

Sezgin Boynik

Towards a Theory of Political Art  
Cultural Politics of 'Black Wave' Film  
in Yugoslavia, 1963-1972



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## ABSTRACT

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The point of departure of my thesis is to discuss the forms of 'Black Wave' films made in Yugoslavia during sixties and seventies in relation to political contradictions of socialist self-management. Instead of explaining filmic forms as representation of social and political dynamics; my aim is to propose a distinct methodology and conceptual apparatus that would enable to grasp social dynamics through their inscription inside the art form. The new methodological reading that I am proposing is largely based on actualization of certain theses proposed by Russian Formalists, Walter Benjamin and Louis Althusser. Combining these distinct theoretical positions my aim is to propose a model of including contradictions in researching the political art without reducing formalism to a mere representation. Basing largely on the work of Dušan Makavejev I have showed that political engagement of avant-garde artists and film makers contribute to the richness of artistic forms. My aim is to find the ways to detect these contradictions. By attentively looking at concept of slogans and cultural policy in the writings and artistic work of Makavejev my aim is to show that the conceptualization of political terms in artistic production has a distinctive characteristic. Advancing this observation my aim is to propose different reading of cultural politics and artistic practices during socialist Yugoslavia. By addressing theoretical and historical debates concerning representation of politics, nationalism, transformation of style, the realism and relation between philosophy and art I have showed the advancements of Formalist approach in understanding of 'Black Wave.' Also in my dissertation I have dealt with ideological consequences of various other readings of Yugoslavian 'Black Wave' and tried to delineate them from Formalist reading which I am proposing. Yet on another level, in my text on 'New Collectives' in post-Yugoslavia I am applying this methodology to contemporary art scene pointing at some formal transformations that occurred in discourse on art in transition from socialist to neo-liberal conditions.

Keywords: political art, cultural policy, Black Wave cinema, Yugoslavia, self-management, Louis Althusser, Formalism, contradictions, ideology, realism, historicism.

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## FOREWORD

In the mid-nineties when it would have been the time for me and many from my generation to engage with interesting avant-garde and experimental art productions of the Socialist Yugoslavia, that country was devastated in bloody civil war. At that time for me and many from my generation it was impossible to engage with any question regarding Yugoslavia that would not have had an already historically inscribed answer. Logic of that historical explanation was simple: everything from self-management to punk music, just to name two examples, of socialist Yugoslavia, indicates that the civil war, the nationalist neo-liberal plundering, and break-up of the country was inevitable. This was my understanding of Yugoslavia in the nineties, when I was engaging with Situationist International, with Godard, with Michael Haneke, rock-in-opposition, free jazz and other things. The name Yugoslavia was at the time nothing more than a suspicious construction based on certain mythologies which would soon confirm to be false. In this falsity there was no room for serious engagement.

Waking up from the historical dream of Yugoslavia, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, was for me a painful and contradictory process. Slowly I started to understand that the historical logic which I had shared with many about Yugoslavia was not so distinct from the elitist logic of nationalist and conservative discourse. This ideology had many different forms; but what seemed to be common to most of them was truism in these apparent and obvious claims. It was argued that the multi-national and self-managing Yugoslavia was in contradiction to inherent nationalism and to residual elements of feudalism. These contradictions, as proponents of this logic tirelessly repeat, are the main reason why the country stopped to exist.

As I said, in the nineties it was impossible to resist this logic; everything seemed fitting to what we were seeing in our everyday life brutality. The official discourse at the 90s always reminded us that this was a reprise of the thirties, or of the First World War, or even earlier periods of Yugoslavian history, where wars were happening almost as natural catastrophes, as film director Emir Kusturica once said about the recent war in Bosnia.

What we start to realize is that the logic of inevitability was not a product of the nineties. It had always been there, from the very beginning of the Second Yugoslavia, from 1945. This was the case especially in argumentation that the self-management is alien to Yugoslavian context, or that multi-national co-existence is generally alien to human nature. But also we started to realize that parallel with this logic, in Yugoslavia there existed yet another position that could be described as the internationalist, avant-garde position (the core of anti-fascist Partisans in the Second World War), which was the driving force in the theory and practice of self-management. It was this position that struck my interest, especially how this avant-gardist and internationalist position related itself with art and culture.

My thesis is a product of this engagement, which is not result of only a personal endeavor. It was a long journey of collective engagement in many dif-



ferent intellectual and especially artistic platforms in post-Yugoslav spaces (in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Skopje and Prishtina), it is a result of many harsh debates (both public and private, some still continuing), spirited discussions, exciting random discoveries (in archives, flea markets, personal collections of people), exhibitions, film screenings, editorial meetings, etc. Just thinking of how many people I can name who contributed to all these discussions makes me excited and at the same time hopeful that we are not only a few isolated artists and researchers who do not want to believe in the official historical hypothesis on the legacy of Socialist Yugoslavia. But especially I am in debt to discussions and friendship with Slobodan Karamanic and others from journal *Prelom*, Gal Kirn, editorial board of *Journal Kino!* (Andrej Sprah, Jurij Meden, Nil Baskar, Maja Krajnc), Branimir Stojanovic, Nebojsa Jovanovic, Vladan Jeremic, and many others.

Also I have to mention how I have initially started my dissertation in Jyväskylä University. I was spending the winter 2008-2009 in Belgrade where I used my free time, actually then I had nothing but a free time, in Archive of Alternative Film at Culture Hall "Studentski Grad", which was run by cinephile and film maker Ivko Šešić. After realizing we have many common interests he introduced me to his partner, Milena Dragičević-Šešić, whose book *Art and Alternative* I already knew. She recommended me to get in touch with the Cultural Policy Unit at Jyväskylä University. This is how I met with one of my supervisors Anita Kangas, who from the beginning understood and supported my research. The second supervisor Kia Lindroos, then from Political Science department, gave a very different and productive twist to my research. I am really grateful to both of them.

The reason why I was in Belgrade in winter 2008-2009 is yet another interesting circumstance. It was artist-residency stay of my partner Minna Henriksen, originally based in Helsinki, who at that time was working on artistic project to map the art scene of Belgrade. The "artistic" side of my research on Black Wave thus follows me from the beginning of my research. Even at the most difficult period when I was dealing with methodology and other scholarly work, my research on film was never separated from artistic practice. I met Dušan Makavejev, Zelimir Zilnik and Lazar Stojanovic for the first time in the gallery spaces in Belgrade, Ljubljana and Prishtina respectively; most of my lectures on Black Wave were part of contemporary art exhibitions; also during my PhD I took part in realization of two artistic projects using models of experimental cinema. Thus my special thanks go to Minna.

Also I am in gratitude to Sovako and the University of Jyväskylä for financial support. Also I would like to thank all my loved ones; Roza, Engin, Elmas and Anush. I dedicate this work to memory of my father.

Helsinki, November, 2014

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS ON PUBLISHED ARTICLES

The chapters have appeared in the following publications:

1. "Between Necessity and Spontaneity: The Cultural Policy of Dušan Makavejev" was published in *Kino! Magazine for Cinema and Cinematic Issues* No. 15, 2011, pp. 87-108, Ljubljana. Earlier and shorter version has appeared with same title in catalogue *Dušan Makavejev: Retrospektiva* published at occasion of his films in Cinematheque Ljubljana, 2011. Portuguese translation of original article appeared as "Entre a Necessidade e a Espontaneidade: A política cultural de Dusan Makavejev" in *Zelimir Zilnik e a Black Wave*, Alfredo Suppia and Henrique Figueiredo (eds.), São Paulo: Cinusp Paulo Emílio/Pró-Reitoria de Cultura e Extensão Universitária-USP, pp. 81-106. Version of the article was presented as "From Worker to Immigrant: Transformation of Political Subject in Makavejev's Films" in Symposium of Black Wave in Yugoslavian Cinema at *GoEast: Festival of Central and Eastern European Film* in Wiesbaden in April 2013.
2. "On Makavejev, On Ideology: The Concrete and the Abstract in Readings of Dušan Makavejev Films" was published in *Surfing the Black: Yugoslav Black Wave Cinema*, edited by Gal Kirn, Dubravka Sekulic and Ziga Testen, Jan Van Eyck Akademie, 2012, pp. 106-152, Maastricht. Unaltered online version has appeared in special issue dedicated to Makavejev in e-journal *Mediantrop: Regionalni Casopis za Medije i Kulturu* edited by Zorica Jevremovic-Munitic.  
<http://www.mediantrop.rankomunitic.org/on-makavejev-on-ideology>
3. "New Collectives: Art Networks and Cultural Policies in Post-Yugoslav Spaces" was published in *Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia*, edited by Slobodan Karamanic and Daniel Suber, Brill, 2012, pp. 81-105, Boston and Leiden. Part of the article was read in conference *Questioning Transitional Dynamics in Re-defining Cultural Identities in SEE* organized by Peace Institute in Ljubljana, January 2011. Paper was published as "From Productivity to Creativity - the Role of Art Collectives in Solving the Contradictions of the Transitional Period", in *Cultural Identity Politics in the (Post-) Transitional Societies*, edited by Aldo Milohnic and Nevena Svob-Djokic, Institute for International relations, pp. 141-147, Zagreb.
4. "The Art of Slogans (The Performative Part)" was published in *TKH: Journal for Performing Arts Theory*, No. 19, pp. 132-141, Belgrade. Serbian translation was published in the same issue of journal as "Umetnost Parola (Performativni Deo)".

5. "The Art of Slogans (The Constative Part)" was published in TKH: Journal for Performing Arts Theory, No. 20, pp. 82-95, Belgrade. Serbian translation was published in the same issue of journal as "Umetnost Parola (Konstativni Deo)".

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In my research I have extensively worked on the issue of how to conceptualize the relation between art and politics. The starting point of my research on the relation between art and politics was a theoretical discussion on the formal challenges in cultural politics. Or more precisely, the starting point of my research was the conceptualisation of cultural policy as a field that is determined both by politics and by the arts. As such my main question deals with the contradiction of cultural politics: how is possible to understand the political avant-garde artwork positioned as it is somewhere between assumed practicality and the negation of utilitarianism. My position (referring to materials, methodology and the conceptualisation I have used) is based on the assumption that through the conceptualisation of this contradiction we can understand the formation of the artwork in its full complexity.

In order to conceptualize this contested field of political, artistic and cultural studies I have used many different empirical and theoretical sources and materials. In my articles published over a period of three years I have reflected on this difficult theoretical field of the relation between art and politics through different perspectives. The red thread running through these published articles is Yugoslavian Black Wave films and particularly the films of Dušan Makavejev. Because of my particular subject, certain issues such as conceptual periodization (temporality, historicisation), national and economic contradiction, complex and uneven social and cultural relations, representation and the genealogy of forms have taken up an important part of my research. In this introduction my aim is to reflect more concisely on the conceptual elements involved in my research and try to configure these elements inside a more rigorous methodological frame. This particularly involves my theoretical orientation and how it is brought to bear on the material. But apart from scientific work, my study of Black Wave and Yugoslavian cultural politics could also be seen as engaging in an actual debate on issues that have wider repercussions than strictly those concerning academic institutions. I could say that partly my work is the result of a theoretical and methodological intervention in the existing discussions on Black Wave studies. Furthermore my aim was to construct a conceptual scheme

that would render the abstraction on the above-mentioned issues in a concise theoretical work. In order to come up with the terms for my theoretical orientation in following pages I will condense the discussion about the relation between art and politics, which constitutes the axis of my overall conceptualisation and methodology.

In order to summarize the methodological and theoretical orientation of my research I will start by emphasizing some of the inherent contradictions and challenges that have determined the way my work has taken shape. In other words, I could say that the complex structure of my methodology has emerged through the very subject of my research that deals with the relation between art and politics in the case of Yugoslavian cinema. These methodological complexities have shown themselves most clearly in the aspect of collecting and discussing the data and in the overall theoretical interpretation of these materials. But most directly these complexities start from the point of conceptualisation itself that I will extensively discuss in following pages.

There are a few questions that are often repeated in discussing the formation of avant-garde art and cinema in the context of Yugoslavian political conditions. My aim is not to avoid these question and challenges, but to face them directly. One of the most enduring challenges in this conceptualisation is issue of *temporalization*, or the retroactive interpretation of Yugoslavian avant-garde art in the sixties from a contemporary perspective. The main implication of this challenge is not only related to the historiography of artistic formation but also to the general theoretical temporalization of an artwork itself. In order to formulate this methodological challenge in a concise way I could start with this simple question: how does avant-garde temporality differ or correspond to political temporality? This question directly refers to the very nature of an artwork itself. Grasping the contradictions of Yugoslavian cultural politics from this perspective means elaborating the discussion on the higher theoretical level of artistic formation itself. Because of this, my ultimate methodological proposition is based on the actualization of the temporal aspect of the artwork. In brief, the temporal complexities inherent in artistic formation are a crucial component of my theoretical and methodological approach. In the following pages it will be clear that the issue of actualization has far reaching effects also to a general conceptualization of political art.

The second theoretical and methodological challenge in dealing with Black Wave is the issue of *representation*, or more precisely the representation of Yugoslavian singularity through the perspective of its intersecting with the global conditions of cinema production. In order to understand the formation of Yugoslavian Black Wave films my aim is to avoid the contextualization of Yugoslavian cultural politics as a closed, or autopoietic system that generates its own truth. Contrary to these kinds of prevailing discussions I have located Yugoslavian Black Wave cinema in a global context of international cinema studies. By extensively looking at available written texts on the films of Dušan Makavejev I have demonstrated that the inclusion of the Yugoslavian filmmaker in the internationally recognized system of film theory usually repro-

duces certain patterns of representation that persist in this process of inclusion. Furthermore I claim that by looking at these patterns it is possible to discuss the cultural politics of cinema from a more concrete and historical perspective.

Thirdly, a more specific theoretical challenge of my research is related to the issue of *philosophical legitimacy*, or more precisely to the issue of the relation between artistic practices and progressive intellectual platforms active in Yugoslavia.

In order to deal with these theoretical challenges my aim is to propose a methodology that will reflect on these heterogeneous and diverse conceptual elements as a result of the contradictory formations of the artwork. I will argue that the theory and methodology of Russian Formalism is the most suitable approach in understanding the complexity and contradiction of art formation. Apart from offering a new understanding of the intelligibility of the artwork, Russian Formalism also provides a scientific model for grasping the unevenness of artistic formation in a most interesting and rigorous way.

In following pages I will discuss which terms I am referring to in Russian Formalism and conceptually justify the use of this model in my methodology. Also, I will speculate along possible conceptual lines of including the temporal model of Walter Benjamin in my overall theoretical and methodological framework.



## 2 RUSSIAN FORMALISM

The main conceptual task of my research is to formalize the distinctive and singular contingencies in the arts and in politics through their specific intelligibilities. Methodologically speaking the most advanced position in dealing with the formal distinctiveness of art is Russian Formalist theory, which initially developed in twenties and thirties Russian Formalism is not a monolith intellectual position. Begun as a quest for the specificity of forms, regulations, laws and the historical development of art, it encompasses a variety of models developed primarily by Viktor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Jurij Tinjanov, Boris Eichenbaum, V.N. Voloshinov, P. N. Medvedev and Mikhail Bakhtin. In the following there are some theoretical observations presented as drafts on the possibility of using of Formalism in my study of Yugoslavian cinema.

Usually most of the analyses dealing with political avant-garde artworks tend to describe the elements involved in the formation of a given work by extrinsic processes which have some arbitrary relation to the artwork itself. Roman Jakobson, one of the most eminent theoreticians of Formalism, explained this by a striking metaphor that serves as a *leit motif* to my methodology: "The subject of literary scholarship is not literature but literariness, that is, that which makes a given work a work of literature. And yet literary scholars up to now have often behaved like policeman who, in the course of arresting a particular person, would pick up, just in case, everybody and anybody who happened to be in the apartment, as well as people who happened to be passing on the street. Similarly the literary historian used anything that came to hand: biographical evidence, psychology, politics, and philosophy. Instead of literary science they created a conglomeration of home-grown disciplines." (Jakobson, 1997: 179) How to deal with the intelligibility of art without necessarily inverting the scope of the work of art to a mere reflection of social and political transformations is a problem. Formalists have described the 'literariness' of Jakobson, in different ways, but generally they all refer to emancipation from the "traditional correlation of 'form-content' and from the conception of form as an outer cover or as a vessel into which a liquid (content) is poured" (Ejxenbaum, 2002: 12). What makes Formalism genuine, distinct and an advanced method in compari-

son to other literary and artistic scholarly approaches is that it does not unfold the form of an artwork to explanations of ad hoc transformations induced by social content. According to this methodology *form is content*. By keeping in mind that the artwork is not transcendental, separate, or independent from social transformations (institutions responsible for supporting this art, larger economical-political transformations influencing these cultural institutions, the global conjuncture which determines the economic, political contingencies, etc.) Formalism is proposing to deal with these determinants through their existence inside the artwork.

## 2.1 Methodological Device's of Russian Formalism

In showing how the extrinsic determinants (such as historical, political and social factors) have been transformed to an artistic form, Formalist methodology has advanced certain approaches that will be present in this part of the text. These tools or models (Jameson, 1972; Steiner, 1984) of researching the correspondences and conflicts between socially extrinsic materials and intrinsic artistic forms are: devices (Shkovsky, 1990); realism of art (Jakobson, 2002); evolution (Tynjanov, 2002, Tinjanov, 1998), dominant (Jakobson, 2002; Jakobson & Tynjanov, 2002), mechanism, organism, synecdoche, (Steiner, 1984; Striedter, 1989), literary fact (Tynjanov, 1998; Fore, 2006), automatism, estrangement, and heroism (Shklvosky, 1990). Since Formalism has multiple ways of dealing with the form of the artwork it is difficult to reduce it to a typical artistic scholarship or methodology. For that reason some Formalists were strictly against using 'method' as their approach and instead proposed a larger and conceptual term as 'Formalist principles' (Ejxenbaum, 2002: 4-5).

These principles in the last instance were based on linguistic approaches in the analysis of artistic materials and forms. Even if it started as a general quest for artistic form, the usual material of Formalists research was literature (both poetry and prose). Consequently most of their crucial works were based on formal analysis of certain novels and poems; such as 'How Gogol's *Overcoat* is Made' (Ejxenbaum, 1964), 'The Making of *Don Quixote*' (Shkovsky, 1990), Xlebnikov and Majakovskij (Jakobson, 1997), Trsitam Shandy (Shkovsky, 1990), etc. In this regard I have to answer the crucial question regarding the 'literariness' of the Formalist principle: how is it possible to use analyses based on language in research dealing with cinema studies? *Firstly*, my two texts dealing with slogans (The Art of Slogans: Constative Part and The Art of Slogans: Performative Part) are directly linked with the issue of linguistics related to a work Dušan Makavejev. Following Makavejev's early writings on political language, particularly on slogans (Makavejev, 1964), I have researched how this initial formal quest of Makavejev on 'how political slogan can be written' influenced also the cinematic form of his later avant-garde films. Comparing linguistic postulates on slogans as it was proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 75-110) in comparison with political writings of Len-

in on slogans (Lenin, 1967) I tried to show how the intrinsic friction and contradiction between politics and arts should be detected in a formal way by looking at the nature of slogans. Furthermore, by using linguistic materials such as slogans I tested the methodology of showing that the relation of cinema to the Yugoslavian socialist system was more complicated than some scholars dealing with this subject assume it. *Secondly*, some of the most advanced cinema theories developed in the sixties and seventies, particularly in France, were using linguistic theses in their conceptualisations. Generally this cinematic theories influenced by linguistic approaches were under the influence of Ferdinand de Saussure's structural and binary theses on the strict distinction between diachronic and synchronic conceptions of language (Metz, 1982; Heath, 1981). Formalist theories that were critical toward De Saussure's reductionist division between diachrony and synchrony offered more complex and process based approach to the formation and transformation of linguistic systems (Steiner, 1984: 217-225). This complex formal thesis on the relation between diachrony and synchrony is also more useful for researching the language of other arts than literature, for example the art of cinema, in relation to history. *Thirdly*, some applications of the principles of Formalist Method such as dominant, hero and plot, estrangement, devices, and synecdoche would be very useful in dealing with the forms of cinematic language. For example in dealing with the transformation of political subject, or hero in films of Dušan Makavejev from worker to immigrant, use of Viktor Shklovsky's 'theories of prose' analysing the relation of the hero to an artwork's plot would be very useful (Shklovsky, 1990). Also the device of estrangement is in direct connection with the form of juxtaposition and shock of Makavejev's film-form, which was heavily based on the theory and practice of Eisenstein. *Fourthly*, there is extensive scholarly use of Formalist theories in cinema studies dealing with social issues. Especially prevalent since the eighties is the approach that uses Mikhail Bakhtin's specific literary tools such as chronotopia, carnivalesque and polyphony in cinema studies (Stam, 1992), or studies that linked the work of Makavejev with a writings of Bakhtin (Horton, 1990). But Formalists themselves have used their methodologies in dealing with cinema. Shklovsky was among the most eminent Formalist scholars dealing with cinema; he wrote extensively on the relation between literature and cinema (Shklovsky, 2008; Shkovsky 1982), on Eisenstein (Shklovsky, 1975), and he also wrote literature and fiction pieces using cinema devices (Shklovsky, 2001). In 1927 during the most interesting period of the Russian avant-garde film production, the Formalists published a book 'Poetics of Cinema', which included articles on 'cine-stylistics' (Ejxenbaum, 1982: 5-31) and 'fundamentals of cinema' (Tynjanov, 1982: 32-54). *Lastly*, another interesting scholarly work pursued the thesis that certain film directors in producing their works used Formalist methods. According to this research, both the cinema of Eisenstein (V.V. Veselinov, 1971: 226-236; V.V. Veselinov, 1985: 221-235; Salvaggio, 1979: 289-297) and Dziga Vertov (Petric, 1987) had a complicated relationship to Formalist theories; they were both influenced by these theories and criticized them as insufficient for cinematic productions.

## 2.2 Philosophical Concepts of Formalist Theory

Conceptually it is easy to find the historical links of the intellectual relationship between Walter Benjamin and the Formalists. Benjamin used the theories and work of Sergej Tretiakov in his 'Author as Producer' text, and of Ejxenbaum in his 'Storyteller' (Striedter, 1989: 55-58), Brecht had a strong relation to Shklovsky (Brewster, 1974). But it is more interesting to look at the conceptual connections between these two. One philosophical link between Benjamin and the Formalists was their reference to Goethe's concept of the 'morphology of forms' (Steiner, 1984), another strong conceptual link is their rejection of historicism. Probably the most 'formalist' notion of Benjamin's work, which is directly linked with his theses on cinema and *spiel-raum* is the proposal of a 'second nature' or 'second technology' as he developed in his text 'Author as Producer'. Dealing with technology and the culture of technology as a 'second nature' that develops independently of 'real' or 'first nature', Benjamin had advanced his 'nicht-synthesis' model towards the possible formal analysis of art. (Leslie, 2000) What I believe is the most valuable contribution in the encounter between the Formalist methodologies and Benjamin's 'nicht-synthesis' model is the possibility of further intensifying the conceptual proposal for dealing with the intelligibility of art, in this case of cinema. If we already detected that conceptually Benjamin's cinematic reality ("cinema-country") exists independently, on its own, then the Formalist methodologies could be used in dealing with the intelligibility of this distinctiveness.

Regarding the work of the Formalist's and their theoretical intervention in issues such as literary evolution, development and the transformation of artistic styles we can also include a temporal aspect, which is an important point for Benjamin, in the actualization of Formalist theory today. The temporal aspect of the Formalist model is best seen in its criticism of Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics. Instead of the synchronic approach to a structure they preferred to work on the model which could be described as a dialectical relation between diachrony and synchrony, or better between history and structures (Striedter, 1989; Steiner, 1984; Jameson, 1972). Another important issue of this part of the text will be the relation between Marxism and Formalism. Extensive reference and use of Formalist theories in the Marxist literary field, as a possible model for analysing avant-garde art, has been discussed in many other scholarly works (Jameson, 1972; Bennett, 1979; Groys, 2011, Yurchak, 2005).

### 3 NICHT-SYNTHESIS

As I have already mentioned, it is impossible to reduce the notion of temporality in avant-garde art and politics to a linear narrative of an easily applicable methodology. A more appropriate way to use the concepts of temporalization is to actualize them as some kind of performative methodology. This will allow me to freely orient the research in the field of politics and art and also will give me clues for the actualization of historical sources for contemporary conditions. Since my thesis is based on the assumption that the intelligibility (or conceptualisation) of art and politics as historical categories in contingent forms give possibility to their distinctive singular conceptualisations, the aspect of temporalization will provide mostly the creative and at the same time mainly rigorous direction to my research. One of the most important theoretical positions that deal overtly with the issues of the historical conceptualisation of political contingencies is Walter Benjamin's model of 'nicht-synthesis', or 'dialectics of standstill'. This historical model of Benjamin, epitomized in his posthumous text 'Theses on Philosophy of History' (Benjamin, 1968 / *Illuminations*), proposes a survey of temporalization that would lead to politicisation of history, or to a model of historical survey which could be described as "historical materialism" ["Historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to stop" (Benjamin, 1968: 262, Thesis XVI)]. This concept of stasis, or non-reconciliation is directly alluding to the historicist notion of continuum, which homogenizes the social transformations as some latent inscriptions of abstract thought. As such the model of 'dialectics at a standstill' and 'nicht-synthesis' are ultimately political, or as Rolf Tiedemann described about the former, it is where "politics was to retain its 'primacy over history'" (Tiedemann, 1988: 272-273); or about 'nicht-synthesis': "this notion as further creating an approach to 'kairological' temporality that unfolds the historical contingency and the sudden appearances of known and unknown historical elements in a way that also characterises the politics of historical interpretation" (Lindroos, 2006: 127-128).

In order to clarify the proposed model of formalisation and temporalization that implies a certain political effectivity to my conceptualisation, I need

briefly to point out how I have used the notion of *politics* in my texts. The starting point for my discussions related to politics are based on the assumption that politics, just as art, also has a specific and distinct intelligibility. Furthermore, I assume that this intelligibility in politics and in art is attained through the formalization of this distinct intelligibility. I have discussed the formalization of political and artistic intelligibility, respectively referring to the writings of Louis Althusser and other political philosophers akin to this model of political formalization (such as Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar, Miko Lahtinen, and others). This set of political form which appears in my discussion is related to the conflictual and contradictory character of the formalization of the singular intelligibility of politics. I could name this as the *conflictual* characteristic of politics. This characteristic which is highly important for my discussion on the relation between art and politics has led me to second important characteristic of politics; namely to the temporalization of the political. It is possible to approach this field from two intellectual perspectives, one is a Benjaminian model of temporalisation of historical contingencies (as I have discussed through reference to Peter Osborne and Kia Lindroos), and the second is an analytical model of formalization of the contingencies. To this proposition, which is also akin to Benjamin's concept, as well to the radical aleatoriness inherent in the Althusserian model, it is possible to approach via the philosophical use of the Machiavellian concept of *fortuna*. From Althusser to Lefort and Paul Ricoeur, the contingency of politics that is a condition of its temporalization could be formalized further, as Kari Palonen has done, through two opposite tendencies in conceptualizing politics, namely politicisation and politicking. The proposed division between politicisation and politicking in general terms corresponds to politics-as-activity and game in former and, opposite to that, politics as discipline, which the latter corresponds to (Palonen, 2007).

I can thus claim that the temporal and conflictual aspect of politics that I am referring to is closer to the definition of politicisation. Following this, I can claim that the general tendency of my published articles is the formalization of temporality and the contradiction of artworks that are generated by various contingencies. Eventually my aim is to discuss these contingencies in relation to politics.

