

IV Excavating Memories of War

Abstract: Chapter IV revolves around the aftereffects of the Yugoslav disintegration wars, as depicted in films by filmmakers who work(ed) and live(d) in the diaspora. One of the hypotheses, a spatio-temporal distance from places of (post)war trauma, leads to an experimentation in style and contributes to the stronger presence of films of non-representation. A combination of archival footage with home movies in mosaic-screen compositions and slow-motion montage shows that non-representational images of war can offer points of entry for the productive exchange of mediated memories of the Partisan struggle and the Bosnian war. They can draw attention to the failure to reconcile emotional confession with collective responsibility as they seek to account for the historical experience of the post-war condition.

Keywords: war aftermath, diasporic filmmakers, archival footage, home movies, mosaic screen, multidirectional memory

Chapter IV revolves around the after-effects of the Yugoslav disintegration wars, as experienced and depicted in films by filmmakers from the former Yugoslavia who work(ed) and live(d) in the diaspora. One of the working hypotheses of the fourth chapter is that a spatio-temporal distance from places of war trauma and/or post-war anxieties leads to experimentation in style and contributes to the rise of non-representational images of war and the films of non-representation. The films that will be analysed are as follows: Vladimir Tomić's *Flotel Europa* (2015), Lidija Zelović's *My Own Private War* (2016), and Namik Kabil's *Interrogation* (2007) and *Inside* (2013).

The last two films analysed in the third chapter, *The Load* and *Krivina*, proved useful for my enquiry due to their non-representational approach to the consequences of wartime atrocities. *The Load* revolves around the main character's complicity in a cover-up crime, while *Krivina* enquires into the aspect of coming to terms with perpetrator trauma while in exile. In *Krivina*, a spatio-temporal distance from the protagonist's active participation

in war crimes and his homeland propels his search for a more virtuous past. This quest for identity shows that identity is not a fixed essence, but a process of becoming, a performance of identity (as Stuart Hall would define it) inseparable from fabulation or an act of storytelling (as Deleuze would propose). The non-representational images analysed here indicate that a perpetrator trauma could be experienced as accommodated within an immigrant trauma.

The four films I will now analyse, much like *Krivina*, share a spatio-temporal distance from homeland and wartime experience. In each case, this propels a journey, a search for an identity, and the films provide the aesthetic means capable of capturing this quest. As elaborated in Chapter III, *Krivina*'s narrative unfolds in the open and closed form of the cinematic chronotopes of the utopia of homeland and the dystopia of life in exile, respectively.

Flotel Europa shares the motif of a journey with *Krivina*, but its story is associated with the thirdspace chronotope. According to Hamid Naficy, this chronotope involves not only intermediary places such as borders, airports and train stations, but also transportation vehicles, such as buses, ships and trains (Naficy 154). Many refugees and asylum seekers are forced to stay in transitional sites, which are "part of the idea of place that forms their identities and their chronotopical figuration in accented films" (Naficy 152).

The Thirdspace Chronotope of *Flotel Europa*

The thirdspace chronotope of *Flotel Europa* is suggested by a ship, of the same name, anchored in the port of Copenhagen in the early 1990s. The ship used to serve as a temporary home to 1,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina waiting for decisions on their asylum applications. The film focuses on the twelve-year-old Vladimir, who, after fleeing Sarajevo with his mother and older brother, spends two years living on the ship. The ship as a transitional site certainly shapes Vladimir's identity, although not in a predictable way, which is a point I will return to later in the text.

Flotel Europa provides us with an insight into Vladimir's adolescence through a compilation of private archival footage. As the film reveals, phone lines with Bosnia often did not work. These circumstances had prompted Meho, a train operator, and Rusmil, an accountant, to put some money together and buy a couple of used VHS cameras. They had documented life on the ship and later sent video letters to family and friends.

Naficy writes that the epistolary form of accented cinema, constitutive of the "thirdspace chronotope," implies a discourse of desire. It mediates

between distanced but desiring subjects (Naficy 154). Naficy divides epistolary films into three main types: film-letters; telephonic epistles; and letter-films:

Film-letters inscribe letters and acts of reading and writing of letters by diegetic characters. Likewise, telephonic epistles inscribe telephones and answering machines and the use of these devices by diegetic characters. Letter-films, on the other hand, are themselves in the form of epistles addressed to someone either inside or outside the diegesis, and they do not necessarily inscribe the epistolary media. (Naficy 101)

Flotel Europa comes closest to Naficy's third category, "letter-films." The epistolary form of *Flotel Europa* is insinuated by the film's mode of representation, by re-edited snippets of videotapes, which in the diegetic and extra-diegetic reality negotiate the distance between desiring subjects; between refugees on the ship moored in the canals of Copenhagen and their family members back in the Bosnian war zone.

A Coming-of-Age and Found-Footage Film

Due to its focus on adolescence, the film is regarded as a coming-of-age story.¹ The experience of puberty is offered from the perspective of a grown-up man, who is heard in voice-over. The director's voice-over guides the viewer of *Flotel Europa* through a collage composed mostly of other people's video letters.

Laura U. Marks perceives the use of voice-over as intrinsic to diasporic filmmaking. Along with the wide-spread use of dialogue and oral histories in many works of intercultural cinema, it helps organize the work together "in the absence of a stable, informative image or a linear storyline" (Marks xv). Intercultural cinema is characterized by the attempt to represent the "social character of embodied experience" (Marks xiii), "the experience of living between two or more cultural regimes of knowledge, or living as a minority in the still majority white, Euro-American West" (Marks 1).

1 The labelling of *Flotel Europa* as a "coming-of-age" film can be found here: "Flotel Europa: Synopsis." *Vladimir Tomic Official Website*, www.vladimirtomic.com/flotel-europa; and here: "2015 Forum, Searching for Evidence: Interview with Christoph Terhechte." *Berlinale Website*, 2015. www.berlinale.de/en/2015/topics/searching-for-evidence-forum-2015.html. Both accessed Apr. 18, 2025.

In her writing, Marks focuses on the experimental styles of various short and documentary films, as well as videos produced in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain.

The absence of a stable image in *Flotel Europa* could be associated with the film's reliance on (other people's) private archive. The existing material was rearranged to fit a certain narrative. Snippets were mixed together to produce new meanings, and the use of voice-over helps organize the work by ironing out any contradictions that might occur.

In an interview, Christoph Terhechte, the former head of the Berlinale Forum section, proposed that *Flotel Europa* could be regarded as a found-footage film. Given that the original footage was arranged to convey a coming-of-age story, the voice-over could equally well be fabricated. For Terhechte, the excitement of the viewer's experience of the film arises from imaginative ways in which the original material and voice-over were used, even if that makes it more a work of fiction than a true documentary.²

In his analysis of the film, Sanjin Pejković explores the same issue in greater detail. His exposition starts with a reference to film theorists such as André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer, who drew "a strong association between the indexical character of photographic image and the primacy of realism as a code within cinema" (Pejković 95). Their understanding of photography and the privilege of realism have shaped the notion that "documentary film is primarily an instrument of unproblematic observation and record capable of being put into didactic service" (Pejković 95). Pejković stresses that with the digital age, a new type of scepticism of the indexical nature of the photograph has arisen. The use of archival material by documentary filmmakers is determined by considerations other than evidential ones. A series of digital post-production strategies are employed not only to increase the spectator's engagement with the story, but also to force them to question the status of the images that he/she is seeing as documents and the narrators' voices they are hearing (Pejković 95). Pejković argues that the memories of the former country are questioned and destabilized by the very images that are used in *Flotel Europa*. Certain strategies are deployed to deconstruct the indexical stability of the film document in front of the viewer. Pejković connects these tactics with the instability and the loss of home, viewed with a certain time delay. He perceives the image as both truth and fiction, as a document of history, and further, as unreliable evidence of a history that is being rewritten (96).

I agree with the more general observation that the viewer's engagement with the film may increase due to digital, post-production strategies used

2 Ibid.

in the archival work. I can understand how the viewer might become suspicious about the status of the images and voices. However, I fail to see how Vladimir's reminiscences about the former country are questioned by the strategies employed in *Flotel Europa*. It is the recollections of his youth spent on the ship that are destabilized by the compilation, and not the memories of his country. *Flotel Europa* primarily offers us insight into Vladimir's adolescence, with the joys and troubles of growing up in the foreground of *Flotel Europa*. Recounting the most memorable episodes of the adolescent's life on the ship in chronological order, visualized as re-edited snippets of other people's private footage, is what constitutes the film's mode of representation. The film concentrates on a period of two years as the most exciting episodes in the life of a teenager. The viewpoint offered here shields the protagonist (and the viewer alike) from the harsh reality of being a refugee, and from the causes that brought him to the ship in the first place. The overall tonality is marked by the protagonist's detailed and humorous accounts of chatting up a girl called Melisa, the awakening of his sexual maturity, supplemented by adventures with his cool and older friends. The optimistic tone progressively shifts into its darker opposite as the outside reality of war and divisive nationalisms starts to creep into the secluded life on the ship.

Beyond the Thirdspace Chronotope: Non-Representation of the Bosnian War and the Second World War

My argument is that non-representational images of war enable the shift from romantic recollections of adolescence to a more sober vision of communal refuge. Non-representational images of war destabilize the narrative, expressed through the collage of clips overlaid by voice-over, by introducing a much broader spatial and historical context. Post-production strategies used in the archival work certainly trigger the viewer's suspicion about the status of the image as document. They make the viewer doubtful about whether this is a documentary or a work of fiction. But non-representational images of war disrupt the narrative of *Flotel Europa* by evoking the time-space beyond the thirdspace chronotope associated with a single ship anchored in the canals of Copenhagen in the early 1990s. This broader context entails private and collective memories of the Bosnian war, the Second World War and the legacy of the Yugoslav motto Brotherhood and Unity.

