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Specters of the Present: Yugonostalgia, cultural politics and policies in Serbia

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Abstract

The present thesis is concerned with the examination of Yugonostalgic modes of remembering as manifested, articulated, and actualized in the post-socialist, nation-state of Serbia. By focusing on four indicative cases, two films (Tito and me, Underground) and two "loci" (Tito's Mausoleum and Yugoland), the aim is to show that it is precisely the different dimensions of culture and the constant interplay within and through different cultural modes that do not allow a simplistic unidimensional conceptualization of the phenomenon. There is not only one Yugonostalgia, but rather different "Yugonostalgias" each time bringing forth their temporal constructive nature and political utilization even within the same nation-state.

Keywords: Yugonostalgia, cultural memory, modes of remembering, Serbia.

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Introduction

While narrating the history of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (from now on simply Yugoslavia), the historian Marie-Janine Calic, (2019) began by nostalgically admitting that *"No other European country was as colorful, multifaceted, or complex as Yugoslavia"* (Galic,2019,p.x). There is no denial that Yugoslavia was versatile. It was a multinational federal state comprised by six constituent republics (Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia) and two provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo) where multiple nation-groups, at least four languages and three religions, all came together under the umbrella of the Yugoslav identity up until the dissolution of the state in the 1990's. In terms of the flamboyant aspect traced in the above sentence, certainly, the historian did not simply wish to idealize the former state. Yet, inadvertently, or not, the above passage captures an emotion that has been afflicting the ex-Yugoslav region ever since the rise of post-socialist nation states.

Indeed, the phenomenon of post-socialist nostalgia emerged throughout the region that once comprised Yugoslavia without, however, afflicting every state to the same degree or with the same intensity. Nonetheless, wherever nostalgia appeared, it always seemed to resurge back into the limelight, stories and icons that under a rudimental narrative of historical "endings" and "progress", should rather have fallen into oblivion. This intensification of longing the socialist regimes of the 20th century led another prominent historian, Maria Todorova (2010), to refer to the specter of the study nostalgia for researchers in Eastern Europe.

Does this, however, mean that nostalgia is a specter now in terms of what Jacque Derrida (1994) had loosely defined as the ghost of "communism" haunting contemporary post-socialist nation states? Is it -to put it rather simply- a temporal/political juncture that signalizes a threat, a critique for contemporary post-socialist national establishments by the socialist ghosts of the past? A preliminary answer to such questions can be provided: it depends on what the subjects make of it.

Looking the field of memory and more specifically cultural memory under the notion of specters implies up to an extent that nostalgia is not only political (it is) but crucially enough inherently ideological (in the Marxist sense). Our focus, following Derrida should be given on textual ("there is nothing outside the text")/philosophical analysis of memory as "archive", as a site of domination or -taking the emancipatory potential

of the ghost- to its revolutionary character. Yet, there is a question remaining in this intellectual conundrum. Where is the social subject? How does the subject relate with its "ghosts"? Should we take into condition not only that observers but fundamentally that subjects view both memory and nostalgia as political?

There is no denial that our collective past(s) bare strategic, ethical, and political ramifications that pertain to our identity, to our very present and they are frequently addressed as sources of (contradictory) legitimizations. Yet, the main anthropological question is to empirically investigate how social subjects make sense of their "ghosts" in different social arenas. Representation of memory takes place within the totality of the context we address to as culture. It takes place through different cultural forms (material, visual, performative, textual and so on) and *modes*. Thus, it is important to explore how subjects perceive their temporalities, implicitly or explicitly, and how they utilize and discuss their own past within and through these forms. Consequently, while diffused within the memory-culture spectrum of post-socialist societies, nostalgia cannot ever really be subtracted from the very social contexts within which it is practiced and articulated and of what groups make of it. The phenomenon of nostalgia needs to be exhaustively contextualized. Such a statement captures all different manifestations of post-socialist nostalgia(s) and of course the protagonist of this thesis: Yugonostalgia.

As the notion itself implies, Yugonostalgia refers broadly to nostalgia for the Socialist Federal republic of Yugoslavia under the charismatic leadership of Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980). As it will be shown, however, Yugonostalgia has become a versatile notion, comprised by richness since the term has been employed to characterize even contradictory phenomena through the post-Yugoslav region, urging for a clarification of the phenomenon. This is not something unexpected in our case. Cultural memory and emotional mobilizations through/for it, cannot be subjugated to clear political or theoretical demarcations. They refer to a fluid, ambiguous constellation of networks, of "grey areas" (Radstone,2008, p.36) where subjects and collective groups *constantly* "weave" the web of their existence.

The present thesis focuses on such weavings of post-social memories and remembering through Yugonostalgia as they are manifested in the context of post-socialist Serbia, focusing merely on four indicative cases. I cannot but to stress the importance of the noun indicative in this case. There is no ambition to turn the analysis into an abstract, holistic inference of what Yugonostalgia is in Serbia or elsewhere. Our

attention here is rather given on questions of how subjects manifest Yugonostalgia in particular contexts and on what aims? (if an aim is present in the first place). Where is nostalgia to be found and, is it really homogenous throughout its different representations in different platforms, media, and practices? Crucially, what are the qualities of these representations? Are they idealized, romanticized, revolutionary or commercialized?

Methodology

In order to answer these questions, the present essay focuses on each case through a non-participant qualitative analysis. A crucial obstacle throughout the research was the central parameter of language since the writer is not familiar to the language of the field. Thus, attention was given exclusively on cases that have been reverberated and examined as Yugonostalgic cases in English-written bibliography.

With that in mind the first two cases were drawn from film. Cinema is perhaps the central mediating arena, the "universal language" of the globe that travels through time and space combining both images and narratives -invaluable features for the workings of remembering- not only within a given culture but through cultures. Through film we, "the observers", can get a glimpse of a different culture and more importantly have a gaze upon the contradicting set of narratives and memories proximate to us through cinematic mediation. For this purpose, two films produced in Serbia within the turbulent period of the 1990's were examined, manifesting that Tito and Yugoslavia swiftly became themes of the cinematographic medium, albeit in a dissimilar nostalgic "gaze" and a contradictory aspect of politics in memory. These parameters are corroborated further by analyzing the reactions of respective audiences at that time. The gaze and narratives of the individual creator on their own, are insufficient if not taking into consideration the general societal framework regarding remembering.

In an effort to elucidate even further this general social context and as the performative aspect of the term "remembering" suggests (Connerton,1989), collective memory also needs to be examined as a set of social practices that takes place in specific "sites" either formal or informal. Memory is constantly "in the works" and has to keep moving. If a memory suddenly appears "stable" or "inert" (a frame in a movie one could say) then we should rather be discussing the complementary yet contradicting

mechanism of forgetting. Hence, the third case focuses on public commemorations that have been taking place at the mausoleum of Tito as yet another mode of nostalgic remembering that continuously draws public attention. In this case screenshots from YouTube videos (uploaded by journals) were also utilized only to illuminate and confirm key-points that have already been found within relative bibliographic research.

A similar approach applies to the last case where the focus is given on another, informal this time "locus" and the practices surrounding it: a Yugonostalgic theme park. This case has proven to be the most difficult since there were minimum, fragmented accounts into relative English written bibliography. Thus, once again, articles, interviews and pictures from webpages were utilized in order to support and contextualize the analysis. The World Wide Web has proven "itself" to be an invaluable mode for delving into memory and its transmission into globalized contexts.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: Following this introducing section, the first chapter delves into a theoretical review in order to map the dialogues that have emerging regarding nostalgia and its regional manifestations in Eastern Europe. In chapter two, the theoretical framework and cases of this essay are presented before delving into greater detail in each one in chapters three and four. Finally, conclusions are drawn at the final part.

Chapter 1: Mapping

1.1 From disease to epidemic

The term nostalgia derives etymologically from the Greek words "nostos" (νόστος) and "algos" (άλγος) meaning to return home and pain, respectively. Even though we could find rather tangible traces of nostalgia to Homer's "Odyssey" (see Hepper & Wildschut 2012), it remains a common ground that nostalgia cannot be attributed to ancient Greek literature or pinned down to the realm of arts or philosophy. In 1688 a young Swiss medical student named Johannes Hofer, wrote a medical dissertation where nostalgia (accompanied by other terms like philopatridomania) was assessed as a medical disease, a diagnosis for an obsession of returning home. The nostalgic patient was a subject plagued by the "mania" of longing the native land and the only remedy (apart from the use of opium) was the return to this beloved homeland (Starobinski, 1966, pp.84-85) (Boym, 2001, p.18).

Hofer's punctilious coinage appeared quite successful albeit for quite different reasons. The historicization of the term (see Natali 2004), indicates that over the next two centuries nostalgia indeed became an "epidemic" yet the notion underwent vast "de-medialization"(Zembylas,2011,p.642). Nostalgia became a literary term, deployed as a critical and analytical tool in different academic domains (philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, media studies, history) creating thus impediments of referring to a lucid explanatory/epistemological framework (Pickering and Keightley, 2006, p.922).

In the realm of social sciences, nostalgia came to be closely related to the workings of memory and identity. By memory here we are referring to collective memory, a term introduced by prominent French scholar Maurice Halbwachs (2001/1950) who in his book "La mémoire collective" (1950) argued that individual and collective memory are socially constructed phenomena. There is no individual memory isolated by the social context and the idea of such a separation seems -up to a point- meaningless.

In the second half of the 20th century the fascination and intensification of narratives regarding the past and collective memory resulted to what retrospectively came to be known as the "memory boom". The notion essentially refers to an intensification of discourses and theories that underlined the significance of collective memory and the utilizations of the past in the present (Simine,2013, p.14) (see also Huyssen 2000). Within this constellation, nostalgia appeared as a rather problematic element. It came

to be associated mostly as a defense mechanism of collective memory that did not simply "recall" the past -as the notion of memory implies- but idealized it in the face of the untreatably modern condition of dislocation (both spatial and temporal) resulting from modernity's acceleration[1]. Throughout the 1970's, there was a multiplicity of accounts referring to consecutive waves of nostalgia, observable both in the United States of America (U.S.A) and the European continent[2]. In the era where the rupture of the 1960's[3] came to be acknowledged and accompanied by frenetic neoliberal doctrines that resulted to redundancy and economic turbulences, collective nostalgic recollections of the past appeared to serve as the only stable pillar of meaning since future aspirations, "the horizon of expectations"(Koselleck, 2002, p.126), appeared to shrink.

1.2 "The year of Miracles"

Within such a framework, the year 1989 remains and will most likely remain "the year of Miracles" (Latour,1993,p.8). The fall of the Berlin Wall followed by the consecutive disintegrations of real socialist regimes, symbolized the end of the "age of the extremes" (Hobsbawm,1994). The so-called triumph of capitalism over the hollow hopes of Marxism[4] became "apparent" to the whole world while ex-socialist countries

[1] The perennial process of modernity (can be traced at the 17th century as nostalgia), essentially has been continuously transforming spatial-temporal taxonomies and meanings, altering thus social experiences (see Giddens 1990).

[2] In the U.S.A, a journalist named Alvin Toffler was the first one to speak of a nostalgic wave by referring to multiple newspaper articles regarding American fashion, architecture and music that resonated the 1950's, the period of Elvis which was also the golden period of capitalism. Similar revivals were apparent in Europe as well. In West Germany books, films and televisions shows, appeared to be plagued by a longing again for the 1950's. In France, a similar wave of nostalgia also appeared, albeit highlighting the 1940s. Films and novels here were referring to the period of the German occupation to such an extent that intellectuals, like philosopher Michel Foucault, criticized this obsession with war and national resistance (Becker, 2018, pp. 235-237).

[3] The 1960's was perhaps one of the most turbulent centuries of the 20th century in global terms. The beginning of decolonization, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War and antiwar protests, political assassinations (e.g., Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy), the climax of Cold War with the Cuban Missile Crisis, the events of May 1968, are a series of consecutive unprecedented events that took place across the globe and effectively resulted to a perception that the world has changed. It is not coincidental that the notion of "generation gap" appears within this period to express this kind of rupture between generations.

[4] This is the main motive that drove Derrida (1994) to write and introduce his hauntology (haunting and ontology) in the Specter's of Marx. The past for Derrida is never buried or left behind. The tripartite structure of time is nothing more than a rudimental conceptualization. It is a convenient solution that has been facilitating teleological, Hegelian schemes such as Fukuyama's which he vehemently critiqued into his work. In Derrida's conceptualization the specter is a deconstructive notion that cuts through such conventions. A ghost is a juncture, it does not exclusively belong to the past, but it does not belong in the present either yet haunts both. By extent, the spirit of Marx for Derrida is not buried or surpassed but will continually haunt the region.

in the region of Eastern Europe were becoming "transitional", national states "chasing" progress and democratization, perennial ideals promulgated by Western states to which the latter always appeared to have a precedence.

Due to these cataclysmic events, the most trailblazing study of nostalgia and its utilizations emerged a decade following the disintegration. In 2001, Svetlana Boym, a Russian-American art historian published the "Future of Nostalgia" which from then on would become the central corpus for the examination of the phenomenon.

Influenced by Walter Benjamin[5], Boym addressed both the already existing intersections of nostalgia and modernity, alongside the manifestations of nostalgia in the region of Eastern Europe. She assays that modernization and nostalgia go hand in hand and defines the latter broadly as a longing for past times and places that appears to serve as an antidote to modernization's acceleration and consequently its discontinuities. In her theoretical arsenal, however, nostalgia is not one-dimensional. While Hofer coined nostalgia by splicing nostos and algos, Boym segregates his compound and refers to two elastic, overlapping tendencies.

The first facet of nostalgia is restorative nostalgia. It "...*takes itself dead seriously*..." (Boym, 2001,p.62), underlines nostos (return to homeland) and wishes to reconstruct, "rebirth" the long-lost home and its facets in contemporaneous society. Subjects of restorative nostalgia do not conceptualize it as nostalgia per se but ascribe to it the enduring truth and certainty founded upon notions of tradition, myth, "roots" by utilizing plots of origins and conspiracies. Consequently, it can and has been instrumentalized as a core trait of romantic, ritualistic, ethno-nationalistic oratories and practices that do not engage critically to the past and may even breed irredentist tendencies.