The conceptual “[possibility] of something unexpected, contingency, conflict ... a sudden presence ... brought into present as an active and constitutive moment, including [the] political perspective as the politicisation of the situation” (Lindroos, 1998: 89), which as a 'non-reconciliatory' understanding, “unfolds the elements of the contingency, but [is] still embedded in history” (Lindroos, 1998: 93). This, to sum up, is a non-reconciled conceptualisation of history as political contingency. Based on Benjamin's early, romantic period writings the concept of 'nicht-synthesis' (non-synthesis) is an attempt to think about the past, or 'to link the Now and the Then', which would avoid the unfolding of historicist writing; or more formally, it is attempt to discuss history as 'discontinuous' conceptualisation (“the history of oppressed people”) as opposite to 'continuous' conceptualisation of history (“continuum of oppressive

power") (Lindroos, 1998: 94). Since in political conceptualisation (as well, and even more, in artistic conceptualisation) these elements have their existence only as concepts, then theoretically we have to unfold these descriptions such as 'oppressed people' and 'oppressive power' to our model also as concepts. I believe that 'nicht-synthesis' as a conceptual model offers a valuable contribution also to, what in the theory of Louis Althusser is described as decisive distinction between the 'object of knowledge' and the 'real object' (Althusser & Balibar, 2009: 44). By linking these two approaches I have tried to position the heterogeneity of the uneven temporality into the field of structuralist discourse. This approach is drawn in some way from my interest in the formalization of the politicisation of the avant-garde art.

The nicht-synthesis model has at least two methodological advances in positioning the heterogeneity of temporalities in a structured and formalist way: *firstly*, it is against historicism, which assumes the teleological, determinist mode of transformation; and *secondly*, it does not posit the issue of representation as a simplified and reductionist process. This historiography is more advanced than other methodologies dealing with the past, that are usually focusing on official narrative of historicist formation of political or artistic object.

*Secondly*, the methodological advance of the 'nicht-synthesis' model is the amount of resources it adds to scientific research: through the conceptualization of different temporalities in the construction of the artwork, nicht-synthesis is representing reality on many different and contradictory levels. The crucial distinctiveness in this methodology is that it is erasing automatism, or the spontaneity of the formation of the artwork; and presents the art work as a process of construction. According to Benjamin "art becomes politicised through the 'construction' process" (Lindroos, 1998: 185). But two particular things in Benjamin's conceptualisation of art as construction should be added: a) construction does not have a functionalist meaning; it is related to destruction and antagonisms. "For the materialist historian, it is important to distinguish the construction of a historical state of affairs very rigorously from what one generally calls its 'reconstruction'. 'Reconstruction' by means of empathy is one-sided. 'Construction' presupposes 'destruction'. (Benjamin, 1988: 60, Konvolut N; Osborne, 1995: 156); and b) construction is against spontaneity and automatism.

With this we arrive at the core of the 'nicht-synthesis' model as it is applied to cinema: first, this model considers art as a construction; and second, it separates cinematic reality from everyday life reality by underlining the distinctiveness of its parameters ["Benjamin does not express any value-aspect between the two, since both realities are equally real and important" (Lindroos, 1998: 206)].

Another important methodological aspect of elaborating the 'nicht-synthesis' model is the conceptual possibilities it can implement in the field of political philosophy. For my purpose 'nicht-synthesis' is the conceptual possibility for evaluating the questions of Yugoslavia as questions of cinema. In this regard we could assume that by dealing with a "second Yugoslavia" as the "second Nature" of Benjamin (as it is developed in 'Author as Producer which

will be discussed in following chapter) it would be possible to claim that the “cinema-country of Yugoslavia” is field of action for my conceptualisation.

The philosophical possibilities of the 'nicht-synthesis' model for the formalization of contingencies are as follows:

1. temporal: a non-reconciliation of distinctive temporal elements in conceptualizing the historical transformation of art;
2. spatial/or as imagistic/or as syntactical: a non-reconciliation between different realms of knowledge/perception construction (i.e. non reconciliation between the object of knowledge and real object);
3. as methodological; non-reconciliation between different conceptualisations of knowledge processes in politics and art.



## 4 MATERIALS OF MY RESEARCH AND PRESENTATION OF MY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

As I have explained earlier my methodological and theoretical approach to a large extent determined my approach to the selection of materials. In discussing Black Wave I have mainly focused on the writings of Dušan Makavejev. One particular reason for this is Makavejev's own intellectual trajectory. Apart from making very avant-garde and experimental films from the mid-fifties onwards, Makavejev has worked on many different styles of films, including documentary, feature, experimental and propaganda films. Even if I did not reflect on the form of this heterogeneity, it has designated somehow my methodology which also included heterogeneous conceptual devices. Another aspect of Makavejev's intellectual and artistic formation was his political activism. As I tried to discuss especially in my text on the **Cultural Policy of Makavejev** and in my two part essay **The Art of Slogans**, Makavejev's early involvement in youth working actions in fifties and later on his engagement in various platforms of cultural policy have influenced his formation incredibly. I have emphasized the role of this political and cultural activism as much as I could. The particularity of my research is that I have heavily referred to this field of Makavejev's formation, which unfortunately in many other studies has been silenced. In order to demonstrate my thesis that Makavejev's intellectual formation was heavily influenced by discussions on cultural policy in socialism and that this interest towards cultural policy has driven his artistic formation I have looked also at the materials that are little referred to in the discussions on Black Wave. Namely I have looked at the debates and discussions published in various Yugoslavian sociological and cultural journals on the importance and role of New Cinema in the Yugoslavian cultural field where also Makavejev took part.

Another reason why I have discussed Makavejev to such an extent is that his book "Kisses for a Comrade Slogan" was one of the most concise elaborations of the issues regarding the relation between art and politics. Published at the moment when Makavejev began to realize his internationally acclaimed feature films, this book – actually a collection of his early writings – is proof of the

heterogeneity of his intellectual formation. This forgotten 'source' in Makavejev's scholarship has been introduced into my research a completely fresh view on the formal aspects of the avant-garde films that deal with the political issues.

In my article **On Makavejev, On Ideology** I have focused on the reception of Makavejev's films in international film studies. Apart from not considering any of Makavejev's writings from his formative years; many of these receptions have reiterated certain patterns of the politicking of cinema in regard to the Yugoslavian and Makavejevan context. I have tried to deconstruct them by carefully looking at these patterns and discussing them as a reflection of two prevailing ideological tendencies. The initial drive for this extensive analysis and critique of the existing materials of writings on Makavejev was to clarify certain issues at stake which were referring to Yugoslavian cultural politics in vague and ambiguous forms by alluding to them either as a practice of anti-totalitarianism or a dissident approach. In both cases they were not sufficient of explaining real structural factors involved in artistic formations. I have tried to show that through the discourse of totalitarianism, discussions on the relation between art and politics is reduced to binary simplifications which were treating the complexities in very vague form. By looking at these complexities not as the symptoms of dissident artistic practice in the conditions of totalitarianism, but as a constructive contradiction I have consciously analysed these rifts, difficulties, and conflicts. Simply put, in order to write my two part essay **The Art of Slogans** and **Cultural Policy of Dušan Makavejev**, which are a substantial part of my thesis, I had to go through a complex and difficult process of clarifying the ambiguities and confusions regarding the reception of Makavejev.

My text on the **Cultural Policy of Post-Yugoslav Spaces** is an attempt to actualize the methodology from a contemporary perspective. More directly it is to understand the heritage and legacy of self-management – which was experimental cultural policy that ensured the space for experimental artistic practices in Yugoslavia – from the perspective of actual contemporary artistic practices. My thesis in that article is that we cannot talk from a contemporary perspective about self-management when the economic and political conditions of its existence have ceased to exist. As I tried to demonstrate by looking at the theory and practice of contemporary art collectives, self-management today in post-Yugoslavian conditions can exist only as a culturalization, or psychologization of political art practices. The materials that I have used in this text are in direct relation with discussions on the Black Wave. Firstly, the conceptual tools, or theory of dealing with artistic collectives are referring largely to a post-Fordist approach that has a strong link with practice and theory of self-management. Secondly, most of the advocates of the artistic collectives as new form of politicisation in post-Yugoslavian conditions have extensively relied on the artistic and intellectual sources that were also important for the Black Wave, such as Conceptual Art, Fluxus, non-figurative socialist sculpture, anti-fascist art, etc. By following these similarities in genesis I have tried to show the differences in the formal constitution of the art-work and its consequent politicisation.

## 5 EXCESSES AND CONTRADICTIONS OF BLACK WAVE

### 5.1 Introduction to the Contradictions of “Black Wave”

The object of my study is Yugoslavian New Wave films from 1960's. These artistic films, usually labelled as 'Black Wave' (Crni Talas) or 'New Film' (Novi Film) have characteristics of formal innovation, non-narrative and non-diegetic plot, prevalence of politically and socially controversial issues, and alternative strategies in realization, production and distribution.

Surveying recent writings on 'Black Wave' we can realize that this description apart from being an imprecise and ideologically driven term, as it is rendered in historiographical, sociological and aesthetic studies, is also a term that is charged with confusions and misunderstandings. One of the main reasons of this confusion is that the term 'black wave' as a designation of certain artistic films was never used by film-makers themselves. Apart from vague reference to so-called Polish 'black' documentaries from 1956-1958, there is not any other link between 'black wave' and other cinemas that would connect the blackness, opaqueness, and negativity of Yugoslavian films to the blackness of films in other genres, geographies or times.

The genealogy of the term 'black wave' can be dated to the end of sixties, precisely to 1969 when *Borba*, official newspaper of the Yugoslavian Communist League published simultaneously in Belgrade and Zagreb, launched an attack on certain artistic films as politically and ideologically unreliable cultural productions. Written by Vladimir Jovičić Jovičić, this report titled as “'Black Wave' in Our Film” is so far, to my knowledge, one of the first occasions of the use of the term<sup>1</sup>. As a primer in the attack on Yugoslavian New Cinema, this text has

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<sup>1</sup> There are other, earlier accounts of labelling some Yugoslavian films as “black” movies, which go back as far as 1963. Some of these accounts were discussed in recent studies on the historiography of Black Wave (Jovanovic, 2011). But Jovicic's article is the first which uses “black wave” in order to designate a particular movement in Yugoslavian film production.

been referred to as neo-Stalinist, or as a neo-Zhdanovist turn in the cultural policy of Yugoslavia; and by many it is interpreted as the text which is commissioned by a party officials in order to deal with the political contradictions of Yugoslavia by instrumentalizing cultural and artistic fields (Ristic & Leposavic, 1998; Dragovic-Soso, 2002). Recent discussion of this text by Boris Buden has put emphasis on the fact that Jovičić's attack on 'Black Wave' was actually based on representational policy strictly regulated by the Yugoslavian state apparatus that saw this issue beyond the aesthetical field, and which had far reaching political and economic consequences. For firstly, the attack has criticized these films as a negative representation of Yugoslavia, or more precisely places its superbly economical, geographical and touristic sides in a negative light; and secondly, it also dealt with the issue of representation on a more ontological or general level, as a philosophy of 'blackness', 'dead-end' and impossibility. But as Buden points rightly, what was really at stake here is that Jovičić had set the limits of the policy of art in socialist Yugoslavia as the practice of representation, a practice which the Black Wave was failing to carry out: the "Official position of the Party on cultural issues at the time was drawing its arguments from an identification with a Western-Orientalist gaze that imagined Yugoslavia as an exotic realm of the authentic enjoyment of life and natural vitality." (Buden, 2010: 42). Accordingly, the real measure of what official Yugoslavian cultural policy accepted as meriting the designation 'Yugoslavianism' was not "culture as a field of struggle" (Bourdieu, 1993; Balibar & Macherey, 1996), but a field of reconciliation where culture would play a role of affirming existing Yugoslavian conditions prescribed by the official policy of representation. In this case, art in the service of politics would erase social conflict and contradiction (including class conflict) was supported by state cultural policy as, to paraphrase Buden, "an identity based symbolical position that surrenders society to culture" (Buden, 2010: 43). This ultimate functionalization of art, or the subsuming of art to immediate social benefits is probably the reason why Daniel Goulding has labelled Jovičić's attack as a 'neo-Zhdanovist' move (Goulding, 1985: 83).

Looking carefully at the text of Jovičić we can realize that in the text, the connection between art and politics, the issue of representation, the cultural politics of avant-garde cinema, functionalism and national identity in Yugoslavian film are depicted in far more complicated terms than most of the critics of Jovičić's attack are ready to recognize. What is most unusual with Jovičić's attack is that he is describing the cultural politics of Black Wave as correlatively opposite, or on the other side, of conservative socialist-realist Zhdanovist cultural policy. As he claims, the latter that could be described as "the most directly affirmative," is replaced by the position of former 'neo-zhdanovism' as "lacking any kind of affirmative attitude." Accordingly, as Jovičić puts it, the negativity of Black Wave is a new extremism of affirmative non-representation. This exaggerated non-representation is the true aspect of Black Wave; due to this apparent form Jovičić is labelling Black Wave as 'anti-zhdanovist zhdanovism' (Jovičić, 1969: 23). The conceptualisation of Yugoslavian cultural politics with the terms of positively described negation, or the impossibility of negation, is

not an unfamiliar thing; Makavejev described it in terms of a hidden Stalinism in an anti-Stalinist Yugoslavia (Mortimer, op.cit., 2009: 169), and Svetozar Stojanovic, a philosopher affiliated with group Praxis, retroactively described the Yugoslavian situation as 'anti-Stalinist Stalinism'.<sup>2</sup>

But instead of a further formalisation of the contradictions of Black Wave in relation to the issue of 'non-representation', Jovičić rather, symptomatically, closes his remark with the historicist claim that Black Wave's negativity is untimely, or ill-timed, an artistic expression which does not synchronize with the ongoing state-of-things; in general, the Black Wave is, according to Jovičić, not in harmony with the Yugoslavian 'cultural-political-ideological' progress (Jovičić, p. 7). This dis-harmonious situation of Black Wave is explained through the assumed unbalance between its form and content; even the claim of Black Wave film directors that their films are an unmediated reflection of 'black' reality (a claim often repeated by Zivojin Pavlovic, Aleksandar Petrovic, Krsto Papic, Dušan Makavejev and other Black wave film directors) is according to Jovičić an un-scientific and naïve proposition. Jovičić then is contradicting himself by discarding the idea of an 'un-mediated reflection' that recalls Karl Marx's thesis that the general development of society should not necessarily be in accord with the general development of the arts. Subsequent to this, Jovičić claims that neither Black Wave nor any other movies can represent reality 'as it is' (Jovičić, p. 7). In this conceptual confusion, or 'ideological attack' blackness meant something more than a colour of the cinematic picture (i.e. the optico-technical disposition of filmic or pro-filmic material), or the representation of *vérité*; it had a surplus of connotations, directly or indirectly linked with the extra-aesthetical projections toward the discussed artwork.

As Dušan Makavejev has described, in one of his interviews, this blackness had a fantasy of ideological excess that in some ways exceeded the aspect of 'negativity' in the avant-garde artistic position of 'black wave' filmmakers themselves. "This expression, the 'Black Wave', was invented by some people who were building their political careers at the time. ... In fact, their imagination was very wild, politico-pornographic, and they took for granted much more than we did, in our own, naive way. These passionate pursuers brought an enormous amount of darkness into our films, having been obsessed both with the need of that darkness, and of the need to be cleansed of it. Thus were our films, as 'black films', used for some social exorcism, for spiritual release in some people, ... but this had nothing to do with us" (Acin, 1988: 39; Levi, 2007: 47).

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<sup>2</sup> "The biggest irony in the YCP's (Yugoslavian Communist Party) history, however, was that its most Stalinist potential was manifested only at the time it openly resisted Stalin. This is why I described, more than 40 years ago, Tito's initial "no" to Stalin as a form of *Stalinist anti-Stalinism*." (Stojanovic, 2009: 390).

## 5.2 Theory of Cinematic Excesses

My position is that this 'excess' of Black Wave opened the door to many confusing positions in the artistic cinema of Yugoslavia of the sixties. I am here referring to the concept of 'excess' in strictly sociological terms as noise or contradiction that is involved in the constitution of social understanding, or philosophically as some kind of semiotic parasite.<sup>3</sup> But 'excess', as an explicitly formalist concept, has also been used for description, if we simplify, of marginalized and oppressed stories in the construction of filmic-form. In film theory, the excess has been used almost as a main constituent of cinematic systems. As Stephan Heath described, in rather schematic and theoretical terms: a "filmic system therefore, always means at least this: the 'system' of the film in so far as the film is the organization of a homogeneity and the material outside inscribed in the operation of that organization as its contradictions." (Heath, 1975: 100). This "material inscribed as contradiction" was crucial for neo-formalist cinema theoretician Kristin Thompson to develop a theory of the dialectic between narrative and counter-narrative as a main dynamic of filmic formation. (Thompson, 1986: 130-142). But, apart from the production of cinematic narrative, the conceptualisation of excess, I believe, is very useful for applying to the development of historiography, which would be more open to the alternative counter-narratives of the marginalized or repressed. Already apparent in the allusion of the term itself, this methodological approach would also make possible the use of historiographical contradictions, which usually are repressed as obstacles, in methodology and theory itself.

In order to navigate in this contradictory, or "noisy" field of 'black wave', I will work on constructing some kind of 'cognitive mapping' that will indicate certain basic theoretical and methodological tendencies in this field. My *initial* step is to 'map' some of the recent writings on 'black wave' and to show that theoretical, historiographical and methodological diversity on this issue is due to the contradictions that are constitutive to the conceptualisation of the term; while 'mapping' these contradictory aspects in three distinct ideological and political fields that have certain particularities to what Yugoslavia meant (respectively in the field of ideological apparatuses, nationalism and self-management socialism) I will also *demonstrate* the formal and theoretical consequences of these conceptualisations. As a counter-methodology to the currently available readings that deal with the relation between art and politics in the framework of Black Wave films, I will *offer* a more complex and formal-materialist model of reading that includes both contradiction and theoretical elaboration.

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<sup>3</sup> To the concept of noise in this text I will refer occasionally, always in relation to conflicts and contradictions that have a constitutive role in the construction of an artwork. Methodologically and theoretically, this approach can be traced to the work of formalists and semioticians (Lotman, 1977; Eco, 1989) of epistemological philosophers (Serres, 1983: 48-63); and also in some references to ideological analyses in Althusser (Althusser, 2006: 105-110)

## **6 MAPPING THE CONTRADICTIONS OF 'BLACK WAVE'**

### **6.1 The Contradictions of Party Politics, or the Ideological State Apparatus**

The main conceptual tenet of this tendency is based on the following assumption: that Yugoslavian socialism constituted an intrinsic and irrecoverable set of ideological contradictions that shaped its political form to such extent that the disappearance of the state apparatus was inevitable. The most eminent theoretician of this thesis on the contradictory state of Yugoslavia is Dejan Jovic, who in his research concentrates on the discrepancies of political discourse in state socialism and has insisted on this tension with most determined clarity. According to Jovic, the Yugoslavian ideological state was a “no-win situation” of perplexing and antagonistic political categories, where, by way of contradiction, the theory and practice of socialist self-management, primarily supported by Josip Broz Tito and theorized by party official Edvard Kardelj. Jovic, described the theory and practice of self-management as the pragmatic outcome of the irreconcilable social and political forces that constituted Yugoslav reality. In the final analysis then the theory and practice of self-management was not a genuine “third path” of socialism, but a well-calculated strategy for avoiding the catastrophe of inevitable collapse.

Formally these political conflicts of the Second Yugoslavia (or the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, 1945-1991) were not only of an ethnic nature, as Jovic argues, but also of an “ideological nature”, and had mostly to do with the conflicts of 'administrative' ('statist') and 'self-managing' ('non-statist') understanding of the objectives of socialism (Jovic, 2003: 161). This conception of socialism had strong repercussions on the representation of what is generally understood by 'Yugoslavism': that is, as an alternative socialist conceptualisation of the state regulating the ever-coercive ethnic and ideological antagonisms. According to Jovic, the consequences of these contradictions between two irreconcilable tendencies in Yugoslavian ideology were grievous: “The success of

Kardelj's anti-statist project led to weakening of the state, thus making it vulnerable and unable to defend its unity. Yugoslavia was first weakened from within, by its own ideological concept of the 'withering away of the state' (Jovic, 2003: 158). Another consequence of this 'no-win situation' was that the paradoxes of the 'new Yugoslavia' should be all embracing or, as Jovic describes it, as a "catch-all formula, which, to many sides offered something and to none everything" (Jovic, 2003: 160). As a result of this, the meaning of socialist self-management became everything and nothing at the same time; it became some kind of linguistic game that postponed the eruption of constant tension. Jovic's principle argumentation surrounding self-management ideologies ('anti-statists' ideologies) was that they underestimated "real danger from the real world", and led to an "almost religious belief in the power of words", which ultimately created an un-realistic politics through "resolutions and propaganda" (Jovic, 2003: 181). Formally, this version of Yugoslavia was bound up with paradox and contradiction, which hoped for the re-conciliation of antagonistic ideological tendencies through self-management theory. But instead of a solution, as Jovic aims to demonstrate, self-management's "non-statism" generated more deep structural contradictions where reality and fiction blurred through synthetic linguistic constructions.

### 6.1.1 Linguistic Theories on the Formation of Ideological Contradictions

There are a few different theoretical approaches dealing with the ideological contradictions of art in post-revolutionary socialism. One of these is the theory of the speech-act that deals with the issue of ideological contradictions usually from the discursive angle of linguistic formation. These discussions mostly deal with the issue of political slogans in art-works and everyday life produced in a revolutionary and post-revolutionary context. As discussed by Alexei Yurchak in the context of the post-Stalinist Soviet ideological field, the construction of slogans are one of the main constituent practices in the ideological and cultural vacuum of socialist countries. Yurchak's theory on the construction of political speech in Stalinist and post-Stalinist ideological state, involving a complex set of relations between performative and constative speech-act positions is a very useful approach. He has shown, through referring to some post-structuralist theses on language in relation to Austin's general speech-act propositions, that the fundamental constituent of the 'performativity' of language in the field of semantic 'constativeness' is the speech-act's ability to have a multiple, polyvalent, and transformable nature (Yurchak, 2005: 20). Instead of proposing some kind of spontaneous anthropology of pragmatically ad hoc hermeneutics, Yurchak is dealing with the arbitrariness of political speech in the Stalinist and post-Stalinist ideological climate as a formal system of linguistic strategy, where the constative and performative become inter-related to such a degree that all meanings are turned into a combinatory of "quotations": "[the] narrative structure of the text was becoming circular, to the point that many formulaic speeches and addresses could be read top to bottom and bottom to top with similar results" (Yurchak, 2005: 49-50).



The theses on the un-sustainable contradictions of Yugoslavian state ideology and its relation to speech phenomena were picked up by few cinema researchers as intellectual and sociological alibis for the explanation of the strange and conflictual form and excess of Black Wave films. One of these was Greg de Cuir who in his articles and book developed the thesis that the contradictoriness of Yugoslavian Black Wave film was the result of a rhetoric of antagonistic ideological stances as an extension of state ideological rhetoric. In order to formalize Black Wave film's (extrinsic) political contradictions de Cuir put forward certain speech act structures that he describes as rhetorical: "an oratorical mode through which a polemical message is delivered by the characters in the films" (de Cuir, 2012: 149). Usually, according to de Cuir, the most concrete and immediate symbol of rhetoric utilized by Black Wave filmmakers is "political speech" (ibid). Accordingly, a distinct form of "political speech" in Black Wave is constructed as a position opposite official or 'socialist-realist' artistic form by encapsulating "the theme and spirit" which de Cuir describes as "methodical Marxism", a branch of Marxism forwarding anti-traditional, oppositional, and critical ideas in contrast to the programmatic, optimistic, and educational ideas of 'socialist-realism'. In applying these epistemological tenets to Yugoslavian film, de Cuir draws the following parallel: "The Yugoslav film industry was founded on Gorky's definition of socialist-realism, which in turn conditioned the conservative aesthetic of classical Yugoslav cinema. Methodical Marxism and Black Wave represent a progressive spirit and stance." (de Cuir, 2012: 78). For de Cuir, this contradictory aspect of Yugoslavian socialism also blurs with the general antagonisms and rhetoric of Marxian ideology. In this case, the contradictions of Black Wave have been conceptually prolonged to a deeper level of philosophical discrepancy. The shortcomings of De Cuir's work, especially his brand of 'methodical Marxism' has been critically evaluated both from historical and theoretical points (Jovanovic, 2011: 161-171; Mazierska, 2012: 107-109).

Despite the fact that this formalisation of Black Wave films through some kind of philosophical model seemingly elaborates the position that prevails in the intellectual conjuncture of most positivist and historicist approaches; the real ideological form of Black Wave seems to be far more complex than de Cuir is acknowledging. This could be discussed with another example of applying Jovic's theses on the contradictory politics of Yugoslavian cinema studies. Vlastimir Sudar's recent publication dealing with one of the protagonists of Black Wave cinema, Aleksandar Petrovic, extensively references Jovic and other Yugoslav historians, such as John Lampe, through whom he depicts Yugoslavian socialist ideology as a paradoxical state of impossibility and as an ideology abstracted from reality ["Tito was liberating with one hand but holding back the process with the other" (Sudar, 2013: 45)]. Following this line, Sudar proposes an historico-biographical analysis of Petrovic's development as emancipation from this paradoxical and abstract conception of the state. The evolutionary linearity of Petrovic's formal and filmic development is depicted in his research as inversely proportional to Yugoslavian political and ideological history. Paral-

lel to the deepening and complicating of Yugoslav self-managing ideological contradictions, Petrovic's cinema became more and more detached from these induced contradictions of self-management. The result, as the author shows, is to turn more toward the concrete elements of society and emancipation from ideology and the abstractness of political discourse. Artistically this inversion meant the detachment from politics and culture and the movement toward the issues of the eternal values of nature. In the case of Petrovic this evolution can be depicted through the use of the Roma (or as Sudar names them, the "Gypsies") in his films. As Sudar argues, the interest in nature as an alternative to abstract politics in Petrovic already existed in his earlier films; but while shooting a short documentary *Sabori/Assemblies* in 1965 Petrovic discovered that the "'other side', or the [rural, religious, superstitious] world that the official politics of the time would have preferred not exist", was more real than the abstract calculations of official party ideologies. This discovery, according to Sudar, becomes a key that unlocks his artistic development (Sudar, 2013: 94). This shift to concrete reality, peculiar to many Eastern European film-makers as a sign of detachment from the tensions of abstract politics, transformed into a genuine cinematic style of dissidence. Petrovic's film *Skupljaci Perje/I Even Met the Happy Gypsies* which won the Cannes Grand Prix in 1967 is the most clear example of this concreteness, or as Sudar describes: "[the film depicts] the Gypsy lifestyle as a specific culture, which communists were not willing to understand ... and did not permit the practice of their specificity (their nomad lifestyle)." (Sudar, 2013: 133).

At the artistic and stylistic level, Sudar is interpreting the detachment of Petrovic from the issue of politics and its contradictions, toward the issue of nature and harmony, as the detachment from formalism; or as the "abandonment of the 'capriciousness' of formal experimentation" (Sudar, 2013: 94). In order to contextualize this shift of de-formalization we can describe it, schematically based on the scale of Sudar's historiography of Yugoslavian artistic films, as a shift from New Film to Black Wave<sup>4</sup>. In the case of Petrovic, who has wrote two books on this issue, the Black Wave represents exactly this mode of giving up the ideas of imagined socialist progress through the device of de-formalization (Petrovic, 1988). *Sabori* in this case of historicism, as depicted by Sudar, is a film of transition; the moment of detachment from the form that gives way to an un-mediated truth. Methodologically speaking, this evokes the claim that Black Wave films as an art of counter-history were a condition for the revealing of truth in Yugoslavia that showed the contradictions buried under the official palimpsest of confusions, lies, ideologies, and politics. Or, as Sudar describes it, a process of the "unravelling the political picture of time and place, as it can be deciphered from viewing Petrovic's films." (Sudar, 2013: 6). That purity of the Black Wave phenomenon as an "anti-dogmatist" stance is con-

<sup>4</sup> In the historiography of Yugoslav artistic films one of the most difficult questions is distinction between New Film and Black Wave. Usually New Film is seen, compared with Black Wave, as a more formal approach of depicting urban modern life; in opposition to this Black Wave is referred to as a cinema of truth, depicting the leftovers of urban socialist progress. (Hatherley, 2012: 180-212; Goulding, 2002).

structured, according to Sudar viewing, not only through the harmony of story (*fabula*) of these films, but also through a device of plot (*sjuzet*) which aims at a more effective integration between form and content.<sup>5</sup>

Describing Petrovic's earlier political documentaries where he experimented with the new filmic-languages, Sudar claims that: "Petrovic's formal innovation was carefully integrated into the more traditional documentary form, making the film very dynamic and at the same time coherent in its content." (Sudar, 2013: 59).

