied of narrative, it is perhaps my search to decipher the meaning of the ruins that led me to delve into an exploration of the cinematic image and its relationship to narratives of the past. Rosenstone once suggested judging historians' work by the "aptness of [their] metaphors" (Rosenstone, 2006:163), and I propose applying the same principle. Cinema indeed offers a privileged site to explore questions of memory and history, and it illustrated the social and political disruption of Yugoslavia.

To paraphrase the description of what Chris Marker achieved in his account of Soviet cinema in the 1920s and 1930s, the aim was to reveal how much of the shared notion of Yugoslav history came, and continues to come to us, through film (Foster, 2009). Though I might not go as far as Godard's confident claim that "cinema is the only art that allows 'to make visible' the history of the century, and even to save it" (Godard, 1996), it is here where I join Marker and Godard in the charge of a failure in historiography, one related both to the writing of the socialist state's version of history during Yugoslavia, and its erasing after the fall of socialism and the disintegration of the country.

As Richard Esbenshade notes, when

> the 'traditional means of preservation' (history books, national holidays, museums) become so obviously manipulated, they are no longer perceived as

the guardians of the national heritage[...] In the face of official manipulation and distortion of history (forced forgetting), individual memory became the source for, and representation of, national history. (Esbenshade, 1995:74)

It would appear then that the nature of historical documentaries is necessarily subjective, leading towards an individual truth. The approach I developed, of re-purposing images, and using techniques of temporal and spatial narration, seems to me to be the direction for historical documentaries, never to go backwards seeking to correct historical narratives, but to examine 'the present of the past', and so perform less a narrative of history, and more a narrative of memory - fragmentary, self-consciously so, as Godard said, making a thought-poem rather than a historical project[55].

Marker met this challenge by coining the phrase *ciné, ma vérité* ('cinema, my truth'), while Godard spoke of *Histoire(s)* as an intimate saga. But do such individual or subjective representations of the past lose the power of philosophical argument? I would argue that this (new) cinematic form of documentary film that moves towards the 'poetic', and even the 'ironic' is more than a question of identifying a subjective voice or approaching history from an individual perspective. Applying Walter Benjamin's theories to the blurring of philosophical argument and lyric reflection in documentary films, Marc Foster defines it as a "negotiation of the *rechten Abstand* or the "right distance" and the *richtigen Bickwinkel* or "the Proper perspective", essentially a problematisation of the stance that the reflecting subject must assume. (Foster, 2009)

This is in effect how the filmmaker's role and position become the focus of a philosophical re-orientation of history in film, which is why the essence of my search for 'rules of engagement' was finding the appropriate narrative voice. In finding this subjective voice or authorial vision, with its "right distance" I sought a balance between the emotional affect of the 'archive effect' that would not be too nostalgic, and the ironic stance that would not take on a superiority of hind-sight, but perhaps most importantly I allowed myself a level of manipulation of the archival material that historians would

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[55] Interestingly enough this approach, rather than being repudiated by historians, has been welcomed by some. For example, Rosenstone wrote that "it is not necessarily the literal past that is of most interest to the historian – it is the relationship between history and memory, or between history and remembering

never allow themselves. In taking the artistic freedom to re-use archives to make my own work in what Didi-Huberman describes as the "supreme freedom of re-use" (*'la souveraine liberté du remploi'*) (Didi-Huberman, 2004:180), montage appeared as an answer to my search for a cinematic expression of a philosophical contrast.

From a cinematic-philosophical positioning then, it is clear *Cinema Komunisto* aligns to the post-modernist turn in historical thinking, that it fits into an 'oppositional' form of historical filmmaking, that it is an exploration of cinematic historical understanding, aiming to elaborate the 'rules of engagement'. By "mapping the contours of the new structures of memory" we can "reconsider the relationship between historical imagination and the new memorial consciousness" (Klein, 2000:129). Did this approach allow me to find a way to meet Rosenstone's litmus test of "adding to our historical understanding" in a way that challenges traditional historical discourse? It certainly allowed me to construct a narrative through which to define my own point of view within a personal and historical framework and my position vis-a-vis the authoritarian value of the image with regard to history.