On the other hand, there is reflective nostalgia based upon the second half of the notion: algos. Subjects or collective groups of reflective nostalgia accept that the past they search is irretrievable. Past times and places are gone or more captivatingly they never really existed as favorable since they are a product of the creative power of imagination in the virtual realities of subjective consciousness. Hence, reflective nostalgia appears up to a point as a more sophisticated, critical form that cherishes the

[5] Even though Walter's Benjamin's philosophical work has been associated to the "Frankfurt School" (where Karl Marx's work was influencing) history for Benjamin is not perceived as a mechanistic, evolutionary scheme. He deems it as a product of an anachronistic constellation of past and present which is defined as "Jetztzeit" (now-time) (see Bohn 2019).

effect of modernity's fragmentation, of creative imagination and it is frequently characterized by irony, a core element that makes it compatible to modernity (or post-modernity for some) (Hutcheon,1988, pp.39-41). While restorative nostalgia thrives on the past, the temporal horizon of reflective nostalgia is rather prospective than retrospective since the past is conceived as something gone. Thus, it does not simply idealize the past but also emphasizes on its many potentialities that have not been realized but should have been, bringing nostalgia closer to the notion of utopia (Boym, 2001, pp. 53-63).

Boym's erudite analytical distinction addresses poignantly to the issue of competing memories that have been taking place in the post-socialist context. The very reason that she provides such a typology is that her research in post-Soviet Russia indicated that a "*memory boom*" (Boym,2001,p.75) took place during Perestroika. The past suddenly appeared to be in plenitude and became available to a multiplicity of socio-political agents. Nostalgia thus was neither singular nor simplistic but was utilized for rather different purposes. Prompted by temporal needs and identity disruptions where the present always appeared inferior, nostalgia's utilizations were ranging from ameliorating the articulation of nationalist discourses that exorcised the "Marxist past", to memories of a stable daily life under socialism and, yet again, to frenetic nostalgic idealizations of this soviet past that suggested that the "Gulag" was nothing but a myth of the transformation period (Boym,2001,pp.76-78).

Following Boym, the examination of post-socialist nostalgia was only amplified. Irrespective of problematizations posted by the utilization of post-socialism[6] (see Müller, 2019), as a framework of analysis, post-socialist nostalgia remains the prevalent umbrella term that currently encompasses the examination of different nostalgic and mnemonic phenomena and their local actualizations in these regions. Hence, apart from Yugonostalgia, there are at least two other noteworthy classifications within the post-socialist paradigm. One refers to nostalgia for the socialist East Germany called "Ostalgia" (see Sadowski-Smith 1998, Enns 2007) while in the Russian Federation it comes by the name "Soviet Nostalgia" (see Piccolo 2015, Kalinina, 2014).

[6] In this aspect, at first, I am utilizing the notion of post-socialism in contrast to the notion of post-communism since the latter bares rather negative connotations while subjects in these regions do not tend to identify or acknowledge it as representative of their situation (Βουτυρά & Μπουσχότεν, 2007,p.11). On a different level I am not utilizing the notion of "transition" but the notion of transformation to abstain from evolutionary and valuated schemes of history where Fukuyama's traces are observable.

Kaleidoscopically, the repertoire of post-socialist nostalgia(s) is pluralistic and, expectedly, varies across time and space since it reflects cultural eccentricities (Bošković, 2013, p.54). Taking into consideration that researchers conduct research in other ex-socialist countries, like the Check Republic (see Reifová 2018, Roberts 2002), new typologies and analytical conceptualizations constantly perplex and enrich the paradigm.

1.3 Yugonostalgia

Yugonostalgia is indeed a phenomenon that can come under the umbrella of post-socialist nostalgia(s), yet its content varies to a considerable extent. In contrast to Ostalgia that refers to a period prior to national reunification Yugonostalgia refers to the exact opposite. It describes a period when the territory of a federal state was intact and, most importantly, to the supranational identity of the Yugo-Slav. Secondly, Yugoslavia was never under the control of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R) and paved the so called "third way" to socialism. It also held a status of independence that was open both to the West and the East, an element of freedom that is also constantly reverberated by interlocutors. Thirdly, the disintegration of the federal state into exclusive national ones was not peaceful. It emerged through a series of civil wars and ethnic cleansings that were a unique phenomenon in this case especially when contrasted to the concomitant disintegration of the U.S.S.R. (Volcic, 2007, pp.26-27). This is one of the prevalent reasons why collective trauma emerges frequently into relative bibliography regarding the phenomenon[7].

The earliest public articulation of Yugonostalgia is attributed to the Croatian president Franjo Tudman (1922-1999) who used the term to stigmatize the so called "children of the red bourgeoisie" (left wing politicians, academics or officers that opposed to ethnic segregation and hostilities during the wars) (Jagiełło-Szostak, 2017, p.8). The term also appeared in December 1992 in an article of a Croatian weekly magazine named "Globus". It referred to five women who were accused of being Marxist communists, profiteers, feminists and "Yugonostalgics" (Kolstø, 2014, p.766). Consequently, "Yugonostalgic" was used as a derogatory term incorporated within a nationalist discourse, aimed to separate "patriots" (those promulgating national

[7] As historian Tony Judt (2005,p.685) puts it: "*Yugoslavia did not fall: it was pushed. It did not die: it was killed".*

memory and ethnicism) and "traitors" (Yugonostalgics or Yugo-zombies as they were called propagating peaceful coexistence on the basis of a mutual socio-cultural past) (Boskovic 2013, p.54) (Jagiełło-Szostak, 2017, p.6).

The concept of Yugonostalgia was popularized in academia by one of the very women that were accused of being Yugonostalgic. Dubravka Ugresic in her book "Culture of Lies" (1998) defined Yugonostalgia as "*a productive revisiting of the collective experience of citizens whose individual lives were embedded in the social life of the collapsed state.*" (as quoted in Volcic 2007, p.27). In particular, the Croatian literary scholar brought forth the term to refer to two kind of terrors embedded in the "culture of lies" implemented by the Croatian nation state during the 1990's: the terror by forgetting (the subject is forced to forget what it remembers) and the terror by remembering (the subject is forced to remember something that never truly existed) (Ugresic,1994, p.37). Yugonostalgia thus was a matter pertaining essentially to culture and memory and was in fact perceived as a counter-memory by Ugresic: Yugonostalgia was pernicious for official establishments since it implied the presence of pro-Yugoslav memories and appeared to oppose to hasty post-Yugoslav reassessments that wished to eradicate the cultural Yugoslav past and everything that could refer to it (flags, street-names, books[8], practices and so on) (Ugresic,1994,pp.28-29).

Throughout the years, academic literature regarding Yugonostalgia was continually enriched and the notion became rather "*polysemic*" (Mihelj,2016,p.240). An early analytical distinction between restorative and reflective Yugonostalgia was made by political analyst Nicole Lindstrom (2005). Restorative Yugonostalgia for her was heavily related to the dogma of Yugoslavism[9] while reflective Yugonostalgia has been

[8] A popular example here is the "Leksikon Yu Mitologije[8] ", [Lexicon of Yu Mythology]. The book contains an abundance of recollections regarding Yugoslav folksingers, directors, screenwriters, politicians, musicians, sportsmen, comic books, films, public spaces, urban subculture and slang, even entries referring to the experience of mandatory service in the Yugoslav People's Army. The project began in 1989 in Croatia and was initiated by Ugresic in collaboration with a Zagreb magazine called "Start". While the goal of the Lexicon was to provide an account representing popular Yugoslav culture, due to the tense post 1990's period (political struggles, outbreak of civil war) the book eventually became a symbol and a political statement by ex-Yugoslavs that did not wish their social and cultural history to be erased from public memory (Boskovic, 2013,pp.51-61).

[9] Yugoslavism was the principal ideology of socialist Yugoslavia which promulgated that the differences between the constituent Yugoslav peoples were apparent yet insignificant. In the federal state, each republic had a rather obvious national sign since their name was defined by the dominant national group. However, the -now mythical- proverb of "brotherhood and unity" was pointing to the official equality amongst these constituent republics. Such equality was not merely an ideological edifice but was rather "tangible" and institutionalized (e.g., rotation of federal leadership, allocation of governmental posts proportionately, constitutional status for the rights of language for each national group etc.) (Lindstrom, 2005, p.230).

mostly perceived as a "nostalgia of style" meaning a nostalgia for Yugoslav art (see Petrov, 2018). Yugonostalgia has also been classified as revisionist (highly political where it mobilizes collective reunification upon a common past), aesthetic (a-political preservation of socialist cultural artifact) and escapist/utopian (commodification of culture and severely a-historical) (Volcic,2007,p.28). The Slovenian cultural/religious studies scholar Mitja Velikonja (2008,2009,) suggests multiple complementary yet contradictive categories: material and immaterial, culture of nostalgia (top-down) and a nostalgic culture (bottom-up), instrumentalized and spontaneous, passive (a-political) and active (political). All these nuanced classifications, underlying the polysemic relationship with the state socialist past, indicate that the phenomenon cannot be reduced to a simple, one-word classification. The same nostalgic object (as long as it is perceived as such), the same ghost(s), can have an abundance of potential utilizations by subjects stemming from different temporal/political conceptualizations and, subsequently, leading to different practice orientations.

An important, mutual in this case aspect that can be found in the majority of scholars is that a yearning for the official Yugoslav regime is rather absent. Yet -and this is something important to bear in mind- the recollections of Yugonostalgics are not necessarily a-political. Memories and narratives regarding the freedom of movement to Western countries (Petrovic 2007), supranationalism and brotherhood (Baskar,2007) alongside the stability and safety of Yugoslavia's socialist way (Maksimovic, 2017),- even though they are perceived by interlocutors as "a-political"- seem to underline a series of privileges and prides that have become only potentialities in particular socio-historic contexts.

This is one of the prevalent reasons on why Yugonostalgia is not the same throughout the ex-Yugoslav region and requires cautious contextualization. The phenomenon is by no means as intense in contemporary Croatia, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and neither has been expressed similarly throughout the nearly thirty years of the transformation period. Even by accepting the nation-state as a frame of reference it does not preclude that Yugonostalgic rhetorics or practices are anti-nationalist (a frequent example here was/is Croatia) or vice versa entertaining and commercialized (in this case Slovenia). In fact, if we were to address the issue of Yugonostalgia or more intrinsically Titostalgia (see below) in Kosovo then the situation is vastly entangled.

Serbia exhibits a large number of Yugonostalgics even today. Yugonostalgics here, according to nationalist rhetorics, are the losers of the transformation period that simply escape to the past (Bancroft, 2009) while informants (who were Yugonostalgics) did not wish to be labelled as such following up to a point the general, rudimental project where nostalgia is deemed as sentimental and inferior to modern rationalization. In other case-studies, Yugonostalgia appears to become a vehicle of/for political emancipation (meaning here mostly social and political criticism based on socialist ideals) (Chuchak,2013) while in others, Yugonostalgics appear to refer passively only to a period of personal stability (employment, healthcare) while being supportive of their national government (Kolsto 2014,). Nonetheless, and whatever the case may be, a fundamental issue is that in Serbia, expressions of Yugonostalgia were rather problematic, especially in the 1990's, since the situation here was rather unique compared to other republics a factor that has left its vestiges until today.

The counterpart of Franjo Tudjman in Serbia is -the by far more widely known in the Western world- Slodoban Milosevic (1941-2006). Milosevic has justifiably been perceived as the personification of Serbian nationalism. As early as his infamous visit to Kosovo (see Morus,2007) he had been deploying a nationalist rhetoric, constantly claiming that the Serbs should re-gain their national integrity. Under a mythical, ethnocentric history about the national Serbian past and future, this procedure inevitably went through the desire to retrieve or reclaim territories that were perceived as Serbian or at least held a significant number of ethnic Serbians in their grounds. Subsequently, it was Milosevic's crave for power that led -up to an extent- to the acceleration of history (wars) since he did not only encourage the Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia to openly express (the already existing) nationalist tendencies but palpably supported them with the Yugoslavian army (Judt, 2005, pp.684-685).

Within this framework, Milosevic also wished to opportunistically capitalize on pro-Yugoslav sentiments that could be found amongst his followers. During the disintegration of Socialist Federal Yugoslavia, he promoted the perseverance of a different Federal Yugoslavia where there is no denial that the role of Serbs should become and remain predominant. A rather obvious example here is that in contrast to the rest of the Yugoslav republics which became independent nation states and abolished the title of Yugoslavia, in this context the title had been preserved throughout the 1990's up until 2003.Thus, the territory of Socialist Yugoslavia appeared to be conceived by Milosevic as an already existing frame for the construction of the Greater

Serbia. Due to this ambivalent/instrumentalizing approach to the historical memory and heritage of Yugoslavia, the 'de-Titoization' of Serbia was abrupt and hectic. Obviously, the lines between nationalist and anti-nationalist nostalgia are blurred in this socio-historic context since this regime claimed a heretic continuity with the previous regime. As Nadiya Chuchack (2013, pp.16-17) points out these imbrications and overlapping discourses are still to be found in many narratives. Many Serbs while supporting Milosevic's nationalistic politics and regime, also comment that they miss their time under Tito and Yugoslavia.

1.4 Titostalgia

Tito is admittedly the personification of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He was the leader of the Partisan resistance movement, who clashed with gigantic personas of the 20th century history (for example Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin) and collaborated with others (like Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser) by generating the historical Non-Aligned Movement. He became the father of the so-called "humane style of socialism" while being called the "last of the Hapsburgs" that managed to suppress nationalistic tendencies within the Yugoslav state. Expectedly, during his times, the public domain was plagued by his figure. His pictures were required to be hanged everywhere, a typical personality cult backed and maintained by systemic propaganda.

It is Tito's death that seems to mark the beginning of the end. The loss of the political persona alongside a severe economic crisis intensified the resurgence of nationalist tensions, which in the end brought the country into a series of atrocious civil wars at the beginning of the 1990's. However, the personality cult of the former Marshal -evidently- all but disappeared after his death. Films, streets, hotels, squares, parks, impersonators, statues, coffee shops, folklore memorabilia, drinks, either named after Tito or drawing upon the aura of his charisma are ubiquitous.