### 6.1.2 Conceptual Consequences of the Formal Study of Black Wave Cinema

The conceptualisation of 'dissidence' with these terms is not un-familiar to Yugoslav and generally to Eastern-European socialist cinema studies and cultural politics. For example Yvette Biro's book on modern cinema is also built on this dualism between an abstract and concrete notion of film phenomenology; which she discusses as a dichotomy between poetry and grammar. This device, which in fact is based on the theory of Russian Formalism is used in the book of Biro as some kind of paradoxical de-formalization of the artistic text; she recognizes that the artistic text is a refraction of the extrinsic reality, but adds that the concrete reality itself has artistic (poetic) characteristics. The position of Biro's phenomenological formalism is complex in cinema theory because it uses formalist theories in order to propose an un-formal (non-formal) reading of cinematic works. Considering that Biro's theories of cinematic formalist-phenomenology have had a large influence on the reception of Eastern European films and, in general, on the conceptualization of political cinema, it is important to clarify this theoretical model and its ideological and political repercussions. The main theoretician of Russian Formalism, Roman Jakobson from whom Biro derives her thesis on the 'poetry of grammar', had a strong philosophical relation to Husserlian phenomenology (Holenstein, 1976). But the relation between poetry and grammar in Jakobson were formalized on two oppositional axes, as 'poetry of grammar' and as 'grammar of poetry'. Biro, referring only to first one, delimits the scope of Jakobsonian theory exactly from the point where it is strongest, or most formalist. For Jakobson's 'grammar of poetry' is one of the most crucial logics of artistic creativity; it makes art and poetry pos-

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<sup>5</sup> According to the Russian Formalists the difference between story and plot is crucial for underlining the materialist analysis of the text. Initially proposed by Viktor Shklovsky, the term "plot formation altered the traditional notion of plot as a set of motifs and redirected it from the provenance of thematic concepts to that of compositional concepts" (Ejxenbaum, 2002: 15-16). Boris Ejxenbaum describes "plot formation" as the most important device of artistic work: "the concept of plot (*sjuzet*) acquired a new meaning which did not coincide with that of story (*fabula*), and plot formation itself assumed its natural place in the sphere of formal study as a specific proponent of literary works." (Ejxenbaum, 2002: 16). Thus, in order to execute a proper Formalist approach to the text we have to conceptualize plot not as a depiction of events, or "story-stuff" (Shklovsky, 1990) which is only material for filling the plot, but as artistic laws which organize, or compose these materials. For this reason approaches to artistic works which concentrate on the issue of *fabula*, or story, are missing essential devices of artistic distinctiveness.

sible as a device to formalize extrinsic materials. Philosophically speaking, it is about structuring the intelligibility of art through prescriptions the effects of which do not necessarily limit artistic expression. With Jakobson we confront artistic prescriptions which allude to the Spinozist point of geometricity; or, as Jakobson states, "The obligatory character of the grammatical processes and concepts constrains the poet to reckon with them; either he strives for symmetry and sticks to these simple, repeatable, diaphanous patterns, based on binary principle, or he may cope with them, while longing for an 'organic chaos'. I have stated repeatedly that the rhythm technique is 'either grammatical or anti-grammatical' but never agrammatical." (Jakobson, 1987: 132).

Departing from this we could say that Biro is hoping for an "organic chaos" of artistic creativity devoid of grammar to condition the artistic work. Furthermore her thesis of cinema as a "new mythology" which derives its richness from a poetism of concreteness and un-mediated reality is further explicated by a sociological observation that in modern, institutionalized, ideologically over-determined, standardized life "events and people are becoming more and more formalized and mechanical" (Biro, 1982: 67). As an opposition to these limits of the mechanistic notion of abstractness, she proposes the resourcefulness of the concrete, as a "poetics of grammar" of everyday reality. Film can arrive at this layer of reality only at the moment it extracts all ideological meaning or, to put it more precisely, the entire effects of the ideological state apparatus that are inscribed in the artwork. This de-politicization of cinema, according to Biro has far reaching philosophical consequences which she, following one aspect of Jakobson's formalism, describes as "negative significance": "This missing layer [meaninglessness, "loss of deep human meaning" sic], is what the film can make visible when it descends into the object-world's unintelligible jungle and presents it to us for what it really is: chaos, indifference, and dreary subsistence; it is an empty existence, of, if you will, a nonexistence." (Biro, 1982: 89). Considering that Biro names the device of this 'negative significance' semiotic exaggeration, excess, or simply de-familiarization and estrangement ("*ostannenie*") (Biro, 1982: 78) and that her proposition of "indifference" reminds us of Shkovsky's "plotless device" we have to grasp these terms in their fully formalist aspect. Since I will deal with the conceptual importance of the device of "*ostranenie*" later on in the work of Makavejev, it is important to situate this artistic device with another similar device, namely with Brecht's concept of "de-familiarization" (V-effect). The literature on the comparison, influence and relation between Shkovsky's '*ostannenie*' and Brecht's '*Verhemdurnefekt*' has been discussed on many occasions (Mitchell, 1974; Brewster, 1974; Striedter, 1989); the main theoretical tenets of these discussions are divided in two; one claiming that '*ostranenie*' and 'de-familiarization' refer to the device of attraction and shock and that it has a deliberate effect on a purely perceptual mode of aesthetic experience; and another referring to them as a procedure of signifying the heuristic process of overlooking the context of politicisation in the arts. In order to discuss these different modes of 'estrangements' or 'de-familiarizations' in a broader, politicised realm I propose to have a closer look at the writings of Darko Su-

vin, Yugoslavian Praxis philosopher and dramaturge, who discussed the terms in direct relation to avant-garde art. As Suvin made explicit, the V-effect in Brecht is not only about stressing the position of audience as an alienated mass from the artwork; but more about pointing to the procedure of alienation which the structure of the artwork itself carries. In other words, instead of understanding the V-effect (alienation made perceptible) as a device which makes us conscious that we are in front of artwork, Suvin is claiming that the real emancipatory potential of Brecht-Shklovsky's device is that it makes the social, political and ideological construction of certain elements involved in the constitution of the artwork perceptible (Suvin, 1965: 579-580). But the use of V-effect solely as a device to experience the world, of an unmediated relation to reality is according to Suvin a "nihilist estrangement aiming at affecting a ritual and mythical, rather than a cognitive approach" (Suvin, 1984: 252). Formally, the horizon of all nihilist estrangements, according to Suvin "is a beatific vision of the discontinuous flux of things, related to a consciousness of the limits of philosophical humanism and of the positive meaning of alienation." (Suvin, 1984: 253). This methodological correction about two distinct uses of estrangement, the nihilist and political, is important for two particular reasons related to my research on the formal and political reading of Black Wave, and particularly of Dušan Makavejev's films. First, Suvin's intervention on the "nihilist estrangement" (which he further describes as "religious, mystical, and mythical") targets the intellectual conjuncture of art theory by "substituting pseudo-biological values for historical ones" (Suvin, 1984: 232), particularly in the work of Lee Baxandall. As I discussed in my article **On Makavejev, On Ideology**, the writings of Baxandall, especially his text *Towards an Eastern-European Cinemarxism* was instrumental in appropriating Makavejev's film-form as something distinctively (Eastern-European!?) political, which does not use heuristic means of politicisation as Godard, but through mobilization of more elementary and deep biological forces and effects. (Baxandall, 1983). In criticising the shortcomings of Baxandall's approach and its methodological consequences I have also criticised other examples of similar tendencies prevailing in cinema studies that refer to Makavejev as an exemplary case of film-works de-politicizing the artistic devices by using grotesque and excess metaphorical forms.<sup>6</sup> Suvin's description of this stream of art theory as "nihilist estrangement" allows me to problematize the issue further in formal terms. Secondly, following this model, one could easily situate Biro's approach in the field of "de-familiarization as desensualisation", or of the possibility of a mythical device where "dominant fossilised views of reality should, when juxtaposed to 'unpacked' events be revealed 'as grotesque, inadequate and dangerous' (Suvin, 1984: 249). This is strikingly similar to the cinematic position which Biro is describing with terms "*ostranenie-as-lifestyle*" and she is furthermore placing Makavejev as one of the most important representatives of this "anti-film" tendency (Biro, 1982: 92). Ac-

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<sup>6</sup> Political cinematic modernism is here described in a larger framework as corresponding to an idea of the intersection between art and politics and the consequences of its contradictions (Rodowick, 1994; Harvey, 1982; Kovacs, 2008).

cordingly, as the finest example of the “poetry of grammar” and the grotesque, this strand of 'anti-film' is distinct from Godard's for many reasons; primarily because it is constructive as opposed to destructive, and, moreover, because it does not use politics as a “slogan like comic abstraction”, “as an unambiguous and direct means of information” and as a “didactic language ... of the one-dimensional truth of an ideology” (Biro, 1982: 93-95). So instead of poster-like Godard we have affirmative life-like Makavejev. Or instead of the slogans of Godard, we have the murmurs or poetry of Makavejev. To resume this discussion from a dualist perspective regarding the relation between art and politics in cinema, as it is depicted through the dualism of Makavejev and Godard, I have schematized the discourse on this issue by pointing to the strict cinematic topography that can be drawn from the writings on Makavejev. By referring to this basic scheme which is pointing at limits and re-occurring motifs of Makavejevan cinematic topography I have detected two general tendencies which could be described as 'concrete' and 'abstract'. The division of the entire cinematic avant-garde into two oppositional or alternative tendencies could be placed in a general schematization of cinematic modernism, or cinematic political modernism that corresponds to the avant-garde films after sixties. Initially discussed by Peter Wollen in his text 'Two Avant-gardes', this schematic dualism of avant-garde cinema is not based on total and definite conceptualizations. But as Wollen indicates, this dualism (“two avant-gardes”) is about the distinctiveness of the abstract and concrete logic of avant-garde cinematic expressions. Roughly, this division sets out to delineate the cinematic modes of productions in two general tendencies: form based cinema, or as Wollen puts it signifier oriented cinema; and content based, or signified oriented cinema. More precisely, the difference of these two 'counter-cinematic' streams is based on their formations; or to a difference in their historical formations, or genesis. If one is based on visual art, another is based on theatre; if one is closed, opaque and self-referential, another one is open, social and activist oriented; or more precisely, if one is about forms, another is about content (Wollen, 1982: 92-104). In the Wollenian system then, Vertov, Peter Gidal, Straub & Huillet belong to former; whereas Eisenstein, Godard, Glauber Rocha to a latter orientation. (Wollen, 1982). If we follow this dualist avant-garde topography we can ask what the position of Dušan Makavejev would be in this system?<sup>7</sup> From the above indicated elements it is clear that the distinction between Makavejev and Godard will not hold. If Godard is in opposition to Gidal, then in order to describe Makavejev, which in most of the cases is described as an “anti-Godard” and as clear opponent of structuralist film-making like Gidal, we need a third option. We need something to situate him beyond Godard and Gidal. My proposal is that in order to conceive this difference formally, as a distinction of devices that determine art production, we have to approach this topography from a completely different intellectual position. We do not have to look at the similarities

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<sup>7</sup> In Wollen's avant-garde topography apart from Glauber Rocha, who incidentally appears as an actor in one of Godard's film, no other filmmaker that is not from North America or Europe is mentioned.

or differences in content, subject or signified, in the works of the above-mentioned filmmakers; but at the artistic devices used by filmmakers that ultimately determine their film-form. One device that would be easy to detect is the internalisation of the extrinsic or pro-filmic material, to the artistic text. By proceeding from this position we can thoroughly detect the relation of filmmaking towards reality and representation. With this method it is possible, I believe, to grasp the internalization of the contradictions of the Ideological State Apparatus in a more formalist and rigorous way.

### 6.1.3 Formal Approach to Slogans in Films of Dušan Makavejev

In my two-part article **The Art of Slogans** I have dealt with this theoretical proposal on artistic devices by applying it to the issue of the internalisation of slogans in the films of Makavejev and the art-installations of conceptual group Art & Language. Even if Makavejev and Art & Language are coming from completely different intellectual and artistic backgrounds (similar to the Godard – Gidal dualism) I tried to demonstrate that once we exclude the vulgar sociological components from theoretical work, and apply the formalist methodology of artistic devices, it is possible to arrive at far reaching conclusions on the relation of art to politics, and at the real constituents of the artwork. By analysing slogans (for sake of being concise in this explication I will not mention the consequences of Art & Language part of analysis) I showed how Makavejev from the very beginning of his artistic practice (from the amateur period of short and documentary film making, circa 1956-1961) was aware that material, or pro-filmic elements, such as slogans which were crucial elements of the ideological landscape of the socialist period of Yugoslavia could not be represented in an artwork by a simple veridical reflection on that reality.<sup>8</sup> As I explained, Makavejev did not “arrive” at this conclusion, or did not “discover” this representational device suddenly and spontaneously; but, on the contrary, arrived at this conclusion through a set of theoretical and abstract discoveries interwoven with the conflicts, struggles, and debates related to this issue. My aim was not to reflect on this “history” of the discovery of some linear development in the understanding of the relation between realism and the artwork; but more appropriately to underline the complexities of the devices of art by concentrating on three distinct moments in the transformation of the conceptualisation of what constitutes the “real” as an intersection, to paraphrase Wollen's semiotics, between signifier and signified in the artwork:

1. *The necessity of reflecting on contradiction:* while participating in the labour action of the youth (*radna akcija*) in mid fifties, Makavejev realized that the semiotics at work in these highly politicized places were not without contradiction, ambiguity, conflict and difficulty. Some of the

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<sup>8</sup> In this sense Eric Barnouw's description of Makavejev's film *Parade* (1963) as “hilarious direct-cinema kaleidoscope” (Barnouw, 1993: 266), or for Charles Warren as “earthlike cinema” (Warren, 1996: 206) are over-simplifications of Makavejev's formal novelties.

slogans chanted by the youth participating in the work actions, or slogans written on the walls were not necessarily in accordance with the official political slogans of the Yugoslavian Communist Party. Makavejev initially came to conclusion that any artwork that aims at dealing with youth political activism such as labour actions, should include these contradictions. Or, as he wrote, "It is impossible to make documentary films about youth work actions without including the slogans. I decided, then, *not to escape the slogans*. I had to approach them, to hear them, and to understand their inner meaning. This is the task that we [i.e., film makers] must undertake now in a more general fashion. (Makavejev 1965, 36)"

2. *The artistic-device in political formations*: these contradictory and ambiguous materials, such as slogans based on non-rational semantics, or following the Futurist's, the zaum (trans-rational) poetry which I described in the first part of my text the "Art of Slogans", belongs in the last instance to the political sphere. They are efficient in mobilizing collective political formations (such as youth work actions) in a direct and striking way because they, as Makavejev describes, have a sensuous, biological and non-rational nature.<sup>9</sup> In order to show the uncanny or artistic nature of the political formation, which in many cases mobilize the most illogical, dark, and ambiguous parts of communication, Makavejev described as 'dream-practices'. This *artistic device* involved in the *political formation* of slogans is a decisive component that makes politics something more than a set of synthetic and imaginary rules; and furthermore adds some "innovation", "imagination", "spontaneity" and "surrealism" to State slogans. It is related to a creative change in the language of politics; or, one could say to the making of "artistic politics". In the last instance, Makavejev introduced the device of dream-practice in order to stabilise the antagonisms between politics and art; this schema makes clear that even if the role of "art" *post facto* concerns this refreshment of social circulation its existence matters the most in the constitution of this world as "creativity".
3. *Slogans in art have to be distinct*: but these political slogans that have artistic character should not be included in the art text (or film) by simple

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<sup>9</sup> The issue of the non-rationality of slogans, or political semantics had unusual importance for the Formalist theory of political speech. Since according to the Formalists, the plot (sjuzet) as device for organization and composition of materials was more decisive in the formation of the art text than the story (fabula) which was about the depiction of events, or meanings out of life materials; then we can easily claim that materials used in the artwork from the Formalist point of view could be considered as arbitrary, or as an excess of the text. Following this, it is easy to understand why the Formalists had to work very closely with the Russian Futurist texts called zaum (trans-rational) poems which negated the usual meaning of art semantics, and put emphasis on the sounds, repetition, meaningless words. Marxist Formalists such as Boris Arvatov and Vinokur had worked on underlining the social aspect of these 'meaningless' trans-rational texts (Arvatov, 1988: 217-232; Markov, 1982: 168-175).



reflection on the contradictions inherent in them. For slogans to take part in the art text (film) it is crucial that their structure, or plot be re-composed, or re-organized. Accordingly, the set of rules that determines the inclusion of slogans in the art-text are distinct from the set of rules that determines the formation of political slogans. Eventually, according to Makavejev, art and politics are not interchangeable; they have distinct rules of dealing with the contingencies.

## 6.2 Contradictions of Nationalism

### 6.2.1 Defining the Framework of National Contradiction in the Cultural Politics of Yugoslavia

Following on the previously discussed issue of the politics of representation it is possible to claim that one of its crucial ideological assertions was based on the assumption that the critique of representation could never properly emancipate itself from the dictums and schemes of the state. Discussing Aleksandar Petrovic's film *Three* which is considered as one of the most political realizations of the so called Black Wave cinema, Sudar criticizes it from the perspective of failed non-representation: "[Petrovic] did not break or alter one of the key directives given by party ideologue Aleksandar Vuco, who said that films on war should offer viewers 'a deeper understanding of the revolutionary struggle.'" (Sudar, 2013: 110).<sup>10</sup> A similar logic of comprehending the Yugoslavian contradictions of the politics of representation could be detected in discussions dealing with Yugoslavian official policy regarding nationalism and relation of cultural politics towards such nationalism. Nick Miller's book dealing with Yugoslavian "nonconformist" writers and artists such as Dobrica Cosic and Mica Popovic, describes the value of this dissident art as a "source of transcendental truths. These truths not being connected to pragmatic utilitarian goals and interests thus existed outside the framework of communism and specifically the communist regime in Yugoslavia." (Miller, 2007: 170). The patterns which Miller is using to discuss Mica Popovic's policy of freedom and transcendentalism includes also the right to nationalist beliefs, and are in some accounts pictured as a criteria and condition for democracy. As such some of the discussions of Yugoslavian representational politics are based on complex relations between limits of freedom and tropes of the nation. Miller is not isolated in dealing with consequences of this approach, and neither was Mica Popovic the only film di-

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<sup>10</sup> The conventional approach to Yugoslav cinema divides it in two: firstly, that which was heavily supported by state was called 'Red Hollywood' due to its spectacular screening of partisan struggle; and secondly, 'Black Wave' which was unofficial cinema in contradistinction with the state, picturing partisans ambiguously and impure. But there is at least one official account in a text entitled 'Partisan Culture' by Vladimir Dedijer, the official biographer of the Yugoslav communist party and a historian of the Second World War, where he lists the genuine and most advanced film realisations about partisans: three out of four films that he mentions are 'Black Wave' films.

rector among the Black Wave filmmakers that dealt with the contested issue of nationalism.

Looking back again to Jovičić's critique of Black Wave cinema which considers these films as reactionary or, more precisely, as films which seek to offer a critique of ongoing national and political contradictions in Yugoslavia generated by socialist ideology; we can claim that he has attempted to "go beyond" the representational frame set by the theory and practice of socialist conditions<sup>11</sup>. This attempt to transcend socialist representation, according to Jovičić, usually ended up following the pre-socialist intellectual and historical context; most likely linked in its representations to the nationalist and religious context.<sup>12</sup> In relation to one of the discussed films (*Uzrok Smrti ne Spominjati*) Jovicis claims that the hidden assumption behind the insistence on verist representation by Black Wave filmmakers is the acknowledgment of the fundamental and real essence of Serbia as spiritual orthodoxy." (Jovičić, 1969: 21).<sup>13</sup> Further on Jovičić labels these approaches as "cultural fashion where the cults and symbols of monastic past reign." (Jovičić, *ibid*).

With this we arrive at the core of most contested field in Yugoslavian cultural politics: that of national representation, multiculturalism and nationalism in socialist Yugoslavia. The most crucial or underlying contradiction regarding the issue of nationalism and representation is that Yugoslavian official policy was against any kind of nationalistic expression both in politics and in culture. In this case adherents to the non-representational position or un-committed policy of freedom of artistic expression have always underlined this as a contradiction between the limits of state regulation and the freedom of artistic creativity. All issues could be summed up in the following question: how is possible to talk about freedom of expression when the state does not allow certain cultural forms, like nationalism, to be expressed freely? But once we divert our attention from the logic of comprehending art as subordination to politics, and put an emphasis on art's own intelligibility, or art's own intelligibility in the handling the nationalism, we can grasp the issue of national form in art not as a reflection on identity politics, but as something which directly emanates its form in the contradictions surrounding the issue of the nation.

Basically, the tendency to national-contradiction formally shares the same structure as the contradiction that surrounds the Ideological State Apparatus or Party Politics; but due to the history of the national-form, it situates the contra-

<sup>11</sup> Jovicic in his text extensively deals with Jovan Zivanovic's *Uzrok Smrti Ne Spominjati/Do not Mention the Cause of Death* and Aleksandar Petrovic's *Bice Skoro Propast Sveta/It Rains in My Village*, both realized in 1968. He also mentions Zelimir Zilnik's *Rani Radovi/Early Works* made in 1969.

<sup>12</sup> This remark is strikingly similar to Fredric Jameson's claim that: "Attempts to 'go beyond' Marxism typically end by reinventing older pre-Marxist positions (from the recurrent neo-Kantian revivals, to the most recent 'Nietzschean' returns through Hume and Hobbes all the way back to the Pre-Socratics." (Jameson, 1977: 196).

<sup>13</sup> Jovicis is writing this as reply to the critique of the film by Bogdan Kalafatovic who wrote in weekly NIN that the reason why *Uzrok Smrti* was not selected for official screening in Pula Film Festival was that the organizers and selectors who did not include the film in their repertoire were ignorant of the situation in Serbia (Jovicic, 1969: 21).

dictions of the Yugoslavian state in a deeper organic field of unevenness. Accordingly Yugoslavia, which was a federation of six different republics and two autonomous provinces with distinct national and religious inclinations, was a synthetic state of antagonistic co-habitation. The historicist tendency that underlies this approach to Yugoslavia shares the same ideas as the party-ideology thesis: that the break-up and dead-end of the state were inevitable. The historiographical and political literature on this issue is substantial, just by looking at certain researches dealing with the cultural aspect of national-contradictions intrinsic to the Yugoslavian state would be sufficient to demonstrate the crucial parameters of this position. On the level of culture and the arts (usually literature) national-contradictions became one of the most eminent factors in describing the state of the things. As I have shown in the discussion of cultural politics, or the "art criteria" proposed by literary theoretician Sveta Lukic, who had considerable impact on Makavejev, the original supra-national Yugoslavian art style was defined in vague, invented and overtly generalized terms as 'socialist aesthetics'. By this, Lukic attempted to arrive at a state of equilibrium where the contradictions of Yugoslavia could be solved by proposing a different definition of socialism that would bring together distinct artistic antagonisms in one compact level. My thesis in the article on the **Cultural Policy of Dušan Makavejev** proposed that Makavejev managed to come up with his own, distinct and peculiar mode of cultural politics once he broke from this conceptualisation of Yugoslavian cultural practice as a state of equilibrium.

Regarding these contradictions surrounding a national-form, the field of cultural policy in Yugoslavia will provide more interesting and theoretically challenging outcomes. The best way to depict this situation is to start from the proposition that the tension between anthropological and artistic positions, as described by Toby Miller and George Yudice, is basic to the contradiction of cultural policy: "Culture is connected to policy in two registers: the aesthetic and the anthropological. In the aesthetic register, artistic output emerges from creative people and is judged by aesthetic criteria, as framed by the interests and practices of cultural criticism and history. ... The anthropological register, on the other hand, takes culture as a marker of how we live our lives, the senses of place and person that makes us human - neither individual nor entirely universal, but grounded by language, religion, custom, time and space." (Miller & Yudice, 2002: 1). This could be detected in Yugoslavia, on a large scale, as the contradiction between the allocations of means of cultural production (in this case, financial means of film-making) and recognition of national differences. This gross contradiction between the aspects of culture involving redistribution and recognition is probably essential to a second tendency: the positioning of Yugoslavia as a state with dynamics of multicultural contradiction between, so to speak, economy and culture (Fraser, 1995: 68-93). But if the contradiction between artistic freedom and the national cultural agenda is underlying the conflict over cultural policy, or its main impetus, then in Yugoslavia this contradiction is somehow doubled. Apart from this basic contradiction, which we can name as the contradiction between individual and collective, there was also a

secondary contradiction between cultural policies of distinct national Republics and the supranational form of Yugoslavian state.<sup>14</sup> Today in the rewriting of Yugoslavian cinema history the general position is that artistic creativity was shaped through the discrepancies between the national differences of filmmakers and their relation to an abstract notion of Yugoslavia; according to this, filmmakers had to deal at the same time with their national belonging and with the supranational construction called Yugoslavia.

As Piotr Piotrowski has pointed out, in Eastern-European countries the notion of the avant-garde had distinct and variable meanings. Varying from the context of the formation of the avant-garde to the institutional support of these artistic tendencies, difference is usually something that has been eliminated from conceptualisations of Eastern European art. Instead of the conceptualisation of the Eastern Bloc in characteristically “all-pervasive sameness”, Piotrowski proposed to emphasise the “significance of difference” as an indicator of the true topography of the Eastern European avant-garde art movements and tendencies (Piotrowski, 2007: 11). In a similar fashion, Yugoslavia should also be viewed from this heterogeneous and diverse perspective; there is an insurmountable difference between artistic avant-gardes in each republic. In one such recent attempt, the work of the Croatian video and installation artist Sanja Ivekovic (active since seventies) has been situated in the context of Yugoslavia as distinctively Croatian.<sup>15</sup> As Ruth Noack has further elaborated, this distinctiveness between the conceptual art scene of Belgrade and Zagreb was, for example, not only visible in the relation between art-institutions and cultural policy, but was also determinative of the form they took. For example, in opposition to the Belgrade conceptualists that were dealing with the “collective rethinking of the potential of the principles of self-management,” the Zagreb conceptual art scene was interested in the “democratisation of art.” (Noack, 2013: 50, 60). Accordingly, the excesses of Yugoslavian differences has been directly connected to the cultural policy of republics where artists are based; in this case Yugoslavian artists were influenced both from the basic contradictions of Yugoslavian cultural policy, and from a secondary contradiction in the cultural policy related to their respective republic. As I have shown in my text dealing with the cultural aspects of post-Yugoslavian artistic groups, these excesses, or diversities still continue to have effects on the conceptualisation of the artistic avant-garde in these places. In that respect all the crucial discussions regarding the cultural politics of self-management have been set in the conceptual framework not as the excesses of the ideological apparatuses, but as contradictions inherent to the general idea of the malfunctioning state apparatus. This conceptual shift from the coercive, struggle oriented approach of cultural transformation to affirmative and normative cultural policy has resulted in the prevailing confusion

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<sup>14</sup> Echoing contemporary debate's on the EU as a supra-national conceptualisation, in Yugoslavia this was more complicated because it was dealing with a more radical re-structuration of social formation and the ideological apparatus.