Since the Bosnian war is rarely mentioned or discussed in the film, either via images or the director's voice-over, non-representational strategies indicate

three modes in which the war reveals its presence. In my analysis of the following scenes, I move from the remotest to the most obvious mode in which the Bosnian war is disclosed and disrupts the narrative, which centres on adolescence. The distant reality of war takes on a certain immediacy via the sporadic telephone and letter exchanges between refugees and their family members in Bosnia as revealed in the voice-over, through glimpses of images broadcast in the so-called TV room and by way of exposing the magnitudes of war destruction in the black-and-white photographs incorporated in the film.

I am reminded of two scenes that offer a view of communal activity in and around the ship, as the narrator reveals fragments of news from Sarajevo reaching the protagonist.

In the first scene, a children's birthday celebration is underway when Vladimir's mother receives a phone call saying that Vladimir's uncle has been killed. A follow-up scene shows ships anchored in the canal of Copenhagen, while the voice-over provides a brief explanation, which the mother passes on to her sons. The Serbian army had occupied the eastern part of Sarajevo, Neđarići, and deported all the Muslims and Croats. Vladimir's uncle had left his house to defend his neighbour Sejo, but the soldiers beat him up and drafted him into their troops. Not long after that, a sniper from the Bosnian side shot and killed him.

In the second scene, refugees gather on the pier to send food packages to their family and friends in Bosnia when Vladimir's mother receives a rare letter from Sarajevo. It says that Vladimir's father was trying to evade the draft to the army, and Vladimir's grandparents had been taken by a Muslim unit and nearly got exchanged with captured soldiers on the opposite side.

Both scenes display regular communal activities, vaguely related to the content of the news revealed in voice-over. The slower pace of habitual behaviour in visual images is juxtaposed with distressing bits of information in their audio counterparts. The reality of war remains excluded from the visual register. It is merely suggested in the condensed descriptions of traumatic events. The audio-visual arrangement of both scenes follows the non-representational logic: the audio images introduce the context of distant conflict into the narrative, which otherwise centres on the challenges of adolescence.

The Bosnian war's distant reality becomes more apparent in a scene that thematizes the importance of the TV room for the inhabitants of the floating refugee centre. As the narrator announces: "if Flotel Europa and our refugee life made a kind of vacuum in space and time ... then the TV room of Flotel Europa was a vacuum inside that vacuum."

With a nod to Naficy's concepts, it could be said that the TV room of Flotel Europa expresses another chronotope within the existing thirdspace

chronotope. Refugees would gather daily to watch the news on a single screen in their community room, hoping that they would see someone from their families in the war reports. The scene with the TV room acts as a strong reminder that the war is taking place elsewhere, but still shapes the lives of the inhabitants of Flotel Europa considerably. Broadcast images emerge in response to more private images made by refugees. Both types of image share the same, VHS format. It is relevant to add at this point that the Yugoslav wars of disintegration became the first to be recorded on VHS by the people who experienced them first-hand: "VHS was the main material for recording that reality, which fitted in the TV news around the world with the help of satellite broadcasting. Private footage would become global material on a much larger scale than ever before" (Pejković 95).

The film itself explores the fine line between the private reminiscences in video letters and the official representation of the war in broadcast images. The scene with the TV room acts as a prelude to the scene in which the effects of the Bosnian war are most perceptible.

The latter scene provides a look at an exhibition of a series of black-and-white photographs, shown in close-up. The photographs provide a glimpse of the wartime atmosphere: a child holding a gun, an older woman amid furniture on the back of a lorry, an elderly man rubbing his eyes in front of a destroyed house, a wounded, expressionless man in a hospital. As one photograph appears immediately after the other, the voice-over recounts that one day, after watching the CNN news in the TV room, a guy called Ramiz approached Vladimir. He put his arm around the boy and pointed his finger at one of the translators at the reception desk. Then he said that the man over there is a "Chetnik," just like Vladimir. Overwhelmed by fear, Vladimir did not say anything. A moment later, Ramiz gave Vladimir some money and sent him to buy a loaf of bread, which the boy did.

The consequences of war destruction are made visible in this scene. The spectator's attention is on still images, snapshots of the reality of war, which remain mostly outside the frame. The stillness of each photograph becomes more apparent in the light of the narrative, which is conveyed by images made by a clumsily held camera. Traces of war destruction in the image appear only seemingly disconnected from the event described in the voice-over. The audio-visual arrangement of the scene indicates two simultaneous operations taking place. The distant reality of the Bosnian war becomes visible by means of black-and-white photographs in close-up and at once palpable, more immediate, through the detailed encounter in voice-over. Due to the unexpected nature of Vladimir's encounter with Ramiz, the scene functions as a turning point in the narrative. It marks a moment of

sudden realization for Vladimir and the viewer alike that tensions between different ethnicities took hold in the refugee centre. Divisions have slowly but surely settled among the refugees at Flotel Europa. From this moment on, the viewer's attention is attuned to the communal aspect of life on the ship, which is why the entire scene acts as a non-representational image of war.

I have identified three modes of non-representational strategies in which the Bosnian war discloses and destabilizes the narrative centred on adolescence. Now I focus on memories of the Second World War, which in a similar fashion disrupt *Flotel Europa*'s mode of representation. Three scenes inserted from Branko Bauer's 1978 fiction film *Boško Buha* indicate collective memories of Yugoslav resistance during the Second World War.

The first scene is introduced early on in the film, via voice-over. Prior to Vladimir's departure for Denmark, his grandfather, a former Partisan, advised him to remember Buha every time he was afraid. A moment later, Buha appears equipped with hand grenades, in the company of two other Partisan boy soldiers. The scene immediately follows the shot of the ship Flotel Europa arriving in the harbour. In the second scene, one-third of the way into the movie, Buha is shown in action, on his way to destroy an enemy bunker. Through the accompanying voice-over, it becomes clear that Melisa had approached Vladimir and asked him for his name, to which he replied, "Boško Buha." The scene comes directly after the shot of Melisa in traditional clothing, sitting quietly, ahead of her folklore performance. The last scene featuring Buha appears towards the end of the film and shows him dying while being ambushed by Chetniks. The voice-over indicates that because Vladimir had mistakenly thrown a snowball at Melisa's face, he got "punished" by other boys in a snowball fight. The scene closely follows the slow-motion shot of Melisa performing on stage.

At this point, I should clarify what makes Boško Buha a historical figure and why the collective memory of his bravery is relevant for my discussion of non-representational images of war.

Boško Buha rose to fame as a teen, martyred Yugoslav Partisan. He became known for sneaking towards enemy bunkers and destroying them with hand grenades. In 1943, Buha died at the age of seventeen, when he was attacked by surprise by a group of Chetniks. As one of the youngest soldiers in the People's Liberation Struggle (PLS) in the Second World War, Boško Buha became a symbol of the struggle and martyrdom of youth. Posthumously, Buha received the title of the People's Hero of Yugoslavia.³ A number of

3 An overview of Buha's participation in the PLS in the Second World War can be found here: "Na današnji dan: U četničkoj zasjedi ubijen Boško Buha. Imao je samo 17 godina." ("Commemorating

monuments, schools and streets across the former Yugoslavia bear his name. Memories of Buha's wartime adventures were mediated through this film and a 1980s television series, also made by Bauer.

In her book *Memory in Culture*, memory studies scholar Astrid Erll points out that mediation should be understood: "as a kind of switchboard at work between the individual and the collective dimension of remembering. Personal memories can only gain social relevance through media representation and distribution" (Erll 113).

Mediated memories of Buha's bravery certainly helped stabilize a site of memory associated with the PLS. Buha's heroic acts had gradually entered the domain of Yugoslav popular culture and, through the film and TV series, became accessible to younger generations without first-hand experiences of the Second World War. For that reason, it is possible to argue that the scenes from *Boško Buha* inserted in *Flotel Europa* are an expression of a "prosthetic" type of memory.

According to memory studies scholar Allison Landsberg, prosthetic memories "originate outside a person's lived experience and yet are taken on and worn by that person through mass cultural technologies of memories" (Landsberg 19). By definition, prosthetic memories are "transportable and hence not susceptible to biological and ethnic claims of ownership" (Landsberg 19). Memories of the Partisan struggle are prosthetic for not strictly belonging to Vladimir and for being mediated as the scenes extracted from the popular Partisan film. Materialized as partly alien to Vladimir, they call for an active participation of the viewer, who may or may not be acquainted with Buha's wartime adventures in particular or the PLS in general.

By incorporating the scenes from *Boško Buha* into *Flotel Europa*, tribute is clearly paid to Vladimir's grandparents. One need only remember how the first scene featuring Buha was introduced in the narrative, via voice-over. Prior to Vladimir's departure to Denmark, his grandfather advised him to remember Boško Buha every time he was afraid. Provided with this cue, the viewer is encouraged to imagine ways in which his grandparents' experiences in the Second World War were passed on to Vladimir and remained vivid in his memory. On this ground, it is possible to argue that the inserted scenes are also an articulation of postmemory.

As conceptualized by memory scholar Marianne Hirsch, "postmemory" is distinguished by generational distance, as it "characterises the experience

the death of Boško Buha, who at the age of 17, was killed in ambush set by Chetniks.") *Lupiga Magazine*, www.lupiga.com/hiperlink/na-danasnji-dan-u-cetnickoj-zasjedi-ubijen-bosko-buha-imao-je-samo-17-godina. Accessed Apr. 18, 2025.