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that can constitute the most (individually) accurate representations of past experiences" (Rosenstone, 2006:160).

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Appendixes:

Cinema Komunisto

Documentary, 100 minutes

Dribbling Pictures, Serbia, 2010

Written and directed by Mila Turajlic

https://vimeo.com/76252055

Password: nemaproblema

DVD of Cinema Komunisto

documentary | DVD: region-free dual layer edition | format: 16:9 | color: PAL | sound: 2.0 | duration: 100' | country: Serbia year: 2010. / DVD 2012 | language: Serbian | subtitles: English

CINEMA KOMUNISTO film

The award-winning film in it's original festival version with English subtitles – running time 101 minutes

SPECIAL FEATURES

BONUS SCENES   10 selected scenes, specially edited for DVD from the wealth of unreleased material – find out which Yugoslav films Fidel Castro liked, which Hollywood film broke Yugoslav box office records, and take a private tour of Yugoslav film locations with production designer Veljko Despotovic.

PREMIERE SAVA CENTER   Short film from the national premiere of Cinema Komunisto, which took place in the largest auditorium in the Balkans, on January 21, 2011, featuring a Q&A with the director, and Bata Zivojinovic and Veljko Despotovic, characters from the film

PHOTO KOMUNISTO   Photo gallery containing 12 exclusive images from the research and shoot

CINEMA KOMUNISTO TRAILER   edited by Aleksandar Uhrin

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY   Follow the story of how the film was made

MILA'S VIDEO DIARY   Short video biography by Mila Turajlic, created for the North American premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival

INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL J. GOULDING   Interview with the pre-eminent Western scholar of Yugoslav cinema, author of the seminal book "Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience" filmed in November 2011 in Oberlin, Ohio

BOOKLET

A 24-page booklet containing archive and photo documents of the golden era of Avala film, an extensive cultural and historic timeline of Yugoslav cinema

Summary of historical evidence relating to Tito and film production

The greatest amount of historical documentation relating to the role played by President Josip Broz Tito in the Yugoslav film industry is located in the fund of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic, which is kept in the Archive of Yugoslavia in Belgrade.

The cache of documents includes the screening diaries kept by Tito's projectionist Leka Konstantinovic, which meticulously track the president's viewing habits, the number of feature films, as well as documentary films and newsreels he watched over a period of 32 years (totaling 8801 films). Because this diary can be cross-indexed with the President's official social calendar, it is possible to discover which films he chose to show to his guests, including heads of state, royalty and famous film stars, musicians and writers. This can potentially lead to a study of the diplomatic use of film screenings. In addition to films that were borrowed for screening from the Yugoslav Cinemateque, or Jugoslavija Film (the central film distribution agency), there was a collection of films that were part of Tito's personal inventory, which includes both domestic films that were presented to him by Yugoslav filmmakers, and foreign films which were given to him by producers and visiting politicians. The collection has been indexed by the Museum of Yugoslav History, and is kept in the Yugoslav Cinemateque.

Other documents that form part of the collection of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic, track the role Tito played as patron of the Festival of Yugoslav Feature Films, which took place in Pula, from 1955. These documents include not only Tito's visits to the festival opening ceremony and screenings, and that of film delegations to his summer residence on the Brioni isles, but also reports about the press reviews and the behaviour of producers at the festival, written for him by the 'Committee on Ideological questions', a body of the Central Executive Committee of the Presidency.

A separate group of documents are transcripts of audio recordings of visits of official delegations of film workers, the first of which dates back to 1954. The transcripts reveal that the film community used these occasion to directly petition President Tito to bring his bearing to the settling of the legal status of filmmakers, but also raising questions of

funding and distribution (he often questions them on international sales and reception of domestic films). They contribute proof of Tito's involvement in the structuring of the state-run film industry, which is further illustrated by memorandums to Tito discussing the financing of specific films, mainly (though not exclusively) the WWII epics that were being filmed with the participation of the Yugoslav army. In the case of specific films, such as the *Battle of Neretva*, or *Sutjeska*, documentation proves Tito played a role in almost every step of the production process, from reading (and making notes) on various script drafts, providing anecdotal information at the request of screen-writers, being informed of shooting dates and post-production progress, as well as the arrangements for private previews of rough cuts prior to a film's release.