Figure 1: A man looks at the monument of Josip Broz Tito in Podgorica, Montenegro. The statue is one of the most recent installations in the region and was received quite controversially. (Source: https://www.euronews.com/2018/12/19/watch-montenegro-unveils-statue-of-controversial-ex-yugoslav-communist-tito).

All these manifestations have been addressed by researchers as a complementary sub-genre of Yugonostalgia: Titostalgia. Titostalgia refers to the nostalgic discourses and practices (commemorations, festivals, parties, books, internet sites etc.) relating specifically to the personality cult of the late Yugoslav president, as they have been articulated and practiced across the region following the disintegration of the country.

Mitja Velikonja has focused on depth upon Tito in his book "Titostalgia" (2008) where he suggests that Tito's proximate, yet in essence distant figure has been undergoing idealization and he comments on the multiplicity of utilizations of the president's figure that can come under all the classifications referred above. As paradoxical as it may seem Tito has been separated from his regime. Velikonja points to the intrinsic fact that the majority of his interviewers refer to Tito *metonymically* and not to the dogma of Titoism[10] or its implementation (2008,p.129). In essence, Tito has

[10] Titoism was a political, social and economic theory and system combining elements of Marxist-Leninist ideology alongside selected facets of Western liberal practices. It was an attempt to underline the Yugoslav independence from the Soviet Union (the split between Tito and Stalin following the Yugoslav expulsion from the Cominform in June 1948) and in particular to the parallel ideology of Stalinism. Noticeable policies within this framework are the decentralization of the economic and political/ administrative spheres and more particularly the workers self-management system, the "citizens

become a central symbol that currently alludes to an array of connections and meanings to/about the past across the socio-cultural spectrum which in turn are articulated for different purposes. Consequently, in accordance to the umbrella of Yugonostalgia, Titostalgic discourses and icons similarly bare a vast, pluralizing content that ranges from titostalgic artifacts of liberal trade and commercialization (e.g., souvenirs, products named after Tito), to discourses about lost stability and peaceful interethnic relations.

self-government system" and the "socialist free market" combining "planned economy" and "free market" (Mcvicker 1958).

Chapter 2: The memory of Yugoslavia

2.1 Modes of Remembering

The main epistemological presupposition that we follow in our analysis is the de-essentialization of the analytic notions. Discourses and narratives referring to the "abuse" and "fraudulence" of nostalgia to the workings of memory or history (see DaSilva and Faught, 1982) are not a very productive approach to cultural representations of the past. These conceptualizations seem to -implicitly-suggest the existence of a positivist kind of collective memory that appears able to impeccably recall past events as long as nostalgia is absent (Bancroft,2009, pp.12-13) (Velikonja, 2008). Similarly, bipolar distinctions or questions between "history and/or/as memory" as promulgated by one of the most famous memory scholars and initiators of the memory boom, Pierre Norra, is not only the "Achilles heel" of memory studies (Olick,2008,p.158) but itself bares elements of nostalgia[11].

As shown above, it was in the fields of culture and memory that the preservation and contestation about the Yugoslav past took place. With that in mind the main locus of our analysis lies in the field of cultural memory studies. What Halbwach's had identified as collective memory, German Egyptologists Jan and Aleida Assmann (2008) distinguish it even further into two different ways of collective remembering. On one hand, there is communicative memory and on the other cultural memory (what for Halbwachs was history). Jan Assmann (1995,p.132) had already defined cultural memory as the:

"..body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity..."

[11] In agreement to Halbwachs, French historian Pierre Norra also distinguished between memory and history and perceived the former positively as "alive" in contrast to history. At the same time Norra himself articulated questions and examined in depth memory and its sites (*lieux de memoire*) because in his conception subjects were no more living in real environments of memory. Memory (national in this context) in fact appeared to be in scarcity due to modernization and globalization. Consequently, memory was something invaluable for Norra, and should be separated and preserved from perils -such as nostalgia- that could diminish it. Paradoxically, however, his argument is itself nostalgic, since it claims that memory at some point in the past appeared to be in plenitude or even more "pure" than in his contemporary context (Legg, 2005).

It is important to stress at this point that both cultural and communicative memory play the fundamental role of providing the fabric upon which identity construction takes place and they are both relative, always pertaining to specific socio-historic contexts. Yet, cultural memory's "body" according to Assmann (2008,pp.111-112) is institutionalized (heritage sites such as museums and monuments are the most obvious example here), formalized and has a temporal horizon that can reach millennia. Communicative memory on the other hand, refers to inter-personal, oral memories that have a short time horizon (three generations).

Astrid Erll (2008,2011,2020), a prominent German scholar of cultural memory studies, suggests that in current anthropological conceptualizations regarding memory working this distinction is relativized (2011,pp.30-31). Both cultural memory and communicative memory are complementary forms that appear in culture and they can both equally address the same past in any given moment. Erll propagates that cultural memory is an umbrella term that:

"…unites all possible expressions of the relation-ship of culture and memory – from ars memoriae to digital archives, from neuronal networks to intertextuality, from family talk to the public unveiling of a monument."(ibid,p.101).

To this extent, cultural memory encompasses both formal and informal/popular articulations and actualizations of collective memory in culture. More so, Erll suggests that cultural memory can also be deemed as "communicative". A memory, in order to remain "alive" following Erll, needs to be in constant movement through "communication", mediation, facilitated by existing temporal media within a given socio-historic culture that effectively can exceed both space and time (Erll,2011). Throughout her research Erll focuses on this very circulation, this constant movement of memory (she propagates the notion of "travelling memory") giving considerable attention to semiotics, narratological analysis and the medialization on memory.

In order to overcome the Achilles Heel referred above, Erll introduced the notion of *modes of memory* in culture. Modes of memory, or more accurately modes of remembering, lies upon the fundamental issue that the past (any past) varies to a considerable extent. Such a case takes into account not only what is remembered - meaning here facts or events- but takes into consideration the multiple ways of *how*

subjects can remember in a given cultural context. Subsequently, the notion of modes of remembering is referring to two things. At first it manifests the multiplicity of ways, that the past is represented and addressed in culture. A book, a photograph, a film, a website, an article, a commemorating ritual, a monument, an oral family story albeit seemingly different can serve as different modes, different paths where individuals and groups can get in contact to their "common" past as it is re-mediated, practiced and circulated across the social spectrum. Following Erll, history is not excluded. It is, yet again another mode of addressing to the past while historiography can be perceived as a specific medium[12] that facilitates remembering. The notion of remembering here underlines the dynamics, this constant interplay between media, practices, and subjects where the past is neither given nor is it static. Remembering as a *process* is diachronic, it entails forgetting (Erll, 2011,pp.8,139-140, see also Rigney 2005,2018) as a complementary mechanism and it always relates to the present, to what is needed now (whenever this may be) from the past, thus re-constructing it, molding it.

Expectedly, this malleability affects not just the intensity with which a past is represented but also its quality register. This is the second aspect of referring to different modes. The past here is endowed to different qualities meaning that every mode in a particular sociocultural and historical context brings forth different representations which in turn bring forth different meanings of the same past. One relative example in this case are the Yugoslav wars. They can be remembered through different modes since they can be a common theme of a film, a history book, an oral autobiographical/family story, or a website. At the same time within and throughout these modes there are different qualifications like: "*Mythical, politicized, traumatic, (..) contested, aestheticizing, and entertaining…"*(Erll, 2008, p.7).

Consequently, the same past, the same series of events can be explored and narrated by all these platforms, yet with every representation the meaning that these events take might diverge. In a similar manner, what the heritage (political, cultural and so on) of Yugoslavia or Tito's consists of, is always under constant negotiation subjected to the re-mediation of such memories and narratives, expressed through different cultural modes that depict or reiterate stories about the ex-State.

[12] This is not a statement to lessen history's importance or homogenize and bracket the totality of the discipline with subjectivism. Following Erll (2008,p7) it rather stresses the complementary (and contradictory as well) aspects of remembrance that exist within a given cultural context.

Hence, remembering and negotiating Yugoslavia's heritage through and by different cultural modes brings forth different expressions where nostalgia's stimulatory, affective force in remembering might diverge in terms of its content and utilizations. This is the way that we perceive the phenomenon. Nostalgia is an affective emotion that diminishes the present, mobilized within cultural memory because it *does* "work" for the subjects (Campell et al, 2017,p.609). Thus, it is not only nostalgia's -"pre-cognitive"- emergence or spectral elements but rather its *uses* while dealing with "the past", that do not allow precipitations about nostalgia's "essence". Nostalgia is multifaceted since it can and has been proven favorable to a multiplicity of narratives and practices that can even be contradictory to each other.

2.2 Remembering Yugoslavia

As discussed above, in this particular study we shall focus on three modes of remembering analyzed in four consecutive representations: Films, a commemorative ritual and the construction of a theme park. All cases bring forth the dynamics of remembering the Yugoslav socialist past under the "veil" of nostalgia yet in each one, Yugonostalgia is presented under a different mode and qualities in remembering.

At first glance, it seems plausible that to accept film as a conveyor of an otherwise "objective" history of events, stands against everything that formal education instills to students meaning here the popular imagination of thick tombs of historical books as a medium of histories where the historian appears as an objective researcher that seems untouched by subjective precipitations. Film has in fact been examined as a permutation of facts, as popular entertainment. The 'culture industry' as examined for example by Adorno and Horkheimer (2006) is a model in which mass, entertaining culture is seen solely as a site of domination and deception that leads to an obedience to the social hierarchy. Cinema thus appears to facilitate escapism from this very history that we live within[13] (Rosenstone, 2006, pp.3-4).

[13] The only "exception" in this case would be the documentary. Documentaries implicitly or explicitly claim that we can have direct access to memory and history through, testimonies, photographs, landscapes, in any case with actual footage that provides an "unmediated" experience to the past. But this is just another form of deception according to Rosenstone (2006,p.16). The documentary "speaks" in past visual tense that *"...we might dub nostalgia..."* and in this case yet again, our connection to the past is mediated.

These kinds of conceptualizations have rapidly changed (see Hedges 2015, Landsberg 2018). Cinema is perceived as a privileged medium where history becomes shared knowledge (Cook, 2004), and the viewer can have access to memories. Films, as any media for that matter, can fulfill three essential functions of/for memory. A film can act as a storage of memory content, while distributing (the function of circulation) this content through space and time and simultaneously trigger the recollection of memories (Erll, 2011,pp.122-123). Henceforth, under all these three functions cinema indicates a substantial potential to contribute to a formation of a future "Yugonostalgic identity" by providing the viewer a chance to gain a "prosthetic memory", meaning here a potential where the subject can internalize memories of others available to him/her through cinematic mediation (Landsberg, 2018). On a different basis, the film as a product, an artifact of a different historical era provides us with another insight: Artistic expressions adequately provide us with cultural "documents" of a historical period regarding the changes occurring in that society. Artists can become 'mediators'[14] since they usually appear to be the first to spot and express their contemporary transformational or traumatic environment, yet they always do so under a different perception. This final issue is something rather evident in the case of post-Yugoslav cinema where the not-so far past quickly monopolized cinematic narrations that were received in quite different manner throughout the region (Kalinina, 2014, p.26-28) (Erll, 2011, p. 127-130) (Jelaca, 2014).

Compared to cinema, the "localities of memory" as cultural modes of remembering at first seem more easily related to the realm of memory studies. The most obvious connection to address issues of mnemonic communities and cultural memory lies in the notion of the monument[15]. Monuments and museums have proven to be fertile grounds as they comprise sites where Pierre Nora had suggested that memory crystallizes and secretes itself. The "birth" of memoriam to commemorate historical figures or events, constitutes a necessary materialization and inventory of cultural memory, pivotal to the construction of cultural, societal consensus. By re-presenting specific personalities or

[14] The individual level of the creator is acknowledged, and it plays a role as to how the cultural artifact is perceived but it does not monopolize the analysis. Nor does the narrative of the film. It also has to do with the reception side-functionalization meaning that a film needs to be accentuated as a mnemonic artifact by the pluri-medial network, the constellations of memory as Erll (2011,p. 138) puts it (e.g., controversies, comments, audience reactions etc). Thus, a movie's ethic, political and memorial quality also relies as to how people, the social context perceives the director and his creation.

[15] In Latin, the word monumentum is linked to the word moneo which means '*I recall'*, while the German term "Denkmal" is translated as 'to think'. In Serbian and other Slavik languages the connection is also evident. The word for monument is spomenik that stems from spomin ('memory') (Jezernik,2012, p.182)

events, official establishments determine which among them are of broader social importance while simultaneously excluding others (forgetting/oblivion) assessed as insignificant by the mnemonic community (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004).

The fundamental aspect that we need to keep in order to proceed is that in contemporary theory we should refer mostly to memorials and spaces meaning that landscapes are dialectically constituted by the stories and practices that surround them (Rigney, 2005) (Certeau,1984). Locations and monuments should not be deemed as merely "sites" or repositories for an otherwise solidified set of memories (or for their qualities) that merely becomes crystallized. The erection of a monument does not only refer to the crystallization of memory, but, quite intriguingly, it may signalize the beginning of amnesia. If the *process* of remembering comes into conclusion by crystallization or by acknowledging that materiality is the final stage, then forgetting appears to become de facto (Rigney,2005).Hence, similar to a movie that materially exists yet remains unnoticed and fates into oblivion, the materiality of a monumental landscape needs also to be constantly re-invested with meaning, narratives and practices that sustain memory.

Taken to the maximum, any site that represents the socialist past, may serve today for Yugonostalgic recollections. This is precisely why the focus here is given to the dialectic constitution of Yugonostalgic modes of remembering by underlying the performative, commemorative ceremonies. It is through these practices that subjects, underline, and manifest a Yugonostalgic mode of remembering. Hence, even though the tomb of Tito is an exhibit of the Museum of Yugoslavia it should not merely be perceived as an "already made" site that remains inert and has already successfully secure long-term memory. Similar elements, under a different scope, are also traced in the last case that refers to a commercial, unofficial attempt of "monumentalization" by a Yugonostalgic subject into his private property. As it will be discussed later, even, this material production of a "private" commercialized space is not deterministically bounded to a one-dimensional conceptualization. As any other site, Mini-Yugoslavia is also entangled into the very contestation of stories and practices as discussed above where its background is fluid and always re-articulated by the actions and memories of the subjects in temporal horizons. Subsequently, it might give rise to alternative discourses that cannot be silenced and more intrinsically can lead even to further circulation of memory, signalizing new potentialities.