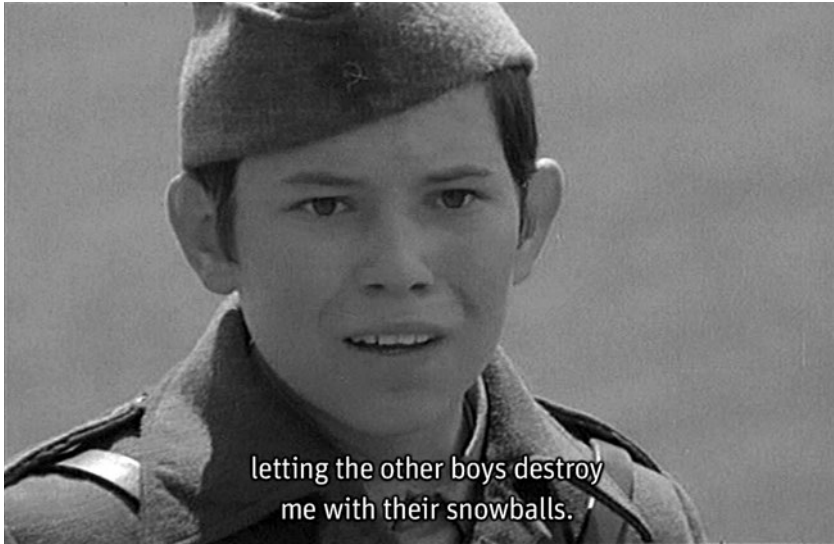


Fig. 7. *Flotel Europa*, directed by Vladimir Tomić, 2015.

of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth” (Hirsch 22). The transgenerational dimension, which Hirsch has in mind while focusing on photographic memory, is immanent to the mediated memories of Buha’s heroic acts in *Flotel Europa*. Tomić provides additional evidence for this claim in an interview by stressing that in the film he speaks about his grandparents and the Second World War, and that the inclusion of the scenes evokes nostalgia for another generation of “ex-Yugos.”⁴ Due to the humorous effect that the inserted scenes generate, I would argue that they are an unmistakable expression of reflective Yugonostalgia.

In Chapter I, I indicated that Nicole Lindstrom draws on Svetlana Boym’s distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia. Restorative Yugonostalgia is an “expression of longing for an essential Yugoslav past” and looks back towards a somewhat fixed time and space, whereas reflective Yugonostalgia “relies on a self-consciously ambivalent, politically engaged, and critical frame in indulging fantasies of this past” and is open to imagining possibilities for the future (Lindstrom 233).

A critical engagement with the official representation of the PLS derives from editing the scenes from the well-known Partisan film to voice-over

4 The interview with Vladimir Tomić can be found in Pamela Cohn, “Videos Home: How VHS Found Footage Became a Groundbreaking Film About Bosnian Refugees,” *The Calvert Journal*, Aug. 10, 2015. www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/4521/flotel-europa-vladimir-tomic-srdan-keca. Accessed Apr. 18, 2025.

recounting Vladimir's clumsy meet ups with Melisa. The audio-visual arrangement of the scenes clearly induces humour. On another level, it introduces the broader context of the Second World War in the narrative, which focuses on the portrayal of the intricacies of being a teenager under peculiar circumstances. In that sense, the scenes featuring Buha follow the non-representational logic. They evoke the previously analysed non-representational images of war by way of the "multidirectionality" of memory. Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory can help us reflect on the constellations formed by memories of the Partisan struggle along with memories of the Bosnian war.

Rothberg perceives multidirectional memory as "subject to ongoing negotiations, cross-referencing, and borrowing, as productive and not privative" (Rothberg 3). His concept is meant to draw attention to "the dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance" (11). In Rothberg's view, Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" constitutes a specific version of memory's multidirectionality. Mediation and the belatedness of "postmemory" are "points of entry for the multidirectional confluence of disparate historical imaginaries" (Rothberg 271).

Flotel Europa suggests that mediated memories of the Partisan struggle stand in a dynamic relation with mediated memories of the Bosnian war. These memories are not in competition with one another, where one type of memory tends to silence or overwrite the other. As non-representational images of war, they offer points of entry for the multidirectional convergence of distinct historical imaginaries. The more established memories of the Partisan struggle assist the process of coming to terms with the trauma inflicted by the Bosnian war. Multidirectionality could also be traced in the other direction, where memories of the Bosnian war, even if somewhat elusive and fragile, help bring neglected memories of the Partisan struggle back into public awareness. Mediated memories of Buha's bravery deserve the viewer's closer attention as they emerge in the light of how present-day nationalisms erase memories of antifascism within the former Yugoslavia, but also across Europe.⁵

Regardless of their critical perspective on the official representation of Yugoslavia's past, the scenes inserted into *Flotel Europa* convey a sense of

5 I have touched upon this issue already in the first chapter. Sociologist Gal Kirn elaborates extensively on this matter in his book *The Partisan Counter-Archive: Retracing the Ruptures of Art and Memory in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle*. For more information, see Gal Kirn, *The Partisan-Counter Archive: Retracing the Ruptures of Art and Memory in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle*.

loss of the federal state and common identity, which is explored in detail in another scene, towards the end of the film.

Diasporic Visualization of Yugoslavia

The scene in question shows Alen Islamović, the singer of the most popular Yugoslav rock band Bijelo Dugme, performing for a diaspora audience, right after a nationalistic singer. Prior to his performance, he is shown sitting near the stage. He wears a look of resignation while smoking a cigarette. The accompanying voice-over reveals that Vladimir went to the concert with his older friends hoping to meet Melisa there:

Melisa never showed up, and we all fell silent. We waited for Alen to take the stage, as the only present member of a great band from our youth. A band from a time when there was a big country, a country whose end we became aware of for the first time that evening.

The scene conveys the sense that both the homeland and collective identity are irretrievably lost. Unlike the films that I analysed in the previous chapters, *Flotel Europa* is the first to address a collective identity as the director's straightforward, conscious, and deliberate choice. I believe that the film owes this to the director's life experience in the diaspora.

Naficy and Robin Cohen's notions helped me realize that collective memory of an idealized homeland is constitutive of diasporic identity. Naficy observes that "people in diaspora have an identity in their homeland before their departure, and their diasporic identity is constructed in resonance with this prior identity" (14). In his book *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, social scientist Robin Cohen proposes nine features of the classical notion of diaspora. Among others, the characteristics include "dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically," "a collective memory and myth about the homeland," and "a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time" (Cohen 17).

These three characteristics are conveyed by the scene involving Alen Islamović in *Flotel Europa*. The collectively shared Yugoslav identity, even if irretrievably lost due to the wars, comes across as the only affirmative group identity. I see two reasons for this qualification. First, it is a trans-ethnic, all-encompassing identity, as opposed to today's divisive, ethno-religious identities across the former Yugoslavia. Second, it is the only identity that Vladimir, his family, and friends could possibly relate to prior to their

departure to Denmark and the subsequent constitution of diasporic identity. Yugoslavia as a federal state no longer exists. The film, however, occasionally suggests that there is an intact homeland to return to in imagination.

My Own Private War or Turning Absence into Loss

The idea of an affirmative collective identity resonates even more strongly in *My Own Private War*. The film offers an autobiographical account of collective responsibility during and after the war by filmmaker Lidija Zelović. Coming from an ethnically mixed family, Zelović grew up in Sarajevo, where she worked as a television journalist. In the early 1990s, she fled the Bosnian war with her family and settled in the Netherlands. Prompted to learn more about the disintegration of Yugoslavia, she went to report on its final war in Kosovo. Twenty years after her emigration, Zelović returns to her home country. There she meets her cousin Željko, who was a sniper during the war, her journalist friend Snježan who closely followed Ratko Mladić, and other relatives who, around the table, passionately “dig through history to prove who they are,” as her voice-over suggests. In an attempt to make “the most honest and truthful film about the war,” as indicated in the voice-over narration at the beginning of the film, Zelović seeks to come to terms with the loss of Yugoslavia.

With a nod to LaCapra's concepts, obtaining the necessary knowledge about the war would help Zelović work through her loss of Yugoslavia (LaCapra 716). As the loss would be precisely located, melancholy could be resolved into mourning. The latter proves to be a necessary precondition for reinvesting in life with all the social demands and responsibilities it requires. The film asks whether it is possible to make a personal film on war, whether an emotional confession can be reconciled with collective responsibilities necessitated by (post-)war realities.

My Own Private War is a collage composed of private and public archival VHS footage, family photographs, and recently recorded material on a digital camera. Scenes and fragments from different formats are occasionally associatively connected with one another. As in *Flotel Europa*, the material is mainly organized through the use of the director's voice-over.

In her writing on transcultural memory in documentary cinema, film scholar Dagmar Brunow discusses the role of voice-over. The use of voice-over contributes to the film's subjective stance by guiding the audience through the film and pointing at the situatedness of knowledge (Brunow 64). Brunow refers to Stuart Hall and his understanding of situated knowledge as a sign

of anti-essentialism. For Hall, the latter is “a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position as “ethnic artists” or “filmmakers” (Hall, 169–70). The use of voice-over as a strategy of anti-essentialism is a logical and necessary consequence of Zelović’s double displacement. Her dislocation is conditioned by being a diasporic and self-declared Yugoslav filmmaker. Her persistence to speak from a particular place, out of a particular experience and culture, without being contained by the position of either ethnic Serb or Croat filmmaker in post-Yugoslav and post-war realities is evenly conveyed throughout the film.