Awards and festivals

AWARDS for *Cinema Komunisto*

- **Gold Hugo for Best Documentary** 2011 Chicago International Film Festival, USA
- **Alpe Adria Cinema Award for Best Documentary Film** 2011 Trieste Film Festival, Italy
- **FOCAL International Award** 2011 for Best Use of Archive Footage in an Arts Production
- **FIPRESCI Serbia** Best Documentary Film in 2011
- **Grand Prix du Jury** 2013 Festival International du cinéma d'Alger, Algeria
- **Best Balkan Newcomer** 2011 Dokufest, Prizren
- **Best Debutant Director** 2011 Makedox, Macedonia
- **Best Editing Award** 2011 Cinema City, Serbia
- **Audience Award** 2011 Views of the World, Cyprus
- **Audience Award** 2011 UnderhillFest, Montenegro
- **Audience Award** 2011 Cinema City Festival, Serbia
- **Honourable Mention of the Jury** 2011 It's All True Festival, Brazil
- **Honourable Mention of the Jury** 2011 Uruguay International Film Festival, Uruguay
- **Honorable Mention of the Jury** 2012 Cape Winelands Film Festival, South Africa
- **Honourable Mention of the Jury** 2011 UnderhillFest, Montenegro
- **Special Jury Award** 2011 Balkan Film Festival in Podgradec, Albania

- **Cinema Komunisto had a cinema release in**
- Serbia (January 2011)
- Croatia (October 2011)
- Slovenia (May 2011)
- Bosnia & Herzegovina (October 2011)
- UK & Ireland (September 2012)

- France (under the title: *Il était une fois en Yougoslavie: Cinema Komunisto*) (September 2013)
- Italy (summer 2015)

FESTIVALS (a selection)

IDFA – First Appearance (world premiere) Trieste Film Festival, Italy, November 2010

Magnificent 7 – European Feature Documentary Film Festival, Belgrade, January 2011

Views of the World Int'l Documentary Film Festival, Cyprus, March 2011

Sofia International Film Festival, Bulgaria, March 2011

Ljubljana Documentary Film Festival, Slovenia, March 2011

It's All True Festival, Brazil, March 2011

Festival Cinematográfico Internacional del Uruguay, Uruguay, March 2011

Tribeca Film Festival, USA (North American premiere), April 2011

San Francisco International Film Festival, USA, April 2011

HotDocs Toronto, Canada, May 2011

DOC.Fest, Munich, Germany, May 2011

UnderhillFest, Montenegro, May 2011

Doc Aviv, Israel, May 2011

DocumentarIST, Istanbul, Turkey, May 2011

Transylvania International Film Festival, Romania, May 2011

Il Cinema Ritrovato, Italy, June 2011

MakeDox, Macedonia, June 2011

Festival International du Cinéma d'Auteur de Rabat, Marocco, June 2011

Pula Film Festival, Croatia, July 2011

Indianapolis International Film Festival, USA, August 2011

Sarajevo Film Festival, Bosnia & Herzegovina, August 2011

Dokufest, Prizren, August 2011

Kerala International Documentary & Short Film Festival, India, September 2011

Kratkofil, Banjaluka

Pristina International Film Festival

Vancouver International Film Festival, Canada, October 2011

Chicago International Film Festival, USA, November 2011

European Film Panorama, Cairo, Egypt, December 2011

Bergen International Film Festival, Norway

Docslisboa, Lisbon, Portugal, September 2012

Cinemed - Montpellier, France, May 2012

UNAFF - United Nations Association Film Festival, USA, May 2012

Eastern Neighbors Film Festival, Utrecht, Netherlands

Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia

Canberra International Film Festival, Australia

Bratislava International Film Festival, Slovakia

Sevilla International Film Festival, Spain

Brighton International Film Festival, UK

Goteborg International Film Festival, Goteborg, Sweden

Tempo Documentary Film Festival, Stockholm, Sweden, March 2012

Cape Winelands Film Festival, Cape Town, South Africa

BAFICI, Buenos Aires, Argentina

London Archive Film Festival, London, UK

Midnight Sun Film Festival, Lapland, Finland

Festival Al Este de Lima, Lima, Peru

Festival International du cinema d'Alger, Algeria, December 2013

Press reviews (a selection)