Chapter 3: A country that no longer exists (except on film)

3.1.1. Post-Yugoslav Cinema

During the 1990's, the magnitude of Yugoslavia's disintegration led to a mass cinematic exploration of pertinent historical events. An abundance of movies coming not only from the region but from all over the globe indicate the original enticement of filmmakers to narrate and depict what was now, a lost country, a country on screen (Aydoğan, 2018).

In Yugoslavia, cinema was a well-established industry[16] and Serbia (or more accurately Belgrade) appeared to be amongst the most important centers of film production (Goulding,2003,pp.73-75). Following the disintegration of the state, cinema industry was also fragmented into consecutive national cinemas. In this context, Serbia managed to retain a high percentage of film production that in the majority of the cases, appeared to follow a cinematographic trend familiar to international and regional audiences. War, violence, machismo, and trauma appeared to be inescapable features of the Serbian post-socialist cinematic framework. Films like "The Wounds" (1998), "Pretty villages pretty flame" (1996), "The Powder Keg" (1998), have been thematizing these features alongside ethnic differences throughout the 1990's and eventually made them irrefutable references, the most notable cinematic schemata visible even to more recent artistic expressions ("Skinning"-2010, "St. George Shoots the dragon"-2012).

Nevertheless, throughout the turbulent period of the 1990's an equally interesting, yet by far smaller movement, was also evident. Apart from nationalist Manichaeism and ethnic martyrdom, Tito and his regime also became a trend in regional cinema. Still, references or "appearances" of the Marshall on screen did not take place into "traditional" heritage films (such as a war/historiographic drama) but mostly in comedy. Humorous depictions of Tito were evident not only in Serbian cinema ("Three

[16] In post-world war II period, Yugoslav cinema was established under the supervision of the Committee of Cinematography and appeared to quickly become a vehicle for propaganda through the infamous partisan genre. "The National War for Liberation" of Yugoslav partisans versus the Axis powers was constantly depicted on screen since it was the main myth upon which the post-war government would base itself upon, both for legitimization and for the construction of a Yugoslav supra-ethnic identity. Nevertheless, Yugoslav cinema was not merely monopolized as a vehicle for propaganda. Following Tito-Stalin's split (1948) and especially during the 1960's, Yugoslav cinema was rather open to the "West" and went on to its own "Golden Period" (aesthetically and thematically), expressed by the wave of "New Yugoslav Film" where social (pessimistic) critique for the present under real socialism was apparent (Goulding,2003,p.11) (Kirn & Mazdar,2014).

Tickets to Hollywood"-1993, "Tito amongst the Serbs for the Second time"-1994) but in other republics as well, such as in Croatia (e.g.,"Marshall"-1999). Interestingly, the genre of comedy (already an established genre within Yugoslav cinema) appeared not only as a mean to satirize Tito but also as a great platform to mediate memories of the everyday socialist life while mitigating the impact of tragedies, disguising them under the "veil" of farce (Jelaca, 2014, p. 160).

3.2.1 Tito and Me

Goran Markovic's "Tito and me" is a political, semi-autobiographical comedy released in Serbia in 1992. It is situated in the year 1954 and follows the narration of Zoran (played by Dimitrije Vojnov) a ten-year-old boy living with his whole fallen bourgeoise family (parents, grandparents, aunts) to what appears to be a once illustrious apartment. The frenetic environment of an extensive family under one roof, is dynamited even further by Zoran's odd affection to Tito. Zoran begins to see the Yugoslav president at his sleep, imitating his moves and speaks to his "ghost" (played by Voja Brajović) during the night. He expresses this affection openly to his family and no one appears able to help him. At a school contest, Zoran even writes a poem about Tito in which he expresses that he loves him more than his parents managing to win a place on the commemorative celebrations of March that will conclude at Tito's birth town Kumrovec. When his father (played by Miki Manojlović) reads the poem he tries to "psychoanalyze" his son and tells him to write at the street wall the name of someone that he cannot live without. The diagnosis only confirms the obvious: the boy writes "Zoran loves Tito", the man whose name is heard constantly on the radio, whose picture appears daily in the newspaper and hangs at the boy's classroom. With the permission of his father Zoran participates in the journey of the March and comes to realize that his affection has brought him into more troubles.

3.2.2 A lesson to disillusionment

The overcrowded space of Zoran's home is the motive that unfolds the first half of the movie since it inaugurates Zoran's attempt to escape in his own imaginary world

(while his voracity becomes rampant) and form a friendship with none other than the man he perceives as the most intimate figure apart from his family: Tito. In this light and humorous way, Markovic denotes the disturbing proximity of Tito, the power of his image that infiltrates even to the most private of spheres, the sphere of dreams. The oneiric sequences of Zoran -alongside other sequences of the film- are in fact archive footage scenes that depict the Relay of Youth celebrations[17] and other moments where Tito is seen relaxing, smoking cigars, saluting his people, and receiving flowers.

Figure 2: Racers of the March Relays (source: Tito and I: 0:36:40)

[17] The March Relay was perhaps the most central celebration in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It refers to a political ritual that went on throughout the year and always culminated on the celebrations of the 25th of May (Tito's official birthday) where the president received (amongst other gifts) a baton. Every year, a baton was travelling and handed off between participants in a relay across Yugoslavia (the Relay of Youth as it is called) that began from his home-town Kumrovec (Croatia) and was handed to Tito in a central event held at the Yugoslav People's Army Stadium in Belgrade (Dorgovic, 2017, p.97). The panegyrics on that particular day were attended by thousands of people and the whole scheme provided the necessary medium of a direct contact, a special emotional bond between citizens and their president.

Figure 3: Tito relaxing at the very mountain that the trip of the movie supposedly occurs (Source: Tito and me: 1:07:30)

This remediation of important and celebratory moments of Tito and Yugoslavia's are obvious triggers for Yugonostalgia. Nevertheless, they are not mere, "edible" idealizations of the past. Markovic quite brilliantly accompanies these scenes by a carnivalistic music. Poignantly satirical and with an ironic touch, the great leader, and his ritualistic March Relays, are reflected as a masquerade of the political elite for the people under a gaze that roughly resembles the notion of Bakhtinian carnival (Dagovic, 2008). Simultaneously, these scenes could be deemed as a signal that Yugoslavia is gone and alongside Tito, belong now into the realms of dreams. The celebrations, the commemorative rituals, everything that recalls a shared identity, and a shared past, is now only a dream, or a sequence in a film.

Irrespective of his dreams and his affection, Zoran's motives are not that sincere reflecting Marcovic's own opportunistic motives back in those dates[18]. In the moments that Zoran is not thinking or dreaming about Tito, his attention is given to an older girl named Jasna (played by Milena Vukosav). It is essentially Jasna and her company that urge Zoran to participate in the contest and write the poem at the school's contest. Jasna is going to participate in the "March Around Tito's Homeland" and Zoran seeks the opportunity to accompany her to the trip. Unfortunately, the trip proves to be a disaster for the young "enthusiast" pioneer. He is chubby, constantly left behind when walking by foot while Jasna's aloofness is making the situation rather adverse from early on.

[18] According to the director he opportunistically participated to the March to get good grades while entering the League of pioneers mostly to socialize (see: https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-09-24-ca-38641-story.html).

Simultaneously, comrade Raja (played by Lazar Ristovski), who is supposed to accompany and take care of the pioneer comrades during the journey, dislikes recalcitrant Zoran from early on. He is a comical figure that represents the banality of socialist conformism since he is constantly telling the kids how to behave, how to think while evoking the mythology of the partisans and teaches them partisan songs. The hilarious absurdities of the foot-trip are tinted with his own nostalgia to follow the trails and routes once walked by the great antifascists' troops which, as Zoran narrates, *"....loved passing through shitty places..."* illustrating an acute pragmatism towards one of the central foundations of Socialist Yugoslavia. Such a position only leads to further problems. After "trialing" Zoran for his non-Titoist behavior (Zoran sends a letter to his parents complaining about Raja), Raja faces the disfavor of the children who stand beside Zoran and oppose to Raja in front of the train that would take their comrade back to Belgrade. This stand signals that it is in these liminal, "..*insular spaces*.." (Vidan,2018, p.42-43) that hierarchies are decaying.

All these elements indicate a sophisticated critique towards the absurdities of the socialist period a feature that generally characterizes Markovic's filmography. Belonging to a group of Yugoslav creators who studied in Prague school (F.A.M.U) and- albeit their aesthetic/thematic divergence- appeared to escarole into problematics of morality, Markovic had already made movies that scrutinized the Yugoslav socialist system. For example, movies such as "Special Education" (1977) and "All That Jack's" (1981) reflected the absurdities of Yugoslavian school system in the socialist period once again through the genre of comedy (ibid, p.41). Similarly, in "Tito and me", Markovic manages to maintain a beautiful, hilarious diegesis that allows him to express rather freely and with more intimacy towards his viewer. The choice of a child as the main protagonist is not by accident. At first it reflects Marcovic' s own memories since he has had a first-hand experience of this period. On a different, yet interrelated basis, such a choice provides an intrinsic freedom of expression. These kinds of narratives are not bounded by social hierarchies and retain a sense of unfiltered frankness that in this context serves both ends: Zoran's hilarious infatuation which he admits and shows openly and at the same time the courage to admit his own mistakes publicly at the most unexpected places and times (Ibid, p. 42-43).

According to Ahmet Ender Uysal (2018, p.43) social critique is rather obvious in "Tito and me" yet he comments on a sense of naïve longing for former Yugoslavia and its leader throughout the film. Furthermore, he underlines that Tito is not explicitly

criticized but appears rather as a bon-vivant than an authoritarian ruler, an argument that can also be found in Edward Alexander (2017,p.53-54) who then ranks the movie as a Yugonostalgic artifact.

The nostalgic elements of the movie -insinuated predominantly by its title- are multiple. Retrospectively in fact, even the setting of Zoran's home, the costumes, or the hall of the school can act as triggers of nostalgia. Nevertheless, and focusing here to depictions of Tito, we do not have a form of naïve longing. As shown above, these icons are mostly employed here as a farse, a critical tool, that fundamentally enables an active engagement with his legacy. The affection of Markovic's protagonist runs parallel to this element. Zoran's infatuation is gradually diminished through the journey that shakes his routine and presumptions, bringing him closer to self-realization, depicted in his "cathartic" speech in front of Tito's house since Raja never really managed to stop him.

Figure 4: Zoran delivering his speech (Source: Tito and I: 1:38:25).

Zoran delivers his speech in which he addresses to Tito himself, admitting that he lied at his poem. That he loves his family and friends alongside foreign cinema stars like Gary Cooper and all others around him, all those that Tito is unaware of their existence. This speech, apart from the protagonist's self-realization is important for two complementary reasons. At first it captures generational memories by referring to elements of Yugoslav popular culture of the 1950's. During that period westerns -produced largely by United States production companies- were frequently shown on Yugoslav theater screens and they were extremely popular. At least a generation of

young Yugoslavs grew up with these movies[19] and Goran Markovic is amongst them mobilizing here these memories and drawing his contemporary viewers into his nostalgic cosmos (Lavrentiev,2013).

At a second level these references are interconnected with aspects of the everyday life. Markovic through Zoran, for a brief moment, expresses an abundance of private recollections that every ex-Yugoslav, irrespective of his generation, might have. Family, friends even the figure of the "local looney" are the daily life aspects that will be remembered and longed, not Tito or his regime per se. The regime's dogmatism in fact has failed. Since the speech resurges the hidden, emotional truths of all people - including Zoran's comrades who smile throughout the speech- it is this very reason why Raja leaves the scene in chains by OZNA agents. Zoran thus, delivers his disillusionment under the cheerful claps of his pioneer comrades standing in stark contrast to the Soviet mythology and another child-figure, that of Pavlik Morozov[20].

Finally, the ending scenes where Zoran is invited at Tito's White Palace are depicted as the final mark of Zoran's awakening. Once again, this scene is not entirely fiction since Marcovic himself met Tito there as a child: *… He resembled a cartoon character. Somehow artificial, unrealistic…"* (Markovic,2020). Yet even though Markovic personally met Tito and trough this experience managed to "de-mythologize" him, his character never really needed such an acquaintance. While Tito is photographed with other children, Zoran does not come near him. Instead he watches him from distance before he fleets the scene and enjoys a private feast at Tito's birthday buffet. The protagonist does not even come to meet the man that he daydreamt, around whom the whole movie was orbiting.

3.2.3 A Yugoslav film

[19] This is also the prevalent reason for the consecutive emergence of the 'Balkan Western' genre in the 1960's. Even though the title Western was never really utilized, the familiarity of Yugoslavs with these kinds of movies led Yugoslavia to become a location for filming westerns and becoming a co-production partner with Western studios (e.g., Italy) (Lavrentiev,2013).

[20] In the Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the figure of Pavlik Morozov became an established myth. Allegedly, in the year 1932, while only 13-year-old, Pavlik reported his own father to the State Political Directorate because he had been forging documents and sold them to enemies of the state. The event led to the execution of the father alongside Pavlik's murder by his own family members. Consequently, the child became a symbol of martyrdom for the communist ideology. It was only after the dissolution of the USSR that became evident that the story was almost entirely fabricated (see: Kelly,2007).

One of the most important factors that can illuminate our argumentation apart from the movie's narration is the historical framework that the movie was conceived and produced. At first the conceptualization of the movie's theme most likely occurred before 1991. Marcovic's intentional Titostalgic/Yugonostalgic discourse (Kalinina, 2014) and its images, retrospectively come to inaugurate the sense that Yugoslavia is already gone, lost for some not only during the 1990's but throughout the 1980's in the abysmal political-economic climate and the rise of nationalist rhetorics in the region that culminated with the outbreak of war. This fact perhaps makes Markovic one of the earliest Yugoslav directors to express a longing for a stable Yugoslav past. Supplementary, throughout the production of the movie, scenes that were supposed to be filmed in Croatia were cancelled since the conflict there had been uprising and instead took place in Fruska gora and Sombor (Serbia) (Alexander, 2017, p.52). Marcovic stated that this whole environment was debilitating and led him to an ethical quandary as to whether he should continue making a movie with children while the battlefield was nearly 25 miles away from stage in Bukova. He concluded to resume and finish filming to "*get away from this atmosphere of oppression and militancy*" and stated that *"…. I did it for myself. For my soul…."* (Marcovic, 1993).