<sup>15</sup> This is not a recent tendency. Even Marijan Susovski, which Ruth Noack is referring to have edited the book on *New Art Practices in Yugoslavia* from this diverse/heterogeneous perspective (Susovski, 1977).

regarding what the real emancipatory potential of socialist self-management theory and practice actually is. In order to demonstrate this I have looked at the confusion in actual post-Yugoslav discussions in contemporary art regarding the issue of the collective. My article **New Collectives: Art Networks and Cultural Policies in Post-Yugoslav Spaces** deals exactly with these moments of the conceptual formations of cultural norms through the issue of contradiction. I have proposed a thesis that once the conceptual framework of political art has been set by affirmative and normative standards then the real contradictory and complex forms of art formation have vanished. In the case of Yugoslavia, this was performed both in theory and in practice; firstly in theory, by silencing the inner contradictions regarding the concept of the collective as an important component of avant-garde art; and secondly, in practice, through active engagement in state supported regulative and normative cultural policy practices.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the recent writings on Yugoslavian film, retrospectively dealing with 'Black Wave' films position these "dissident" films as artistic works that are in fact true documents of national sentiments; that each of them depending on their origin are best in describing their own particular locality. As such Krsto Papic, the Croatian filmmaker depicting true Croatian contradictions (both intrinsic and contradictions of the Croatian relation to Yugoslavia), or Bato Cengic as a Bosnian filmmaker on the Bosnian state, and Zivojin Pavlovic, Aleksandar Petrovic or Dušan Makavejev as a Serbian filmmaker of Serbian national sentiments. Even on the formal level, artistic devices were also interpreted in this realm of nationalism. For example the mud, which prevails in many of these films, is usually imagined as the most common material of Serbian "black wave" films, which as a metaphor alludes to a gap and contradiction between the urban and the rural. Imagined in this way, mud as metaphor serves to depict the in-between situation of Serbia, and some parts of Yugoslavia. In looking attentively at Zivojin Pavlovic's films, which extensively use mud, it is easy to demonstrate that this mud is a device that deliberately performs the national excesses involved in metaphorical approaches of film studies. Pavlovic, and many others, including Makavejev and Zelimir Zilnik, use mud as a device that enables them to produce a short circuit in the contradictory representation of the nation in their films. Here I refer to the use of the mud not as a metaphorical component that could be applied to certain national representations, particularly a metaphorical sediment of a certain nation's contradictions. Even if this kind of statement (that the mud in the film is a reflection of a certain nation's structures of feeling) sounds like an anachronistic and stereotypical fallacy it can possibly be found in many accounts that deal with Yugoslavian film. From

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<sup>16</sup> By extensively dealing with collective contemporary art and curator groups from post-Yugoslavia I have tried to show this issue also through the actual context of transition from socialist self-management towards the joining the European Union. In another article which is not included in this work, I have dealt with the issues of art collectives and their contradictions in practice and politics; solely by basing my approach on a theoretical formalisation of the "collective as vanishing mediator" (Boynik, 2011)

Daniel Goulding to recent discussions of Owen Hartherley, the usual approach is that some of the Serbian film-makers, especially Zivojin Pavlovic, have used the mud as a spontaneous, unconscious symptom of Serbian national being (Goulding, 2002: 60; Hatherley, 2012). The silent assumption in these accounts is that Serbian filmmakers usually reflect on Serbian geography, landscape, materials and sources. This spontaneous approach to reflection then easily turns to metaphorical assumption that between nature and culture there is an indispensable link. Since Serbia is usually seen through the national imagery of balkanist discourses as a place between east and west, archaism and modernism, feudalism and capitalism, it is easy to situate the mud as the material of this imagination; material which stitches the village and urban life. This operation of stitching, known in film language as a 'suture', maintains the village and the city in constant tension; both as separate and united. If the ideological discourse on Balkanism has the function of substituting the national contradictions for natural contradictions (Zizek, 1996); then the stereotypical cinematic imagery that is in certain forms similar to nationalist imagery pictures the national contradictions as artistic contradictions. The road from nature to art is, in this instance, paved through a culture represented through a national regeneration. I have proposed that this circularity, in formal way, could be an explanation of the status quo nationalism prevalent in certain artistic expressions.<sup>17,18</sup>

Nebojsa Jovanovic, in series of his writings, has offered one of the most elaborate criticisms of the nationalist tendency based on identitarian politics and has dealt with the shortcomings of this approach. The most convincing argument in Jovanovic's writings is that the current state of historical revisionism on nationalist discourse regarding Yugoslavian cinema is based on the assumption that Yugoslavia never existed. In his work, Jovanovic, and before him Pavle Levi, have demonstrated that without taking the supra-national context and contradictions of 'Yugoslavia' into consideration, whole theoretical and historical researches will be futile (Jovanovic 2012; Levi, 2007). My aim is not to deal with the possible effects of "Yugoslavianism" to the formation of the Black Wave, which obviously had a huge impact, but more on the inscription of contradictions of national-form into the avant-garde cinema. Furthermore my problematic was based on theoretical and methodological issues surrounding the detection of this inscription.

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<sup>17</sup> I have developed a thesis on the circular form of nationalist style in film in a co-authored article with Minna Henriksson on Erkki Kivikoski's film *Laukaus Tehtaalla* made in 1973 (Boynik & Henriksson, 2011). Through reflecting on mud as a material and device of film-making in Black Wave, I have dealt with the nationalist form of circularity and repetition in the Black Wave films of Zivojin Pavlovic; this recent article is not included here (Boynik, 2012)

<sup>18</sup> In regard to this it is necessary to remember that referring to formalist theories is not necessarily to refer to a condition of non-nationalist art production. One of the example a nationalist formalism would be the Serbian film director Zarko Dragojevic who produced both highly nationalist films and film theory texts which have extensive reference to Baudry, Comolli and Bonitzer (Dragojevic, 1998: 113)

### 6.2.2 Theoretical and Formal Discussions of National Contradiction in Relation to Cultural Politics

Even if the nation is as construction with tendencies toward the homogeneous, compact, ahistorical and conservative forms of expression it usually unites culture and politics without conflict; there are also national forms that are not necessarily univocal conceptions uniting political and cultural determinants as harmonious co-existences. From the writings of Antonio Gramsci to those of Frantz Fanon, there are many examples showing that the formation of the nation is based on continuous struggle where both emancipatory politics and culture play an important role. National independence and de-colonization movements in most cases played this radical role of culturalization; either as an implementation of novel cultural policy that completely breaks from the past, or as a novel and distinct re-appropriation of the past cultural norms (Anderson, 1983; Lazarus, 1999; Fanon, 2004: 145-180). In these instances the nation is equivalent to a newly constructed emancipatory culture that is inherently political. The allegory of the nation as a politicisation is usually linked with the theory and practice of de-colonization in Third World Countries (Jameson, 1986; Ahmad, 1987); but there is not any theoretical reason why this politicisation should not be applied as well to the First (Western) or Second (Socialist) World countries (Wayne, 2001). In case of socialist theory and practice, the role of the nation as novel cultural policy is usually established through a comparative approach that equates the conditions of post-socialism with the conditions of post-colonialism. As both a reappraisal and critique of this stance is by now widely discussed, it would be appropriate to describe this equation as something which is based on the assumption that in both cases the prefix 'post' means philosophically a deconstruction of the discourse that constituted these positions. This deconstruction is usually applied to ideological constructions which are perceived in terms of totality and completeness; and as such the nation in these cases of dissolution, plays the crucial role of de-constitution; in the case of post-colonialism as opening the "third space" for "other" conceptualisations of identity (Bhabha, 1994; Bhabha, 1990: 291-322), or in case of post-socialism as a possibility for a non-totalitarian and diverse conception of unified culture and ideology (Groys, 2011).

Here we could refer as well to Michael Shapiro who has discussed the concept of the nation as an ideologically constructed unity: "The state's politics of representation - its claim to house a coherent national culture - was accompanied by a series of policy initiatives aimed at imposing that coherence" (Shapiro, 1999:45) and accordingly proposed a counter-conceptualisation which is usually practiced by alternative cinema. He describes these practices as "un-commoning"; or as a counter-narrative or mode of articulation based on "the production of thinking-as-uncommon-sense", as a "critical and disruptive thought enterprise rather than a mechanism of representation, which unreflectively participates in the production of a *sensus communis*" (Shapiro, 1999: 22)

Theoretically this conceptualisation allows for another position that traces the emancipatory and novel cultural politics as well the moments of constitu-

tion and formation of the nation. For this theoretical application, the Gramscian use of the nation could provide a valuable starting point. As David Forgacs showed, in Gramsci the form of the nation and the concepts of culture and politics are fused (Forgacs, 1984); and as Franco Bianchini further evaluated from the perspective of cultural policy, the contradictions of national formations (legislation of minorities, discrepancy between recognition and redistribution aspects of multiculturalist policies, etc.) are important driving forces in the transformation of cultural and artistic practices (Bianchini, 1987; Bianchini, 1989). Accordingly, those artistic practices that included national discrepancies and contradictions in their practice came up with more progressive cultural policies. The discussion on the issue of cultural politics that I am postponing to the end of this introduction is crucial in the politicization of art. But for now it is sufficient to state that the notion of popular, nation and counter-hegemony derived from Gramsci has had lot of influence on political art and the conceptualisation of cultural policy (Rifkin, 1981).

As I tried to show in my article on **Cultural Policy of Dušan Makavejev**, the form of the polyvalent-nation was important for Makavejev's cultural policy conceptualisation that could be easily theorized through the Gramscian concept of 'rawness', 'counter-hegemony' and the 'popular' that are directly connected to the concept of the 'nation'.<sup>19</sup> Especially the thesis on "rawness" as a concept of direct, vulgar and residual forms in the cultural field played crucial role in framework of cultural studies. According to Raymond Williams, the residual elements of the cultural field are as important as the actual forces of society in constituting the ideological mode of nation; or as he describes it, the "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1961: 64-88). As Williams discusses, without the "structure of feeling" a communication at the level of the nation would be impossible: "communication that outlives its bearers, the actual living sense, the deep community that makes the communication possible." (William, 1961: 65). What is most challenging in Williams's theory is that the "structure of feeling" as an entity that ascribes continuity to a society has a contradictory character: it does establish continuity (which is the most essential ideological postulate for national formation, as historicist evolution), but it establishes this continuity through elements that are conceived as discontinuous. Or through elements, which Williams describes as "matrixes of unevenness" (Williams, 1961: 80) that are crucial in constructing the 'structure'. Usually these elements are not indexed in the "grand" narrative of national formation: they are either raw elements of people's folklore or marginal notes in cultural field. The un-detected parts of the 'structure of feeling', as the detritus of society, are in many ways the

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<sup>19</sup> Interest in coercive concept of "people" as raw components in national formation is not only restricted to social theory of Makavejev. One of the most outspoken advocate of this approach was writer Bora Cosic, who have edited couple of books on this issue, used the vernacular in his novels, and proposed a thesis that Dadaism of avant-garde art and rawness of 'people' might have similar form (Cosic, 1984). Makavejev also approached to this issue in similar vein when he proposed that Yugoslavian post-revolutionary reality is Dadaistic; and that this Dadaistic reality has a cinematic characteristics. (Makavejev, 1964).



most creative aspects of the nation. It is not unusual for Williams to use this concept to re-write the history of art style formations, such as his history of theatre (Williams, 1971). In order to grasp these raw elements of the nation, or the un-indexed elements of unevenness in the Yugoslavian cultural field we have to re-draw the map of art and cinema history.

In mapping the 'national' tendency of Black Wave studies we have to be careful to delineate between those researches that tend to silence and suppress the national-contradictions from those tendencies that use the contradictions as the possibility for creative and advanced cultural politics. There are, unfortunately, many examples of first tendency. It is important to note that in the first account together with the contradictions the oppositional and emancipatory aspect of nation-form is also silenced, which enables its use in advanced artistic practices. In order to demonstrate the differences of use of national-contradictions in the formation of the novel art-work it would be useful to have closer look at the reference to the film-concept of 'Serbian cutting', both by Branko Vucicevic and Mihailo P. Ilic. Due to the fact that both Vucicevic and Ilic are, respectively, from fifties and sixties actively involved with the theory and practice of Black Wave films it is important to see the distinctive uses of the terms in two seemingly similar accounts. Vucicevic was co-scenarist of Zelimir Zilnik's film *Early Works* (1969), assistant director to Makavejev's films such as *Love Affair* and *Innocence Unprotected*; while Ilic has edited the early Black Wave films such as Mica Popovic's *Delije* (1968) and a few films of Kokan Rakonjac. Their apparent similarity is based on the fact that both are active in the field of culture which, following the description of Pierre Bourdieu, we could say is "creating a new position" and introduces the "difference" in the cultural practices of avant-garde art, differentiating itself from the position of the accepted norms of consecrated art (Bourdieu, 1993: 106). Besides the similarities between Vucicevic and Ilic's cultural strategies as "novelty in art forms" they are part of completely antagonistic political tendencies that shaped the current post-Yugoslav spaces. While Vucicevic is from the beginning of nineties active in the cultural field that clearly opposes the nationalist and clerical neo-liberal position (Vucicevic, 2007); Ilic is politically connected with the stream of nationalist tendencies that are directly or indirectly responsible for the destruction of the representative public institutions (Jovanovic, 2009). Because of these political disparities, their cultural politics and artistic forms are also differentiating in a scale that the Bourdieuan theory of "production of belief in arts" might not be enough sensitive to detect.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Even if Bourdieu's thesis is offering an intellectual context for discussing the production of art with terms that are emancipated from the notion of idealist creativity; they might at the same time also rule out the distinct intelligibility of the avant-garde art. He is delegating the conceptual and formal differences of art positions to a mere strategic anomaly: "The names of the schools or groups which have proliferated in recent painting (pop art, minimal art, process art, land art, body art, conceptive-art, arte povera, Fluxus, new realism, nouvelle figuration, support-surface, art pauvre, op art, kinetic art, etc.) are pseudo-concepts, practical classifying tools which create resemblances and differences by naming them." (Bourdieu, 1993: 106).

Apart from their political inclinations which obviously have some kind of influence on their artistic theories, the difference of Vucicevic's and Ilic's film-concept of 'Serbian cutting' could be traced also on the formal level. Vucicevic coined the term 'Serbian cutting' for the first time in 1998, in his booklet on avant-garde cinema called *Paper-movies* (Vucicevic, 1998: 36-43). There he depicted the abrupt and contingent montage style of some of the Black Wave films as the formal element of the device that is based on a radical intervention in linear narrativity and any kind of historicism. But Ilic who in his latest *magnum opus* publication of nine-hundred pages dealt with the history of 'black wave' film-form, both as a practitioner and as a theoretician of avant-garde film, used the term 'Serbian cutting' as something completely endemic to the Serbian national being. He related this style of montage, or as he calls the "methodology and school of montage", to the indispensability of continuity and narrative, as a real victory of the dynamics of opposition to the static conception of avant-garde form. In the first two chapters of his book, *Serbian Cutting* is either necessarily Serbian essentialism, or a proper way of dynamic film-making that is in contradistinction to formal experimentation. Or as he puts it, referring to Eisensteinian theory of the 'montage of attractions', the real distinctiveness of 'Serbian cutting' is that "it realizes both in a content and in a form the continuity of an action; it is not a static, but a dynamic movement" (Ilic, 2008: 99). Because of the conceptual parameters he has introduced to the discussion, the movement in the film is essential to a dynamism of national-being, it is never a break from circularity; but a constant re-affirmation of a circular and repetitive form of national existence. As such, this conservative model of a Black Wave device does not recognize the most urgent and productive contradictions and excesses in most of the films that it deals with.

### 6.3 Contradictions of Self-management

As a unique Yugoslavian socialist theory and practice, self-management, the self-governing system or auto-gestion is generally considered a distinct experience of socialist democracy where workers' egalitarian and collective management of the state is supported both in theory and in practice. As a form of socialist self-management it was also distinct through its radical emphasis on the withering away of the state, and of the democratization of social relations which implied decentralization and the underlining of human conditions in social reproduction, re-arrangement of social, political and cultural institutions and radical egalitarianism. Yugoslavian self-management socialism with its emphasis on the humanist approach to Marxist doctrine was symptomatic of many Eastern European socialist theories, as Louis Althusser interestingly noted, that have put more emphasis on the idealist and essentialist positions of Young Marx (Althusser, 2005: 49-86). But at another level Yugoslavian self-management was also interpreted as genuine socialism that was completely emancipated from the Stalinist and reactionary notion of statist socialism. Usu-

ally, these interpretations have emphasised the contradictions of the Yugoslavian experiment in de-bureaucratization and egalitarianism of the social, political and cultural institutions (Lefebvre, 2009: 95-152; Castoriadis, 1988: 179-197). Another interesting aspect in the international recognition of self-management was based on the assumption that the Yugoslavian experience is return to original and authentic "soviet" definition of socialist theory and practice where all fields of the state apparatus from culture to politics were reformulated and decentralized.

### 6.3.1 Theoretical and Philosophical Discussion of Self-management in Yugoslavia

In Yugoslavia, self-management was introduced gradually through certain decrees and laws already in the beginning of fifties and institutionalized in the 1974 constitution. The so-called "thickest constitution in the world," the 1974 constitution was based on certain fundamental contradictions and irregularities that had implications both to the federal national formation and to the economic restructuring of the relations of production. Before dealing with this economic contradiction of Yugoslavian self-management (that would be possible to characterize as a contradiction between collective ownership of the means of production and the individualization of the relations of production) that had direct influence on the conceptualisation of the role of the state in formation of socialist culture; it is important to reflect on the theoretical works that dealt with the contradictions of self-management in the field of Marxist philosophy.

One of the most important philosophical platforms in socialist Yugoslavia was a group of young theoreticians gathered around the journal Praxis and the Korcula Summer School that was highly productive between 1964 and 1974. The main philosophical tenets of Praxis involved an emphasis on the young Marx's humanistic theses on alienation, the inevitability of communism, self-realization, and the Hegelian notion of contradiction, and utopian politics influenced primarily by Lukacs, Bloch and Goldmann.

As Mihailo Markovic, one of the leading philosophers of Praxis wrote, the main proposition of their philosophical platform was a philosophical struggle against "transcendental and extra-human realms where the human being is reduced to a mere thing, i.e. where human is reified." (Markovic, 1979: xxxi). He detect this reification in many fractions of philosophy, including some fractions of Marxist philosophy (especially the Althusserian branch of structuralist philosophy<sup>21</sup>), that could be summarized in three distinct conceptual fields: first; reification in *ontology*, as a tendency to regard human conscious activity as merely an epiphenomenon of some primary objective structure: Being, Matter, Nature, inexorable Laws – independent of human consciousness and will. In opposition to this, the philosophy of Praxis put emphasis on the assumption

<sup>21</sup> Althusser's article "Contradiction and Over-determination", that launched his international fame as a Marxist philosopher, initially was submitted to the Praxis International journal; but was rejected for publication by the editorial board on the grounds that it exemplified the position of "Stalinist-positivism" (Kangrga, 2001: 19).

that all objective structures are mediated by human activity and relative to it. Second, reification in *epistemology* appears as tendency to regard the model of natural science as the paradigm of knowledge in general. Characteristic to these philosophies is transfer of concepts and methods of the natural sciences into the social science and humanities, which results in gross simplifications and mechanistic and the uncertain application of scientific methodologies. Lastly reification in philosophical conceptualisation takes place in *axiology*, which has the form of a behaviourist reduction of all purposive, goal-directed activity to a stimulus-response scheme, thus relegating all discussion of values to an archaic, prescientific era of theoretical development. As a result it fails in dealing with specifically human praxis which is spontaneous, free, creative, imaginative and self-improving action." (Markovic, 1979: xxxi-xxxii)

The philosophical struggle against the reified conceptualisation of humanity had a more important agenda for the voluntaristic conception of political action where workers' subjective emancipation from the constraints of the state apparatus could possibly be realized through the humanistic formulation of political action, or through the praxis of un-reified subject. This re-formulation of the subject would implement both the re-conceptualisation of politics and of art and the culture. But as many philosophers of Praxis have argued, including Markovic, this policy was impossible because it was in direct contradiction with the politics of the statist (state based) conceptualisation of socialism. Even if self-management aimed at the withering away of the state and its apparatus, Praxis philosophers claimed that this was only half complete. As another Praxis philosopher, Rudi Supek, in his article "Some Contradictions and Insufficiencies of Yugoslav Self-Managing Socialism" wrote, Yugoslavian self-management as something between Proudhonian 'coordinating organization' composed of producers and a vertical organization of societal power represented by the communist party, was based on irrevocable antagonisms. One of the most obvious (negative) consequences of the contradictions of self-management was the legal and business-like equalization of productive and mediating organizations, that is to say, those who produce the surplus of wealth and those who have this surplus in their hands.

One of the criticism regarding the theory and practice of self-management is its relation toward the formation of the political subject, which easily led the discussion from political to cultural formation.

Following this, Supek listed four important problems in Yugoslavian self-management:

- a. legal formalism;
- b. anti-functionalism as regards the social function of productive organizations;
- c. middle class liberalism regarding the market and self-regulation of economic development;
- d. combination of self-managing organizations on a horizontal plane with a statist power structure on a vertical plane. (Supek, 1979: 257)

It is interesting to note that Supek's article further intensifies the contradictions surrounding Yugoslav socialist self-management with national and party based components of ideological figuration. These are the two earlier components that I discussed in relation to a conceptualisation of Black Wave's cultural politics. In this regard we can define self-management as a binding point of Yugoslavia's basic contradictions, which is between the collective and individual conceptualisation of political subjectivity. This in-betweenness in accounts dealing with representative notions of the formation of artistic styles (such as the style of Black Wave films) finds this basic contradiction as a decisive factor in understanding the relation between politics and art.

### 6.3.2 Yugoslavian Praxis Philosophy and Black Wave Cinema

There are many accounts dealing with the deterministic relation between Praxis' philosophical notions on self-management's reification and Black Wave's form of ambiguous images: suggesting that the latter's ambiguity is a reflection of the former's contradictions (Eagle, 1983; Baxandall, 1983; Goulding, 2002; Levi, 2007: 29-35).

The thesis on relation between Black Wave and Praxis, in the last instance, argues that the philosophical propositions of Praxis on human nature as spontaneous, creative and genuinely non-reified being was a determining factor in constituting the formal component of Black Wave film subjects. Accordingly, Black Wave responded to the contradictions of self-management through the lens of Praxis philosophy; or to be more precise, through the lens of the humanist theses of Marxism, which are not subsumed under the rubric of the structural conception of human formation. Most of the researches dealing with the representation of contradictions in Black Wave films tend to disclose the analysis by conceding to it an easy applicable equation between Yugoslav un-official cinema and Yugoslav un-official philosophy and assuming that the notion of 'un-official' or un-dogmatic could be a link between these two. In these accounts the concept of un-official has the rather peculiar nature of blurring the lines between intrinsic elements, or forms that constitute art object, with the ideological notion of un-mediated creativity. In order to demonstrate the shortcomings of this representational projection of Black Wave philosophy we would have to deal with many important components of these approaches; for example, with the actual conditions of the unofficial nature of Praxis philosophy, or more precisely to define the basic antagonisms between the institution (until now described as platform) of Praxis philosophy and the policy of self-management; also it would be useful to have more concrete information regarding the relation between the philosophical voluntarism of Praxis and the economic self-governing of Yugoslavian socialism.<sup>22</sup> But instead, for my purposes, it is suffi-

<sup>22</sup> In a recent interview of Gal Kirn with Christina Samary in which Gal pointed to some of these discussions (Kirn & Sammary, 2012). But there are many accounts that deal with the formal similarities between the Praxis' notion of freedom and the neoliberalist position of economism (Markovic, 2006: 84-88). This similarity between neoliberalism and the praxis oriented conception, sounds like Boltanski and Chiapello's

cient to briefly look at the theses that deal with art in the Praxis philosophy. As it might be clear from the above-indicated propositions, for Praxis the artistic agency in this configuration would be a true guarantor of the non-reified, non-alienated, and spontaneous human expression. In many ways this echoes the possibility of a philosophy and a lifestyle that has the artistic merit of emancipating itself from the formalist and structuralist conceptions of un-restrained man. Probably this is the most important aspect to mention in regards to Praxis' theses on art: even if the philosophy of Praxis, *en toto*, has a strong association with actions and practices that have direct artistic connotations; not all the arts have the characteristic of non-alienated experience. On no rare occasion did the Praxis philosophers take the pain of delineating this Praxis based art from the rest of the art which did not have these characteristics. Danko Grlic, a philosopher associated with Praxis group, who had dealt with the issue of art and aesthetics most thoroughly in his works, described in his programmatic text "Art and Philosophy" published in 1963, the role of art as a chance for the "unanticipated possibilities of humanisation" (Grlic, 1963: 213). For this possibility to be realized, art, as well as philosophy, had to comprehend reality and ideas in neither a formalistic nor intrinsic way, but as expressions of concrete and harmonious relations with the world. That is why expressions such as, "morbid eruptions in glass, with wires, around countless squares, or crumpled and glued wreckages of irons, etc." (Grlic, 1963: 208) should not be seen as the true and genuine artistic positions.<sup>23</sup> Real artistic value is in the form, but not in the form that has been intrinsically defined; but in the form that is not in contradiction with the "artistic way of life", that is, with the form "that reached the highest point of synthesis with the content." Only in these instances, Grlic reminds us, can "we can talk about the true meaning of art that overcame the tension between form and content" (Grlic, 1963: 209). From this schematization it is sufficient to understand that the logic that determines the non-reified humanist philosophy also designates the logic of art within Praxis theory.

The concept of the equilibrium of form and content in art works also had an impact on the way in which art and culture generally have been connected with politics and economy in the theory of Praxis. As Branka Curcic has shown the difficulties with the Praxis philosophy of art rests especially on this contradiction between the assumed immateriality of the creative work and the reifica-

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concept of the avant-garde as the "new spirit of capitalism", has already been underlined by some radical 'non' dogmatic' approaches within Marxist theory (Negation Collective, 1975; Boltanski & Chiapello, ). But even if mentioned as an anecdote by Kangra in his autobiographical history of Praxis, it is important to mention that the institutional conditions of self-management and the emergence of Praxis have very close ties. As Kangra recollects, the first appearance of a Praxis philosopher's texts was in the cultural pages of the magazine *Industrial Worker*. This periodical which was dedicated to the problems of industrial production, had also, due to the conditions created by self-management, pages that were not dedicated necessarily to the issues of labour and productivity. In these pages on culture, Praxis philosophers published their texts (Kangrga, 2001: 21-22).

