

Conclusion

The multi-faceted meanings of the adjectives *post-Yugoslav* and *post-war* were reflected on in Chapter I. The detailed analysis there showed distinct differences between the legacies or continuous influence of Yugoslavia on the one hand, and the war on their respective aftermaths on the other. Post-Yugoslavia implies retrieving once lost memories of living in the former federal state. Post-Yugoslavia may in time persist on its own, as a separate entity and a gentle reminder of antifascism, multiculturalism, and solidarity, once deeply shared values among south-Slavic people. The notion of a post-war society assumes an inability to detach from the war, to separate trauma and the legacy of the war from the present. The distinction between the post-war and the post-Yugoslav condition, which was outlined in this chapter, justifies the imperative to move beyond the post-war condition. What is at stake here is bringing an end to an enduring and un-reflected legacy of the war—making the post-war condition an afterthought, disconnected from the war as its source. This implies coming to terms with painful and contradictory memories of the war, while not only criticizing a status quo that is experienced as an unchangeable and cemented legacy of the war, but also as a habit of turning a blind eye to post-war quandaries like corruption and massive poverty.

In the context of filmmaking, overcoming the post-war status assumes finding the aesthetic means to convey memories of the war while avoiding the traps of representation. A closer look into problems of representation, as explored by Gilles Deleuze, helped me ground and further develop the concept of non-representational images. Non-representational images are ideas and affirmed differentialities in the Deleuzian sense. They cause disruption to existing representation, which always comes from within. They present rather than represent war traumas in their belatedness. They provide a glimpse into the agony of living in a permanent post-war condition. Non-representational images express a certain reluctance to swing easily into film narrative, to connect with other images and produce clear-cut meanings that would corroborate official state narratives. Rather than restricting representation to a sense of linear and causative storytelling,

I suggested that it should be associated with a sense of narrative continuity, which, as some films from the former Yugoslavia indicate, can end up supporting damaging ethno-religious stereotyping. In those instances, the narrative continuity proves to be aligned with exclusionary ethno-nationalist narratives, which rest on erasing the collective memories of living in the former multinational federal state of Yugoslavia. These narratives are best understood as historical memories, which flow into historiographies that are later captured by intellectual elites. The narrative continuity, which reflects and reinstates the convenient and useful historiography, implies a certain doubt about the possibility of truthfully conveying collective trauma. The post-war condition is implicated in various forms of self-victimization, which are inseparable from the daily political discourse in the former Yugoslavia. The self-serving, exclusionary ethno-nationalist narratives imply a notion of a resolvable past, the coherence of a narrative continuity, in need of being challenged.

By refusing to add up to a coherent, self-evident film narrative, non-representational images open a narrative up to inassimilable heterogeneity. In this operation, they refer back to themselves, yet at the same time require a specific type of spectatorial engagement. Considering the existing lack of resolution in the dispute over consciousness and subjectivity between Deleuzian and phenomenological thought (for its part), I found it useful to reconsider Bergson's notions on matter and memory. A return to Bergson's notion of attentive recognition proves rewarding when taking into account the shortcomings of both Gilles Deleuze's and Vivian Sobchack's models of spectatorship. As film scholar Darlene Pursley stresses in her writing, the Bergsonian model implies a dualism of spatial and temporal spectatorship. A certain "mental flexibility" is indeed required for a notion of spectator oscillating between the spatial and temporal modes of spectatorship, between "space as narrative continuity and physical sensation and time as affect and memory" (Pursley 1192).

I draw on the most systematic study of post-Yugoslav cinema, that of Jurica Pavičić on film style and ideology, published in 2011. Pavičić offers a tripartite categorization of post-Yugoslav film: films of self-victimization; films of self-Balkanization; and films of normalization. These categories propose a coherent narrative of a shared past with the purpose of laying the groundwork for a shared future for their respective countries or communities of origin. They categorize films according to what could be called the ideological objective and possible influence of their narratives. Films of self-victimization argue that the war was the result of external prediction; films of self-Balkanization internalize and amplify western stereotypes

about the intrinsic irrationality of Yugoslav peoples and politics; and films of normalization attempt to create a false consistency through narratives that suggest that what is still persistently present, the unresolved past, has actually been resolved and turned into a liveable past. I depart from and at the same time challenge Pavičić's model by distinguishing my own three categories of post-Yugoslav cinema: films of over-representation; films of representation; and films of non-representation. Films of over-representation (often in melodramatic or epic modes) stage competition between victims and strengthen divisive ethnic stereotypes, or resort (in more postmodern modes) to relativizing forms of self-Balkanization (that is, they roughly correspond to Pavičić's first two types). Films of representation reject such strategies and instead tend to use minimal realism, classic narrative arcs, and linear storytelling (roughly Pavičić's films of normalization). Finally, films of non-representation tend to reject linear narrative storytelling and work instead with silences, long shots, shaky camera, and the insertion of archival or home movie footage. These films derive their power from non-representational images, which in their self-reflection have the capacity to elicit particular effects and encourage political awakening.