Given the context of war and of edgy political configurations the movie's distribution initially took place in the Eastern regions of ex-Yugoslavia where it was ardently received (Vidan,2018,p.41).The same thing happened in the north and especially in Croatia. Although the movie was available by pirate cassettes[21] throughout the 1990's, official distribution and screening of the movie took place there as late as 2000. Even then, the vast majority of critical reviews and audience reactions were praising the movie not simply as a quality comedy, but as a pan-Yugoslav artifact in terms that it managed to abstain from the heated nationalist tendencies that plagued regional cinema during the 1990's. Instead, the movie depicted memories of a past time that both Croats and Serbs could connect to: From one point criticizing the previous personalistic regime and its intrusion into their everyday-life and simultaneously

[21] The illicit existence of the film in Croatia during the war period indicates a will-either implicit or explicit-to participate and preserve common cultural artifacts and into extend bonds across ethnic lines, something favorable especially in the midst of a period when formal political agents wished to abolish such connections (Alexander, 2017 p.52).

managing to recall the celebratory aspects and fond cultural memories of what retrospectively became a common prelapsarian period of better times (Tannock,1995). Moreover, the fact that Markovic himself attended the official premiere in Croatia might also act as an indication that he wished to retain and promote such a sense of cultural Yugoslav commonality (Alexander, 2017, p.53). In a period when the relations between Croatians and Serbians were still extremely tense this is something to be noted.

Taking into accordance these parameters, it is important to stress what kind of statement, what kind of nostalgic narratives and memories Marcovic left for future spectators. He managed to abstain from an oversimplified idealization of Tito and, most importantly, through his own experiences to articulate a temporal critique by "escaping" into more intimate, glorified moments and illustrate how himself saw Yugoslavia as *"both magical and life-threatening"* and Tito's period as: *"the era of the big lie, and happiness"* (Markovic, 1993). The period of Tito is not depicted here as a solid place to escape from the present but as a bitter-sweet momentum that ameliorates the convalescence of the present pain.

Consequently, by a playful trip to the past, Marcovic managed to visit its warm facade indicating the existence of his nebulous present and simultaneously diminish the peril of naive idealization with his dextral irony and sarcasm. It is these aspects that bring Markovic closely to a critical, reflective aspect of nostalgia that Enns (2007, pp.480-491) traces in cinematographic narratives of different directors in Ostalgia. Nostalgia here appears to serve as a platform of critique to the political present, balancing between sentimentality and rationalization. It is important to notice that Markovic's managed to do so by constantly refusing to take sides, either that side supports Tito or Milosević's "socialist" regime. The production of films like 'Tito and Me' represent invaluable political intercessions since we are examining periods characterized by the omnipotence "*…of autocratic regimes with cults of single rulers..*" (Jelaca,2014,p.154). Markovic was aware of such a danger. He has been constantly referring to the peril of artists siding with regimes and always wished to abstain from such kind of narratives, an element that seems to have been acknowledged and cherished by his contemporary audiences[22]

[22] (see here:https://cordmagazine.com/my-life/goran-markovic-film-and-theatre-director-successes-corrupt-failures-fortify/).

3.3.1 Underground

The story of "Underground" unravels throughout the years of Socialist Yugoslavia and it is located in Belgrade. It portrays two "blood-brothers" and bandits, named Marko (played by Miki Manojlović) and Blacki (played by Lazar Ristovski) and their love rivalry for an actress named Natalia (played by Mirjana Joković).

The first chapter of the movie, titled "War", unravels throughout the years of the Second World War. The narration begins the night before the bombardment of Belgrade (6 April 1941) by the Axis powers where the two protagonists are seen entering the screen by shouting and dancing under the music of a gypsy band playing at the behest of Marko who celebrates Blacky's recruitment at the communist party. Following the bombardment of Belgrade, Marko in order to protect his family members and neighbors hides them under his grandfather's cellar (the underground). Blacky, now that his own wife and newborn son are safe in the underground, forcefully tries to marry Natalia in a celebration on a boat and gets captured by yet another love rivalry of Natalia's, a Gestapo officer named Frantz (played by Ernst Stotzner) that comes to rescue her. Even though Marko initially fleets the wedding scene and betrays Blacky, he decides to save his "blood brother" from his tortures under Franz and sends him to the underground for his "own protection".

The second part of the movie, titled "Cold war", finds Marco capitalizing upon his nest of lies. Accompanied now by his wife (Natalia), he becomes an illustrious member of the communist party, a close associate of Tito, and a spectacle man that recites his own poems publicly to honor his "long-lost" friend Blacky, perceived now dead and honored as a martyr for the antifascist cause. Throughout all these years the underground continues to exist, constantly exploited by Marko who has persuaded its residents that the Second World War ended with the Nazi's victory and that the resistance continues. Effectively, it is because of the underground that both Marco and the regime continue to hold their power. Yet, irrespective of all these profits and honors, the cost of this constant hypocrisy (that appears to be everywhere in Yugoslavia), drives eventually both Marko and Natalia to flee the country and destroy the underground. After Marko disappears Tito succumbed to his melancholia for the disappearance of the former and died nearly twenty years later.

Following the death of Tito, the third chapter of the film, titled once again "War", jumps to the Yugoslav Wars pestering the region. Marko still appears to be an un-ethical

man who negotiates with an arm dealer (Kusturica himself resembling to this matter his idol Fassbinder[23]) on the battlefield. While Marko leaves the scene his brother Ivan (played by Slavko Stimac), a tragic figure, captive all those years in the cellar, find his way back from Germany and kills his brother before committing suicide within a church[24]. After all the protagonists have met their end, they all reappear on screen in an open field. They are once again young and healthy, re-celebrating the wedding of Blacky's son that initially took place in the cellar, while Ivan delivers a monologue that concludes with the very inscription that the movie began with: *"…once upon a time there was a country…[25]"*.

3.3.3 An Allegory?

Underground was released in theaters a short period after the end of Bosnian war and eventually became one of the most successful films coming from Serbia (and the region). The Bosnian-Muslim director, Emir Kusturica, another famous alumnus of the Prague school, was already considered back then a prominent artist known both to Western and Eastern audiences. He had already won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes festival for his movie "When Father Was Away on Business" (1985) and managed to receive it once again with "Underground". Concomitant to this success however, Kusturica became one of the most controversial directors for the rest of his life (Iordanova,1999,pp.75-80).

There is a multiplicity of reasons for such a case. At first, "Underground" brings forth a variety of narratives and icons that relate closely to the notion of Balkanism (Todorova,2005). The cinematographic narration of the movie exaggerates "usual suspects" such as war (the tripartite structure of the movie always bares a titled relating to war[26]) violence, masculinity, and hedonism. The "heroic" figures of the resistance, throughout the film are continuously portrayed as licentious characters who carry guns

[23] Fassbinder himself appeared as a German, underground, black marketer in "The Marriage of Maria Braun" (Krstic,1999,pp.148-149).
[24] This very act has been frequently used in Eastern Europe cinema and has a symbolic meaning about the imposition of state-atheism in the Socialist Yugoslavia (Iordanova, 1999, p.82) (see also: Buchenau 2005).
[25] This inscription was also the main subtitle of the movie since it was supposed to be a 5-hour long mini-TV series.
[26] It appears that for Kusturica is nearly impossible to narrate the history of Socialist Yugoslavia without referring to war. Ergo, we could claim that Kusturica's endemic war sequence not only reflects but legalizes a Western gaze, a gaze that Kusturica himself has in fact internalize and promotes in his creation.

and shoot in the air while dancing and make love while Belgrade is getting bombarded. They are always entangled in a nest of betrayal that is formed by this very passion that simply seems uncontrollable. These elements are an important factor on why the film was heavily critiqued, with philosopher's Slavoj Zizek argumentation here being the most reverberated example.

On a different basis, the problem with "Underground" is that its aesthetics and narratives are also multilayered, self-contradictory, and self-referential especially in terms of memory- making and history. The constant insistence on excess and carnival like frames rejects any sort of normative reading and aligns it well to the spirit of a post-modernist allegory, or more accurately, a film that belongs to the genre of historiographic metafiction (Hutcheon,1988,pp.105-123). Indeed, "Underground" constantly draws the viewer to the plexus of memory itself meaning that it draws our attention to the ways that history and memory are shaped and permutated (Keene,2001).

However, Kusturica's narrative bares rather provocative aspects in this case as well that are well-hidden. Similar to Markovic, Kusturica uses documentary footage in order to create an "*effet de reel"* -where the viewer is supposed to have an "unmediated" glimpse to the past- albeit quite problematic in all cases for different reasons. The first of these sequences, appearing quite early on screen, pays its respects to Serbian nationalism. It portrays Slovenes in Maribor and Croatians in Zagreb celebrating the arrival of Nazis under the sounds of Lily Marlen, the unofficial anthem of Nazi Germany. Yet, in Belgrade there are only Nazi officers on screen, amongst destroyed buildings. No juvenile crowds appear here. Even though this detail could be missed by international audiences[27] it could not be ignored by the domestic or regional ones since it comes to empower a well-known, deep-rooted myth about nationalist resentment and Serbian self-victimization (Homer,2009, p.7).

[27] This aspect plays a crucial role in the work of Kusturica. Kusturica is perhaps one of the most famous directors coming from the region already known to western audiences. Thus, we could suggest that he already had an intuition regarding to his potential audiences.

Figure 5 : Croatians in Zagreb giving the Nazi salutation to the camera(Left). Similar celebrations are depicted in Maribor (Right) (Source: Homer, 2007,p.5)

Figure 6: In Belgrade, no crowds appear (Source: Underground: 0:15:47).

At the second inter-textual documentary footage, Tito appears on the screen and a digitally inserted Marko is seen saluting, standing next to Marshall while watching marches, or receiving flowers delivered to Tito by young pioneers similar to the children portrayed in "Tito and Me". Later, both Marco and Tito are seen dancing, wearing hilarious hats during a party and appear as caricatures. The manipulation of the historical footage in this case serves obviously as an element of self-reflexivity. The insertion of the fictional hero into the depiction of real events manifests the interactive relation with history while underlying the problems of historical representation and the propagandistic tactics that plagued socialist regimes in the region[28]. At the same time however, it draws the attention as to who are the people closer to Tito. Tito hugs Marko, a man that has been exploiting his own family throughout this whole period for profit, power and is acknowledged, rewarded by the regime while movies are being filmed to hold the memory of his "revolutionary" youth. During the movie, the National Film

[28] Photographs or pictures currently travelling through the internet often bring up the manipulation of memory (see Blackmore, 2020).

Studios of Yugoslavia have actually started filming a Partisan epic film called 'Spring Comes on a White Horse[29]' in honor of Marko, Blacky and Natalia who have become heroes of the resistance that "clashed" Franz and his troops.

This mise-en-abyme (a film within a film) reflects and criticizes cinematic representations at two levels. First, it allows Kusturica to describe the partisan genre as a polished façade. The partisan film is deemed here as the central medium of state-propaganda and the genre that ameliorated both the legitimization of the regime and the construction of the post-war Yugoslav identity upon the narrative of the antifascist struggle. Kusturica thus de-constructs this very genre since it is perceived by him as a socialist kitsch. Ergo, no socialist realism[30], no antifascist history, just fiction (Keene, 2001). On a second level, these scenes underline how history, memory and truth can always be manipulated on film reminding us that in this case, this power lies on Kusturica himself.

Following this line, the manipulation of memory and history in Kusturica is always skeptical and relativistic. Myth, tales, truths, lies, fictions, and facts are diminished and raised to a considerable extent generating a frenetic parody. The final documentary sequence is perhaps the apogee of this unelected satire which depicts Tito's death and funeral in the 1980's. The footage shows the crowds of Yugoslav citizens in Ljublanja, Zagreb and Belgrade gathering to salute their leader. In juxtaposition to the crowd's laments and cries, Tito is saluted by Kusturica with irony. The symbol of Yugoslavia's antifascist spirit is saluted with the same song that signaled the arrival of Nazis.

This "heretic" amalgamation manifests quite punctually the dictatorial facets, that according to Kusturica, Tito shared with what appears to be only an alleged nemesis (Adolf Hitler). Crucially, this very sequence provides also an "associational effect" (Homer,2007,p8). Tito here is related to the Croats and the Slovenes depicted in the first documentary sequence bringing forth yet another Serbian nationalist rhetoric where Tito is seen as a traitor and an associate of the "anti-Serb coalition" (ibid,p.8) while simultaneously implying Tito's "roots" that expectedly were all-important for

[29] The very title of the movie is a provocation implicitly referring to Tito. Tito upon a white horse is a reference that can be found in "Tito and me" when Zoran sees Tito upon a white horse while scared in the mountain.

[30] Initially, Yugoslav cinema adhered to the aesthetics of socialist realism as they had been propagated by the Soviet Union. A film in that sense should rather abstain from aesthetic experimentation and focus on the depiction of reality. Nevertheless, it seems that films of that period depicted not so much reality per se but how society *should* have been under the dictations of Marxist ideology (Goulding, 2003,p.7).

Serbian nationalism[31] (Macdonald,2012,p.188). Thus, if a viewer misses the first sequence it is nearly impossible to grasp this particular connection.

Finally, the scene of Tito's funeral brings together an abundance of different and incompatible political leaders of the 20th century (for example Margaret Thatcher, Todor Zhivkov, Nicolae Ceausescu, and Kurt Waldheim) saluting Tito and standing all next to each other. Kusturica here depicts a holistic view of the "Establishment" which through his prism of continuous relativism -stemming rather from a sense of cynicism and a-historicity- there is no difference. Every establishment seems to be the same while "West" and "East", apart from their ostensible differences, seem to work in collaboration, on a silent synergy that keeps the masses below, underground (Iordanova, 1999, p.75).