<sup>23</sup> A similar description of abstract art, according to Ernst Bloch, was made by Georg Lukacs in 1916, who, after seeing a exhibition of group *Blaue Reitter*, said that it reminded him of a "nerve wracked gypsy" (*Aesthetics and Politics*, 2007: 13).

tion induced by the transcendence of non-Praxis philosophy. Somehow Praxis was trapped in between the materiality of action and immateriality of creation; it is interesting that art suffered most evidently from this contradiction. Curcic discussed the consequences of this Praxis conceptual approach, which separated the processes of labour of artist from the workers; and has shown that how with this separation Praxis missed some of the most essential discussions related to artistic production in post-Fordist conditions (Curcic, 2012)

In fact the main problem with the Praxis philosophy of art is that it silenced, and postponed the contradictions inherent in the artwork itself. By refuting the tensions that are constituent to the formation of any artwork, the Praxis philosophy of art was, somehow, conceptually responsible for the proliferation of research that assumed the immediate representational relation between art and politics. In this case we can claim that the thesis on Black Wave films as a representation of Praxis philosophy are part of theoretical conjuncture of Praxis philosophy itself. More precisely, the thesis on representation is a theoretical effect of Praxis philosophy.<sup>24</sup> Following this line of thought I propose to look at the contradictions (of self-management) in Black Wave films not through the lens of Praxis; but through the Black Wave's own apparatus, or of its own microscopic dispositive of cinematic intelligibility. In order to realize this model, which is the model that I am proposing in this introduction, one has to fully accept that the cinematic apparatus is built on an excess of contradictions, and that equilibrium between form and content has to be abandoned in favour of a proper materialist and formal approach to the artistic device. By doing this it is possible to deal with Black Wave not as a reflection of contradictions through a philosophical lens that imagines art as a non-contradictory expression; but as a construction of contradictions through the logic of avant-garde art itself, which is based on merits of negation, conflict and antinomy. Following Adorno's assertion that a successful art work "...is not one which resolves objective contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure" (Adorno, 1967: 32) it is possible to claim that art's intelligibility, its scope of conceptualization is based on this singular negativity. But this should not be understood as a reflection of philosophical concepts, as Adorno, in another instance referring to Sartre, claimed that, "however sublime, thoughts can never be much more than one of the materials for art" (Adorno, 1977: 182).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Basing his thesis on the work of Emanuel Barot that "political film is the privileged agency for the crystallisation and analysis of the contradiction of social relations," Gal Kirn claims that Black Wave cannot be reduced to a reflection of Praxis philosophy, because the political implications of the humanistic theses of Praxis cannot be accommodated to the field of Black Wave's formal pluralism (Kirn, 2012a: 254-255)

<sup>25</sup> Negative dialectics in art is usually related to a writings of Theodor Adorno. But it would not be an exaggeration to claim that most of the avant-garde writings between the Second World War - as it is depicted in the book "Aesthetics and Politics (Jameson and all, 1977) - and in the arts made during the sixties in context of social activism and conceptual art could be also discussed with the terms of refusal, negativity, withdrawal, and destruction. For a historical and formal analysis of a politics of negation, the writings of John Roberts are very useful (Roberts, 2010). In Yugoslavia, an

In order for this to be realized we have to look at the contradictions of self-management from a different theoretical perspective; one which does not silence the struggles, excesses and confusions of ideological formation. As Althusser discussed in his later essay written in 1977, where he set out to deal with the theoretical limits of Marxist theory, the real problem with Marxism is that it never properly dealt with the relation of ideology to the state. Even if there were all possible conceptual components for such a theoretical elaboration, Marxist theory did not get a grip on the excesses of the state and its relation to both force and struggle. As Althusser put it, the class struggle, or general ideological struggle that is constitutive of the Marxist conception of social and subjective formation is actually a never-ending struggle, and seemingly stable results such as the state apparatus are conditioned by the silencing of these excesses. In order to have a proper Marxist theory of state, it is necessary to grasp the full implications resulting from these conflicts. In order to grasp the ideological components of the state, Althusser proposed a thesis that “the state is a machine in the full, precise sense of that term ... a man-made device (*dispositif*) comprising a motor driven by an energy 1, plus a transmission system, the purpose of the whole being to transform a specific kind of energy (A) into another specific kind of energy (B)” (Althusser, 2006: 105)<sup>26</sup>. In order to fully describe what this energy is,<sup>27</sup> what makes the machine to work, Althusser tried to avoid metaphysical and naturalist theories of power (those dear to Schopenhauer or the Nietzsche), and proposed that energy A, or Force or Violence, should be conceptually approached as something designating a “*conflictual difference*” (Althusser, 2006: 109). As a result the true element of the state and ideological apparatus, the power which runs it, is based on radical difference, or on an excesses:

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internationally renowned formalist theoretician Aleksandar Flaker's book on avant-garde art was entitled as “poetics of negation” (Falker, 1984). Pavle Levi and Boris Buden are among the first writers who have dealt with the avant-garde artistic form of Black Wave through the issue of negativity (Levi, 2007; Levi, 2012; Buden, 2011). As such they are the first intellectuals to break from the assumption that Black Wave's form had an affirmative and normative function (of human values) in socialist Yugoslavia.

<sup>26</sup> This model is indeed based on a strange 'machine': “the machine which sets a whole series of tools in rapid motion, whereas the human hand can manipulate only one, and slowly at that.” (Althusser, 2006: 84). Probably this is a closer description of what Althusser discussed as over-determination by contradictions, where the issue of subject is also considered as part of conceptualization. Due to this subjective factor, and also particularly due to the mechanistic imagination as part of XIX century discourse, Peter Steiner labelled and criticized the Shklovskian model of Russian Formalism (differing among three other models) as mechanistic, and consequently as a reductionist model of mechanistic determinism. Here my aim is not to underline the complex-mechanism of Shkolovsky's concepts, which was pointed out by many Formalist scholars (Flaker, 1984: 306-315), but to allude to a conceptual approach implicit in Althusser's formalism which deals with the state and ideology as the device regulating conflict and contradiction.

<sup>27</sup> “What then is this energy A that is transformed into (legal) power by the state machine?” (Althusser, 2006: 107)



“It is *this excess of conflictual force, real or potential, which constitutes energy A*, which is subsequently transformed into power by the state-machine: *transformed into right, laws and norms.*” (Althusser, xxx: 104).

There are attempts to deal with the dynamics of self-management's contradictions also from the standpoint of the Althusserian theory of state, such as Gal Kirn's work which has shown that the real productive excess in the contradictions of self-management should not be looked for in the state of equilibrium of the co-existence of classes; but in the dynamics of class struggles which took place in the institutions of socialist self-management (Kirn, 2012b). In this sense the contradictions of self-management are not seen as a reification of the human agency of creativity, but on the contrary as the true constituents of social formation. According to this analysis, the state apparatus has been seen as the reification, or silencing of such struggle and conflict. Gal Kirn indicated in his research that the economical crisis between 1965-1971 in Yugoslavia, which determined the collapse of the federation in the beginning of nineties, did not happen because the apparatuses of the state were unable to manage the contradictions of self-management. On the contrary, the collapse of self-management was in particular a reason for the state's reconciliatory position towards the struggle induced by the dynamics of self-management. As Kirn puts it: “The self-management project after the period of market socialism continued the compromises and perfecting of legal communism, which essentially failed to organise and promote social forces that could shift the capitalist tendency into a more communist sphere. The self-management model did not fail, as some would claim, because it was not liberal enough, which actually confirmed its inadaptability and inefficiency in terms of the world economy. The project failed because it was not communist enough: it did not continue revolutionary politics in all fields of society; it did not reanimate the link between masses, working class and LCY” (Kirn, 2012b: 327).

If we are to understand Yugoslavian cultural politics not as reflection of harmonious contradictions, but as the work of excess and conflict, than it is necessary to grasp the *impurity* of the contradictions of self-management.<sup>28</sup>

Here we have theory of impure contradiction that cannot be relegated to any kind of essentialism or metaphysical historicism, but will acknowledge these excesses within the field of material constituents. These material constituents were described by Althusser as an apparatus<sup>29</sup>, and furthermore specifically by Michel Foucault as a *dispositif*, with its historical and formal characteristics:

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<sup>28</sup>“ Contradictions are 'originally' 'impure'. Because all contradictions are or have been real contradictions they also are or have been over-determined contradictions. When, furthermore, it is taken into account that over-and under-determination are characterised by displacement and condensation, one notices that all contradictions are or have been displaced and/or condensed contradictions. Again, displacement and condensation, like over-determination generally, are possible only if elements from some other contradiction or contradictions are displaced and/or condensed into the contradiction, and vice versa” (Lahtinen, 2009: 54)

<sup>29</sup> “An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material.” (Althusser, ISA: 158)

“A heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decision, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions, in short, the said as much the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the network that can be established between these elements.” (Foucault, 1980: 194).

### 6.3.3 Uneven Relation between Ideology and Art: On the Use of Beethoven in the Films of Makavejev

Talking about the relation between ideology and art, Pierre Macherey has clarified that the task of the researcher in dealing with the formation of specific artistic styles, or devices, or expressions is “not to analyse the system of ideas, thoughts and representations (the “history of ideas” approach). It is to study the material operation of ideological apparatuses – to which correspond a certain number of specific practices.” (Macherey, ; op.cit. Tagg, 1988: 168).

To clarify this, we have to look at the material operation of a “network” between the elements, which Foucault mentions, or at the concrete effects of the contradictions of the formation of artistic, and other positions. In the history of the theory of cinema, the apparatus thesis had a huge impact on the understanding of the political and subjective formation of film languages. Starting with Baudry's ground-breaking works, Stephen Heath and Narbonni, for example, have dealt with the issue of the ideological apparatus as the merger between components of psychoanalysis (especially Lacanian psychoanalysis) and the Althusserian analysis of ideology (especially collection of texts in Rosen, 1986). As I explicated before by referring to Mikko Lahtinen's work, the Althusserian concept of ideological formation has an inherent psychoanalytical logic based on devices of condensation and displacement; through this similarity I was able to trace the same device in the work of Dušan Makavejev (“dream-practice”) and to draw a conclusion that the Althusserian notion of “over-determination by contradictions” can be traced in avant-garde artistic devices. But now I will add a new component to this: avant-garde art's apparent psychoanalytical device of condensation and displacement that has a form of “over-determination by contradiction” does not happen automatically, spontaneously and by itself; the artists has to *work on* the various existing components (usually highly ideologically driven elements) in order to arrange the art-work as an ensemble of contradictions.<sup>30</sup>

I have attempted to explicate this in dealing with the use of “Beethoven” in the films of Makavejev. Both in my text on the **Cultural Policy of Makavejev and Ideology and Makavejev** I have dealt with the contradictory use of “Beethoven” in three of his films.

In his first film *Man is Not a Bird* made in 1965 depicting the social and political contradictions in the transformation of the means of productions in one

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<sup>30</sup> Working on, working through are models of artistic practice that have been utilised by the conceptual art group Art & Language, which I have used in my two-part article “The Art of Slogans”.

industrial city, Makavejev uses music and references to Beethoven as a cultural pattern for showing the cultural gap between the workers and managers of the factory, and furthermore to pinpoint the confusion of this uneven situation in the cultural field. In his second film, *Love Affair* made in 1967, Beethoven is used as an affirmation for workers freedom and the multiculturalism of Makavejev's contemporary Yugoslavia. In his third use of Beethoven, in his fourth feature film *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, the reference is directly linked with the issue of impossibility, cultural dead-end, conflict and the basic contradiction between uneven fields of cultural emancipation.

By fully granting the importance of the fact that "Beethoven" is itself a contradictory assemblage of distinct ideological components<sup>31</sup>, I have asked what was the formal and political outcome in reference to this contradictory source. Paraphrasing the above discussions on 'over-determination by contradictions' I could say that Beethoven over-determined Makavejev. It is wrong to assume that Makavejev was simply in contradiction because he was a communist film-maker referring to a Beethoven, who is usually considered to represent bourgeoisie values. This would be to reduce Makavejev's complex film-form to the ambiguity of humanist agency. As I am trying to show, Makavejev's film-form and device is far more complex and contradictory than that. My initial thesis was that Makavejev did not use "Beethoven" as something antagonistic to his filmic structure, which was about self-management. He did not display a cinematic clash – the extrinsic agency of Beethoven and his film-structure – in order to demonstrate that "human values" in their eternity are in constant contradiction. Makavejev included, or inscribed Colin Mercer's description, and used Beethoven's contradictions in his film-structure. This means, to put it more schematically, that by including this component, or network of elements such as Beethoven in his film-structure<sup>32</sup>, Makavejev included the excess of contradiction related to Beethoven in his work. If we follow the conclusion of Esteban Buch who has shown that "Beethoven" contradictions are primarily due to a genealogy of formation that rested on the contradiction between the aristocratic basis of his musical origins and the bourgeoisie intention of his artistic creativity (Buch, 2003). This tension in his music led to a formal contradiction that made possible the use of Beethoven's music in such antagonistic instances as Stalinist socialism, the European Union and modern colonialism, to name just a few instances from the twentieth century. In these episodes Makavejev's use of Beethoven drew attention to the fact that any cultural component in their formation bears inextinguishable/irrepressible elements of tension, contradiction and noise. An art-text has to give voice to these noises.<sup>33</sup> But the real problem,

<sup>31</sup> This is reason why I am using Beethoven's name with quotation marks. As a manifest contradiction, Beethoven will be used and referred to from now on in an antagonistic cultural and political field: i.e., from now on it will be almost impossible to talk about the concrete, historical and true Beethoven.

<sup>32</sup> Instead of film-structure it would be possible to use also "art-text", by referring to Jurij Lotman. (Lotman, 1977).

<sup>33</sup> Here is how Jurij Lotman defines the role of noise in art: "Art is capable of transforming noise into information. ... This peculiarity of art is related to the structural principle which determines the polysemy of artistic elements; new structures which enter

we can name a historico-temporal problem that arises when we face the fact that the contradictions that Makavejev brought to the art-text via Beethoven was a set of contradictions belonging to the historical antagonism between the aristocratic and bourgeois conception of politics. Sooner or later it became obvious that this set of contradictions was insufficient for the set of political contradictions in the scope of Makavejev's cultural politics; namely, in the set of contradictions belonging to the antagonism between the bourgeois and communistic conception of politics. This, cultural dead-end, that was induced by the unevenness of contradictions, or the residual effects of contradiction, was formally dealt with by Makavejev in his film *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, precisely by exposing its impossibility. Makavejev dealt with this not by surpassing the contradictions so that the art-text will be pursued in its smoothness; but by adding a new set of contradictions, which, to be brief, we can name as "Leninist contradictions".<sup>34</sup> By introducing this new component, or new conceptual set, to his art-text Makavejev combined the contradictions of socialist formation to form a new configuration, or *dispositif*; he had proposed a new conceptualisation of art for a new social and political situation. Accordingly, Beethoven did not have a place in this new context. Going back to the previously discussed conception of art as a state of equilibrium between form and content, or a harmonious beautiful contradiction based on the "spontaneous" human agency of Praxis philosophy, we can easily claim that the form of contradiction in Makavejev's films were different from this conceptualisation. This difference was most radically visible, as I elaborated in my article on **Makavejev and Cultural Policy**, in conceptualisation of cultural policy that was inclusive towards negative and antagonistic designations. With this new set of contradictions, that I termed "Leninist contradictions", Makavejev invoked the role of excess, force and struggle in more explicit terms than any Praxis philosopher ever did, with the exception of Darko Suvin. I have termed this a negative cultural policy; a conceptual model for cultural policy over-determined by contradiction, conflict and struggle.

#### 6.3.4 Postscript to a Theory of Contradiction

Following these discussions, it is of crucial importance to state that the contradictions emerging from the formal analysis of the work of Makavejev and other Black Wave filmmakers are not something particular to Yugoslavian socialist context. They are related more to contradictions of film and art making itself. Previously discussed as excesses, these contradictions are of crucial importance to understanding both the cultural and political axis of the artwork, and the real and concrete elements and processes involved in art production. Precisely for this reason it is important to conceptualize the relation to Godard, who is usually assumed to have an antagonistic and oppositional relation to Makavejev's work.

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into a text or the extra-textual background of a work of art do not cancel out old meanings, but enter into semantic relations with them." (Lotman, 1977: 75)

<sup>34</sup> Here I am referring to an episode recalled by Gorky in 1912, about Lenin listening to Isaiah Dobrovein playing Beethoven's *Appassionata*.

As discussed mainly by Colin MacCabe who, referring to Brecht, has shown that the conceptualisation of the "real" in Godard is precisely a move which is also emancipation from reflective approaches that render the images involved in the film as contradictory constructions. Or as MacCabe puts it by referring to Godard, which could very easily be applied also to Makavejev, it is the form which renders "[the montage] as the effect generated by a conflict of discourse in which the oppositions available in the juxtaposed discourses are contradictory and in conflict" (MacCabe, 1985: 44). It is possible to discuss this as the form of contradictory-realism, which is common to many avant-garde filmmakers and artists. According to this conceptualisation, the relation between art and politics is not based on devices of reflection of latter by the former; but, on the contrary, is a production of intelligibility through art that would include the tensions of politics into art as a distinct set of conflicting elements. In order to explicate this we have to schematize the relation between the issues of the ideological state apparatus and art more thoroughly.

A short detour through the work of Althusser on the conceptualisation of contradictions as the over-determining effects (forces) of social and ideological formation would bring us to a formal theoretical scrutiny that could explicate the issues of the real – and of ideology, contradiction, art and representation – in a more rigorous way. The conceptual topography of "over-determination by contradiction" proposed by Althusser seemingly lies in the sphere of the Marxist understanding of the relation between base and superstructure; or more precisely in the sphere of the relation between economy and culture. If we are to look at this relation between hard-facts and the base of economic reality and superstructure in the arts, which is supposed to be, according to the Hegelian conceptualisation, a reflection of that reality from the idealist and transcendental perspective, then we have to, as Althusser claims, reduce and simplify the scope of the theory of over-determination. "The mention of the last instance in determination thus plays a double role: it divides Marx sharply off from all mechanistic explanations, and opens up within determination the functioning of different instances, the functioning of a real difference in which the dialectic is inscribed. The topography thus signifies that the determination in the last instance by the economic base can only be grasped within a differentiated, therefore complex and articulated whole (the "*Gliederung*"), in which the determination in the last instance fixes the real difference of the other instances, their relative autonomy and their own mode of reacting on the base itself." (Althusser, 1976: 177).<sup>35</sup> The thesis that over-determination has distinct effects in

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<sup>35</sup> Also it is important to mention that topography in Althusserian Marxism is strictly a conceptual device which has striking similarities to the Formalist explication of laws, rules and constraints in the construction of a plot: "when Marx inscribes the dialectic within the functioning of the instance of a *topography*, he effectively protects himself from the illusion of a dialectic capable of producing its own material content in the spontaneous movement of its self-development. In submitting the dialectic to the constraints of the topography, Marx is submitting it to the real conditions of its operation, he is protecting it from speculative folly, he is forcing it into a materialist mould, forcing it to recognize that its own figures are prescribed by the material character of its own conditions." (Althusser, 1976: 177).

various instances is probably one of the most striking novelties in the Althusserian theory of ideology, but at the same time it is a term which harbours many of the misunderstandings related to the issue. One of the main components of the Althusserian thesis is that the conceptualisation of over-determination does not mean determinism, "it does not suggest a system of relationship structured by a governing essence, but rather refers to the limited and differential effectivity of each and every element. 'Limited' because structure or its elements are not subjects, in that they do not control and dictate their own effects and secure their own conditions of existence; rather, they are over-determined (and underdetermined) by their specific conditions and histories." (Ozselcuk, 2013: 216).

In order to make the consequences of an Althusserian conceptualisation of over-determination explicit for understanding the relation between the contradictions of politics and art formation we have to move forward to the formalisation of these terms.

As Mikko Lahtinen has shown, the real methodological potential in Althusser's theory lays in the theoretical possibility of complete emancipation from the Hegelian notion of totality, determinism, causality and historicism; and to discuss the contradiction of the real as a mixture of conflict and struggle. This conceptualisation of politics which is open to contingency will allow me to theorize the field of cultural policy, an important ideological component in Makavejev's work, both as field which is over-determined by basic ideological contradictions and a field which has its own set of contradictions

"Contradictions do not exist independently of one another, but become contradictions and receive their concrete content in the same *interactive process* in which they influence one another. This can be outlined as follows: the *concrete* existence of some particular contradiction (here called contradiction y) requires other contradictions (here called contradiction x1-xn). From this follows that contradiction y is *over-determined* by contradiction x1-xn. Seen from the other angle, one of the x1-xn contradictions participating in the process of over-determination, or a kind of subgroup of them, is not sufficient *on its own* to produce contradiction y. Contradiction y is *underdetermined* in relation to any subgroup of x1-xn. For instance, the primary contradiction of the economy is the central over-determining factor in the evolution of secondary contradictions, but none of these secondary contradictions can be explained merely by means of the primary contradiction, that is, by being reduced to it. Rather, the secondary contradictions are *undetermined* in relation to the primary contradiction; that is, the primary contradiction *undetermines* the secondary contradictions." (Lahtinen, 2009: 37). Or as Lahtinen further clarifies, this formalisation of over-determination should not imply any hierarchy, or 'central' core of understanding the effect of distinct contradictions.

"When describing the contradictions that over-determine contradiction y with the symbols x1-xn, one must not think that contradiction y would be a kind of union or sum of x1-xn. Contradiction y (like other contradictions) has its

own and specific (but not separate) identity and dynamic (such as, for instance, the educational institutions)" (Lahtinen, 2009: 39).

If we continue along this line of logic and instead of educational institutions we put an emphasis on artistic institutions, such as cinematic institutions with its own distinct *dispositif* (apparatus), rules and laws, it is possible to propose the thesis that in order to understand the contradictions which over-determine the cinematic formation we have to avoid the reduction of these contradictions to a overall contradiction of the state, or of the economy. Methodologically, this de-centring conceptualisation opens up new approaches to grasp the distinctiveness of the artistic contradiction. What seems most genuinely novel in the theory of over-determination is that it operates as a device that has striking similarity to the psychoanalytical "processes characterised by displacement and condensation." (Lahtinen, *ibid*). Displacement and condensation as the primary devices of the psychoanalytic processes of unconscious subject formations are especially important if we recall that, according to Makavejev, what constitutes the real and contradictory politics is a practice that he termed 'dream-practice', which remind us of the psychoanalytical device of construction.

One of the most striking consequences of this dualist methodology that situates Makavejev in opposition to Godard is the reduction of certain conceptual possibilities in the complexities of his work. For example, the dualist thesis of restrained structuralism, which theoretically opposes the complex form of over-determination, is silent about the excess of Makavejev's artistic formation (as I tried to show in the three moments constructing the slogan); and about the role of cultural policy as a decisive component of his artistic system. On another level, and also situating Makavejev as opposition to Godard, methodologically evading such a important issues as language (slogans), organisation, and avant-garde art history from the overall field of cinema theory dealing with this particular film-maker and generally with Yugoslavian alternative film productions is problematic. My aim was to bring all of these hidden conflicts and contradictions of the filmmaking process to the fore. In so doing I intervened in the prevailing studies on Makavejev, which prefer to minimize these disruptions and contradictions in Makavejev's films and propose a total, yet superficial understanding of the relation between art and politics.

But what is more striking in the representational and dualist interpretation of Yugoslavian political film is that the true artistic and dissident cinema is depicted as a strategy for overcoming state induced antagonism; and, as such, the form of artistic cinema is seen as an expression which is above political contradiction. The structural position of these theses is that in real artistic film there should be some strange coherence and co-habitation between form and the content.

In returning to where we set out from in this section, I have to mention that the concept of Yugoslavia as an ideological imbalance, or politico-ideological un-sustainable state is not a novelty of the post-Yugoslavian intellectual conjuncture. Already in the seventies researchers dealing with Yugosla-

via, such as Dennison Rusinow, depicted the state of self-management socialism as a *contradictio in adiecto* state, where two irreconcilable tendencies of centralism and liberalism were in constant clash over the influence on policy. As Rusinow describes, there were 'conservatives' (they wished to conserve the partly de-Stalinised quasi market economy and politically monopolistic party control) and 'liberals' (they sought an expansion of entrepreneurial and civil liberties, a diminishing role of state and the extension of the effective franchise). (Rusinow, 1977: 142). According to Rusinow, there was not an explicit distinction between these two tendencies; their differentiation was due to pragmatic daily needs. For this reason, the state apparatus became perplexed to such a degree that the language available for differentiating these two distinct positions were insufficient, or as Rusinow described referring to one ordinary party meeting, claimed that it "[was] often difficult understand why the participants have become so angry with one another over apparently fine and unimportant differences of phrase or emphasis." (Rusinow, 1977: 218). It is interesting to note that Rusinow's writings on Yugoslavian political formation have a large influence on researchers dealing with the formation of the cultural and artistic fields in Yugoslavia. Rusinow's influence is especially visible in Daniel Goulding's book on Yugoslavian cinema written in 1985, and for a long time considered as one of the most important international sources on this subject.

Goulding's approach to Yugoslavian cinema is that two completely oppositional tendencies in cultural politics of Yugoslavia created an almost impossible situation for filmmakers who were expected, on the one hand to experiment with the new forms and expressions (the liberal tendency in Yugoslavian cultural politics) and, on the other, to be respectful and conform to some essential Yugoslavian ideological parameters (the centralised tendency in Yugoslavian cultural politics). The effects of this impossible co-existence could be artistically elevated only in the cases when expression tended to regard these as state produced paradoxes, discarding them as the ideological surrogates of the state apparatus. The common nominator of this position is that the real constituent of discourse and ideology of Yugoslavian socialism was based on the paradox and impossibility of any political position (or politicisation); and, as such, artistic expression is possible only when it positioned itself outside these paradoxes.

In concluding this section, it is possible to say that for many Black Wave researchers mentioned here Yugoslavian art during self-management socialism was realized in a hyper-politicised condition which over-determined the entirety of cinema's stylistic, formal and narrative production (Goulding, 2002; de Cuir, 2012; Sudar, 2013). Accordingly, the cinematic apparatus was inseparable from and interwoven with the state apparatus: thus, the emancipation of art from politics also meant the proliferation of distinct and avant-garde expressivities. This pattern is precisely similar to Liehm's work, which is a primer for Eastern European cinema historicisation and theorization, that perceived art as over-determined by politics in Eastern Europe and that was realized/executed to such an extent that expressive emancipation was no longer possible even on a formal level:



“Even those who were not interested in the social implications of film, but primarily in its formal aspect, were gradually brought over to the political camp by the progressive distortion of this original conception and attempts to transform film into an instrument of state propaganda. First they encountered the effort to place each and every formal discovery, each and every experiment, into the “service of the Idea,” which shortly became the demand to give up all searching “in the name of the Idea.” Consequently, even the problem of form became political, and all efforts to assert new formal approaches became political efforts, as all subsequent efforts to consciously sidestep political issues through form. Film language and film form did not develop smoothly in a single one of the Eastern European countries, not even in the most favourable periods, but was instead dependent on many extra-artistic influences. No analysis of the formal structures of Eastern European film and their development, no analysis of the best works of Eastern European film, is completed unless one takes into consideration the close connection between film art and the development of society and politics that is characteristic of a nationalized film industry – sometimes as its boon, sometimes as its bane.” (Liehm and Liehm, 1977: 2).

As I will explicate further on this in the following pages, the statement of Liehm's are paradigmatic in the intellectual field dealing with the relation between Eastern European art and politics. My thesis is that with a thorough formalist methodology and theory we could avoid the pitfalls of both totalising approaches and simplified dualist reductionisms that deal with avant-garde productions from Eastern Europe and also rigorously with the contradiction and conflict with the Ideological State Apparatus in the formation of cinematic expression.

## 7 YUGOSLAVIA AND CINEMA: TOWARDS A TEMPORAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTRADICTIONS OF REALISM

### 7.1 Introduction to Theory of Realism

Once we have defined the field of cinema as a form constituted through a distinct set of elements existing autonomously from the general laws of ideology; then we are faced with the crucial question of understanding the temporal-historical consequences of this definition. Theoreticians dealing with the specificity of "cinematic apparatus" were most of the time referring to this distinctiveness as something related to the conditions of reproduction. But what is most interesting and exciting in this approach is that apparatus theory enables the historical positioning of ideological reproduction in the field of art and culture without avoiding the issues of transformation and historical change. Or more simply put: it makes it possible to conceive the transformation of the forms of art in relation to the transformation of politics without reducing art to an extrinsic field. This is a crucial question especially if we want to avoid the idealist and eternal conceptualisation of art as a sublime and timeless form of permanent beauty. This is indeed a very strange problem, because art as an autonomous supra-historical phenomenon is not only part of the idealist philosophies of Kant or Hegel that deal with aesthetics, but can also be found in the historical-materialist philosophy of Karl Marx where art has a form of supra-temporality<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> As Marx famously wrote in the end of his introduction to *Grundrisse*: "But the difficulty lies not in understanding that the Greek arts and epic are bound up with certain forms of social development. The difficulty is that they still afford us artistic pleasure and that in a certain respect they count as a norm and as an unattainable model." (Marx, 1973: 111). This brief reference by Marx has led many art theoretician to point both to the complex relation of the origin and transformation of art-forms in relation to the economic-politics superstructure (Lifshitz, 1973; Rose, 1984) and to the unruly Marxist problematic related to the historicity of arts (Roberts, 1994: 1-36; Raphael, 1982: 75-112).