Zelović’s fondness for Yugoslavia is determinately expressed in three scenes. The first scene belongs to the corpus of publicly available archival footage, an excerpt from the TV coverage of the opening ceremony of the 1984 Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo. The other two are more recent scenes, recorded for the purpose of making *My Own Private War*. In the second scene, Zelović’s son Sergej is shown looking at a map of Yugoslavia in their apartment. In the third scene, an exterior shot of her father’s idyllic home village is introduced with the soundtrack of Ismeta Kravac’s famous patriotic song “*Zemljo moja*” (“My Land”). Svetlana Boym’s conception of nostalgia provided me with the framework to understand that the choice of motifs such as the Olympic games, the map of Yugoslavia and Kravac’s song indicate not only a longing for Yugoslavia as a place, but also a yearning for a different time, the time of long past youth. Reminiscences of youth are inextricably connected with recollections of a collective homeland:

Unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory, individual home and collective homeland. (Boym 151)

Boym’s distinction between melancholia and nostalgia made me realize that the state of melancholy I referred to earlier in the text is better conceptualized as nostalgia. Assuming that melancholy can be resolved into mourning, would there be an equal way of coping with nostalgia?

Throughout the film, Zelović expresses the view that learning about the war would help her acknowledge and accept the loss of Yugoslavia and move on with her life. Gaining knowledge about the war would concretize the absence into loss and resolve her enduring nostalgia. As Zelović occasionally intimates, a way to accomplish this goal requires her to be free of her personal story. But is it possible to retain the objectivity required by war reporting

in conversations about war and accountability with your closest family members and friends? Especially in a time when Zelović's father, cousin and friend no longer share her Yugoslav identity, but instead have adopted a more exclusionary and divisive ethno-religious identity.

Dino Abazović's remarks on ethnopolitics and religion in post-war Bosnia prove useful for elucidating the term ethno-religious identity. Following the collapse of socialism in the former Yugoslavia, religion was politicized through ethnicization:

as this occurred, the "understanding" of religion has, unfortunately, narrowed: religion has been oriented and reduced to ethnicity, rather than to its immanent universal characteristics, features and mission, thus, ethnic and religious identities collapsed into each other ... During the war, politicized and ethnicized, religion becomes a powerful tool for mobilization against "ethnic enemies." (Abazović 39)

With ethno-religious affiliations, insurmountable differences between groups come to the fore. The differences translate into diverging views on the history of wartime atrocities, which block the much-needed reconciliation in the region. Due to ethno-politics overpowering daily life in the post-Yugoslav states, a simple task of figuring out what happened during the wars turns out to be a walk through a minefield. In *My Own Private War*, the gap between official, historical records and non-official, familial memories proves too big to be bridged. For that reason, Zelović fails to a certain extent in her attempt to make "the most honest and truthful film about the war." Non-representational images of war draw attention to the failure at reconciling emotional confession with collective responsibility, familial remembrance with public representation. They appear as a mosaic screen and slow-motion scenes.

Between History and Memory: Mosaic Screen and Slow Motion as Strategies of Non-Representation

Before I take a closer look at strategies of non-representation, I need to explain what I mean by *mosaic screen*. Film scholar Sergio Dias Branco introduced the term because he felt that the split screen could not be used as an umbrella term for films and series with images of usually distinct characteristics arranged on screen. His major points of reference are the TV series *24* (Fox Network, 2001–10) and films such as Norman Jewison's

The Thomas Crown Affair, Vincent Gallo's *Buffalo '66*, and Bruce McDonald's *The Tracey Fragments*. Before I summarize the key features of the mosaic screen according to Branco, I will put forward two definitions of split screen.

The first is a quite reduced explanation of the term offered by film scholars David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson: "In this process, two or more different images, each with its own frame dimensions and shape, appear within the larger frame" (Bordwell 187).

Film scholar Malte Hagener provides a somewhat broader understanding of the same practice. He suggests that it is often regarded as incompatible with the idea of transparency immanent to continuity editing and with the narrative style predicated on the invisibility of technique and technology:

A frame within a frame draws attention to the act of framing itself by visibly displaying the basic principle that forms the condition of possibility for the image: the frame that draws a distinction between inside and outside, between image and non-image.⁶

This definition proves useful for enhancing the understanding of artificiality and the constructedness of the image in the digital age. Contrary to the commonly held view that the split screen runs counter to the precepts of continuity editing, Branco asserts that the use of split screen is regularly aligned with the prevalence of causality and simultaneity:

The split screen is generally connected with simultaneity as well as division—the technique is often used as a division that allows simultaneity. That is why it is regularly employed in television news and live sportscasts.⁷

Unlike the split screen, which divides the screen into halves, the mosaic screen "splinters" the screen.⁸ In Branco's view, it organizes two or more isolated, detached images on screen. In this way, images that vary in their characteristics are assembled together. They retain their autonomy, as they remain disengaged one from another. The split screen divides the screen

6 For more information see, Malte Hagener, "The Aesthetics of Displays: How the Split Screen Remediate Other Media." *Refractory: a Journal of Entertainment Media*, vol. 14, 2008, www.refractory.unimelb.edu.au/2008/12/24/the-aesthetics-of-displays-how-the-split-screen-remediate-other-media-%e2%80%93-malte-hagener.

7 For more information, see Sergio Dias Branco "The Mosaic Screen: Exploration and Definition." *Refractory: a Journal of Entertainment Media*, Dec. 27, 2008. www.hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:16983. Accessed Apr. 18, 2025.

8 Ibid.

into two or more segments, while keeping them effectively connected based on the existing relations of simultaneity and causality.⁹

With this conceptualization in mind, the use of mosaic screen in *My Own Private War* can be regarded as an additional post-production strategy used in the archival work. Employing the mosaic screen in the film does not, however, induce the same scepticism of the indexical nature of the image as does adding the director's voice-over to the collage composed of other people's archival footage in *Flotel Europa*. The process of image making is, nonetheless, of major concern for Zelović.

Her filmmaker's biography is self-reflexively interwoven with the narrative, like in most accented films (Naficy 271). Acting as a documentary filmmaker, Zelović reflects on her role as a journalist covering conflicts. The two positions appear to challenge one another, as private, more contemplative images juxtapose mass media images meant for faster consumption. The film could be regarded as an attempt to negotiate between the two positions and, correspondingly, between two different types of image and narrative. Non-representational images of war assume the shape of mosaic-screen scenes and thereby point out the impossibility of such reconciliation.

The first mosaic-screen scene is introduced via voice-over early on in the film. The viewer learns that, at the beginning of the war, Zelović was in the Netherlands, while her parents and brother were still in Bosnia. She did not know if they were alive. All she had was "a constant repetition of news footage from my hometown" as she was busy learning Dutch by repeating new verbs and sentences. The left side of the screen shows mass-media images of the war in Sarajevo, one frantically following the other: shelled buildings at night, heavily wounded and dead people on a street, civilians crossing streets under sniper fire. The other side presents Zelović in slow motion, walking through a sun-drenched park, surrounded by people celebrating Queen's Day.

The second mosaic-screen scene appears halfway through the film. The voice-over indicates that Zelović was on her way to report on the war in Kosovo. Since her assignment had preceded Sergej's birth, nothing could have possibly stopped her from going into the war zone. The left side of the screen shows Sergej building a LEGO house in their apartment. A view of Zelović reporting and commenting on war developments in Kosovo is offered on the right side. Excerpts from various items of TV coverage are interspersed with news images of burnt houses, marching tanks, and mass graves.

9 Ibid.



Fig. 8. *My Own Private War*, directed by Lidija Zelović, 2016.

The third example of the use of mosaic screen involves a scene appearing two-thirds of the way into the film. The scene thematizes July 11, 1995, the day Ratko Mladić entered Srebrenica with his Army of Republika Srpska. During the war, he served as a Bosnian Serb colonel-general and later was convicted as a war criminal by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Years after the war, Zelović meets her friend Snježan, who closely followed Mladić and his troops. At one point, the screen fragments. The left part shows Mladić giving an interview to Snježan, who is seen answering Zelović's questions on the opposite side. The mosaic screen lasts for several seconds. A few moments later, it reappears. It is introduced via voice-over indicating that Snježan filmed the day that Mladić's troops came into Srebrenica, where Zelović went years after the war to film the women, who lost their sons and husbands. The left part of the screen offers a view of a mass grave in a forest. A mother of Srebrenica is seen giving a statement to Zelović, who is seen sitting with Snježan on the grass, occupying the opposite side of the screen.

In all three scenes, the voice-over guides the viewer through the collage composed of private and public archival VHS footage and recently recorded material on a digital camera. VHS recordings of the shelling of Sarajevo and Kosovo villages, as well as the fall of Srebrenica, belong to the corpus of publicly available images. These are, mostly, dramatic representations of war meant for faster and broader consumption. Mass media images of war-ravaged Sarajevo and Srebrenica constitute Zelović and the viewer's prosthetic memory. A destruction of Kosovo villages is illustrated by commentary, co-created by Zelović and her journalist colleagues. As the repeated use of the mosaic-screen technique indicates, Zelović used to follow coverage of one conflict and produce reports on the other. Although there are degrees of difference between the two positions, together they appear irreconcilable with the position of a documentary filmmaker. The slower

pace of the recent and more intimate shots of Zelović in the park and Sergej building his LEGO house is clearly juxtaposed with the frenzied speed at which mass media images of war replace one another. The use of mosaic screen accentuates the disparity in experiencing life at home and abroad, in the past and the present, during peace and wartime, in private and public, through the lens of VHS and a newer digital camera. The third example of the use of mosaic screen is relevant to my discussion on non-representation for accentuating a clear and unbridgeable divide in choices and orientation between two old friends, journalists and image-makers, one following the future war criminal and the other attending to its former victim.