3.3.4 A bad antidote

Relativization and manipulation of history and memory in "Underground" is indeed aesthetically pleasing and challenging towards the Yugoslav establishment and its construction of collective memory. Yet, up to a point. If we were to follow Kusturica's holistic view and judging by the promiscuous nature of his protagonists, then the Yugoslav resistant and antifascist years are to be deemed as nothing more than an a-posteriori official story while hedonism and profit (the protagonists play cards, chase Natalia constantly, relate to smuggling of guns) were the only "true" motives to be a member of the resistance.

"Underground" in essence falls into mental patterns stemming from the cultural context within which it was produced. This element is picturesquely captured into the last scene where Yugonostalgia is expressed tangibly: The camera focuses on Ivan who in fact breaks for the first time throughout the movie the fourth wall and delivers an uninterrupted soliloquy (in the movie he stutters) directly to the audience. He refers to a country that is lost and will only continue to exist in the stories that Yugoslavs will narrate to their children. Suddenly the piece of land where all the protagonists are celebrating on is cut off from the mainland and starts drifting upon a river. Yugoslavia is gone forever. Remediated across the globe, the scene today comprises according to

[31] Tito's father was Croatian, and his mother was Slovene.

Sean Homer (2009, p.7) the ideal of Yugoslav identity from an obvious expression of Yugonostalgia.

The scene indeed evokes Yugonostalgia, and it is extremely affective. In fact, it was the central setting that the screenwriter Dusan Kovasevic and Kusturica had in mind when they first started working on the scenario and they wished to use it as a metaphor in their film about Yugoslavia (Iordanova, 1999, p.71). This is not something unexpected. Both Kusturica's and Kovacevic's artistic expressions have been related to the working of memory and nostalgia. Kusturica's first two films *"*Do You Remember Dolly Bell*?"* (1981) and "When Father Was Away on Business" (1985), are tinted with nostalgia for teenage infatuation and coming of age through the 1950's and the 1960's by depicting the parallel political climates. Yet, both films appeared highly stylized, without discourses or icons implying ethnic segregation and were perceived quite favorably both by regional and international audiences (Tot,2018). On the other hand, Kovacević's relation to nostalgia is much more recent. In 2012 the movie "Saint George Shoots the Dragon" (The most expensive production in Serbia to date) which he wrote, is once again focusing on war, masculinity, and nostalgia, this time explicitly referring to the nation of Serbia following the first World War. Similar to "Underground" there were tangible elements of critique towards the official establishment and at the same time references to the agrarian Serbian people that as naïve or brute as they may appear are always heroic and the true spirit of the nation. The film was perceived as one of the most hideous depictions of national martyrdom and resentment while scholars suggested that audiences should boycott it by not going to cinematic theaters (Jelaka, 2014, pp. 172-181).

In the case of "Underground" nostalgia as articulated both by Kusturica and Kovacevic is problematic. It is presented as a dramatic yearning which reflects a Yugoslav identity expressed by a person coming from the underground as an antidote to official politics. But this is what fundamentally makes nostalgia a great political tool in this context.

In "Underground" Yugonostalgia serves two overlapping strategies. On one hand it captures the imagination -mostly of foreign audiences- into the calamity of the recent civil war which is to be remembered as the ultimate step in a region already known as the "powder keg of Europe". On the other hand, this message of an a-political, "impartial" yearning, conceals brilliantly the historical truth and de-politicizes the responsibilities of the Serbian side, something that did not remain unnoticed by local

audiences judging especially the social context where the movie was produced and distributed[32].

At first, the very fact that Kusturica decided to film in Belgrade remained all but unnoticed. In the 1990's Kusturica wished to be separated from what he perceived to be an expression of Islamic fundamentalism (the Bosnian Muslim Government) and rather stay "non-aligned". Yet, his very decision to make a movie in Serbia while war was wrecking Bosnia (and Serbia's aggressive role there is well known) is anything but coincidental or neutral. Complementary, facts such as that part of the movie's budget or equipment were provided by Radio Television Belgrade and that the debut of the movie in Belgrade was attended by many controversial figures such as Zelijko Raznjatovic (Arkan) and other known nationalists are also quite problematic (Halligan,2000 p.80). The only thing that seemed to matter for Kusturica throughout the production of his film was his creative urge while neglecting everything else, including the very history that was taking place during that time ironically while making a movie that pertained to questions about history and memory.

Secondly, and even more importantly, the historic period when "Underground" is produced is a time where the establishment was quite favorite towards these kinds of allegorical, sentimentalizing narratives. In Serbia, during the Milosevic period of the 1990's there was, as we discussed previously, an instantaneous endorsement to pro-Yugoslav sentiments through an articulation and instrumentalization of Yugonostalgia, in this context injected with ethnoparticularistic interests. Truth, history, and memory within that period were always conveniently blurred, difficult for anyone (apart the regime) to comprehend. Underground's narrative is of great use since it is embedded within a particular rhetoric coming from Serbia where the blame -if not attributed to a specific national group- is attributed to everyone, to every Yugoslav republic, thus minimizing and concealing the role that Milosevic and Serbia played into the wars. As film scholar Pavle Levy (2007, p. 102) points out the rhetoric of *"all sides are guilty"* became the central idiom of Milosevic's cultural politics era.

Thus, similar to the transformation within the politics of culture in the Serbian context, Kusturica's narratological vagueness and longing come to serve this particular rhetoric where history and truth regarding the ultimate contemporary step, that of "a

[32] The very first critique regarding a problematic and ethnically biased narrative came from a Montenegrin journalist that resided in Paris (Iordanova, 1999,p. 82).

brother killing a brother" as Marko says while dying -implying the disintegration of the socialist state- is nowhere to be found. While the socialist regime was heavily critiqued throughout its existence, the blame for the final chapter that led to the disintegration of the country that Ivan nostalgically recalls, is absent. These elements, contradict the alleged aim of Kusturica that through his movie he tried to: "*clarify things in this chaotic part of the world...*" while concluding that: *"..It seems that nobody is able to locate the roots of this terrible conflict..."* (Kusturica as cited in Iordanova, 1999,p.77). Conversely to such a task, Kusturica's work was perceived as a movie that paradoxically appeared to do what partisan's films used to do. It seemed to serve as a narrative that aimed to the affirmation of -now national- identities indicating rather a continuity than a rupture in terms of the utilization of the cinematic medium. Taking into consideration that the director has also admitted that back then he "naively" believed that Milosevic was a revolutionary figure (Rujevic, 2016) while discovering that his ancestors had been Serbian Orthodox-Christians for centuries[33] it is highly debatable as to what his motives really were. Nevertheless, Kusturica is still deemed as a controversial- to put it mildly- artist, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Kusturica thus, rather wished to appear as non-aligned, an element that could be perceived as an effort by him to be enlisted as a Yugonostalgic director since in the period of the 1990's a "non-aligned" artist effectively meant a Yugonostalgic artist (Iordanova,1999,p.76). However, Kusturica's Yugonostalgic expression is not an element that justifies such a "classification". If the past is to be remembered for something, then the stereotypes of Balkan primitivism lurk in every corner. Furthermore, recalling Yugoslavia in Kusturica's film is entangled into antagonistic, (stereotypical) mode of narrations where Croats and Slovenes always remain traitors contrasted to the Serbs that remain "Balkan" and "genuine", apart (or due to) their opportunistic motives. Yugonostalgia in Kusturica is a case where nostalgia is depicted on how it can work as "*a double-edged sword*" as Boym (2001,p.69) had suggested. It ostensibly seems to refer to an emotional cosmos which is a-political yet in this case, serves and becomes a tool for the very thing that it supposedly "heals".

Consequently, similar to Markovic, Kusturica offered an acute, aesthetically pleasing critique upon the fabrication of history that took place under the socialist

[33] Kusturica himself took Serbian citizenship and converted to Orthodox Christian in 2004 (Halpern,2005)

regime. Yet, this constant critique leads to the entrapment of his own narration. In Kusturica's symbolic realm, the conspiratorial mode of remembering rather leads to a restorative, *fatalistic* aspect of nostalgia if we also take into consideration the final inscription where we see that *"…this story has no end…"*. The expression of Yugonostalgia here is rather inconsistent to the movie's narrative and more importantly the cause for this very intense expression is nowhere to be found. Nostalgia stems from loss and this loss remains here deliberately unaddressed. It comes to serve a particular purpose where Kusturica blurred his own contemporary context where history was taking place and effectively supported the position and rhetorics of Milosevic's regime.

Chapter 4: A God for a Utopia

4.1.1. Celebrate and mourn

Memory is nothing without constant actualization. It is only within the interplay of material, social and mental dimensions that cultural memory can remain "alive". This element holds true both for scholars and it appeared to be acknowledged by the Yugoslav establishment. During Tito's times the communist party did not only backed the production of partisan films but also carried out Yugoslav rituals (that one can observe in "Tito and me" or "Underground") and promulgated the daily use of Yugoslav memorial places by citizens.

Yugoslavian mnemonic places were constructed as open monument parks at the very historic locations that events occurred (e.g., battlefields) in an effort to establish and disseminate the Yugoslav ideology. Most importantly, these places were constructed with a purpose to combine mourning and celebration. On one hand they were well equipped: Benches, facilities such as hotel accommodations, restaurants and similar infrastructures for leisure, were available both for visitors and tourists. On the other hand, these places held annual official commemorative ceremonies and spectacles where propaganda speeches by local politicians -even Tito himself- were an inexorable part (Micić & Denda, 2018 pp.282-285).

The remaining socialist monuments and statues in squares and parks are currently scattered across different post-Yugoslav cities and towns. If not demolished or renamed, many of these sites managed to remain at the epicenter of public attention due to the fact that they became locus of various annual Yugonostalgic pilgrimages and festivals conducted, once again, on particular dates. To this already existing constellation of ex-Yugoslav memorials, new Yugonostalgic places also appear to become popular. The emergence of informal Yugonostalgic commercialized places has become an issue throughout ex-Yugoslavia. Coffee shops, thematic hotels, trips with retro Yugoslav cars across public sites have become local trends in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, generally considered as phenomena of commercialized nostalgia, the "culture of nostalgia" that Velikonja (2008) has suggested. Bottom-up memory here appears to be lost or, more accurately, lie upon a tense interplay where the commercialized, capitalistic appropriation can rather easily result into marketable, uncritical gratifications of the past.

4.2.1 House of Flowers (Kuća Cveća)

The story of the "House of Flowers begins" with the "birth" of the "May 25th Museum" (Spominski Muzej 25 Maj), established in 1962 at the illustrious neighborhood Dedinje in Belgrade, to honor Tito's 70th birthday. Even though, it was interpreted as the epitome of Yugoslav modernist architecture and an expression of a spatialization of the regime, the practical purpose of the building back then appears to be rather practical: a repository where Tito kept the innumerable gifts, alongside the batons, that he received. In 1975 the "House of flowers" was built and added to the complex of buildings as a winter garden, where Tito used to reside. A year later, during a meeting at that place with Serbian officials, he expressed the desire to be buried there in order for Serbia to have a space dedicated to his memory (Stevanović, 2016, pp.101-110).

Tito's wish was granted. Following his death on the 4th of May 1980, the entire complex was named "Josip Broz Tito Memorial Center". Tito's funeral, held on the 8th of May was one of the biggest state funerals of the 20th century, attended by numerous official foreign delegations and historic politicians as someone can see in Kusturica's footage in "Underground". The following days nearly half million people paid their respects while many continued to pay a visit and bow to Tito at his resting place throughout the 1980's. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, the entire complex was closed to the public and the honor guards were permanently removed[34]. During the years of war, the entire complex was once again renamed the "Museum of Yugoslav History" (1996) without however alluring a significant number of visitors (Stevanović, 2016,pp.101-110) (Đorgović, 2017, pp.98-101).

Throughout the years the situation has rapidly changed. The "House of Flowers" is currently amongst the most well-kept memorial complexes in the region, while monuments of Tito elsewhere have been removed. The Museum in fact appears to

[34] The Museum actually became the un-official private property of the Yugoslav president at that time Slobodan Milošević, and his family. There were some renovations made at the place where the memorial center was divided by a tall wall, which separated the new museum space from Slobodan Milosevic's residential area. During the NATO bombing, a part of the Museum was destroyed yet Slobodan Milosevic and his family moved to another building (Villa 'Peace) where they remained until 2001, when the Serbian president was arrested (Manojlovi &Ignjatovi,2011, pp.804-807) It is quite intriguing that Milosevic choose this place identified as "Tito's place" to reside. It seems to confirm the general modus of a continuation by drawing a parallel between the two great men who shared the same residence for a brief period.

implicitly capitalize upon Tito's charisma without however promulgating nostalgia. Nevertheless, an equation between Tito and the history of the whole country remains prevalent and for many in Serbia the Museum is still largely connected to "Marshal" (Chushak,2013, p.223). For foreigners on the other hand, even though the House of Flowers is not a conventional heritage site nor as gratuitous as other resting places[35], it has been appealing to a number of visitors in touristic trends relating mostly to dark, communist or nostalgic tourism (Rabotic, 2012).

4.2.2 Commemorations

Velikonja (2008) has conducted an extensive fieldwork throughout ex-Yugoslavia examining Titostalgic artifacts, landscapes, practices and narratives and paid special attention to commemorations about Tito. Yugonostalgics in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Slovenia according to him tend to visit Tito memorials during May where the central help is provided by non-profit organizations. Charged with the task of preserving the memory of Tito and the socialist past these organizations have been facilitating the movement of ex Yugoslavs to particular locations of interest and they have also been orchestrating various commemorative events: Sport activities, youth race festivals or parties that take place -or at least they culminate- on the 25th of May. A commemoration named "The Day of Youth and Joy" takes place in Tito's birth town of Kumrovec where thousands gather to honor the late president. A similar arrangement is also present in Dedinje. The "Association for the Preservation of the Tradition of Youth Work Brigades" based in Belgrade, commemorates Broz's birthday in a club and then concludes to a visit to Broz's mausoleum (Velikonja, 2008, pp.78-79).