This dilemma between the extrinsic and intrinsic conceptualisation of art in regard to a social and political forces is most aptly described by Russian Formalists as the issue of the device and the formal concept of literariness; in my case I am adapting this notion to a concept of cinematicness. Following this path of theorization we can claim that between extrinsic (outer materials, and forces, such as society, economy, politics, or general laws of ideology) and intrinsic (art's distinctive set of elements constituting its own intelligibility and historicity) elements there is not a direct and uniform relation, but a complex conflict, which following Colin Mercer we could describe as "inscriptions". As Mercer showed in regard to the inscription of the 1848 Revolutions in relation to art, these coercive intersections do not happen logically and linearly. From the position of temporality, the traces of these inscriptions should be achieved through delineating the "mis-cognitions" of ideology. What Mercer is calling for, following Althusser, is an "informed gaze" able to decipher the leftovers of historical narrative. As he writes: "it is not the 'evidence' of a particular 'chunk' of history; it is precisely another history, the history of a specific signifying practice seized within and not vis-a-vis social relations." (Mercer, 1986: 20). Combining the Althusserian notion of the 'distinct intelligibility' of art with Voloshinov's semiotics ("this all takes place in language", p. 24) and Benjamin's motif of the "ragpicker", or counter-collector, Mercer proposes historical-materialist theses on the art-politics relation, which do not follow the historicist notion of transformation.

Due to the distinct temporality of art and politics, the contingency of their intersection should always be emphasized. A similar understanding of the relation between art and politics can be also detected in T.J. Clark's book on Gustav Courbet's relation to the 1848 Revolution. Deriving his theory of art history from other intellectual sources than Mercer's, he arrives at more or less the same conclusion that the only possible art history is one that in its conceptualisation is open to contingency and unforeseen forces. As such, when T.J. Clark looks at Courbet's realist painting *Burial in Ornans*, he shows Courbet's refusal to depict what the peasant is in the form of a continuous narrative: "He provides a meticulous geography, but he destroys the transitions from place to place: scene follows scene like the slides in a diorama, each one a separate world from the next, no scene subordinate, each with an equal and often opposing weight. ... the fragments of rural society are juxtaposed rather than connected; there is no plot save the description of those divisions, repeated and elaborated, deliberately held apart" (Clark, 1982: 119-120)<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> This description of peasant life is strikingly different both from Balzacian realism, and also from the image of the peasant which Karl Marx famously drew in his *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which is a primer for historical materialist methodology applied to the 1848 Revolutions in France: "Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. A small holding, a peasant and his family; alongside them another small holding, another peasant and another family. A few score of these make up a village, and a few score of villages make up a Department. In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as po-

Following these conceptual propositions it would be very useful to see how Yugoslavian cinema-forms could be understood as the 'intersection' between art and politics. As I have shown in mapping the basic tenets of the discussions on Black Wave cinema, such theories and writings are moulded either by the historicism of national representation, or by a representational conceptualisation of the arts. The usual approach in dealing with the cinema of Eastern Europe is to discuss it as an absolute novelty induced by the political transformation of a post-revolutionary condition. The most elaborate and the first general historiography of Eastern European cinema, a book called "The Most Important Art" has set the intellectual standards of discussion for this field. Based on Lenin's dictum that in cultural policy cinema is the most important art, Liehm describes the history of Eastern European cinema as an art that takes shape at the contradictory intersection between the political and intellectual conditions of socialist revolution. Only by looking at the opus of Eisenstein and Vertov is it possible to show how the political novelty and radical contingency of the Russian October Revolution influenced the formation of avant-garde cinema. According to this reading, the unprecedented situation of the October Revolution created a platform for a new art that had to restructure itself in order to accommodate a new reality. In this regard, the most important aspect of this discussion is precisely the concept of the real. Especially considering the historical fact that realism had an excess of meaning in the cultural field of the socialist countries, it is thus important to clarify the relation between the real and the avant-garde and experimentation. The usual approach to realism is as an aesthetic ideology of the XIX century verisimilitude naturalism that corresponds to the bourgeois cultural field, which created a difficult and unpleasant situation in the historiography of socialist art. In this case socialist realism has been interpreted as a drawback, or recuperation of avant-garde principles toward the reconciled conception of naturalism: what was seen as the initial emancipation of form in avant-garde art was quickly replaced by the conservative form of realist naturalism. There are many art historical challenges to this notion, notably Boris Groys' account that certain principles of avant-garde art were shared with socialist-realism due to the fact that both had a similar position toward the functionalism of art, its totalising conception, anti-humanism, etc. (Groys, 2011). But what is most interesting in this case, and somehow more open to sociological analysis, is the proposition that the concept of the real should not be conceived as an aesthetic principle of representation for the social, the natural, or the concrete. This conceptualisation of realism is strikingly different from the approaches that claim that art should be a sheer reflection of the extrinsic and totally graspable external reality.

Both avant-garde art and realist arts are somehow different refractions of so-called 'reality', or of the outer elements of the extrinsic. Or as Terry Eagleton

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tatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes" (Marx, 1963: 123-124). With this short detour I want to point to the rather difficult and unruly connection between art and politics and their intelligibility.

put it, they are distinct Modes of Productions<sup>38</sup>; in this case, then, the historicism imbedded in the hierarchical structuring of the transformation of art is automatically discarded. It is discarded both as a negation of any kind of consecutive conception of art history, where the avant-garde is the crown of the slowly developing cultural field emancipated from naturalist-realist representation. Secondly, it is also an uncompromising refutation of any notion of genesis that would point to the direct relation between the extrinsic and intrinsic materials of artistic production. By elaborating all these various artistic styles as distinct modes of production it is possible to arrive at the concept of art as a confrontation of various representations, or refractions. These two notions are interconnected and both of them refer to the understanding of art and cinema history as a field of conflict, contingency, contestation and irregularity.

Following from this we can claim that the methodology of the historiography of Eastern European art cinema as an emancipation from realism is insufficient in explaining the complexities of the relation between art and politics. In order to sufficiently demonstrate this position it is important to show the discussions on realism in regard to avant-garde art. Or more precisely we have to show, by using formalist theories, the device of realism itself. One of the earliest accounts in dealing with the theoretical problems of realism in the post-revolutionary Russian context in relation to avant-garde art is Roman Jakobson's text "On Realism in Art" written in 1922. Jakobson, by schematizing the distinct conceptualization of realism in art, demonstrated that it does not necessarily mean the proper representation of reality, or a verisimilar approach to the concrete. Jakobson starts with two distinct realist conceptualisations:

A: "realism may refer to the aspiration and intent of the author; i.e., a work is understood to be realistic if it is conceived by its author as a display of verisimilitude, as true to life"

B: "a work may be called realistic if I, the person judging it, perceive it as true to life." (Jakobson, 2002: 38)

Following these two generally accepted proposals on realism, Jakobson in order to historicize and demonstrate the relativity of these descriptions has included two sub-groups for each of these descriptions. For example there would be A1 designating the avant-garde approach that renders a deformation of the artistic norms of true realism in contrast to A2 that indicates those who remain within the tradition of artistic norms as the most accurate reflection of reality. Accordingly, in subjective merit, there would be B1 describing the artist who rebels against given artistic codes in opposition to B2, the artist who remains faithful

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<sup>38</sup> Eagleton names them as Literary Modes of Production, but we could refer to them either as artistic or cinematic modes of productions as well: "We are not merely concerned with the sociological outworks of the text; we are concerned rather with how the text comes to be what it is because of the specific determinations of its mode of production. If literary modes of productions are historically extrinsic to particular texts, they are equally internal to them: the literary text bears the impress of its historical mode of production as surely as any product secrets in its form and materials the fashion of its making" (Eagleton, 1976: 48).

to a given artistic code. But as Jakobson demonstrates through looking at various artistic developments, these descriptions are very limited conceptualisations: because every artistic canon is actually an appropriation and normalization of previously conceived deformation. In this sense a strict delineation of what is “realism” in art is not possible. Following this, it is incorrect to claim that the meaning of realism generates a certain historico-social period of artistic representation, which corresponds to Jakobson's third (C) meaning: “realism comprehends the sum total of the features characteristic of a specific artistic current of the nineteenth century.”

In this regard, it is obvious that realism as an artistic concept does not have a strict historical connotation, nor does it have a strictly defined norm or code; moreover, it should be conceived as something which follows certain specific artistic devices of plot construction such as those based on formal contiguity (as in the D meaning of realism, which corresponds more to a filmic conception of realism); or more specifically, it should be dealt with as a fundamental device for constructing an artistic text as realistic, something which Jakobson describes as the E meaning of realism: “the requirement for consistent motivation and realization of poetic devices.” (Jakobson, 2002: 45). In this final designation of realism, artistic realism is not described in relation to extrinsic life material, but strictly to a process that delineates realism within the artistic field. E-realism, or the intrinsic formalist realism of an art-text, is what makes grasping history possible as well as the dynamics, contradictions and laws of stylistic transformation in art in a more materialistic and rigorous way.

## 7.2 Realism and History in Yugoslavian Cinema Discourse

Following on this it is impossible to continue with the false distinction between the abstract and the concrete that haunts many readings of Makavejev's films. As I have discussed in my article on **Makavejev and Ideology**, the subordination of Makavejev's art form to two oppositional fields, such as abstract and concrete is due to an ideological misconception of the contradictions surrounding the relation between art and politics. But another reason is that this dichotomy is reproduced even in the formal description of an art style itself. One crucial reason for this is the assumption that realism has specific historico-social components, which Makavejev and Yugoslavian Black Wave cinema do not belong to as being on a higher level of artistic evolution. In order to demonstrate this I will look attentively at one typical historicist description of the evolution of Yugoslavian cinematic realism.

Ranko Munitic, a renowned film critic, published an extensive overview of Yugoslavian cinema history in *Forum: Journal on Contemporary Literature* in 1965, which sought the “continuity and evolution of domestic cinema” (Munitic, 1965: 209-231). In this very symptomatic reading, Munitic dealt with nine films as episodes in a continuous trajectory of development in Yugoslav cinema. He starts with the first Yugoslavian feature film *Slavica* directed by Vjekoslav Afric

in 1947, which dealt with the National Liberation (Partisan) struggle by employing formal devices of Soviet post-Eisensteinian techniques of representing reality as the extension of the human subject in a social transformation, or as Munitic described it, as an "impressionistic illusion of new reality" (Munitic, 1965: 215). Accordingly, in this film there is no clear demarcation between the subjective and objective presentation of reality: everything taking place on the screen is part of that momentous "real" combination of personal excitement, political slogans, concrete extrinsic forces, and radical and novel political conditions. Accordingly, *Slavica* is the zero degree of writing; a total break with the past that unselectively and "spontaneously" registered everything, from the personal to the collective, constituting the subjects of that time. In the second case in Munitic's historiography, Fedor Handzekovic's *Bakonja Fra Brne* appears, which was made in 1951 and dealt with the social issues surrounding the corruption of the clergy. As Munitic described it, this film introduced a new conception of "reality" to Yugoslavian cinema, which he described as a "realism of locality ... with a balzacian motif ... of the precise realistic analysis of a certain spatiality." (Munitic, *ibid.*) *Bakonja*, was one step forward formally from *Slavica* due to its Balzacian formula, and had a "necessary realistic unity of content and form ... which led to the strange equation of the human subjects and objects depicted in the film" (Munitic, 1965: 217). This equation, accordingly created a gap in this version of realism; even if it had overcome an advanced form of representation, it still under-estimated the role of psychology and the determinants of subjectivity. The next film is one of the first Yugoslavian films which introduced "human feelings, fears, uncertainties and tensions as an essential constituent of dramaturgy", *Veliki i Mali* directed by Vladimir Pogacic in 1956 (Munitic, 1965: 218). This version of reality where the total unity of subjective and objective is achieved was, according to Munitic, an important step in "realizing national film values" (p. 219). The next important step in this historiography was another film by Pogacic *Subotom Uvece/Saturday Evening* (1957), which added the elements of "private, individual and happy moments" to the catalogue of the personal and the subjective (Munitic, 220). This realism accordingly was in a more complete and full sense as it had posed the "relation between subject and society not in terms of strictly defined laws and structures, but as a dialectical realisation both of dependency and freedom, and of extrinsic and intrinsic tendencies" (*ibid.*). The contradictions of reality in the economic crisis of Yugoslavia in mid-sixties became more apparent and more visible subsequent to this,<sup>39</sup>. Accordingly the next step in the evolution of Yugoslavian cinematic form was realized in *Uzavreli Grad/Boom Town* (1961), a film by Veljko Bulajic, where the subjectivity of the hero is placed in the coercive domain where the entire contradictions of outer society take place (Munitic, 223). It was with this step that the film-form of Yugoslavian cinema became "newest realism", where the most

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<sup>39</sup> The crisis in economical production in Yugoslavia in sixties was detected and analysed both by local and international scholars (Bilandzic, 1973; Woodward, 1995). My aim is not to deal with the over-discussed problem of the relation between the economic crisis and the prevalence of certain artistic and cultural forms.

intimate and personal matters were inseparable from the social and the collective. In order to establish the evolution of this filmic-form along the lines of the historicist terms of continuous progress, as in previous cases, Mutinic proposed that “after emancipation from extrinsic social and existential material, [film-form] has to emancipate itself also from the conception of humanity as a bearer of living dramaturgy” and with this new shift, “a new image of essential visions can constitute the nature of the film” (Mutinic, 224). This “new vision”, or new step is carried out by the films *Balada o Trubi i Oblaku* (1961) by Franc Stiglic and *Prometej S Otoka Visevice* (1964) by Vatroslav Mimica, where “history is not perceived as something personal, individual, and limited; but as a rich and sensitive structure which in itself accommodates all phases and surpasses the dilemmas of the previous stages, even those archaic dilemma's.” (Munitic, 228). In this new relation between man and the world, film-form does not represent humanity as a product of history, but as a product of forces that go beyond given history, as some sort of cultural phylogeny. As a last step in this evolutionary progress of Yugoslavian film-form, Munitic gave the example of Aleksander Petrovic's 1965 film *Tri/Three*. As one of the most successful Black Wave films, *Tri* is about three contradictory partisan episodes during the Second World War in Yugoslavia. According to Munitic, *Tri* introduced a new formal device to film history which he described as the “subjectivisation of vision”, which necessarily “leaves narration behind, [as well as the] description and compilation of objective facts as surplus and residual materials ... and instead focuses on the polyvalent representation of reality” (Munitic, 229).

In order to historicize the conceptualisation of realism as an ensemble of contradictory elements, or to grasp the concept of novelty in the field of artistic transformation, we have to show how the 'change', or 'evolution' takes place in the artwork itself. Following from the conceptualisation of *ostranenie*/estrangement as a formal device with theoretical and heuristic implications, it is possible to propose a methodology that would deal with the historical and temporal notions of art in a formal way. Through this approach it is possible to show both the historical implications of Roman Jakobson's model of conflicting realisms and also to make explicit what has been left out in Munitic's narrative of Yugoslavian film-form evolution: i.e., to try to work out an alternative explication of Yugoslav cinema history. The first theoretical difficulty that presents itself in this theorization is the theory of conflicting realisms put forward by Jakobson, who then formalized this as a “driving force through a conflict between signifier and signified” (Narboni, 1987: 49-61; Chateau, 2010: 99-109). As is widely discussed, this definition led to the post-structuralist model of cinema theory with a historiographical methodology that does not have a form of historicist explanation for transformation.

In order to situate *ostranenie* in more historical context we have to discuss the issue of transformation and evolution (Tynjanov, 2002: 66-78), which is a predominantly Formalist problematic, in the non-historicist model which Shklovsky described as the 'knight's move'. According to this model of historical transformation, there is no necessary link between various artistic forms and



styles developing according to some teleologically latent laws. The predominant classical view based on historicism actually uses this description even in order, for example, to describe the transformation of avant-garde style and form: as the development from father to son, as some kind of identity based the evolution of form. Shklovsky proposed an uncle-to-nephew genealogy instead of this model of history and the genealogy of art form from father to son. According to Shklovsky, history “progresses along a broken path,” whose “ruptures” trace “reasons that have nothing to do with chronology,” or unilinear genealogy. The legacy,” passed on from one literary generation to the next moves not from father to son but from uncle to nephew” (Shklovsky, 1990: 189-90; Sternberg, 2006: 198). From this perspective *ostranenie*, as a “foundational idea of Russian Formalism” (Sternberg, 2006: 126) is sufficient for discarding the claims that Formalism is a synchronic metaphor for the text spatially considered; and enables the innovative temporal methodology to regard the constructed devices and forms of art. As concerns this distinctive, contingent temporality or zig-zag historicisation of novelty, it is possible to assume a non-historicist conception of transformations in the field of film-forms. This model of zig-zag historicisation also provides a conceptual framework for dealing with the origins of the forms not necessarily in the context that seems most familiar and spontaneous to an art work. By applying this *ostranenie* based historiography to changes in cinema forms, Frank Kessler suggested that it would help if we considered the influences which have usually passed unnoticed: “The innovative act then consists mainly in turning to a different tradition, in appropriating forms and devices that may be automatized in their original context, but become both defamiliarized and defamiliarizing when transplanted into another realm” (Kessler, 2010: 69). In this reading of *ostranenie*, as in previous one proposed by Darko Suvin, we arrive at the most important aspect of the historical-materialist reading of defamiliarization; that “concept of *ostranenie* as a heuristic tool” (Kessler, 2010: 72). Empirically this methodology apart from providing a conceptual tool for dealing with the neglected, marginalized and oppressed realms involved in the origin of the art-form; it also proposes, at a philosophical level, a complete defamiliarization, or to “defamiliarize the defamiliarization” (Kessler, 2010: 79).

Before proceeding with these conceptual applications, it is sufficient to note that the dimension of temporality in the work of Dušan Makavejev is something that has been repeatedly underlined. Starting from the initial claims of Amos Vogel who categorized the work of Makavejev as a subversive film genre that uses temporality in a progressive way; and of Makavejev's own description of his film 'Innocent Unprotected' by way of heterogeneous and polyvalent temporality, we can claim that the distinct time of estranged historicisation is easily applicable to his films<sup>40</sup>. Common to such approaches is the im-

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<sup>40</sup> Vogel in his book on subversive films described Makavejev's film *Innocence Unprotected* (1968) as follows: “It successfully destroys the conventional concept of time and reality in its mingling of two time's from different periods” (Vogel, 1974: 114). Or as Makavejev noted about the time-form of *Innocence Unprotected*: “As they watch the film, viewers will spontaneously make choices according to their own predispositions. Some will believe that they are following a melodrama filled with adventures

proper conceptualisation of the temporal dimension of the artwork. One possible way of discussing the consequences of this conceptualisation through a rigid philosophical proposition would be to look at this strange and oblique temporality in Makavejev and the avant-garde art as schematized through Peter Osborne's Benjamin influenced thesis on modernism; not as the idea of progress, but as the "name for the cultural affirmation of a particular temporal logic of negation ('the new', the temporal logic of the modern) (Osborne, 2000: 57). In this case the historiography of Ranko Munitic that follows on the maturity of the cinematic-form of Yugoslavian film is an obvious case of an ideological approach that traces the 'modernisation' of form in a directly teleological and historicist mode, which assumes an invisible link between the developments of national-being and the maturity of film-form. Instead we are here in the field of modernism as a "cultural condition of possibility of a particular, distinctively future-oriented series of forms of experience of history as temporal form" (Osborne, *ibid*). This particularly Benjaminian materialist historiography in combination with the de-familiarization of the evolutionary patterns of artistic and political transformations includes all the contingent and aleatory forces and effects in the conceptualisation of the artwork. For example, in dealing with the formation of Black Wave film-form it would involve "modern" constellations of negation such as the Yugoslavian surrealist movement between the two World Wars, amateur cine-clubs, Mihovil Pansini and GEFF, vaudeville and circus art, naïve art of the folklore, Dadaism, and FEKS, to name just a few of the influences and cultural 'contexts' which Ranko Munitic and many other researchers dealing with the history and politics of Yugoslavian cinema prefer to pass by in silence.<sup>41</sup>

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and moral dilemmas, into which certain documentary materials have been incorporated like some large footnotes, which may also be neglected. Others will be convinced that they are watching a contemporary documentary about the still-living authors of our first sound film, combined with huge quotations from the film itself, like in some sort of 'Time-machine' dedicated to the beginning of our cinema. *Feel free to choose one or the other approach and impression*, it depends solely on what you consider *first* and *second*, whether you move from the *present* towards the *past*, or from *fiction* to *reality*. The third approach, the one that would please me the most, I would call *rotational*: the film is now fictional, now documentary, the one who pays close attention to it has to keep 're-aligning' him/herself...This 're-alignment' is possible because all the fragments are long enough to avoid the effect of 'film associations'" (Makavejev, 1968, as quoted in Levi, 2007: 31-32).

<sup>41</sup> Among the early examples that deal with the alternative sources of experimental and avant-garde Yugoslavian art is Milena Dragičević-Šešić 's book "*Umetnost i Alternativa*" / "*Art and Alternative*" (Dragicevic-Sesic, 1992). In previous years there have been interesting exhibitions and publications that dealt extensively with the less discussed alternative sources of Yugoslavian "black wave" cinema. Most notably are the exhibitions *As Soon as I Open My Eyes I See Film* at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, and *This is All Film! Experimental Film in Yugoslavia, 1951-1991* at the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana (Janevski, 2011; Piskur, 2011)

## 8 CONCLUSION: ART AND POLITICS BETWEEN CULTURE AND POLICY

As I stated at the beginning of my introduction, the starting point of my research was the conceptualisation of the relation between art and politics. In this introduction I elaborated on the methodological and theoretical consequences of this relation when applied to avant-garde films. By extensively referring to Russian Formalism I worked on a hypothesis that the representation of the contradictions that resulted in the uneven relations between art and politics should be conceptualized with appropriate models that do not exclude these contradictions and complexities. In the case of my research the contradictions that are bound to an uneven relation between art and politics were further intensified by the singularity of Yugoslavian self-management contradictions, which constitutes the historical subject of my research. The main argument of my thesis is based on the assumption that avant-garde artistic practices, such as Yugoslavian Black Wave cinema, can be positioned and accordingly discussed from the perspective of a larger understanding of cultural politics. Due to this assumption I have conducted research and published the articles on the general issues that reflect this larger understanding of cultural politics: such as the construction of slogans, policy and the management of art, the ideological reception of films, linguistics and the issue of artistic collectives. My argument was that the cultural politics of Black Wave films could not be understood in isolation from formal experimentation. Even though the model that I am proposing is based on a Formalist understanding of the constitution of artistic styles and genres, I asserted the idea that without social and political dimensions, the pure formalistic understanding of artistic language would be short sighted. Instead of proposing a synthesis between politics and art, or an external social dimension and an internal artistic formalism I conceptualized this uneven relation from the perspective of contradiction. In the subchapter "postscript to the theory of contradiction" I proposed that this modelling had larger philosophical consequences, which could also determine our understanding of knowledge processes, ideology and social formations generally.

Apart from these abstract and philosophical connotations, the indexing of the contradictions of the cultural politics of avant-garde art could be best described by looking at the discussions related to cultural policy in regard to avant-garde art practices. The first article of my research explicitly dealt with the notion of cultural policy; this article is the backbone of my research, which aims to show the intersection between forms of art and social formation. Especially by looking at Dušan Makavejev's involvement in the field of cultural policy (I am referring to my article **Between Necessity and Spontaneity**) I worked out the thesis that the involvement of artists in the affairs of cultural policy is not a sign of instrumentalisation in their practice; on the contrary, it is a perspective which adds certain complexities and creative contradictions to their work. The starting point for this conceptualisation is the argument that cultural policy is a site where many different and competing fields culturally and politically intersect. My assumption is that issues such as institutions and effectivity, creativity and contingency, which are determining aspects of any art practice, are constitutive of the category of cultural policy.

In this regard my aim is to reverse the question of the relation between politics and cultural policy and to propose a conceptualization of cultural policy as a site of politicisation, which includes the contingency of both art and of politics. In order to proceed with this theoretical problematic, I have worked with the idea of a formalization of the elements that constitute the politics of avant-garde art. I have described them carefully, by indicating some formal devices involved in this ideological construction; such as break as opposed to circularity; non-historicism as opposed to teleology and evolution; form as opposed to content; over-determination by contradictions as opposed to representation; counter-narrative as opposed to linear storytelling; plot as opposed to *fabula*; and noise and struggle as opposed to harmony and re-conciliation. By referring to a work of Dušan Makavejev, and partially to other Black Wave filmmakers I have applied this conceptual position to questions such as the relation between extrinsic political and historical material and intrinsic artistic form (as in this case relation between self-management and Black Wave); the philosophical conditions of avant-garde art and their politicisation through forms (in the relation between the philosophical group Praxis and the Black Wave); non-historicist and non-representative discussion of artistic forms in relation to the state apparatus (the relation between Yugoslavia and the Black Wave); the contested relation between origins of national and artistic forms (the issue of nationalism and its representation); etc. In all these discussions the issue of cultural policy somehow appeared as a crucial quilting point for the contradictory and antagonistic relations between politics and art. Most crucially, I claim that the distinctive style of Makavejev, which is composed of contradictory and ambiguous elements, can be properly analyzed by discussing its relation to cultural policy. I state that the contradictory and ambiguous form of Makavejev's films are the result of his involvement in issues that are directly or indirectly related to the field of cultural policy; such as the effectivity of art practice, its relation to institutions, ideological conditions and the politics of creativity, just to name a few.

Other, more crucial reasons to underlining the issue of cultural policy are the theoretical consequences of dealing with art and politics as contradictory and coercive formations. According to this, as politics and art are constituted through an indispensable contradiction, it is futile to attempt to describe them in a hierarchical mode, as one subsumed to the other; or as one autonomous and independent of the other. This is the usual approach of many theoretical positions, varying from positions assuming that art is a reflection of politics; or, in the completely opposite direction, of assuming that art is independent from politics. As a corrective to these claims I have emphasised the idea that cultural policy is a site where the contradictions and contingencies of both art and politics meets and produce additional contradictions, which furthermore generate complexities that have creative effects for artistic practice.

This politicised conceptualisation of cultural policy is detected in many different accounts and positions which I will summarize briefly. I have already mentioned the accounts of Miller and Yudice who discuss cultural policy as a tension between two oppositional registers, between anthropological and aesthetic registers (Miller & Yudice, 2002: 1), which due to this form of cultural policy, generate a more creative and advanced use of the term than the usual normative application. As they describe their position, they distinguish it from “[conventional] research, which articulates knowledge with social reproduction, with government as primary loci of power, authorization, and responsibility”. They contrast this with their own project, which “is concerned with transforming the social order, [whereas] the alternative seeks to replicate it”; for them this is “a struggle between cultural policy as transformative versus a functionalist sphere”; their “starting point, therefore, [begins with] theory, history and politics, rather than efficiency, effectiveness and description” (Miller & Yudice, 2002: 3). Somehow Oliver Bennett also detected a similar tension when he claimed that the constitution of cultural policy involves an opposition between the ‘culture’ of cultural policy as primarily an artistic expression, and the “policy” nature of cultural policy as the production of demonstrable social benefits (Bennett, 1997: 69-70). Echoing the previous tension, this approach to cultural policy is sensitive to the shortcomings of a normative oriented policy, which in the last instance serves to reproduce and regenerate the ideological apparatus. Miller and Yudice have discussed this clearly in terms of an anthropological register of cultural policy, which has direct links to national regeneration; as such cultural policy has direct consequences on governmentality (referring to Foucault), to collectivizing and regulating of taste, managing subjects, and the reproduction of the state apparatus (Miller & Yudice, 2002: 3-28). The national register of cultural policy is one of the most complicated areas of the art-politics relation in the context of Yugoslavian avant-garde art. As I theoretically discuss in my texts, the issue of socialist self-management's cultural policy is woven with a “fabric of contradictions” (referring to Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin’s film on Czechoslovakia, *Pravda* from 1970), which still continues haunting the way how we think about the avant-garde today. The “fabric of contradictions” of socialist self-management's cultural policy was primarily due to the form of

self-management itself; as a theory and practice of socialism that was caught between the collectivisation of the means of production and the regulation of this collectivisation. Or is usually described as a theory of socialism trapped between communism and capitalism. On another level, more akin to Miller & Yudice's anthropological register, there is a secondary contradiction of the supra-national form of Yugoslavia; precisely between various national cultural policies of the distinct Yugoslav republics. Accordingly, avant-garde artists in Yugoslavia were trapped not only in the contradictions between capitalism and communism; but also between national (Serbian, Croatian, Albanian, Macedonian, Slovenian, etc.) and the supra-national (Yugoslavian) designation of cultural policy. Both these contradictions were registered and already discussed in the seventies and eighties in Yugoslavia. Most of these were representative of Stevan Majstorovic's report to Unesco published in 1980 as *Cultural Policy in Yugoslavia: Self-management and culture*. Registering the problematic issues from precarity to the disparity of the allocation of means for artistic production, or the contradiction between cultural objectives and the market relation, Majstorovic clearly demonstrates that culture in self-management was contested field between recognition and redistribution (Majstorovic, 1980: 55-62).