Chapter II revolves around the portrayal of a victim that varies from film to film, depending on the degree of representation that each selected film submits to. The emphasis is placed on the shift from representation to non-representational strategies. And this shift is partly reflected in the change of register within the oeuvre of the same filmmaker, as seen with Aida Begić and Jasmila Žbanić in particular. As could be seen, non-representational images of war can deviate from the linear, cause-and-effect narrative, but remain supportive of the film's overarching optimism and related goals, as in *Grbavica* and *Snow*. They can appear as inserted home videos or news footage and thereby challenge the coherence of the narrative structure, as in *Children of Sarajevo* and *For Those Who Can Tell No Tales*. Alternatively, the cause-and-effect narrative can be left behind, and new temporalities can emerge with new sound/image arrangements, as in the fully fledged films of non-representation *Depth Two* and *1395 Days without Red*. An evoked traumatic past can be successfully mastered and integrated into the films' present, as the films of representation show. Alternatively, its assimilation into the film's narrative, which is marked by its predisposed goal orientation and overarching optimism, can be challenged, as evident in the films featuring a higher degree of non-representation. If *Madonna* offers a clear-cut opposition between victim and perpetrator, which is narratively presented in melodramatic terms, *1395 Days without Red* is at the opposite end of the non-representational scale in that it suspends cause-and-effect

relations and rejects representing human suffering altogether. A shift away from objectifying victims, on one side, and towards escaping the convention of representation in order to restore dignity to victims, on the other, are issues of political relevance that were addressed in this chapter.

Chapter III acts as a mirror-image to Chapter II. It revolves around the portrayal of a figure of the perpetrator, which varies from film to film, depending on the degree of representation that each selected film submits to. While *Underground* and *Pretty Village*, *Pretty Flame* resort to strategies of over-representation, the use of grotesque and hyperbole, *Ordinary People* and *Blacks* shift away from such forms and focus on dead time in warfare or the paratactic ordering of an unconnected narrative. Finally, *The Load* and *Krivina* are characterized as films of non-representation as they attest to a failure to remember the commission of war crimes and the silent complicity in their cover-ups. The movement from over-representation to non-representation implies a shift away from glorifying wartime violence and the inhibiting internalization of derogatory stereotypes about the Balkans along with a further perpetuation of nesting Orientalisms, Balkanism, and self-Balkanism. The films that succeed in refusing to disclose and narrate actual killings, while providing sporadic cues, help engage the viewer's knowledge, memory, and imagination in completion of these non-representational images of war. The reduction in style, which amounts to an erasure of the political context of the Yugoslav wars, however, raises an ethical concern over the limitations of non-representation. *Ordinary People*, for example, works with a decontextualization of its narrative (concrete historical events or ethnic affiliations are not traceable) and thus could be understood as evading the problem of historical guilt and responsibility. The introduction of Dominick LaCapra's notion of perpetrator trauma and its relation to and integration into a film narrative is used to initiate a discussion about the possible drawbacks of non-representation. A treatment of individual and collective guilt and accountability came under careful scrutiny.

Chapter IV revolves around the after-effects of the Yugoslav wars of disintegration, as experienced and depicted in the films by the filmmakers from the former Yugoslavia who (have) work(ed) and live(d) in the diaspora. One of the working hypotheses of this chapter was that a spatio-temporal distance from the places of war trauma and/or post-war anxieties leads to an experimentation in style and contributes to the rise of non-representational images of war and a stronger presence of the films of non-representation.

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. A concern over the loss of Yugoslavia and collective identity is integral to *My Own Private War*, whereas a concern over the post-war reality as being determined by ethno-religious identities is meticulously scrutinized in Namik Kabil's films *Interrogation* and *Inside*.

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 for non-representational images of war to create new productive forms of future thinking and point 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 concern of the ethics of their usage, can be part and parcel of the films that thematize and problematize a denial of past atrocities. The fourth chapter makes this contradiction palpable and sets up the necessary framework for any 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.

Based on the analysis of the objects in my study, the political relevance of non-representational strategies in post-Yugoslav film lies in: recuperating the dignity of a survivor of the war that was previously lost to mass media images of human suffering; approaching the denial of past atrocities without reinforcing divisions across ethno-religious lines that keep post-Yugoslav society locked in its post-war condition; and preventing the glorification of wartime violence. Non-representational images in post-Yugoslav film become problematic when the wider sociopolitical context of war is obscured to such a degree that the distinction between perpetrators and victims is relativized, and when denial about atrocities or widespread silence about the war past is further enhanced. Within the scope of my research, I investigated how contemporary images of war shape the film aesthetics and development of film language in post-Yugoslav cinema. The question of the political relevance, possibilities, and limitations of non-representational strategies was the focus of this study.

An enquiry into the role of the Sarajevo Film Festival in selecting, showcasing, and supporting the production and circulation of post-Yugoslav films would provide further insight into the topic. It would be relevant to explore

whether and how the Sarajevo Film Festival as a privileged showcase of post-Yugoslav cinema contributes to the overall discourse on reconciliation within post-Yugoslav society. In particular, it would be essential to determine whether and to what extent the festival encourages the production and promulgation of films that avoid the use of representational images of war and address both the historical experience of war and the contemporary experience of post-war society through non-representational strategies.

My research on non-representational images of war in post-Yugoslav cinema would benefit from a comparative analysis with films and artworks that originate from or engage with other areas charged with collective memories about past trauma. Joshua Oppenheimer's films *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence*, Rithy Panh's *The Missing Picture*, László Nemes's *Son of Saul*, and Alfredo Jaar's *The Rwanda Project 1994–2010* are prominent examples that come to mind. A closer look at the difficulties of representing victim and perpetrator trauma, complicity in cover-up crimes, silence and denial about atrocities across various historical and geographical sites would properly contextualize my findings. The ensuing interdisciplinary exchange between artistic practices and theories could eventually lead to the creation of the first catalogue of non-representational images of collective traumas. In line with the aim of this research, the catalogue would highlight the role of non-representational images of war in shaping the film language of the post-conflict societies addressed. The social relevance of the strategies analysed here would be on equal footing with their aesthetic properties. The question of reconciliation would be as relevant as the form of expression it pursues.

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