Yugonostalgics thus are not tourists and similar to the above scheme they tend to visit Tito's Mausoleum collectively, in this case on two particular dates. Apart from the day of his official Birthday (25th of May) there is also substantial movement on the day of his death (4th of May). Thus, both dates appear to attract a considerable number of

[35] Lenin's mausoleum is most usually depicted as the archetype of socialist leaders' gravesites. His tomb (built in 1930 and located at the Red Square of Moscow) resembles to a great extent to the mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the monumental grave of the Persian satrap Mausolus. Tito's mausoleum is much simpler. It is a closed, American-model tomb. Surrounded by flowers under a glass roof that shed light to the hall, this place is also the resting place of his wife Jovanka (Stevanovic, 2016, pp 109-110).

former Yugoslavs that apparently share the site with an equally substantial number of television crews and journalists that wish to cover the events that take place there.

Commemorations on both dates appear to be similar in structure. Visitors arrive at the mausoleum from all over ex-Yugoslavia and they appear well-equipped: they are wearing partisan hats, medals or holding Yugoslav flags and cadres with Tito's photo. When people enter the hall, they form lines and appear to leave flowers or lit candles upon Tito's grave. Some salute collectively the former president by clenching their fists (the Partisan Fighters salutation) (Ibid, 2008, p.114) while others tend to have a more private salutation where they touch or kiss the tomb.

Figure 7: A woman saluting Tito's grave (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thuTJXcGTmA : 00:01:01)

Figure 8: A modern "pioneer"
(source:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENShdRKyqO0&ab_channel=Ruptly 00:00:28)

Figure 9: A woman kissing Tito's grave (source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuHLnT1n5PE : 00:59:00)

At the same time, people appear to have the opportunity to listen once again to speeches now expressed by the delegates of the respective memorial organizations, annually arriving from all former Yugoslavia to the House of Flowers to bring once again the traditional batons. Josko Broz (Tito's grandson) is perhaps one of the most recognizable figures in commemorations at Tito's mausoleum that helped start the tradition of marking Youth Day in nearly all the ex-republics. In 2008, during another commemorative day in the House of Flowers he received six batons in honor of his ancestor – one from each former republic. An account of his speech is cited in Velikonja (2008, p.80):

"for some, Tito is responsible for all that was wrong: for the bridges that were constructed(…) for health care that used to be free (…)for factories that were built (…) He is responsible for everything that they can no longer offer to the people….."

Here, nostalgia once again includes an active sense of irony that allows it to function as a counter-memory (Georgescu, 2010, pp.165-170) (Kalinina, 2014,pp.46-47). What Tito's grandson speech brings forth is essentially the demonization of Tito and Yugoslavia throughout the years. In post-socialist competing memories, Tito has been perceived antithetically: a great statesman and a typical totalitarian tyrant, a traitor of Croatian-hood but equally a "Serb hater". A similar fate befell his Yugoslavia. From a multicultural just and strong country of brotherhood and Unity it rapidly became "a prison for nations" (according to nationalist rhetorics) which consequently had to gain

their "freedom" in order to become modern democratic states. When Serbian nationalists condemned Tito, they did so because he was connected to the Croats (as Kusturica suggests) and for giving away too much of Serbia's nation's historic capital to another national group. In the Serbian regime of truth´ Milosevic's pivotal contribution was rather avoided. The responsibility always resided someplace else (Macdonald, 2012, p.189).

Josko Broz's speech is utilized in a specific context where he knows that it will most likely be accepted and even generate a certain quality of response. Irony and nostalgia in this speech can be efficient as long as they manage to strike a sensitive chord in the audience. In that matter, opinions similar to Josko's can be found amongst the crowd throughout the years yet not as political or critically emphasized. Heterogeneity thrives in the crowd. However, when people refer to Tito then the leader is idealized to a considerable extent and he is more proximate to a mythical figure. Tito appears as one of the greatest men that ever lived "*the greatest son of these lands"* (Margry,2008,p.34). He is remembered as a peacemaker who confined regional disputes, hatred and provided an environment where people had a quality of life, characterized by justice and pride while now, his people are merely struggling for survival. Albeit these narratives are intrinsically political, the subjects do not seem to perceive them as such. They are referring to past prides, accomplishments and memories of "the man", which are carried as such in the next generation: In 2016 an interlocutor from Bosnia and Herzegovina with two small children said that the children are watching partisan films and that he hoped they would embrace *Tito's* heritage (Nikolic, 2016).

4.2.3. Pilgrimages of Hope

Formulation and preservation of identities is heavily based upon shared memories, narratives, practices and sensual relationship to a given environment. Gatherings at Tito's mausoleum seem to provide all and indicate a commemorative mode of remembering that takes place not on one but on two very especial dates that equally act as triggers for remembering. Marking either the birthday or the death of the leader itself implies a conscious will of remembering and preserving the past in contemporary contexts. In our case this holds true and encapsulates not only Yugonostalgic groups but up to a point, a multiplicity of other groups as well. It is not coincidental that the majority of journalist crews tend to visit the tomb on these two particular dates to cover

the pilgrimages and capture on camera all these practices. Thus, both dates through the massive participation of people seem to remain into the limelight and invigorate, re-inscribe these dates to the fabric of collective memory while refer to a common societal background.

These gatherings did not appear ex-nihilo. They are resurging an already available, shared ensemble of memories about the secular rituals, common for all these "ex-people". Celebrations of the 25th of May alongside other dates, as they were established and conducted throughout the Socialist times, are still in the picture albeit not inalterable: These practices are now conducted voluntarily since we are not referring to top-down initiatives. There is neither official propaganda nor any official national policy that dictates or incentivizes these people to participate in such commemorations. The last official Relay took place in 1988 and since then, they were abolished by each former republic (Chushak, 2013, p.115).

Another indication of this transformation is the element of religiosity. While in former Yugoslavia, the official ideology was based upon the Marxist-Leninist dictation-promulgating thus a secular character of socialist rituals- in post-secular contexts these practices are rather different. Tito's mausoleum, even though simple, is sacred, an element corroborated both by the place and the practices that are conducted there. The shrine of this place is immense, ameliorated by the obvious fact that Tito's body resides in this place. Similarly, religious gestures such as touching or kissing the grave has been perceived by Velikonja (2008,pp.85-86) as indications that signalize elements of "contagious magic". In the same line, the March Relays that are conducted during these days could also be perceived as ritualistic expressions since the batons are the preeminent object (alongside the flowers or the candles) that symbolize "offerings" to Tito (ibid,p.85-87).

There are potentialities through such practices. These gatherings even though they seem to be have become a mnemonic mode for a "lost" identity (between these former compatriots and today's "foreigners") they bare the potential to foster the re-construction of current identities through movement to this sacred place. In 2012, during another gathering for Tito's 120th birthday, Bosnian "delegates" bringing the traditional baton, said that they came to Belgrade *"to pay their respects and come closer to their brothers"* (Ristic and Cabric, 2012). Josko (now a president of the Communist party) once again took the stand and said that Yugoslavia cannot be restored, but that the "*Yugoslav spirit lives on"* (ibid, 2012). Hence, we can agree to an extent with Maja

Maksimovic (2017) that there is a potential, a small step regarding a reconciliatory frame on these gatherings. Indeed, people arrive from all around ex-Yugoslavia to salute the symbol of their common homeland. They socialize with each other, they exchange their memories, and inherit these memories to the younger generations. The gatherings at the Mausoleum seem to bring forth the most fundamental aspects that nationalism has destroyed, meaning here a multinational convergence. People, for a brief moment, seem to unite across political and national boundaries by sharing their worries over their daily lives always in comparison to their common, prelapsarian Tito's era. They appear to enter a fragile liminal stage where *"..connection, brotherhood and social equality…"* (Rabotic, 2012,p.262) amongst them provide both comfort from their fragmented presents while baring the potential to serve as an inspiration for cultural and other forms of cooperation among them (Maksimovic,2017).

Simultaneously, however, these kinds of practices also suggest that we need to remain cautious regarding an overgeneralization of a more active (conscious), political or otherwise engagement and critique by the participants towards their past and their existing establishments. It is true that the "official" delegations seem well organized and determined to preserve Tito's figure, which may become an instrumentalizing force in current political agendas. Subjects, however, do not identify their narratives or these practices as political or even anti-structural. This is rather clear while we focus on their perception regarding Tito.

Tito in this case is no longer "a man", but he has been undergoing mythologization that de-historicizes him, separates him from his own political/historic past. There is no conscious, reflective critique that can penetrate his figure here, because in this case he has become a "god" that can be "found" in this sacred gravesite. It seems that what was previous a personality cult has been taking a whole new dimension in contemporary contexts through severe idealization leading to a form of popular religiosity, tangibly evident through the practice of the pilgrimage.

Visiting Tito's grave facilitates subjects to submerge to the virtual realities of their consciousness and travel both literally and metaphorically. The trip is the exodus of their melancholic, individual present and a trip to the Yugoslav memory lane, to their own auspicious memories where respect and pride were vital elements of their self-image. It is a recollection of the retrospectively constructed "familiar" and "euphoric" past(s) now deemed impeccable since it is contemporary discontent with political, economic or cultural inabilities that can lead to these forms of religiosity regarding

political leaders. It is a case of re-enchantment through the evocation and preservation of an idealized past that needs to remain since it is a platform of coping with these current inabilities without, however, addressing them directly (Margry,2008,p.34) (Belaj,2008, pp. 74-86).

Subsequently, the religious qualities of the commemorative mode at Tito's mausoleum are characterized by mourning, a notion analytically closer to reflective nostalgia. Yet, in a closer look the liminoid aspect of the pilgrimage also bares elements of restorative nostalgia where "the past" is *"..a time of mythical giants.."* (Boym,2001,p.118). Subjects during their trip, as different as they may be, are equating and sacralizing through their practice what is deemed now as the most prosperous periods of their own lives with their then president since he appears to comprise the "Yugoslav spirit" in all terms. Tito's sacralization thus is an (uncritical) necessity to preserve this kind of spirit. The constructed symbol of all these hopes and joyful times, needs to be sacralized constantly in order to cope with present pain and more importantly in order to keep it (alongside everything that it encompasses) uncorroded from "profane" discourses (either them being hegemonic or not) that could potentially diminish or criticize the rather totalizing elements of this nostalgic procedure.

4.3.1 The Fourth Yugoslavia

In February 2003, the "third Yugoslavia" composed at that time only by Serbia, Montenegro and the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo came to an end. The word Yugoslavia was removed from the official title of the state which was now titled "State Union of Serbia and Montenegro". That same year, however, another Yugoslavia came into existence.

This "fourth Yugoslavia" was a private project led by one nostalgic ex-Yugoslav citizen named Blasko Gabric. Gabric, a Vojvodinan Croat and a small-scale businessman, built Mini-Yugoslavia at his own three-hectare estate near the village of Subotica in Serbia in August 2003. The interior design of the park is supposed to serve as a replica of the geographical area of Yugoslavia via constructions that represent each Yugoslav republic. For instance, there is a constructed hillock that resembles the Triglav mountain (Yugoslavia's highest peak in Slovenia) and a pool symbolizing the Adriatic Sea.

At the beginning the park appeared to be a well-established industry, taking into consideration that it was a one-man's (financial) project. Busts of Tito and billboards with old maps could be found across the pathways while at the beginning of the project an impersonator of Tito used to welcome and accompany visitors to some of the buildings where they had the chance to watch movies, listen to traditional Yugoslav music and see innumerable daily objects from the Yugoslav period (flags, pictures and portraits of Tito and so on). Expectedly, there was also a memorabilia shop that sold objects from that period or retro ones like posters of Tito, souvenirs, and T-shirts that tourists could purchase. The tour often concluded with a "Youth Day Celebration" and the traditional arrival of the relay baton. A trip to Tito's grave was also included "at the travelling package" since Mini-Yugoslavia has strong relations with similar organizations like the ones mentioned above (Petrović, 2007, p.269) (Prodger, 2004).

The business status of the park however changed rapidly in the following years. What seems to be the case is that despite the illustrious scenery and grandiose planning, the project never really worked out as a business. As early as 2006 the- yet incomplete- park did not manage to attract visitors on a regular basis while the global economic crisis appeared to exacerbate the already scarce funding even further. During an interview video in 2012[36] the park seems almost abandoned while there were also fears about closing it indefinitely. While asked about this situation Gabric answered that due to the economic condition: "..*we will lose Serbia and Macedonia*..." (Gec, 2012)

4.3.2 A short-term utopia

Similar processes of "'heritageing" (Lahdesmaki,2012,p.36) as modes of remembering have been taking place in Eastern Europe and Western Europe as well[37]. Regional examples here are the Graveyard of the Fallen Monuments in Moscow, the DDR Museum in Berlin, and the Grutas Park in Lithuania[38]. However, even though these places seem to share up to a point the same (hyper) realistic elements that can be

[36] see here: https://balkaninsight.com/2018/05/01/video-mini-yugoslavia-where-the-former-socialist-federation-still-exists-04-30-2018.

[37] The "Mini-Europe" park located in Brussels is a well-known example. The park has miniature models representing famous sites of each member-state (e.g. Great Bell/Big Ben, United Kingdom) of the European Union propagating a common, cultural sense of "Europeanness" (see Lahdesmaki,2012).

[38] Nevertheless, Grutas park appears to share features of a "*socialist Disneyland*" (Velikonja, 2009, p.6) found in Mini-Yugoslavia at the beginning. For example, there are tourist events for socialist holidays and coffee shops where visitors have the chance to enjoy a "socialist menu".

found in the case of Mini-Yugoslavia they are formal, public funded cases in close relation to nation-states. Moreover, these places appear to act, up to a point, as paternalistic cautionaries. They wish to reprimand the visitor to express any sort of nostalgia since the socialist times *should* be deemed under an "impartial", rational historic gaze (Velikonja,2009, p.6).