Cinema history, due to its formation, has very strong relation both to avant-garde art and national representation; as such, in cinema both registers of cultural policy, which Miller and Yudice have mentioned, are present and are in constant conflict. As Andras Balint Kovacs has shown, this aspect of cinema is an indicator of its modernist roots. Kovacs argued that cinema as an historical phenomenon that developed in the context of avant-garde art, became related to "narrative and visual forms of national cultural heritage" (Kovacs, 2007: 17). The reason for the nationalisation of the avant-garde form was due to concrete issues, as Kovacs argued, such as the impossibility for avant-garde art to survive in the conditions of a commercialized market. In order to avoid this, avant-garde art had to be part of a national cultural policy of the regeneration of cultural-national values through the arts: "artistic quality was meant to be acknowledged only within a national context" (Kovacs, 2007: 24). If this national pattern was the context of the first cinematic modernism that corresponded to the twenties and thirties, the second cinematic modernism of the sixties was in the form of a supra-national context. Apart from fact that this observation is too optimistic to be taken as factual, Kovacs description of this supra-nationalism in relation to Eastern European conditions also loses its grip. According to Kovacs, Eastern European political conditions in sixties was designated by "bureaucratic centralism and with the radical limitation of individual liberties," in these conditions the role of cinema's cultural policy was to reanimate the democratic and egalitarian sentiments of Eastern Europe (Kovacs, 2007: 354). In any case, to conceive cinematic modernism through the register of cultural policy as a national-artistic-form is problematic, as it can never grasp the real conditions of its politicisation. As in Kovacs' case, or Yvet Biro and others, politicisation is always done with vague extra-political means, such as emotions, feeling, individual freedom, liberty, sensuality, etc. As I have shown in my arti-

cle **On Makavejev, On Ideology**, in internationally acknowledged film theory Dušan Makavejev has been situated inside this extra-political context: his work is seen as an artistic-form of Eastern European avant-garde cinema emancipated from politics.<sup>42</sup>

Instead of discussing the issue of the national register of cultural policy for cinema through the effects of regeneration, it would be better to grasp the inherent contradictions of cinematic modernism as an heuristic process with formal elements. To put it briefly and clearly, the aim is to formalize art, modernism, cultural policy and the nation, altogether.

If Kovacs' version of artistic modernism corresponds to a normative and programmatic theory of politics, or to refer to Palonen to a politicking (Palonen, 2007); then we have to approach modernism from a different political theory, one that does acknowledge its contradictions. As briefly mentioned above, one example of such modernist theory is Peter Osborne's Benjaminian influenced conceptualisation of temporality as an indicator of the politics of avant-garde art. To emphasise yet again, it is theory that refers to modernism as the "universality of a philosophical context," which derives its "concrete meaning from the distinctive unity of its specific instances as a particular constellation of negation, at any particular time" (Osborne, 2000: 59). This moment of a disruptive construction, or "transition to a (temporary) new order" (Osborne, 2000: 64), of modernism is surely happening through the politicisation of forms; or as it was in the seventies often described as the *politics of forms*. But aside from this, Osborne's view of modernism as a moment and temporal constellation of disruptive novelty, or constructive negation, also provides a different theoretical framework for the historicisation of social changes. According to this perspective there is no room for regeneration and historicist continuity as any kind of consecutive conceptualisation of history is discarded: consequently, the concept of the nation which is directly linked to the issues of historicism and reproduction is automatically discarded as well. The notion of cultural policy that I am pinpointing here has this philosophical background of negation, which is actually a politicisation of avant-garde art. Once the contradictions of cultural policy are accepted as inherently avant-garde, and as inherently conflictual, it is no longer possible to deal with the functionalism of art, or a 'cultural' dead-end of cultural policy, to paraphrase Oliver Bennett, in pessimistic and nihilistic terms. This conflict must back up a politicisation of cultural policy. My thesis is that the real strength and value of artistic-form in Dušan Makavejev's films are based on the acknowledgment of the conflicts of cultural policy. The difference between Makavejev, and, for example Kokan Rakonjac, the "blackest" of all Black Wave filmmakers, is made insofar as he never escaped the contradictions induced by an involvement with cultural policy.

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<sup>42</sup> Examples of this interpretation are vast. We can mention Lorraine Mortimer who claims that Makavejev already quit the Yugoslavian Communist Party in sixties. This is obviously an incorrect statement, considering that Makavejev was *expelled* from the party in 1972.

The main contradiction to an involvement with cultural policy is the inclusion of an indispensable conflict between political engagement and artistic autonomy in the work of art. According to Sylvia Harvey, political modernism in cinema has exactly this position of an art that aims at “combining radical aesthetic practice with radical social effects” (Harvey, 1982: 48). Unlike Kovacs, who differentiates between two modernisms, a first and a second, Harvey deals with political modernism as a formal method, derived particularly from the theoretical and practical work of Berthold Brecht (Harvey, *ibid*). But this formal method in political modernism which Harvey discusses has a strong relation to the extrinsic material of social reality or, as she puts it, “[it] involves not only textual properties but also extra-textual relations” (Harvey, 1982: 49). As I clearly indicated in the introduction, the inclusion of noises (referring to Jurij Lotman) into the artistic text was a particular device of Dušan Makavejev, which he used in order to construct different sets of subjectivity, signification and reality, the three most important concerns of political modernism that Harvey discusses. The most important element in Harvey’s conceptualisation of political modernism is that it operates as an heuristic set of aesthetic activities with a political agenda; in this sense, the positions (political and artistic) in this version of modernism are neither arbitrary nor relative, they are based on clear demarcated truth processes: “for a political modernism the process of displacement [i.e. various forms of subjectivisation, signification and reality] cannot take place within the general framework of philosophical relativism (one way of seeing this is as good as another way of seeing and is judged according to criteria of internal coherence). Rather, it must operate within the framework of a realist epistemology and [in] correspondence [with a] theory of knowledge” (Harvey, 1982: 53).

With this we arrived at the core of the thesis on the contradictory character of cultural politics involved in the practice of avant-garde art and cinema. By introducing the formal logic of analysing the internal constituents of artistic and cinematic practices I have shown that these contradictions, in last instance, cannot be grasped solely with reference to the autonomy of artistic forms. This theoretical approach refuses to emphasize these registers: neither the dominance of artistic forms nor the causality of social formations. Conceived in this way, as a struggle and tension between these two registers, this methodology hinges upon the assumption that the reduction of complexities concludes as an ideological affirmation of accepted rules and norms, which avant-garde artistic and cinematic practice aim to deconstruct. This way of formulating the relation between art and politics has far reaching conceptual and especially epistemological consequences; namely, if we are to assume the theory of cultural politics as a clash of perspectives, then how is possible to decide on a correct policy agenda when cultural activity is defined as contradiction and noise? Is there any such epistemological position, which Harvey is alluding to, that would give us concise clues for delineating truth from manipulation, or modern from archaic elements? The examples that Harvey gives in describing this model are similar to the patterns that I have been referring to throughout my work, such as the



Brechtian model of distanciation with a heuristic self-critical formalism, and Shklovsky's anti-historicist "knight's move". These examples and models are far from dealing with these issues in a proper conceptual register. In order to proceed with these questions, I agree that even if art and politics are mutually related, this convergence should be based on an un-symmetrical, uneven and coercive relation. As a result, the politicised cultural policy in avant-garde art differs from normative cultural policy, not only as an heuristic position, but as a different heuristic position, and also as different political position; one which is open to the negativity involved in heuristic processes, or knowledge procedures. So in order to differentiate the politicised cultural policy of the avant-garde from a normative one, we have to understand it as a cultural activity which is not defined by its ability to regenerate already existing parameters; but one that negates them, and opens the political field to the future, and unforeseen possibilities. This position requires fully acknowledging the contingencies of art and politics.<sup>43</sup>

In the last instance, this way of dealing with cultural policy was also the artistic model of Makavejev's political art mixed with contradiction, negativity, and the issues of force, which exposes the unevenness and intervention of a norm.

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<sup>43</sup> It is obviously very difficult to clearly indicate the distinctiveness of this conceptual position; but I can at least refer to one attempt, sympathetic to formalist approaches, which in attempting to deal with the difficulties of a cultural policy over-determined by contradictions has, in the last instance, proposed a mediating and modest line of cultural policy. Tony Bennett's first and highly influential book 'Formalism and Marxism' which thoroughly deals with formal issues of political art by merging postulates from Russian Formalism and Althusserian Marxism questions if the class struggle in theory, as Althusser referred to it, would make any sense for cultural politics: "Ultimately, Althusser's work echoes not to the *sound* of class struggle but to the reverberating *noise* of empty ideological categories clashing with one another" (Bennett, 1978: 138). This element of sound versus noise in Bennett, which I have underlined, formally corresponds to the dichotomy between harmonious and impure contradiction. But moreover, according to Bennett the issue of class struggle in Althusser is not a real one, but an epistemological abstraction, and as such it has attributes that could be discussed as random, meaningless and contingent tendencies. Accordingly, the arbitrariness and unpredictability of noise manifests itself in cultural texts in even more confused terms, which as Bennett suggest needs the certain direction and clarification of cultural cacophony: "it should work upon literary texts wrenching them from the forms in which they are customarily perceived or interpreted, so as to mobilize them politically in a stated *direction*" (Bennett, 1978: 142). The question is whether this kind of voluntarist position in cultural policy is a first step towards the reconciliation and administration of the politicisation of cultural practice?

## TIIVISTELMÄ

Väitöskirjassani ehdotan metodologiaa joka mahdollistaisi politiikan ja taiteen välisen vuoropuhelun alistamatta niiden käytäntöjä ja konsepteja toisiinsa. Sen sijaan, että viittaisin poliittiseen taiteeseen politiikan representaationa taiteessa, tai poliittisena tehokkuutena taiteellisessa työskentelyssä, tavoitteenani on korostaa näiden välisiä jännitteitä. Venäläisen formalismin, Walter Benjaminin ja Louis Althusserin teorioita ja malleja hyödyntäen ehdotan, että jännitteellä, joka on erottamaton osa taiteellista konseptualisointia, on oma kielensä, joka hyödyntää ideologisten muodostumien ristiriitoja. Yhdistämällä kirjallisuuden liitetyviä ja formalismin erityisten ilmaisujen teorioita Benjaminin dialektiseen nicht-syntesis malliin, tavoitteenani on sitoutua Althusserin radikaalin epävarmuuden konseptiin ja yli-määräytyminen ristiriidoihin. Väitöskirjani aiheena on Jugoslavian Uusi Aalto elokuva vuosien 1963 ja 1972 välillä, joka tunnetaan 'musta aalto' elokuvana. Sen jälkeen kun olen käsitellyt termin 'musta aalto' historiallista ja ideologista määritelmää, jatkan soveltamalla formalistista konseptuaalista mallia aiheeseen tarkastelemalla tapoja, joilla voimme ymmärtää ristiriitoja Jugoslavian uusi aalto -elokuvassa. Erotan kolme hallitsevaa ristiriitaa mustassa aallossa suhteessa sosialistisen Jugoslavian ideologiseen kontekstiin, jotka perustuvat valtiokoneistoihin, nationalismiin ja itsehallintaan. Hyödyntäessäni ristiriitoja keskustellessani taiteen ja politiikan välisestä suhteesta, pääväitteeni perustuu olettamukseen, että ristiriidat tuottavat uutta tietoa taiteellisista muodostumista. Keskittymällä erikseen jokaiseen ristiriidan tapaukseen tarjoan erilaisen luennan mustasta aallosta, joka perustuu uusiin materiaaleihin joita jatkuvasti ammennan ensikäden lähteistä elokuvaohjaajilta, erityisesti Dušan Makavejevin kirjoituksista. Keskustelemalla mustan aallon muodoista, ensisijassa muodoista Makavejevin elokuvissa, osoitan, että ristiriidat näissä elokuvissa voisivat tuottaa uutta tietoa myös ymmärtääksemme sosialistisen Jugoslavian systeemiä. Esimerkiksi analysoimalla itsehallinnan ristiriidan tekstejä elokuvan muodossa, voimme konkreettisemmin ymmärtää monimutkaista suhdetta kulttuuripolitiikan ja taiteellisen autonomian välillä. Tämä epämukava suhde kulttuuripolitiikan ja autonomian välillä, kuten väitän, on vedenjakaja Makavejevin älyllisessä ja taiteellisessa tuotannossa. Usein väitetään Jugoslavian mustaa aaltoa käsittelevissä tutkielmissa, että nämä elokuvat ovat usein välinpitämättömiä itsehallintoa ja sosialismia kohtaan, väitän päinvastaisesti, että niiden suhde on monitahoisempi. Tämä voidaan havaita erityisesti katsoessamme kulttuuripolitiikan käsitettä Makavejevin työssä ja tuotannossa. Hypoteesini on, että kulttuuripolitiikan konsepti Makavejeviläisittäin on radikaalisti muuttunut sosiaalisen itsehallinnan näkökulmasta. Samaa voidaan sanoa hänen tavastaan, jolla hän käytti poliittisia sloganeja elokuvissaan. Poliittisia sloganeja Makavejevin tuotannossa ei voi täysin ymmärtää ellei niitä oteta huomioon taiteellisen älyllisyyden kontekstissa. Väitän, että poliittiset ja sosiaaliset elementit jotka ovat kirjattut taiteelliseen työhön saavat toisenlaisia muotoja kuin poliittisella kentällä. Jotta pystyn näyttämään tämän toteen käsittelen millä tavoin Makavejev käyttää surrealismia, unta ja muita epämääräisiä elementtejä esittäessään poliittisia

sloganeja. Sen lisäksi, tarkastelemalla historiallisia muotoja ja tiettyjen universaalien kulttuuristen elementtien, kuten Beethovenin, muutosta tavoitteenani on näyttää millä tavoin tämä kirjaaminen tapahtuu. Ehdotan muutamaa teesiä, jotka auttavat meitä ymmärryksen muutosrealismin konseptiin sosialisissa itsehallinnan kulttuuripolitiikassa. Vertailemalla realismin käsitettä mustan aallon elokuvassa realismin konseptiin perinteisemmässä Jugoslavia-laisessa elokuvassa, tavoitteenani on alleviivata ristiriitojen merkitystä ensimmäisenä mainitun tyyliin. Tätä seuraten, argumenttini on että mustan aallon kulttuuripolitiikassa, muuttuneena realismina kirjattuna ristiriitojen muodot, on pitkälle ylettyviä seurauksia meidän ymmärryksellemme historiasta ja taiteen väliaikaisuudesta. Tämä vaihtoehtoinen väliaikaisuuden ymmärrys on myös osallisena 'kansallisen' erilaiseen konseptualisointiin taiteessa, ja valtiokoneistojen kysymyksiin omistautumisessa monitahoisemmalla tavalla. Loppuyhteenvedossa spekuloin idealla, että muodollinen metodologia, joka perustuu ristiriitoihin voisi tarjota erilaisen ja teoreettisesti yksityiskohtaisemman luennan kulttuuripolitiikasta suhteessa luoviin taiteellisiin tuotantoihin.

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## **ORIGINAL PAPERS**

### **I**

#### **BETWEEN NECESSITY AND SPONTANEITY: CULTURAL POLICY OF DUŠAN MAKAVEJEV**

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# Between Necessity and Spontaneity: The Cultural Policy of Dušan Makavejev

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## ***Introduction: The Contradictions of Cultural Policy***

Attempting to think the work of Dušan Makavejev in terms of the effects of social and cultural action, in terms of change or political engagement will inevitably lead us into the sphere of cultural policy. Considering the fact that in most cases the discourse surrounding Makavejev's work could be schematized (structured) in various antagonistic dichotomies, such as the abstract and the concrete, the collective and the individual, or dogmatism and pluralism, it is obvious that a discussion dealing with cultural policy would conclude with some kind of antagonistic dichotomy. Before starting to discuss the specifics of Makavejev's cultural policy and its contradictions, it is necessary to perform this operation on the very object of cultural policy.

The main contradiction of the subject of cultural policy is based on the tension between its two main parameters, the tension between culture and policy. This almost metaphysical statement will be clear when we specify or concretize the manifestations of these parameters. Then, to put it in a more concrete manner, we can claim that the discourse of cultural policy, as Oliver Bennett pointed out very concisely, is structured around two opposing definitions: it involves the opposition between the 'culture' of cultural policy as primarily an artistic expression, and the "policy" nature

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of cultural policy as the production of demonstrable social benefits (Bennett, 1997: 69-70). It is possible to further intensify this contradiction by insisting that there is something about the "arts" that is ultimately based on authenticity, autonomy and originality as something structurally irreconcilable with any kind of instrumentalization and engagement, which are part of the production of social benefits. Thus, talking about cultural policy in the case of artistic creation is a dead end, a stalemate, or an impossibility of the oxymoron. Bennett names this problem of cultural policy *scepticism*, and detects the consequences of this state in various manifestations of *cultural pessimism* (Bennett, 1997: 74). There have been many different attempts at pacifying this tension, attempts that constitute the foundations of various cultural policy approaches: these range from the view of cultural policy as the simple democratisation of diversity, to the secular patronage of the "arts", but almost in all cases this tension is part of the discussions related to cultural policy. Be it as pessimism, anxiety (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005: 420-21), or as cynicism, this tension is always a metaphor of the malaise which cultural policy is either attempting to pacify (i.e. with a dismissal of the policy as manipulation or as serving a secret agenda of the state apparatuses) or to completely ignore (i.e. by reducing art to its social or psychological practicality).

Another completely opposite approach is to denegate (in a psychoanalytic sense) the aspect of cultural policy from the field of cultural production. This is the case with artistic strategies transcending social, economic or political constraints. Pierre Bourdieu who analysed art as a field of power and of struggle showed most clearly the importance of adopting a position in the cultural field. It would not be fair to reduce Bourdieu's work to this, but it is possible to employ his approach in the possible critique of the artistic denegation of policy. This denegation, which Bourdieu labelled as *disinterestedness*, is especially related to the *economies*, which art, as a matter of the *soul*, should have no relations with. But as Bourdieu showed, the *economies* and social benefits in art entail very important formative aspects for the field. This formation, apart from having its own epistemological implications, is most obviously manifested in the process of consecration, which is a significant driving force of artistic history. This disinterestedness goes hand in hand with the *abstraction* or transcendence in art discourses. The discourse of art history usually omits struggles and power relations as trivial issues that belong to a different field, insisting on the canonical or abstract continuity of its own thought (ideal history). Bourdieu criticizes this pure art historiography which *strips off the most concrete debates of their time* creating a *derealisation of a work* as *intellectualism* or *empty humanism*, and counters this by trying to introduce the unnoticed, repressed, and concrete (rumours, labels of schools, truncated quotations, etc.) as a constitutive part of the field of cultural production. (Bourdieu, 1993: 31-32)

***A Demonstration of Cultural Policy in Dušan Makavejev***

In this text I will try to show that Makavejev was clearly *interested* in the adoption of positions with regard to contemporary culture in Yugoslavia. His interest in the field of culture was about more than a mere valorisation of individual affirmation; it clearly included an aspect of cultural policy. Usually the readings of Makavejev's work tend to denegate this aspect of cultural policy from his intellectual and artistic work, generating the ideological discourse of film-maker up against all kind of social and political constrains, as the poet of self, or a prophet of pleasures. The general assumption of these ideological interpretations divides Makavejev's work into two antagonistic tendencies, the abstract and the concrete. The thesis of this text suggests that Makavejev's attitude to cultural policy is not mechanical and is related to both of these antagonistic tendencies; but the theoretical tools which Makavejev used when taking on these irreconcilable antagonistic tendencies meant that he had to gradually give up his interest in policy and the adoption of positions in culture.

*Schema on the notion of the abstract and the concrete in the readings of Dušan Makavejev films:*

<b>The Abstract</b>	<b>The Concrete</b>
- rational, over-socialized discourse, ideology, alienation, cold violence (Mortimer, 2009)	- irrational, carnal, sensual, non-ideology, non-alienation, hot violence, blood, flesh, bones (Mortimer, 2009)
- Euclidean, linearity, rational, finite, (Vogel, 1973)	- non-Euclidean, irrational, infinite, (Vogel, 1973)
- Vladimir (Lenin), rational, altruistic, behaviourist, regimented bureaucracy (Durgnat, 1999)	- Darwinism, psychoanalysis, biology, brutishly zoological, spontaneity (Durgnat, 1999)
- impersonal, schematic, scientific socialism (Elsaesser, 1968)	- revolution, euphoria, excitement (Elsaesser, 1968)
- Godard (MacBean, 1975)	- spontaneity, noise, natural, diversity, original (Parvulescu, 2009)
- discontinuity, analysis, Stalin (Cavell, 1978)	- humanism, community (MacBean, 1975)
- scientific, neo-Stalinist (Baxandall, 1983)	- continuity, complex, tastable (Cavell, 1978)
	- commitment to body, earth-like, openness (Warren, 1996)
	- subjectivity, humanist (Baxandall)

As is clear from this map, Lenin, intellectualism, rationality, social engagement, seriousness, and cultural policy are the "abstract" notions of this cosmogony, or more precisely they represent the "interests" of the un-Makavejevic world. I will insist on a counter-argument, and try to show that first, cultural policy played a crucial role in the artistic interest of Makavejev, and second, that the contradictions of his cultural policy had an important influence on the form and content of his artistic production.

Today Makavejev is known more or less only as a film director; but throughout the fifties and sixties he was engaged seriously as what is often called a “public intellectual”: he was writing pamphlets, reviewing books and films, commenting on official resolutions on culture and arts, popularizing film for educational purposes, organising film happenings, participating in various forums on film culture. Most of these efforts were related to cultural policy, or what we could generally label as the instrumentalisation of culture. In this article I will draw on some of these texts, which have unfortunately been neglected in the discussions related to Makavejev’s work. This omission is not accidental amnesia; it is related to the prevailing conception of the relation between culture and politics, which is either perplexing as an oxymoron or blurred as a pleonasm. My first aim is to show how in Makavejev’s work cultural policy, exactly because of this contradictory position, generated very complicated and ambiguous theory and practice. The clearest description of this tension is arrived at when looking at two different statements by Makavejev from the end of the sixties. In a discussion on *New Yugoslav Film*, organized by the Gledista journal during the XIV Pula Film Festival in 1967, Makavejev is explicitly interested in the notion of the policy and organization of film workers productions. He is, as many others participating in the discussion, claiming that Yugoslav film is heterogeneous and non-systematic. According to Makavejev, this non-systematic nature of Yugoslav film is a crucial emancipatory element. This heterogeneity is achieved through the exploration of authentic and avant-garde film forms (referring to GEF, or Genre Experimental Film Festival activities between 1963-1970) which paved the way for the democratic and lively productions of New Yugoslav Film (Novi Jugoslovenski Film, 1967: 1122-3). It would be a mistake to interpret this formation of cultural policy from experimental artistic work as “recuperation” (in the Situationists’ sense of the commodification of radical ideas in mainstream society). According to Makavejev, things are more complicated. The exploring of experimental film forms at the beginning of the sixties, which led to the formation of a more consistent (but heterogeneous) film language in Yugoslavia, faced stagnation as a result of the professionalization of culture entailed in the policies of self-management. As Makavejev explains, “*the state withdrew its support from cinematography, letting cinema sustain itself*”, which created a situation that led to an abundance of commercial films. (p. 1125-6). The promoting of free entrepreneurship in the cinema business as part of self-management in Yugoslavia, which Makavejev says boosted mediocre and populist film production, is a result of the passive attitude of the League of Communists on the matter of culture. The commodification of film is related to the lack of a cultural policy, or of an “*active attitude of the League of Communists towards cinematography*”. This is most clearly manifested in the indifference of the Yugoslavian League towards artistic engagement with social and political issues, particularly concerning theoretical work on film (especially in the field of education), which resulted in a failure, as Makavejev declares, “*to open a space for film to affirm itself as social action,*

*merciless documentation, and as critical reflection on social phenomena*" (p. 1127). In order to understand the complex relation between culture and politics in Makavejev I am proposing to have a look at the very development of his thought on these issues.

### ***Self-Managing People for Self-Management Society***

Reading a collection of Makavejev's early texts written between the late fifties and beginning of sixties and published in a short book entitled *Kisses for Comrade Slogan* (1965), it is interesting to note how much these writings are dealing with the problems involved in the relation between culture and politics. What kind of culture is needed for the new policy (self-management) of Yugoslavia, what are the residual factors which continue to haunt cultural manifestations and political failure, what is the reason for the pervasive persistence of dogmatism in new Yugoslavia, how is anti-dogmatism possible in culture, what is our reality, what kind of man is needed for a new society? These are the questions that play a significant role in all of Makavejev's writings published in the mentioned book as well in many of his early films. The political philosophy of Makavejev is based on the succinct supposition that socialist Yugoslavia, with its de-Stalinization, new policy of self-management, openness and revolutionary heritage of the anti-fascist struggle, has created a unique "reality", one that introduced a new gap between the human-subject and this reality. In the political philosophy of Makavejev, this gap or schism, which can be outlined as the tension between the subject and the structure (as we mentioned earlier), is crystallized as the subject of the construction of the "new man". The point of departure for Makavejev's concept of "new man" is the position that the holistic conception of the human being is no longer valid (Makavejev, 1965: 18). The most clear materialization of this fragmentation is manifested in the confusion or "irresolvable misunderstanding" between the human and "reality". The coercive relationship between the human and reality is not based on symmetrical inequality, and this coercion or tension is not a static one. According to Makavejev's philosophy, reality is far more progressive, multi-layered, harbouring different potentialities, creative and revolutionary. The usual sociological explanation of this situation is based on the transitional chaos of accelerated modernisation, which followed the revolutionary transformation. This uniqueness, which has very clear epistemological aspects (as new knowledge, new conceptions, etc.), is at the same time, as a field of tension, affirming the construction of elements for a cultural policy which is primarily based on the transformation of the human subject. The human subject of this policy is lagging behind revolutionary reality; accordingly, the task of cultural policy should be based on a transformation of the subject so as to reach the level or state of this "reality". Makavejev describes this "reality" as "Dadaistic", or more precisely as a "spontaneous Dada" of "modern city folklore" (Makavejev 1965: 53), which includes a clear reference to its fantastical and uncanny attributes. Even if Makavejev does not systematize the characteristics of this "reality", he has a sociological explanation for



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it (i.e. blurring of urban and rural dispositions, leisure activities of the working class, rapid urbanization, etc.). Another important characteristic of this Dadaistic reality is that it has cinematic attributes: it evokes the lure of Antonioni's *Notte* or the comedy of expressionist films; the plots of this "reality" develop in cinematic spaces such as cinema saloons, and ontologically this "reality" has a cinematic nature [*free cinema under the blue sky*], (Makavejev, 1965: 59)].