As indicated earlier, non-representational images of war appear as mosaic screen and slow-motion scenes. My last example is a scene that appears near the end of the film and is presented entirely in slow motion.¹⁰ Such an artistic decision clearly separates the scene from the rest of the film. Zelović is seen driving a car, while the outside landscape gets blurry. In the next shot, she is shown in front of the building of The Hague Tribunal, surrounded by many journalists and photographers, eagerly anticipating the arrival of Ratko Mladić. She is shown looking at the landing helicopter. A moment later, a blue sky emerges behind white clouds. An episode from Zelović's time in Kosovo is being narrated. She was getting ready to do a presentation on camera with her colleagues from the BBC, when an angry soldier ordered them to turn off the camera. He asked her to go to the main commander, which the crew wanted to prevent. She reassured them and went to the base on her own. From that moment on, the narration switches from English to Bosnian. The next few lines provide a sparse amount of information: her clothes were taken off, she was humiliated, interrogated and threatened. Some time later, she was asked to sign a paper that she was not raped. She complied while she needed closure, for herself and the soldiers present. The account finishes with her asking the soldiers not to do it since they are compatriots. They objected by stating that she is no longer on the same side with them.

The visual and the audio image match insofar as they engage on equal terms with the role of media during and after the war. Compared to earlier mosaic-screen scenes, the audio-visual arrangement of the latter scene further

10 In their book *Film, a Critical Introduction*, Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis provide the following definition of *slow motion*: "A technique that involves filming at a speed faster than the speed of projection (24 frames per second), then projecting the footage at normal speed. Because more frames are recorded per second, the action appears to slow down when projected. For example, if 36 frames are recorded in one second, capturing an action, when the footage is projected at 24 fps, it will take 1,5 seconds than the action to unfold" (456).

complicates the relationship between documentary filmmaking and war journalism. The more intimate view on a large-scale, public event such as bringing Mladić to justice is achieved through the use of subjective camera and slow motion. The reduced manner of the audio account engages the viewer's attention in making the unseen, traumatic experience more perceptible and memorable than any other in the film. The switch from English to Bosnian language particularizes a direct, bodily experience of war and detaches it from the somewhat impersonal, objective duty of a war correspondent.

On a related note, Naficy emphasizes that the use of multilinguality, multivocality, and voice-over narration in accented cinema helps "destabilise the omniscient narrator and narrative system of the mainstream cinema and journalism" (Naficy 25).

The widening gap between emotional confession implied in self-reflective documentary filmmaking and collective responsibilities assumed by war journalism is emphasized through non-representational strategies of introducing slow motion combined with a reduced mode of narration in a language other than conventional. The impossibility of reconciling the two outlooks on war is more concisely yet strongly articulated only in the title of the film *My Own Private War*.

At the beginning of this chapter, I asserted that a spatio-temporal distance from homeland and wartime experience propels a journey, a search for an identity, and the aesthetic means capable of capturing this quest.

In *Flotel Europa*, the experiences of an adolescent and asylum seeker are reflected in one another. Both suggest a temporary, transitional, and formative episode in the protagonist's life. The film is conveyed as a coming-of-age story. It takes the form of an assemblage of other people's private footage, edited with the director's voice-over. The autobiographical aspect proves inherent to the accented films of diasporic filmmakers, as can be seen in *My Own Private War*.

The latter film indicates that for former Yugoslavs in the diaspora, grieving the loss of the homeland precedes any reflection about the war. The loss of Yugoslavia means a loss of group identity and subsequent search for a renegotiated identity. It translates into accepting or not, but, in any case, learning that the country as a federal state no longer exists. The film is intended as an enquiry into Yugoslavia's wars of disintegration. It assumes the shape of a mosaic, made of public and private footage.

The non-representational strategies in *Flotel Europa* and *My Own Private War* act as points of rupture within the existing narratives. Inserted black-and-white photographs and movie excerpts introduce the wider context of the Bosnian war and the Second World War within the coming-of-age

narrative of *Flotel Europa*. Mosaic screen and slow-motion scenes evoke doubt about gaining full knowledge about the wars in *My Own Private War*. As both films suggest, the wider context of the wars is either gradually revealed or additionally obscured through the strategies of non-representation. In either case, the awareness of the loss of Yugoslavia—as a direct consequence of the wars—proves to be a defining feature of a new collective identity among former Yugoslavs living in the diaspora.

A distance from homeland and wartime experience motivates a quest for knowledge about the war and the way it shapes emergent identities in Namik Kabil's films *Interrogation* and *Inside*. Both films engage with the problem of coming to terms with the wartime past. A concern over the loss of Yugoslavia and shared collective identity is replaced by a concern over the post-war reality as being determined by ethno-religious identities. As my analysis will show, ethnic representation remains a politically loaded term for the subjects of both films. There is a general preference to be termed less rather than more. The initial urge for self-determination has been replaced, years after the war, by the urge to tone down the overwhelming ethnic over-representation. It boils down to less identity altogether.

Excavating Memories of War

Interrogation and *Inside* take the spectator on a journey through a variety of collective and individual memories related to the atrocities in Bosnia. These memories are brought to the viewer in the form of testimonies and interviews, face-to-face exchanges between the interviewer and the interviewees. Through *interrogation* both films expose an *inside* view of the Bosnian conflict, which in this case could be seen as a miniature version of the Yugoslav conflicts as a whole.

In *Interrogation*, director Kabil takes on the position of an interviewer, whereas his friends, neighbours, and acquaintances appear as interviewees. While all the interviewees have direct personal experience with the Bosnian atrocities, they are of different ages and have varied professional and educational backgrounds, ethnicities, and nationalities. The title of the film refers to a juridical form of interviewing with the specific goal of extracting a confession or obtaining information from an interviewee or witness. The director “interrogates” because he wants to learn more about the interviewees’ relation to and experiences of the war. The viewer learns that during the war, Kabil lived in Santa Monica, in the United States, and is now based in Sarajevo. He lacks war experience; therefore, he interrogates. The

exchange between the interviewer and the interviewees takes place around a table in a dark, abandoned warehouse. The interviewer's questions range from: when did the war start? who was the aggressor? is peace righteous? and to whom should one talk about the war nowadays? Surprisingly enough, the same question evokes a variety of answers and views on the past. As the film progresses, any consensus about what happened during the war is lost within the turmoil of the memories evoked. Due to the inconsistent answers to the questions Kabil proposes, the film touches upon the issue of war denial.

Kabil's subsequent film, *Inside*, takes up where *Interrogation* left off. The subject matter is the denial of atrocities. *Inside* takes place in a spacious hospital with long, bizarre-looking labyrinthine corridors. Much like *Interrogation*, *Inside* is characterized by the use of the same interviewing technique—an interrogation. Within the diegesis of the film, the position of the interviewer is shifted from a psychiatrist character to a patient character. At the beginning of the film, the psychiatrist is the one in charge of asking questions; while later in the film, the interrogator's role is assigned to the patient. It is important to add that the patient is a survivor of the genocide in Srebrenica, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Inside consists of three distinct parts. The first comprises conversational scenes between the psychiatrist and the patient, while the second conveys an "interrogation" of five Serbian women (all played by the same actress, Jasna Ornela Bery), conducted by the patient. The third focuses on the patient's discussion with another patient (again played by the actress Bery). The first segment revolves around the doctor's treatment of the patient's traumatic recollections and the second offers a view into a slightly distorted confrontation between the patient and five different and yet similar Serbian women. This segment raises the issue of war denial because four out of the five Serbian women refuse to acknowledge the genocidal nature of the crimes committed by Serb forces in Srebrenica. Finally, the third part consists of a more nuanced discussion between the two patients. As can be presumed, all these exchanges touch upon issues of collective and individual memories, denial of war atrocities, and empathy.

The Non-Representational Strategy of Un-Naming in *Interrogation* and *Inside*

The names, occupations, exact ages, and other biographical data that might help the viewer identify the interviewees are not explicitly given in the film

Interrogation. Nevertheless, the group of seventeen interviewees comprises Bosnian public figures (for instance, a theatre director, a journalist, two writers) and relatively unknown individuals. Their appearances are juxtaposed. For the Bosnian audience, it is clear who these public persons are, whereas for the spectators outside the region of the former Yugoslavia, the functions and social positions of these figures remain unknown. To allow the readers to orient themselves throughout the film, I have provided interviewees with provisional names. Within the attached cast list, the interviewees are presented as Woman A, Woman B, Woman C, etc., Man A, Man B, Man C, etc. The A, B, C, D order follows the chronological order of their appearance within the film. In addition, within the cast list every interviewee is presented with a name and a corresponding photo, a screenshot of his/her face.

The strategy of “un-naming” and leaving out information about the interviewees results in a de-individualization of the interviewees. I believe that this de-individualization enables a stronger integration of the interviewees into the group of people who experienced the siege of Sarajevo and the war. This strategy also draws attention to collectively similar war experiences as opposed to different ones, which leads me to a second explanation. The strategy of omitting biographical information implies that the interviewees are not automatically being differentiated by their names and classified in their ethno-religious groups. Their belonging to a certain ethno-religious group and their political affiliations remains unspecified.

Consequently, the individuals are distinguished or unified by what they say about their past and not according to their names. It is essential to add that during and after the war in Bosnia, it was common practice to seek an ethno-religious background in a person's first and last name in order to presume possibly related political affiliations. For that reason, Bosnian names have become markers of ethno-religious differences. During the rule of one political party in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the ethno-religious differences were not expressed nor appreciated as such. The unity and the brotherhood of different nationalities and ethnicities were the state's motto and future goal. The Partisan struggle, which led to the formation of the federal state of Yugoslavia, was aimed against the principle of the ethnic hatred of the Second World War. As sociologist Gal Kirn emphasizes, “the Partisan principle was based on multinational antifascist solidarity, which declared the equality and unity of all nations and working people” (Kirn 35).