"The fascinating and absorbing documentary Cinema Komunisto is a must for film fans.. quite wonderfully tracks the history of former Yugoslavia through its cinema."
- Mark Adams, Screen International, *Review: Cinema Komunisto*, December 9, 2010

▪ [critic's pick] '…a documentary collage of 60 years of Yugoslavian film under Communist rule.'
- Anon, Wall Street Journal, *Tribeca Film Festival Announces World Narrative, Documentary Competition Films*, March 7, 2011

What makes this film important is the dialogue between past and present, the fact that a story about a country has been told in a new way, which opens the communication between myth and competing truths, between history and the people who made it, between lies that our parents were fed of "socialist paradise" and the lies that certain states poison us with today, and above all, between the illusion that our parents lived in and the price we are paying for it today."
- Vladan Petkovic, e-novine, *Sva ludila su dragocena*, April 6, 2011

'…a challenge that could have stumped even the most seasoned filmmaker: create a movie about a country that no longer exists.'
- Dan Bilefsky, New York Times, *Tribeca Q & A: Mila Turajlic on 'Cinema Komunisto'*, April 21, 2011

"Cinema Komunisto" is still one of the most riveting, well-researched, elegantly-rendered chronicles of a fallen era to ever be captured on film—and a must-see for film aficionados.."
- Sam Weisberg, Screen Comment, *TFF '11: Making Movies in Communist Era Yugoslavia*, April 23, 2011

'Yugoslavia no longer exists, but its story still does. Who will tell it? Turajlic begins the conversation with this beautiful film.'
- Sheila O'Malley, Capital New York, *Anthems for Dead Nations*, April 25, 2011

(4 stars) - "this exhaustively researched and elegantly edited documentary explores the cinematic legacy of the former Yugoslavia"
- Wendy Ide, The London Times, *Review*, November 23, 2012

"In a fantastic, prize-winning documentary, Mila Turajlic brings back to life a time and places that have been abandoned today, using archival images and witness accounts. The most surprising? That of Tito's personal projectionist, who remembers having shown the Marshal more than 8000 films."
- Jean-Christophe Buisson, Figaro Magazine, *Bobines yougos*, September 13, 2013

"Mila Turajlic doesn't hide anything. This introductory voyage into the heart of the grand mise-en-scene realised by Tito, this director without a camera, proves that there remains beauty in what used to be Yugoslav cinema. The ability of Mila Turajlic is the best proof of this."
-Clément Sautet, Studio Cine Live / L'Express, *A l'affiche: Il était une fois en Yougoslavie*, September 17, 2013

"When Yugoslavia exploded, Mila Turajlic wasn't even 10 years old. Not many experienced watching their native country die. What remains today of this State swept away by history? (...) Assembling through skillful editing, film clips, exclusive archives and interviews with onetime protagonists of the Balkan 'cinema', the documentarian unpacks a political myth constructed in 35mm."
-Mathilde Blottière, Telerama, *Sorties de la semaine*, September 18, 2013

"Behind the title "Cinema Komunisto: once upon a time in Yugoslavia" hides an extraordinary documentary, a mad adventure of the seventh art, as written by Marshal Tito, at the head of a Yugoslavia that was transformed into a gigantic European Hollywood. Cinephiles seeking curious stories will be astounded, but also history lovers, and more generally, all those interested in plunging into the heart of a disappeared country, seen through the eyes of a camera."
- Arnaud Schwartz, La Croix, *Cinema Komunisto » : Tito et le cinéma, Hollywood à la mode yougoslave*, September 18, 2013