Mini-Yugoslavia is not that much a heritage, monumental park but a theme park taking into consideration its alternative title- "Yugoland". Theme parks have their origins in the pleasure gardens of the 18th and 19th century[39]. They are artificial landscapes with an intention to submerge visitors into different, happy worlds to which they can escape during their leisure times. The most obvious example here that became a locus of examinations[40]is that of Disneyland's. Nevertheless, whereas Disneyland was built as an ode of both modernity and economic hopefulness back in the 1950's, Mini-Yugoslavia as a *cultural* theme park (the theme here is culture itself) appears to strive upon nostalgia and seems to act "in contrast" to modernity. This is not an exception. In the era of globalization, memory and nostalgia are powerful weapons for cultural theme parks since they wish to provide a "solidified" and "authentic" conceptualization of a given culture, that remains intact within their borders, through aesthetic manipulation (Hoffstaedter,2018, p.4).

According to Gabric his primary goal was not merely to create a private Yugonostalgic space or a touristic attraction although he has acknowledged the economic allurements emerging from this place (Prodger, 2004). Mini-Yugoslavia has been a place where Yugonostalgia became both "capital" and consumer product since the name served as a trademark, deliberately chosen for its marketability. Nonetheless, Gabric stated that his initial aim was in fact to create a heritage park similar to "Memento Park" in Hungary. The "third Yugoslavia" comprised only by two of the former Yugoslav republics has been seen by Gabric as a fraudulent, "artificial" state. When the final step was made (meaning the abolition of the title Yugoslavia) he claimed that he built this park in an effort to preserve the memory of Yugoslavia, a *full* Yugoslavia for himself and others like him since he did not wish to become a modern

[39] In Europe this kind of gardens held a variety of eclectic amusements such as concerts, comedians and entertainers, fountains, even firework demonstrations (Hoffstaedter,2018, p.1).

[40] The preeminent example here is that of philosopher's "Jean Baudrillard" (1981) who suggested that Disneyland in particular exists not only as a simulation (the world for Baudrillard is a simulation) but intriguingly a third order simulation since it gives the impression to the visitor that the outside world is real. In Baurdillard's vantage point regarding contemporary western culture "authenticity" is nothing but a pointless concept.

"Palestinian" (Petrovic,2007,p.269). The park thus, indicates up to an extent Gabric's own individual claim and effort to preserve a piece of his own past, of his own homeland as he nostalgically remembers it: as a utopia (Petrovic,2007,p.269) (Prodger, 2004).

This utopian dimension is acknowledged by visitors albeit not from the majority. The park never really managed to become a touristic attraction, yet it "survived" throughout the years by capturing the imagination of a particular group. Apart from the problems that the attraction has had, there are accounts that in consecutive years a number of Yugonostalgics tend to visit the place and celebrate with other people once again on particular dates such as the "Labor day" (1st of November) or, again, on the 25th of May. For the organization of these gatherings, alongside other events in pre-selected dates, Mini-Yugoslavia, which is currently listed as a non-profit organization, is accommodated by external sources. According to the active president (Brasko's nephew), the park currently receives help by pro-Yugoslav associations located in Subotica but also from the communist party and the city of Subotica in order to host these celebrations (Korchnak, 2020).

Figure 10: Brasko Gabric at the March Celebrations in mini-Yugoslavia in 2019 (source:https://www.subotica.com/vesti/mini-jugoslavija-po-17.-put-ugostila-jugonostalgicare-id34928.html)

Figure 11: Visitors arriving for the celebrations in 2019 (Source: https://www.subotica.com/fotografije/mini-jugoslavija-proslava-2-maja-u-mini-jugoslaviji-17-put-id74149.html

Thus, it seems that there is a conscious attempt and a spirit of practical solidarity between these memorial organizations to this place. It appears that Yugonostalgics, throughout the years, have rather distinguished, identified the park as an emotional, safe place in which they can come closer together, express their nostalgic angst and share their memories through entertainment and festivities. It is preserved as a place that successfully evokes not the geographical but the emotional topographies of the past and act in contrast to the fragmented present. These people are not simply guests or visitors but more accurately time interlopers: they step into the park and travel to the past (Hoffstaedter, 2018, p.4). The space thus manages to provide a ferocious enchantment to Yugonostalgics and their metaphorical re-territoritalization while serving as a short-term utopia for them as well during their visit.

4.3.3 The passports of freedom

On a different basis, Mini-Yugoslavia retains and circulates the memory of Yugoslavia through a travelling document. Throughout these years and till this day, Brasko and the current president of Mini-Yugoslavia (his nephew) have been "issuing" mini-Yugoslavia passports to enlist "citizens" (active members) of Mini-Yugoslavia. Whoever wishes, can pay a small amount and attain what is essentially a brochure about Socialist Yugoslavia: it contains a short history of the constituent republics and its

leader, while providing the owner a free access to the museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade and to the House of Flowers during the March celebrations (Korchnak, 2020).

Figure 12: Mini-Yugoslavia's Passport (source: https://www.subotica.com/vesti/prvomajski-uranak-u-mini-jugoslaviji-id34916.html)

Figure 13: The former patria under different national colours (source: https://www.subotica.com/vesti/prvomajski-uranak-u-mini-jugoslaviji-id34916.html)

The symbolism of this document is substantial. In the Yugoslav context, passports qualified citizens with visa-free movement to almost all the countries, and particular closer destinations, meaning countries that today are members of the European Union. The situation changed dramatically after the dissolution of the country. In the Federal

Republic, the red coverage in the passport remained intact and in fact valid, up until 2001 yet another indication of the regime's attempt to provide a bridge of continuation with the previous era is evident. However, such an effort never really captured the social imagination or facilitated pragmatically the movement of the citizens. These passports were deemed rather as shameful and weak since the passport alone was not sufficient to allow entrance in foreign countries. Additionally, the admissions for a visa card in order to visit the same places after 30 years alongside the economic burdens regarding bureaucracy, produced according to the public, groups of immobilized idiots (Jansen, 2009).

Henceforth, in the period following 2001, the old, authentic red Yugoslav passport incrementally attained a special status, and its evocation remains prevalent amongst Yugonostalgics (Boskovic, 2007, p.71). The passport reflects a metaphorical longing for a space and time of dignity and acts as a retrospective narrative regarding current geopolitical entrapment underlying the lost freedom of mobility once provided under the Yugoslav citizenship. Moreover, in the case of Mini-Yugoslavia and Gabric the passport is not only a yearning for a lost identity or an artefact that signals a nostalgic community. Apart from these "readings" Gabric has stated that the goal of these passports is to reach 10.000 "citizens" (still have not reached the number). This achievement will lead to an official request to the United Nations to obtain the status of the state an indication that the park wishes to promulgate an emancipatory nostalgic facet (Petrovic, 2007, p.269).

Clearly, we need to remain sceptic about the emancipatory aspects of the place and the respective organization. The park still needs the (hyper) reality, and unfavorable conditions of the outside world in order to retain its own power. At the same time, it is highly debatable to what extent such statements are not merely grandiose, marketable dreams for consumer attraction.

Taking all these facts under consideration it is obvious that the Yugoland project has been rather personal. Gabric is a Yugonostalgic, something that he has been constantly accepting rather openly and proudly. In all of his interviews he constantly refers to the beautiful heaven of his homeland without however missing to make some critical comments on Yugoslavia's socialism. Thus, reflective individual qualities in this sense are present. Yet, it is Gabric's utopian mode of remembering the Yugoslav past that is the main theme of his construction. Mini-Yugoslavia is the land of its creator, an extension of Gabric's intentional utopian/ nostalgic remembering and an attempt to

monumentalize this kind memory of Yugoslavia to the world by simultaneously rendering it a profitable attraction.

These elements are harmonic. Alongside the notion of the cultural theme park, commercialized/utopian nostalgia also requires that the cultural past has had a "..*smoothing over its rough spots*.." (Volcic,2007,p.35). Any contradiction of the past has been necessarily lessened in order to be consumed by subjects which escape into it. Gabric's view on this matter and the festivities that continually take place there seem to indicate that the park is perceived here as a place where Yugonostalgics can evade the present. Yugoland hosts a celebratory environment of happiness where a playful nostalgic trip to the past is a presupposition in order to experience what the park has to offer in the first place.

The commercialized, utopian elements, still, are not deterministically bounded to apathy. The utopian and similarly commercialized traces found in the evocation and circulation of the passport for example may not lead necessarily to a utopian a-critical longing. The passport of Yugoland has been a rather easily materialized retrospective critique to current immobility, circulating throughout the region and the globe. At the same time the respective organization also seems to wish to make the park a cue, a conveyor for alternative cultural agendas since events continuously take place there that seem to perplex the situation even further. In September 2020, in the midst of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the park hosted a festival called "Ekoslavija", an event that promoted the perseverance of the antifascist/partisan Yugoslav heritage and its enrichment with current, similar minded (according to the interlocutors) ideologies such us environmentalism since the park -despite the constructions- is surrounded by trees and throughout these years it seems to have minimum interference to the environment (Korchnak, 2020). Subsequently, it remains open to what extent the park will continue to serve "only" as an escapist utopia since there are examples of critical *engaging* to the utopian past in order to fulfill and/or enrich its un-realized potentialities.

Conclusions

What we can conclude from all the cases is that in each context Yugonostalgic recollections (individual and/or collective) tend to prioritize and exhibit different elements. In all cases nostalgia is deployed as a coloring of remembering Yugoslavia to address and underline a temporal, present rupture that breeds inabilities and unfavorable realities. Yet, what the qualities of this nostalgic recollection are all about, always pends on the particular mode of remembering.

As we saw in the first two cases even while the form of representations lies in cinema, we actually have two different modes of remembering the Yugoslav past throughout the most devastating period- the disintegration. Both films wished to depict the socialist past, and both manifest a nostalgia for it. Yet, this connection, this nostalgic remembrance is radically different. From one side we have an "experiential" account of the early years under Tito. The nostalgic trip is characterized by a critical humorous representation that longs the daily-life and personal connections while concomitantly lessens the personality cult of the supreme leader (and implicitly that of similar strong-men that were established in that period). The movie's plot appears to be in harmony with this element alongside the director's own vantage point and of what the success of the film throughout the region seems to suggest. On the other hand, in the case of "Underground," Yugonostalgia serves as an element that serves as an ostensible "remedy" that in this particular context is evoked by the official regime of truth to de-politicize and obfuscate what in essence is an antagonistic (stereotypical) mode of remembering. Kusturica shares and empowers the selective nationalistic "reading" of the most traumatic series of events that took place in the modern history of the region.

Interestingly enough, and this is another element that "paradoxically" both cases share, is that none of them idealizes Tito but stand highly critical to his leadership and politics. In contrast, the nostalgic practices and narratives that can be traced at Tito's mausoleum manifest that the period of Socialist Yugoslavia is obviously personified. Even though the same metonymic personification of the period can be found in the symbolic space of "Tito and me", the pilgrimage at the Mausoleum of Tito seems to bare no critical reflection of Tito's political heritage but has become a mode of popular religiosity that idealizes him. This divinization facilitates convalescence yet seems to leave little room for critical engagement regarding the past while it remains to be seen if the pilgrimage will "breed" general reconciliation.

Mini-Yugoslavia is a commercialized, monumental mode that propagates a utopian quality of nostalgic remembering where the previous state is perceived as nothing less than a paradise. There is no lamentable, critical or diminishing aspects here regarding the loss of the beloved homeland. The Yugoslav past is a case of commercialized escapism, entertainingly experienced by the subjects that still tend to visit the park and celebrate. Nevertheless, the organization of the park has also been making deliberate -potentially emancipatory- attempts to mark and disseminate even further the memory of Yugoslavia as a utopia of freedom. The Yugoslavian passport alongside more recent events indicate once again that a unilateral conceptualization is not secure in any case.

Finally, and in this case referring to the last two cases, it is evident that there is an active memorial network organized throughout the years of transformation period. The respective organizations appear to play a crucial role in preserving Yugoslavia's and Tito's memory in contemporary contexts and provide help in order to secure further circulation of Tito's and Yugoslavia's memory across and the area of ex-Yugoslavia. The proliferation of the Communist party only opens further questions as to what extent these memories may become instrumentalized to contemporary and future political associations.

We can comprehend the fundamental aspects that Yugonostalgia brings forth in terms of contemporary cultural politics of memory. The fact that the cultural memory of Socialist Yugoslavia has been mediated and addressed through a constant interplay of cultural dynamics is because it is deemed as a critical stage in history that continues to play a decisive role in people's consciouses. Through the imbrication and of course the contradictions of these representations (either favorable or negative) the memory of Yugoslavia does not seem "ready" to be condemned to inertia or oblivion (something that even the Serbian regime embraced and wished to capitalize on). As long as the present and the future are deemed by subjects as inadequate and unimaginable respectively, various Yugonostalgic recollections of the past will continue to arise. Hence, it remains to be seen as to how these past(s) and ghost(s) will be re-constructed in the future and under what kind of variations they will be subjected in order to address a diminishing present.

Other regional cases of nostalgia and Yugonostalgia have not been addressed or compared to a considerable extent here. Nor have we discussed further on other modes of Yugonostalgia within Serbia or elsewhere that might ameliorate our effort for further contextualization. Further research needs to be conducted in order to illuminate

perceptions and narratives in Serbia regarding the relation between Yugonostalgia and nationalism with a focus upon the period of the 1990's. Moreover, there is a need for case-studies focusing extensively on youth perceptions about the phenomenon to elucidate further potentialities of Yugonostalgia in the years to come, especially in a period already marked by the global memory (and rupture) of the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, a thorny research could examine the diversity of Yugonostalgic recollections as an incrementally global travelling memory through existing media.

Filmography:

1. *"Marshall" (*2000). Directed by Vinko Brešan [Film]. Croatia.
2. *"Powder Keg"* (1998), Directed by Goran Paskaljević [Film]. Serbia.
3. "*Pretty villages pretty flame"* (1996), Directed by Srđan Dragojević [Film]. Serbia
4. *"Skinning"* (2010). Directed by Stevan Filipović. [Film]. Serbia.
5. *"St. George Shoots the Dragon"* (2012). Directed by Srđan Dragojević [Film]. Serbia.
6. *"The Wounds"*(1998). Directed by Srđan Dragojević, [Film] Serbia.
7. *"Three Tickets to Hollywood"* (1993). Directed by Božidar Nikolić [Film] Serbia.
8. "*Tito amongst the Serbs for the Second time"* (1993). Directed by Želimir Žilnik [Film]. Serbia.
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