The Partisan principle is best understood as a rupture. Kirn makes a reference to Rancière's notion that “the existence of real ruptures (‘politics’

that interrupts the order of 'police') ... needs to entail a process of 'de-identification'" (as quoted in Kirn 37). For Kirn, "de-identification" is a fitting term to describe the collective character of Partisan resistance. It is "posited against the (local) fascist ethnic hatred and racial hierarchy, while also against the old stereotypes of national character" (Kirn 37).

In line with Rancière's and Kirn's understanding of "de-identification," the strategy of omitting biographical information within *Interrogation* conveys a strong sense of unity among the group whose members share similar war experiences. If the film is regarded as an attempt to extract information, to articulate and name silenced war experiences, then the "un-naming" of interviewees is a non-representational strategy inasmuch as it prevents any automatic ethno-religious classification and differentiation of the interviewees.

Interrogation and *Inside* address the problem of the complexity of national and ethno-religious group identity. *Inside*, which can be perceived as a follow-up to *Interrogation*, addresses this issue more directly. Even though the viewer is not provided with the names of the characters, right from the beginning of the film it becomes apparent that the protagonist is a Bosniak, a survivor of the genocide in Srebrenica suffering from PTSD. What is more, the film thematizes the patient's encounters with five Serbian women, whom he "interrogates" in order to learn more about their views on the war atrocities committed by the Serb army in July 1995 in Srebrenica. At the beginning of the film, the viewer learns from the patient's conversation with his psychiatrist that he grew up with the Muslim myth that "They (Serbs) are all the same," which he, allegedly, did not believe. He confronts five women in order to put this myth to the test. The ensuing detail proves to be an extremely significant artistic choice: as mentioned, the same Bosnian actress Jasna Ornela Bery plays the roles of all five women, who are physically distinguished by minor modifications in their styling and the way they express themselves. Their opinions about the Srebrenica genocide differ to a certain degree. The first woman claims that Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić were CIA agents, and that the CIA should be blamed for the war. The second one admits Serbian involvement in the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and feels sorry and ashamed, whereas the third claims that people, especially youth, should not be bothered by some Balkan war-torn past. The fourth woman accuses the media of the wartime atrocities, while the fifth has an irrational view in general. In this film, like in *Interrogation*, the characters are not specified by their names. For that reason, I have provided the characters with their provisional names, included in a separate cast list. The patient and the doctor are regarded as

Patient and Doctor, whereas five Serbian women are, in accordance with the above order of appearance, referred to as Woman 1, Woman 2, Woman 3, Woman 4, and Woman 5. The other patient is named Patient 2. Each character is presented with a photo of his/her face, accompanied by his/her provisional name.

Time-space of *Interrogation* and *Inside*

Interrogation is set in an abandoned factory, charged with the collective memories of pre-war Yugoslavian industrial prosperity. As an abandoned, partly demolished venue, it proves to be a proper stage for “extracted” war memories. The film operates with three different levels of time. First, the choice of the post-industrial place induces collective memories of the socialist past. Second, the interviews evoke memories associated with Bosnian war experiences. Finally, the interviews take place fifteen years after the war. Consequently, two layers of the collective past—the socialist and the Bosnian war past—co-exist in a more recent, present moment.

Inside takes place in a bizarre looking hospital with many labyrinth-like corridors and entrances to numerous rooms. It is important to mention that Kabil shot this film in the largest nuclear bunker in the former Yugoslavia and in one of Sarajevo’s hospitals. The nuclear bunker, built between 1953 and 1979, is located 200 metres underground, inside the mountain Prenj, 60 kilometres southeast of Sarajevo. In his article “Beneath the Regular,” architect Christoph Hinterreiter claims that the nuclear bunker D-o was supposed to “ensure the survival of the political and military elite of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” in the case of a nuclear war after Yugoslavia’s exclusion from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s dominated Cominform (Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers’ Parties) (Hinterreiter 1). *Inside* implies that collective memories of President Tito’s prosperous Yugoslavia and his legendary split from the Soviet leader Stalin resonate in the numerous corridors of this outlandish space. Collective memories belong to one layer of the past, whereas exchanges between Patient and Doctor, like other conversations within *Inside*, refer to another sheet of the past. These dialogues evoke memories of the protagonist’s traumatic survival, which took place next to the mass execution of more than 8,000 people in Srebrenica in 1995. Two “sheets”¹¹ of the past—memories of

11 The reference is made to Deleuze’s term “sheets of past,” thoroughly explored and presented in the chapter “Peaks of Present and sheets of Past: Fourth Commentary on Bergson.” See Deleuze

Tito's Yugoslavia and those of the protagonist's survival—are simultaneous with the present. The present is referred to as the actual time in which the conversations took place. The Bergsonian conception of time as duration is reintroduced within *Inside*.

This outlandish setting, with its numerous, long and narrow corridors, evokes the image of brain lobes. Interestingly, the film's title refers to the inside of the protagonist's mind. In addition, the protagonist's PTSD and memory-based hallucinations indicate that the viewer experiences the same events as the protagonist, as if the viewer could have inhabited the protagonist's mind. The Patient character relives his past through his hallucinatory encounters with imaginary Serbian women. For most of the film, the viewer experiences the protagonist's visual hallucinations with him. Hence the confusion between what is true and what is false or, using the Bergsonian distinction, between what is actual and what is virtual.

Seers

In *Interrogation*, the film director's friends and acquaintances, people of different ages and various backgrounds, have, in some way or another, experienced the Bosnian war. According to their statements, there are no goals that were achieved during or after the war. "Nobody won the war," "everybody lost," "what we fought for was utopia" are statements that echo throughout the film. Recurring variations of these and similar statements imply a certain sense of loss, disorientation, and a state of being common to Deleuzian "seers." The film title implies that individuals are brought into the factory and seated around the table to be "interrogated." They are not supposed to move nor leave; it is assumed that they will be confronted with their memories. In many ways, the *mise en scène* of the film insinuates that an interrogation or an artificial trial might take place. The specific lighting of the film, the face-to-face position of the interviewer and the interviewees evoke film-noir aesthetics. Dim lighting, which is a characteristic of film noir, makes use of shadows and contrast to convey a sense of danger and intrigue (Prammagiore 93). The faces of the interviewees are partly covered by shadows. This type of lighting conveys their feeling of uneasiness while reminiscing about the war. In fact, as *Interrogation* clearly demonstrates, some interviewees do not wish to discuss their past. A few others seem reluctant to name the aggressor. Even though they are well aware of the

devastating atrocities committed during the war, they avoid naming the perpetrator. On the opposite end, there are interviewees who address the relevance and pressure to discuss past experiences.

Obviously, all the “interrogated” individuals in *Interrogation* are in some ways aware of the overwhelming silence related to the past atrocities. The only difference is that some of them do not find it relevant to discuss traumatic events; the others tend to disapprove of them, while the third acknowledge the importance of talking about them. Why is there no firm stand among the interviewees, a straightforward action against the pervasive silence and the increasing denial of the war atrocities? A possible explanation is to be found in Deleuze’s formulation. There is “something intolerable in the world” and “unthinkable in thought,” which occurs after a war, which breaks an organic motor-sensory link between a man and the world and produces a line of “seers” (Deleuze xi; Pisters 232).

Inside is a film that revolves around a psychic situation of a “seer.” A deeply traumatized victim, who has PTSD, relives his trauma through his visual hallucinations. The protagonist’s delusions compose the largest portion of the film and are framed by a supposedly therapeutic conversation between him and the doctor. The only action that the patient is capable of is to “interrogate” five Serbian women. These women, nevertheless, prove to be a product of his imagination. Later in the text, I will demonstrate how I came to this conclusion. The protagonist seeks to learn more about the women’s views over the genocide in Srebrenica. Yet, once he has been asked questions in turn, he is incapable of providing answers. Several times he stares in silence instead of reacting firmly against the aggressive provocations. It is relevant to stress that the protagonist is depicted sitting when he is in his therapy session, when he confronts his “imaginary” enemies, and even when he talks to another patient. Most of the time, he does not move. The immobility of the character, or the impossibility to react to occurring situations is what enables the Bergsonian conception of time to enter this type of image. In Deleuzian terms, time emerges and subordinates movement to itself:

And thanks to this loosening of the sensory-motor linkage, it is time, “a little time in the pure state,” which rises up to the surface of the screen. Time ceases to be derived from the movement, it appears in itself and itself gives rise to false movements ... Even the body is no longer exactly what moves; subject of movement or the instrument of action, it becomes rather the developer (*révélateur*) of time, it shows time through its tiredness and waitings. (Antonioni) (Deleuze xi)

The immobilized protagonist of *Inside* is a body in the process of waiting, a true developer of time. He exhibits his tiredness, while staring, unable to react and unable to protest.

True or false? Non-Representational Images in Between

The viewer of *Inside* mostly experiences what the protagonist's visual hallucinations "inform" him of. Nevertheless, the protagonist's delusions are not clearly separated from his "real-life" perceptions, hence the confusion between what is true and what is false, between subjective and objective. How can the viewer orient himself within the diegetic world of *Inside*? Deleuze's understanding of the actual and the virtual together with the proposed concept of non-representational images might be helpful in this matter:

We run in fact into a principle of indeterminability, of indiscernibility: we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental, in the situation, not because they are confused, but because we do not have to know and there is no longer even a place from which to ask. It is as if the real and the imaginary were running after each other, as if each was being reflected in the other, around the point of indiscernibility. (Deleuze 7)

A sense of disorientation, a lack of centre to refer to, or a whole to develop an organic sensory-motor relationship with add up to create the conditions for the emergence of the principle of indeterminability.

The point of "indiscernibility" is what, according to Deleuze, forms the crystal-image. In fact, "the crystal constantly exchanges the two distinct images which constitute it, the actual image of the present which passes and the virtual image of the past which is preserved" (Deleuze 79).

The difference between the actual and the virtual is a difference in time. The present that passes defines the actual, whereas the virtual is defined by the past that conserves itself. The crystal image consists of the indivisible unity of an actual and its "virtual" image (Deleuze 77). Inspired by Bergson, Deleuze names this unity a mutual image and claims that the present is the actual image, and its contemporaneous past is the virtual image, the image in a mirror. In Bergson's words:

every moment of our life presents the two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on the one side and recollection on the other ... Whoever becomes conscious of the continual duplicating of his present into perception

and recollection ... will compare himself to an actor playing his part automatically, listening to himself and beholding himself playing. (quoted in Deleuze 77)

According to Bergson, memory is a virtual image, which co-exists with the actual perception of the object. Memory is a “virtual image contemporary with the actual object, its double, its ‘mirror image’” (Deleuze 150).

Inside can be perceived as an exchange or interplay between the actual and the virtual. At the beginning of the film, the viewer follows a conversation between Doctor and Patient. Within a therapeutic process, Patient reveals details about his traumatic past. Since he has PTSD, he starts to relive his past through his hallucinations, in which he confronts five Serbian women. By the end of the film, the viewer comes to understand that all five women, played by the same actress, physically resemble Patient 2, who shares a hospital room with the protagonist. Essentially, all the women “residing” in the protagonist’s imagination are modelled around the appearance of his hospital roommate.

It is possible to sketch out the following organization: the film is divided into three parts. The first segment revolves around the Doctor’s treatment of Patient’s traumatic recollections; the second offers a view into a slightly distorted confrontation between Patient and five “invented” women; and the third consists of a more nuanced talk between the two patients.

The first and the third part of the film might be perceived as the actual. Both segments refer to what Bergson calls actual perception. The second part of the film acts as the virtual. Shaped by the protagonist’s hallucinations, this section might be conceived as the virtual image co-existing with the actual perception of the first and the third part of the film. Furthermore, the aforementioned segment functions as a double, a mirror-image to the actual depiction of the conversations of the first and the third part. In fact, the first part of the film introduces Doctor-Patient, or the interrogator-interrogated relation, whereas the second brings a change, a shift in the power positions mentioned. The interrogated person of the actual becomes the interrogator of the virtual. Consequently, *Inside* produces a mutual image, a co-existence of the actual image of interrogated Patient and the virtual image of the interrogator. This simultaneity goes back to Bergson’s notion of the continuous duplicating of the present into perception and recollection. His illustration of an actor playing his part while listening and beholding himself playing comes to mind. The spectator watches the protagonist tell a story in which the protagonist sees himself playing the role of the interrogator.

In his *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze refers to many cases where a film is either reflected in a theatre play, a show, a painting, or in another film (73). He argues that the film within the film is a mode of crystal-image (74):

It will be observed that, in all the arts, the work within the work has often been linked to the consideration of a surveillance, an investigation, a revenge, a conspiracy, or a plot. This was already true for the theatre in the theatre of Hamlet, but also for the novel of Gide. (Deleuze 75)

Since the second part of *Inside* functions as a mirror-image to the first and the third parts of the film, it is possible to claim that this “double” functions as a film within the film. The segment mentioned previously is related to an investigation. Within the therapeutic process, the protagonist must put the “Serbs are all the same” myth to test. As a survivor of the genocide in Srebrenica, he asks himself if he can make a distinction between Serbs. He needs to determine if he believes that all Serbs are perpetrators. Therefore, he makes a “mental” journey, an investigation, in which he confronts five Serbian women to learn more about their views on the war atrocities committed in Bosnia. Throughout his introspection, he relives his trauma in order to be able to leave his past behind and move towards the future. It is relevant to add that the protagonist’s reliving of his trauma can be compared to a notion of re-enactment.

Re-enactment is a process of playing certain episodes from the past in order to come to terms with that past. I am particularly reminded of the opening scene of *Inside*, which in the given dramaturgical sequencing acts as a non-representational image. Without any prior explanation, the spectator is confronted with the scene of a man, naked from the waist up, sitting passively in his chair. His head is down. A close-up of his face discloses red lipstick on his lips and black mascara on his eyelashes. It reveals and adds nothing to the viewer’s comprehension of the situation but nevertheless has an impact on the viewer. The viewer may not understand the context but does sense that there is something awkward and slightly disturbing about the situation in which the character finds himself. In the second part of the film, the protagonist is seen speaking with Woman 2. Their exchange reveals that he managed to escape the act of killing of 8,000 people from Srebrenica. During the conversation, the protagonist presents a photo, which depicts him disguised as a girl. The explanation follows that as a young boy he had to put on a headscarf and make-up in order to be disregarded by Serb troops. Since the troops had divided men from women with the intention of eliminating men, the protagonist had disguised himself in order to escape an inevitable ending. A UN soldier operating in Srebrenica, which used to be



Fig. 9. *Inside* [Unutra], directed by Namik Kabil, 2013.

one of the UN safe areas, took the photo after realizing that the protagonist was masked. Luckily, Serb authorities were tricked by his camouflage, and the protagonist managed to escape. Two non-representational images, which appear as two shots, one at the beginning of the first and the other at the end of the second part of the film, show Patient, naked from the waist up, sitting passively in his chair. Bright red lipstick colours his lips, and black mascara his eyelashes. Having seen him in this state for the second time in the film, one sees him reliving and re-enacting his past trauma.

Aside from acting as a non-representational image, the scene depicting the disguised protagonist serves as a good illustration of the crystalline image. We are confronted with Bergson's notion of duration, which presupposes the simultaneous unfolding of the protagonist's actual perception and his traumatic memory. Given that the crystal-image assumes the actual and the virtual in a perpetual exchange around a point of indiscernibility, it is relevant to look for cues of indistinguishability within the diegesis of *Inside*. Due to the indistinguishability invoked between the actual and the virtual, these cues give rise to non-representational images within the narrative. Three examples come to mind. During the actual talk between Patient and Doctor, the camera tilts a little upwards and downwards instead of remaining fixed. In this way, the camera work renders a discomforting situation. The resulting scene implies that the viewer is aware that a set of objective shots might have become subjective. Therefore, this conversation might as well have taken place in a protagonist's dream or hallucination. As argued earlier in this chapter, this segment of the film is regarded as the actual. Nonetheless, the viewer recognizes an intrusion of the virtual within

the actual. As a matter of fact, this scene illustrates that the actual and the virtual “chase” each other around the point of indiscernibility. It becomes difficult to determine precisely when the actual stops and the virtual starts. This point of hesitation, insecurity, indistinguishability between the two is what forms the crystal-image and gives rise to the non-representational image. Also, towards the end of the film, when Doctor is seen having a telephone conversation with his friend, Woman 4 passes by. As evident from the earlier assessment of the film’s organization, Doctor inhabits the realm of the actual, and Woman 4 resides in the virtual. This example demonstrates the virtual’s interference in the actual. Yet, it is difficult to entirely distinguish one from the other.

My final example is drawn from the second part of the film. It is the sequence in which the protagonist confronts five Serbian women. The discussion heats up; many questions, answers, and insults are exchanged. In a brief moment, a camera points to an empty chair opposite the protagonist. Suddenly, the spectator realizes that the protagonist is alone in this room. His actual perception intrudes the realm of his memories and imagination. Given this cue, the viewer is able to navigate through the film structure. It makes the following argument possible: the middle segment of the film is shaped by the protagonist’s imagination that functions as the virtual, which unfolds as the film within the film.

Powers of the False and the Limitations of Non-Representation

In Chapter II, it was stated that the movement-image, or what Deleuze calls organic narration, consists of the extension of sensory-motor schemata: goal-driven, self-determined characters react to situations or act in such a way as to disclose the situation. This is “a truthful narration in the sense that it claims to be true, even in fiction” (Deleuze 123).

On the opposite end, crystalline narration is quite different. It implies a breakdown of sensory-motor schemata: “Sensory-motor situations have given way to pure optical and sound situations to which characters, who have become seers, cannot or will not react, so great is their need to “see” properly what there is in the situation” (Deleuze 124). Deleuze suggests that these conditions form a new status of narration. The narration ceases to be truthful, and becomes essentially falsifying (Deleuze 127). It is a “power of the false, which replaces and supersedes the form of the true, because it poses the simultaneity of impossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts” (Deleuze 127).

By claiming the power of the false, Deleuze refers to Nietzsche, who, “under the name of ‘will to power,’ substitutes the power of the false for the form of the true” (127). Narration ceases to be a truthful narration, which is related to sensory-motor descriptions. A description becomes its own object, and “narration becomes temporal and falsifying at exactly the same time” (Deleuze 128). Deleuze adds that the formation of the crystal, the force of time and the power of the false are strictly complementary. They continually implicate each other as the new coordinates of the image (Deleuze 128).

Essentially, the actual breaks free from its motor linkages, and the virtual disengages itself from its actualization. Unrelated to each other, the actual and the virtual become legitimate for themselves (Deleuze 123). The forger or the falsifier becomes the main character of the cinema. As Deleuze states, “it is not the criminal, the cowboy, the psycho-social man, but the forger pure and simple, to the detriment of all action” (128). He could previously appear as a liar or traitor, but now he presupposes an endless appearance, which creeps in and overwhelms the entire picture. The forger stands for “indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary,” of the actual and the virtual. He makes the direct time-image, the crystal-image apparent. The forger “provokes undecidable alternatives and inexplicable differences between the true and the false, and thereby imposes a power of the false as adequate to time, in contrast to any form of the true which would control time” (Deleuze 128).

The lead character of *Inside* shares characteristics with Deleuze’s forger. He is a magician with words, a storyteller. He is the one who, while speaking to Doctor, continually makes up stories. Unlike the liar or traitor of the movement-image, his appearance is not accidental or short-lived but endless and permeates the entire narration. He is the maker of a “pseudo-story,” the one who plays tricks with the viewer’s mind, makes the viewer suspicious about the objectivity and truthfulness of the unfolding events:

The story no longer refers to an ideal of the true which constitutes its veracity, but becomes a “pseudo-story,” a poem, a story which simulates or rather a simulation of the story. Objective and subjective images lose their distinction, but also their identification, in favour of a new circuit where they are wholly replaced, or contaminate each other, or are decomposed or recomposed. (Deleuze 144)

As seen from the latest examples, objective and subjective images have lost their distinction; they are decomposed or recomposed; the actual and the virtual are hardly distinguishable because they are constantly moving;

they run after each other, and refer back to each other. The story and the simulation of the story are hardly differentiated. The actual Doctor-Patient talk and the virtual Serbian women-protagonist talk influence each other and refer back to each other.

Contrary to the organic form, which is unifying and presupposes a coherence of the character, the power of the false cannot be divorced from an "irreducible multiplicity" (Deleuze 129). According to Deleuze, French poet Arthur Rimbaud's credo *Je est un autre* ("I is another") has replaced Ego=Ego. The protagonist ceases to be reduced to a coherent, self-conscious and self-determined subject. Instead, he becomes a series of many possibilities and versions of himself: "Even 'the truthful man ends up realizing that he has never stopped lying' as Nietzsche said. The forger will thus be inseparable from a chain of forgers into whom he metamorphoses" (Deleuze 129).

The falsifier exists in a series of falsifiers who are his metamorphoses. According to Deleuze, a becoming, an irreducible multiplicity, characters or forms are now valid only as variations of each other (140).

Five "invented" Serbian women appear as transformations of each other, and as transformations of the protagonist himself. All five women are physically identical, yet in terms of their narratives, they differ from each other. All five of them are forms of what Deleuze refers to as "becoming." The Patient keeps on transforming himself, becoming five women, while telling his stories to the disinterested Doctor:

What cinema must grasp is not the identity of a character, whether real or fictional, through his objective and subjective aspects. It is the becoming of the real character when he himself starts to "make fiction," when he enters into "the flagrant offence of making up legends" and so contributes to the invention of his people. The character is inseparable from a before and an after, but he reunites these in the passage from one state to the other. He himself becomes another, when he begins to tell stories without ever being fictional. (Deleuze 145)

The Patient tells the stories and thus invents people. The five Serbian women, variations of him, are not accidental, short-lived appearances within the film. In the process of continuous re-invention, they permeate the narrative. They continually make the viewer question the truthfulness of the unfolded events. At the beginning of the second part of the film, the protagonist acts as the interrogator, a person in charge of asking questions. By the end of this part, his "becoming," five different variations of himself attack him back and overtake his interrogator's throne. The protagonist's inventions,

powers of the false become a dominant, self-evident and inescapable fact of the narrative.

Interrogation, on the other side, provides the viewer with a few scenes that, in a slightly different mode, exemplify Deleuze's concept of powers of the false. But first, let me briefly refer to film-philosophical notions provided by Laura U. Marks.

In her book *The Skin of the Film*, Laura U. Marks discusses Deleuze's concept of powers of the false with regard to the works of intercultural cinema. She brings into discussion one of Deleuze's descriptions of the crystal image:

When a film reflects upon its own production process, its obstacles, and the very cost of its making, it acts as this sort of catalytic crystal, reflecting the film-that-could-have-been in the complex of its virtual images. (quoted in Marks 65)

In a similar manner, many of the films Marks analyses are “constructed around the setbacks that block their production—the cancelled interviews, the amnesiac interviewees, the censored images, the destruction of real archives” (65). The obstacles that were in the way of making *Interrogation* are to be found in the answers provided by two “amnesiac” interviewees—Woman G and Man E. Both interviewees face difficulties naming the perpetrators. Woman G cannot name the army responsible for the eight-month long, continual shelling of the building that she lives in, whereas Man E, self-identified as Safet Buljko from Mostar, refuses to say which were the enemy forces that stopped him on his way back from Mainz. Both interviewees have been repeatedly asked to name the perpetrators and have repeatedly refused to provide the interrogator and the audience with a clear, unambiguous answer. The non-representational strategy of “un-naming” interviewees, which I discussed earlier, appears to be in a relationship of direct dialogue with two scenes involving the two amnesiac interviewees. The non-representational strategy of “un-naming” the interviewees enhances the aspect of group cohesion among those who survived the war regardless of their eventual ethno-religious inclination. The “un-naming” of perpetrators follows the same non-representational logic, however, it reinforces the aspect of overriding silence and the denial of past atrocities.

Woman G and Man E share a number of similarities with Marks's agents of intercultural cinema. With a reference made to Deleuzian forgers or “intercessors,” Marks defines the characters of intercultural cinema as “real characters who make up fiction” (68). As she suggests, “these are not the

docile informants of documentary, but resistant characters who dispute the filmmaker's construction of truth at every turn" (68).

The forgers, intercessors, and resistant interviewees of *Interrogation* insist on telling stories that undermine the director's construction of truth. At the same time, the interviewees' memories are set against the official version of Bosnian history and can therefore be conceived as Foucauldian "counter-memories."¹² However, Woman G and Man E's answers do not offer any critical distance from the hegemonic narrative, nor do they provide the viewer with some other, politically relevant explanations. Or, in Laura U. Marks's words: "the powers of the false only undermine the hegemonic character of official images, clichés, and other totalising regimes of knowledge. They do not privilege some other experience as truth" (66).

In the case of *Interrogation*, Woman G and Man E do not privilege some other experience as truth. Or I would say they do not explicitly privilege some other experience as truth. However, at the core of their statements lies an attempt to distort, hide, and deny facts about one group's committed war crimes. The characters end up creating a fiction, producing lies. Their answers cannot be conceived as a critical re-consideration of the established and sedimented truth since they relativize, normalize, and equalize war crimes for the purpose of sending these very crimes to oblivion. Therefore, what might have initially appeared to be an obstacle in making this documentary has turned out to be its specificity. What might have been the interviewees' straightforward refusal to provide clear-cut answers has turned out to signify a deeper and more complex problem. The forgers of *Interrogation* have got their counterparts, a whole series of forgers, multiplications, and variations in *Inside*. What has been an expression of the false in some parts of the film *Interrogation* has resulted in an overall rule of the powers of the false within *Inside*. What has been an insinuation of the denial of atrocities in *Interrogation* has clear contours in *Inside*.

12 A brief but good summary of Foucault's concept is provided by Barbara A. Misztal and reads as follows: "Foucault (1977) defines counter-memory as a political force of people who are marginalized by universal discourses, whose knowledge have been disqualified as inadequate to their task, insufficiently elaborated or as naïve knowledge, located low down in the hierarchy. These elusive group memories, which are frequently in a sharp contrast to the dominant/official representation of the past, provide a group with a repertoire of categories for enacting social divisions. Counter-memory illuminates the issues of the discontinuity of traditions and the political implication of alternative narratives." (Misztal 78) For more information see Barbara A. Misztal, "The Sacralization of Memory." *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 7, no.1, 2004, 67–84.

Conclusion

The working hypothesis of the chapter is that the spatio-temporal distance to the former Yugoslavia alleviates the consequences and pressures of the post-war condition and leads to formal experimentation and a greater freedom in moving towards non-representational strategies than is the case for films made by those authors from the former Yugoslavia without the experience of living in the diaspora.

Flotel Europa and *My Own Private War* combine archival footage with home movies in mosaic-screen compositions and slow-motion montage. They show that non-representational images of war can offer points of entry for the productive, multidirectional exchange of mediated memories of the Partisan struggle and the Bosnian war. They can also draw attention to the failure to reconcile familial remembrance with public representation, as they seek to account for the historical experience of the post-war condition. The awareness of the loss of Yugoslavia—as a direct consequence of the wars—proves to be a defining feature of a new collective identity among former Yugoslavs living in the diaspora.

The emergent ethno-nationalist identities are a point of departure for *Interrogation* and *Inside*. Both films are characterized by the use of interrogation. This proves to be a fitting technique to investigate the pervasive silence about wartime experiences or outright denial as the challenge imposed by the post-war present. The non-representational strategy of “un-naming” the interviewees enhances the aspect of group cohesion among those who survived the war regardless of their possible ethno-religious inclination. The “un-naming” of perpetrators follows the same non-representational logic, however, it reinforces the aspect of pervasive silence and denial about past atrocities and points out the limitations of non-representation discussed previously.

All four films indicate that the wider context of the wars is either gradually revealed or additionally obscured through the strategies of non-representation. They make it conceivable that non-representational images of war can create new productive forms of future thinking and point to the way beyond the post-war condition, also when they indicate how difficult it might be to resolve differences between private and public memories. Non-representational strategies, which help obscure the political context and, thereby, provoke ethical concern about their usage, can be part and parcel of the films that thematize and problematize denial about past atrocities. The fourth chapter makes this contradiction palpable and sets a necessary framework for the future debate on the limitations and potentials

of non-representational strategies in accounting for the historical experience of denial as implicated in the enduring post-war condition.

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