Thus the main affirmative task of the cultural policy for a New Yugoslavia is to re-shape man to correspond to this revolutionary "reality". The elementary method in this transformation of man is education, or as Makavejev names it "*a complete materialistic education*" (Makavejev, 1965: 19). With the notion of education we arrived at the core of the discourse on the cultural policy of revolution. Historical discourse on the revolutionary social transformations of states like the Soviet Union or Hungary implies that the transformations of cultural policies were based primarily on education. In the Soviet Union with Nadezhda Krupskaya and Anatolij Lunacharsky and in Georg Lukacs's "*western Marxism*", work on the cultural policy of socialist revolution is strongly linked with education (Read, 2006; Morgan, 2006). The notion of education was very important in the discursive formation of New Yugoslav Cinema (or the Black Wave). Branko Vučićević (*Decji Filmski Klub/Children's Film Club*, 1958), Dušan Makavejev (*24 Frames per Second [24 Slicice u Sekundi, 1960]*), Živojin Pavlović (*Film in School Benches [Film u Skolskim Klupama, 1964]*) and Milenko Karanović (*Film in Working with Children [Film u Radu s Decom, 1960]*) were all very influential in the theoretical and practical development of New Yugoslavian Cinema and had written books on cinema and education, or on the reception of films among children. Deserving special mention here is Milenko Karanović, the founder of the Yugoslavian Film Archive (Kinoteka) and its first director, who played a significant role in the affirmation of contemporary films (primarily through his connection with FIAF and Henri Langlois and other propagators of the art of film), and who after 1955 dedicated himself completely to the relationship between education and cinema. He founded a special commission, known as Film and Children, which was supported by the Association of Societies for the Children Youth of Yugoslavia — Savez Drustava za Stvaranje o Deci i Omladini Jugoslavije. (Kosanović, 2004). Karanović's work cannot be reduced to the classic didactic school system approach of working with the means of film. For him, working on cinematic education was also a possibility of forming alternative cultural and social forms of expression. In an interview from 1982, Karanović tells the story of how the Film Archive was set up. In order to convince Aleksander Vuco (a surrealist writer famous for his children's book *Pet Petlica* and the first director of the Yugoslav Cinematography Committee) to establish a Film Archive, Karanović put together a "*salad-programme*" (or "*mixed-programme*") of moving images consisting of fragments from the Gold Rush, news reels of Stojadinović's speech in Pancevo, of Usthas killing communists, as well as fragments from films

featuring Greta Garbo. This collage-impression led to the Yugoslavian Film Archive being established in Belgrade in 1951. (Jovanovic, [1982] 2004: 96). The polyvalency of this “*salad-programme*”, which includes the affirmation of education, holds a formal similarity to the collage language of Yugoslav New Film/Black Wave. This collage (or “*mixed-programme*”) had a notable influence on the film language of Dušan Makavejev who was also an active member of the commission for Film and Children. In his essay on Karanović, entitled *Creator of Happy and Intelligent Coincidences*, Makavejev describes working with children as being about more than general cinematic education. Working with children at the beginning of the sixties was also considered as a possibility to create a platform for the cultural policy of spontaneity, or what Makavejev names “*creative disorder*” (Makavejev, 2004: 63).

The cultural policy of revolution is not about the affirmation of individual emancipation but of the internalization of collective, complex and authentic new possibilities. It was based on the political and social transformation of human subjects. The main dictum of this policy was based on the human being (individual) who has to attune her/himself to the complexity of the collective. Consequently we can label the cultural policy of revolution *negative cultural policy*: because it is overturning all the principal assumptions of cultural policy as the guarantor of the creative expression of individuals as the main goal behind the instrumentalization of the democratic conception of culture. With negative cultural policy things are reversed; as opposed to the creative monad of the artist individual, the collective (as a polysemic society in revolutionary transformation) is the determinant of cultural policy. For the purpose of schematizing we can claim that the subject of positive cultural policy is the individual, whereas the subject of negative cultural policy is the collective.

In this case the recuperation — one of the most important aspects of Makavejev’s films — of this negativity is achieved through the introduction of the “individual subject” into the field of the cultural policy of revolution. This, according to Makavejev, happened within Stalinist ideology as a result of a policy that re-introduced the individual and the human hero (“cult of personality”) as the bearer of the revolution. The most dramatic manifestation of this recuperation in cultural policy happened, as Makavejev vividly describes in his text on Eisenstein, in the celebration of the fifteenth year anniversary of Soviet cinematography in 1935, where Eisenstein’s films, including *Battleship Potemkin*, were criticized as outdated because their hero was the “collective” and “the crowd”, as opposed to the real hero of those times — “characters” or “individuals” as for instance *Chapayev* by the Vasilyev brothers (Makavejev, 1964: 21).

In his interviews, Makavejev always refers to Eisenstein’s movie *Old and New* (1929) as his favourite. Being Eisenstein’s only “revolutionary” film with an individual as the hero (Marfa Lapkina), this film could introduce some unease to our thesis on negative cultural policy. But upon a more careful inspection we realize that in *Old and New* the subject of the film, Marfa, is not the protagonist of change, she

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is herself changed and transformed in the course of the film from the old-conservative-bullied peasant woman to the new-emancipated-engaged woman as a result of a policy of revolutionary education.

Makavejev's insistence on the education of the new-man could be understood in this light, but since we are dealing with cultural policy, it is necessary to return to the main theme, or to the culture of cultural policy which is the "arts" as the new, creativity, autonomy, liberation and subversion. We have to answer two questions: how can we define "artistic" production in negative cultural policy, and what is the role of necessity and force in the instrumentalisation of negative cultural policy?

#### ***A Surrealist Policy for a Dadaist Reality***

A background for the first question is provided by a report entitled *Moral and Social Meaning of Individual Human Life*, which Dušan Makavejev presented at the Second Strazilov Meeting in 1960, dedicated to the topic of "Young Intellectuals Today". Strazilov meetings were important gatherings of young artists and intellectuals dealing with new developments in cultural policy in Yugoslavia. They were above all encouraging the development of a network of innovative thinkers and artists from all around Yugoslavia and had a strong connection with avant-garde tendencies. Makavejev starts his paper with a direct critique of the term "*intellectual*" by claiming that it is usually associated with the norms attributed to the "*citoyen*", alienated from real life and its complex relations. According to his schema, an intellectual is an abstract human, or a "*psychogenic deformation of a human*" without a body, just a head. The real — organic — intellectual, Makavejev says, is the human of total action, balancing physiology and intellect, or the concrete and the abstract (which resembles the ideological schema of Makavejev readings). Since in Makavejev's system the abstract is not the collective, and accordingly the concrete is not representing only the individual, the social or collective transformation of society — the destruction of bourgeoisie civil society and socialist transformation, anti-Stalinism and de-etetization, and self-management — is not related to "*experience*" but should instead bring about the concrete social factors needed for "*humanistic emancipation*" (Makavejev, 1965: 114-115). This emancipation of human creativity (cultural or sexual) is not the transcendental and psychological transformation of the state of the individual self, or of sub-consciousness. On the contrary, it is "*openness*" and an "*eruption*" which results from new developments in the economic and political reorganization of society, introducing a contradictory and complex relation between society and human beings. Makavejev outlines the problem in the following way: the reformation of materialist economic and political relations implies a reformation of the human; a new society needs a new man. In the case of Yugoslavia, as Makavejev explains, the self-management system implies a self-managing people, with the social task at hand being the transformation of human life (Makavejev, 1965: 116-117). The main difficulty in this philosophy is that this "internalization" of society could also be part

of the policy of any cultural operation based solely on engagement and could easily be simplified as the mechanical imposition of the pure instrumentalisation of any “higher agenda”. Makavejev has criticized this mechanistic approach as “*academic cretinism*” and compared it to “*boring Marxist conferences*”. In order to test this justification and demonstrate the complexity of the “*translation*” of collective ideas into the actions of individuals, he raises a very simple question: how is it possible that non-Socialist (and non-self-management) ideas find their place in the hearts and minds of socialist people? Or, to put it another way: how is it possible that collective progressive ideas cannot influence regressive individuals?

Makavejev’s novelty is that his plan for cultural policy considers more than merely the rational parameters of human beings. According to Makavejev, negative cultural policy should pay serious attention to the irrational and dark forces which are deeply entrenched in the heart and soul of human beings. One practical implication of this policy is that pedagogical efforts aimed at bringing about the new man are not only based on the “internalization” of socialist polysemy, but also need to take into account the innermost and persisting elements of the self and consider a non-moralistic conception of everyday life, which in most of cases is irrational and ambivalent. It is clear that Makavejev introduces a cultural policy of revolution that is not based only on the negativity of socialism (as a negation of the order of bourgeoisie-civil society society), but also considers in psychoanalytical manner mental coercion as a dark element of our innermost psyche. This problem of Makavejev will occur in most of his feature films and writings, but here I am mostly concerned with the development of his philosophy in the much neglected field of cultural policy discourse. In the last instance, these negations will capitulate to give way to the praise of the positive and of humanistic realization: the inner, integrated self or harmony of life as opposed to death drive (Makavejev, 1965: 138). But this therapeutic pragmatism to be found in Makavejev’s philosophy is not part of his cultural policy. The “art” segment of Makavejev’s cultural policy has a more complicated task: it is to serve the continuity of revolutionary emancipation. Makavejev’s pedagogical proposal put forward in this report is the affirmation of the theory and practice of the Surrealist movement in Yugoslavia from the period between the two world wars. If, Makavejev writes, our main intellectual and artistic task is to explore the “*phenomenon of transformation*”, then the impulses of un-reality and sur-reality have to be taken seriously as “*the necessities of ambivalences*”. Following the premise of famous Serbian Surrealist writer Oskar Davico, Makavejev is setting down the postulates of his cultural policy: effective *practical action* in revolutionary change implies a necessary dose of *surrealism*. This practicality of dreams (he calls it “*dream-praxis*”) is the artistic content of Dušan Makavejev’s cultural policy; it is a synthetic extension of the “*surrealist*” character of the revolutionary state (Makavejev, 1965: 136-137).

Histories of arts in revolutionary moments are very clear when it comes to exposing the contradictions of this negative cultural policy. Lenin’s slogan, for instance,

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that “film, of all forms of art, is the most important” is discussed by Mira and Antonin Liehm — who picked this slogan for the title of their book on Eastern European Film — as the instrumentalisation of film art for revolutionary purposes. They interpret this demand on the importance of cinema as pure propaganda and describe it as the movement of political revolution (i.e. furthering) of Marxist ideas in the minds of the people). The enthusiasm that artistic movements, or what the Liehm’s describe as the second force, felt for revolution was a result of the liveliness and fusion of the various exciting novelties of revolutionary transformation. According to the Liehm’s, the “*anarchy and chaos*” of revolution served as material for the artistic creation of the avant-garde. To paraphrase, if for the revolution the most important art was cinema, then for cinema the most important art was the revolution. (Liehm & Liehm, 1977: 34-35).

#### ***On the Problem of Violence in Negative Cultural Policy***

If the last detour allowed us to deal with the issue of art in cultural policy, it is now time to deal with the instrumental part of cultural policy. It is time to come to grips with the real implications involved in the policing or managing of culture. In *WR: Mysteries of Organism* (W.R. – Misterije organizma, 1971), Makavejev’s most popular and surreal movie, two young communists (Vladimir and Milena) discuss trivial everyday life issues and their ideals, when suddenly one of them, Vladimir, euphorically proclaims: “*I could listen to it all day! Marvellous, superhuman music! With perhaps naive pride, I think: What wonders man can create! But I can’t listen to music. It gets on my nerves! It arouses a yearning in me to babble about nothing, to caress people, who, living in a hell, can still create such beauty. But nowadays, if you stroke anybody’s head, they’ll bite off your hand! Now, you have to hit them on the head, hit them without mercy, though in principle we oppose using any force in human relations. Hm-hm — it’s a hellishly difficult task!*” Milena’s answer to this statement is even more direct; she grabs Vladimir’s penis, to which he reacts with a strong slap that throws her to the ground. In this dramatic moment Milena, looking at Vladimir (Lenin) sees instead the figure of Stalin from Chiaureli’s movie *The Vow*. Lenin’s transformation into Stalin here is a key element in understanding the recuperation of revolution, its freeze. This is the dead end of the policy. In an interview at the beginning of seventies Makavejev is opposing interpretations claiming that his movie asserts an equivalence between Stalin and Lenin. But still, he argues, there is something of Stalin in Lenin’s theory and practice: it is exactly the “policy” of change. As Makavejev explains, “*all of Lenin’s efforts to change things forcefully were reincarnated in Stalin*” (Sitton, MacBean & Callenbach, 1971-72: 7). This reincarnation, the worst imaginable, is a result of the policy of change. With this we have arrived at the core of the problem of negative cultural policy: if the policy of revolution is based on the transformation of the individual in line with the demands of the collective, then what role should force and violence play in the implementation of this. As we know from Bourdieu and Passeron, any form of edu-

cation is symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), but how is the violence of the revolutionary cultural policy distinct from the general violence and instrumentalization of any other policy? Or more precisely, how does the instrumentalization as conceived in negative cultural policy differ from positive and individualistic cultural policy? Before dealing with these burning philosophical questions, we have to look more carefully at the above mentioned scene from the *WR*. The speech of Vladimir is taken from Maxim Gorky's memoirs of Lenin, and these are the words, as Gorky remembers, uttered by Lenin after hearing Isaiah Dobrovein play Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata, Opus 57 (Gorky, 1967)

### ***The Cultural Policy of Concrete Polyvalence***

The ambivalent scene with Lenin and Beethoven is reproduced many times, for many different and contradictory occasions; it is one of the anecdotes that serve for a continuous reproduction of the unpredictable Lenin as the source of an unprecedented revolution. Its dark humour and opaqueness lend themselves to various kinds of significations. Georg Lukacs as Gorky is using it for conveying a sense of Lenin's genuine and productive "*complexity*" and according to Ilya Ehrenburg, it is the main dilemma of the century (Ehrenburg, 1963: 84-85). It is, as the historian researching Beethoven's reception in Russia Frederick W. Skinner wittily puts it, "*a nice way to portray both Lenin and Beethoven*" (Skinner, 2002: 62). Even if Lenin, seen as the demiurge of revolution, didn't feel at ease with Beethoven, his music was not disliked in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it was very popular and handled in a 'revolutionary' manner. The peak of Soviet Beethoven mania was the performance of the Ninth Symphony crowning the proceedings of the Eight Extraordinary All-Union Congress of the Soviets (the so called Stalin Constitution) in 1936.

Apart from representing an instance of what Bourdieu calls non-canonical concrete knowledge in the field of culture, this anecdote has very firm impact on the field of theory and practice dealing with the cultural policy of revolution. The anecdote with Lenin and the Appassionata reproduces the dichotomy of art and instrumentalization, or of culture and policy in the most dramatic and antagonistic way. In line with this, art that is an exaltation from reality, a transcendence, an elevation, creation, etc. is incompatible with the "real" situation. It is spontaneous feeling which has to be disciplined with the rigour and the harshness of the policy of force in revolutionary education. The suppression of art, according to this discourse, is necessary for any cultural policy of revolution: socialist-realism's refusal and negation of the avant-garde is a necessary or logical consequence of Leninist policy. We can make this issue even more complicated if we take into account that the recuperation of the avant-garde in the course of socialist-realism happened not via a deletion of the human subject (as the ultimate subject of artistic creation), but paradoxically with the reintroduction of the residual bourgeoisie notion of the human-subject-hero, or the personal niche. As mentioned earlier, this was one of the important ideological

alibis in the suppression of Eisenstein's revolutionary movies in 1935. This dilemma, this tension between culture and policy, is determining many of Makavejev's works.

Without collapsing into some kind of psychological nerve theories (which Makavejev does in the above mentioned interview for *Film Quarterly* by describing Lenin as "neurotic"), it is possible to claim that Lenin's attitude to Beethoven was typical "denegation" as described by psychoanalysis. Considering the fact that Beethoven was an exemplary musician of humanist universalism and particularly of the bourgeoisie's conception of that universalism, there is nothing contradictory in Lenin's refusal of the residual feelings and pleasures of his mind and soul. His mercilessness seems to be first and foremost directed towards himself, although with the plan of extending it to the difficult but concrete level of the policy ("a hellishly difficult task"). But it is wrong to connect this self-mercilessness and rigour to the popular conception of "Leninist" revolution as an ascetic endeavour. This rigour also has a clear intellectual or theoretical purpose, which is correlative to the demands of any cultural policy.<sup>2</sup> It is important to insist on this issue, because readings of Lenin and the cultural policy of revolution have the tendency of linking the recuperation of revolution with the refusal of pleasure. This issue, which is dense with ideological readings, could be reduced to a simple statement that the failure of revolution is the result of its refusal of the human pleasures of free love. Makavejev is one of the most effective representatives of this tendency; he approached the Reichian critique of revolution without pleasure in its most dramatic implications. In *WR*, Vladimir kills Milena after the "Appassionata" scene because of the unbearable and unendurable pleasure he experienced during sex.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that Lenin refused the "art" of Beethoven due to theoretical reasons related to the cultural policy of change which he was propagating: the "art" of pleasure and ethereal exaltation is not suitable for the revolutionary policy of concrete transformation. In order to make the issue at stake more apparent, we have to ask one more question: what is the role of the avant-garde that programmatically negates pleasure and submits itself directly to the demands of collective cultural action as envisaged in Leninist cultural policy. Or more precisely, what is the avant-garde's role in the instrumentalization of culture? The Soviet Union with its great avant-garde manifestations deserves more attention, but we can reduce this issue to a concise

2 Lenin's refusal of pleasure is taken most seriously by Pierre Macherey, who described cultural policy (rather than cultural administration) as a central point of Lenin's thought (Macherey, 1978: 107). Apart from the sound of bourgeoisie Beethoven, Lenin also had very ambivalent views on the texts of feudal and mystic Tolstoy. Macherey in his influential article *Lenin, Critic of Tolstoy* discusses in detail the meaning of Tolstoy for Lenin as the representation of complex reality (in the metaphor of the "broken mirror") and its relation to the art of criticizing the spontaneity of ideology.

3 Lenin's ambivalence regarding Beethoven is often related to his ambivalence towards Innes Amand who apparently introduced him to Beethoven. (Wolfe, 1963)

practical question: how did Lenin consider the role of avant-garde productions by the Futurists and Mayakovsky in the implementation of the cultural policy of revolution? A rather quick look at the collection of texts in *Lenin on Literature and Art* will provide us, again, with very ambivalent ideas. According to Anatoly Lunacharsky, Lenin couldn't stand "futuristic monstrosity" (Lenin 1967: 256-8), Nadezhda Krupskaya remembers that Lenin was taken aback and distressed by the recital of Mayakovsky's poetry in theatre (p. 236), and Gorky remembers how Lenin treated Mayakovsky with distrust and irritation (p. 248). Only on two occasions does Lenin refer to Mayakovsky: first in the capacity of a literary critic, referring to him with praise as the author of a poem on corruption in politics and administration which he read with great pleasure (p. 158), and the second time in a telegram to Lunacharsky as policy-maker, accusing him of stupidity and lack of sense for publishing Mayakovsky's book *150,000,000* in 5,000 copies (p. 214).<sup>4</sup>

Practically speaking, it would be logical to conclude that the denegation of ethereal and transcendental "art" would lead to an art of the "raw" and the concrete. As we have seen in the case of Makavejev's writings from the early sixties, this rawness (Dadaism) was the main source and material for revolutionary art that has strong potential for an effective impact on the cultural policy of transformation. The same approach can be detected in the writings of Antonio Gramsci for whom the issue of cultural policy of art was in direct relation to the "common sense" of the folklore of the proletariat, and its "rawness". By analysing Gramsci's writings on Futurism we can grasp this policy more clearly. Before being imprisoned, between 1913 and 1922, Gramsci wrote three texts on the Futurists. Generally Gramsci considered the Futurists as an artistic movement marked by vitality and capable of clearly expressing anger and rawness, comparing it to the proletarian culture of non-reconciliation with monolithic bourgeoisie "ideas". In his first text, written for a university magazine in 1913, most probably at the time when Lenin couldn't bear listening to Dobrovojin playing the "Appassionata", Gramsci euphorically praised the vitality and the anti-establishment insistence of the Futurists. Their anger was aiming for the total elimination of the soft and pleasant lies of mainstream culture, and was a "direct reaction against the general state of degradation". It was the "art" of the hit, not of the stroke of the head. According to Gramsci, futurist art was principally what the art of Beethoven with its ethereality and superfluous dignity was not ["they are artists, not rustic entertainers" (Gramsci, 1991: 46-48)]. In a second text, published in 1921, when all the Futurists turned their coats to become open supporters of Fascism, Gramsci was still insisting on the progressive aspects of their art. It is interesting to note that Gramsci starts his text *Marinetti the Revolutionary* by criticizing the unequivocal statement of Anataolij Lunacharsky, commissar for culture and education

4 I am grateful to Aimo Minkkinen, director of Lenin Museum in Tampere, for this valuable information on Lenin's relation to Mayakovsky.



in the Soviet Union, that Marinetti is a revolutionary intellectual. Gramsci argues that Marinetti and the Futurists who have become supporters of Fascism are not revolutionary intellectuals, but are dealing with the material of revolution (the “rawness”) in a more revolutionary way than many other Marxists. He considers that the cultural policy of revolution (what he calls proletarian culture or civilization) which is based on new forms of art, philosophy, behaviour and language should take the programme of the Futurists more seriously. Or as he proposed in his cultural policy (plan) for the workers: to destroy spiritual hierarchies, prejudices, idols and ossified traditions...not to be afraid of monsters, not to believe that the world will collapse if a worker makes grammatical mistakes, or if a young man sneers at academic and feeble-minded senility (Gramsci, 1991: 51). In a letter to Trotsky on Futurism, sent in 1922 and published the following year in Trotsky’s *Literature and Revolution*, Gramsci carefully detaches himself from the Futurists and explains their total submission to Fascism. But still, Gramsci is one more time repeating that the “workers understood the Futurist far better than the bourgeoisie” and that before the war, Futurism was very popular among the workers, having its magazine *Lacerba* distributed widely among them. (Gramsci, 1991: 53). As Marcia Landy suggests in her analysis, Gramsci’s work has had an important influence on the cultural politics of progressive cinema movements. The influence of Gramsci’s work mostly has to do with the complex conception of the social formation as an educative moulding of a multifaceted, incoherent and raw reality (Landy, 1994: 15) This reality, similar to Makavejev’s dadaist spontaneity, is not rational, ideologically coherent, or systematic; it is a “poetic logic” of polysemy which Gramsci describes as “common sense” (Landy 1994: 81). The role of education is to transform the “commonsense” into “good sense” with the help of the means of the cultural policy of revolution. Thus, this transformation is not the elimination or suppression of the contradictions of this “residual” reality. Since Gramsci asserts that the contradictory nature of common sense is not about the simple reproduction of prevailing conditions, it follows that the policy of concrete “reality” will secure the effect of cultural and hegemonic resistance (Landy 1994: 79). The task of the cultural policy of revolution should be based on the affirmation of raw, polysemious, and subversive “common sense” (which Gramsci on many occasions labels as “folklore”) as the manifestation of spontaneous resistances. Pedagogy was not pre-given, authoritarian or moralizing, “it had to develop critical skills conducive to transforming common-sense knowledge inherent to subaltern groups, and, thereby effecting a transformation from common sense to good sense” (Landy, 2000: 150). Thus, the task of organic intellectuals and filmmakers should be the affirmation of the complex and polysemic culture of “raw” reality through the policy of social transformation.

In Makavejev, the affirmation of the polysemic potential of “raw” reality is visible in most of his films. The hypnotists, sexologists, acrobats, rat killers, which are present in most of his early films, are representatives of this complex reality. As Bora Ćosić tried to explain, in the philosophy of Makavejev the cultural policy of this

reality was related to his programme of “*equating socialism and culture*” (Ćosić, 1984: 7). This “socialist culture” envisaged by Makavejev’s policy had to do with his proletarianization of artistic creativity, or collectivization of the art genius, Ćosić furthermore explains. He shows that the characters that Makavejev used in his films (for example Dragoljub Aleksic in *Innocence Unprotected* [Nevinost bez zaštite, 1968] or Živojin Aleksić in *Love Affair*, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator [Ljubavni slučaj ili tragedija službenice P.T.T., 1967]) are erasing the boundaries between popular and contemporary art by affirming the “concrete art” of profane reality (Ćosić, [1969] 1984: 19). It is important to insist on a clarification of this notion of “concrete”; theoretically this notion might also be associated with the carnivalesque of the bodily stratum, or the transhistorical manifestations of instinctive creativity which is very effective in ideological definitions of various Makavejev’s readings.

This notion of the concrete or reality (dadaistic reality) is also very important in understanding Makavejev’s relation to culture and politics. In order to understand the intellectual conditions of the formation of Makavejev’s ideas on the concrete and his diverging from non-political interpretations of this notion, we have to compare his interpretation to Sveta Lukić’s. In his review of Sveta Lukić’s book *Reasons* (Razlozi), Makavejev asserts that Lukić was one of the first to discover the field of “*self-managing the self*”. (Makavejev, 1965: 102). According to Makavejev, Lukić’s discovery resulted from his interest in the subject as real authentic human being that can serve as a catapult for the realization of a new society. It is the world of this polyvalent and repressed everyday that opened the possibility for the concrete, or as Makavejev explains through Lukić, the horizontal determinants of society as opposed to vertical determinants. This horizontal field is where authentic and original characters can take shape, and where the new policy of revolutionary change could materialize. With his book *Art and Criteria*, Sveta Lukić, one of the most important “public intellectuals” for the formation of Makavejev’s ideas on the cultural policy of Yugoslavia, tried for the first time in 1963 to systematize cultural politics on the basis of self-management and set down the criteria for this cultural and ideological transformation. He tried to establish a Yugoslav cultural policy, known as ‘socialist aesthetics’ and based on the policy of in-betweens. This new (Yugoslav) socialist aesthetic involved two criteria, the first being *reality*, as the relative, independent and heterogeneous element of cultural creation which is not in the service of any political programme (especially of socialist-realism which Lukić is largely criticizing), and whose main constitutive parameter is the human subject defined by the characteristics of in-betweenness. The second criterion for the art of socialist aesthetics is based on *unity*, which has to supplement the art work’s expression of uniqueness and harmony, and in practice would mean the tolerance toward the creativity (Lukić, 1964: 137). In his book, Lukić gives many examples of literature, theatre, music, visual arts and cinematic production that fulfil these criteria of socialist aesthetics. According to Lukić, Makavejev’s “*engagement, curiosity, and synthesis of humour and*

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*revolution as socialist poetry*” as demonstrated in his short films *Smile 61* (Osmjeh 61) and *Parade* (Parada, 1962), fulfilled these criteria most successfully (Lukić 1964: 209). Even if Lukić constantly refers to the polyvalence and heterogeneity of Yugoslav reality (Lukić 1964: 215) and artistic productions emerging from this reality, he completely omitted the use of “*self-management*” as the determinant of this field of cultural and political transformation. According to a more detailed description in Lukić’s later book *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, self-management created a policy of relations regulation between the producers and consumers. Or more precisely, he claimed that self-management turned cultural policy into cultural administration by further alienating it from the complexities of reality (Lukić, 1972: 109). This situation was, according to Lukić, a continuation of cultural policy as clear instrumentalization of art, reminiscent of the years leading to the formation of a more centralized Socialist Yugoslavia [he is referring to a statement by Milovan Đilas from 1952: “*leave politics to us politicians, while we leave aesthetics to you writers. It is obvious which of these is more important*” (Lukić 1972: 105)] which he describes as “*ideological*”. (Lukić 1972: 107). The main difference between Lukić and Makavejev, apart from the interpretation of the role of self-management, is that Lukić insisted on “*rational arguments*” and “*consciously planned the rational criteria*” of moderate cultural policy (Lukić 1972: 112), whereas Makavejev, as I have shown, was seriously taking into account the most dark, irrational, dadaistic elements in proposing a surrealist and fantastic cultural policy.<sup>5</sup>

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### **Makavejev and Beethoven**

With this detour we arrived at the very nerve of the negative cultural policy debate: if this policy is based on the internalization of collective-revolutionary polyvalency (folklore, rawness, spontaneous-Dada) through a complete transformation of the subject (“*complete materialist education*”), then what is the role of “art” in this process? This further implies that in negative cultural policy, art could easily become an arbiter for any social action. The specific nature and language of art would be reduced to the ordinariness of practicality. This impossibility is most clearly manifested in Lenin’s refusal to attend the performances of Dadaists in Cabaret Voltaire, although they lived in same neighbourhood in 1916. Lenin and Dada, perceived as the ultimate example of antagonism and contradiction, are generally represented as an antagonism between discipline and spontaneity, instrumentalization and art, or policy and culture (Starr, 1985: 79-130).

As is clear from his ambiguities regarding Beethoven, Tolstoy and Mayakovsky, Lenin, did not have any theoretical solutions to the contradictions of cultural policy;

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that even in most “official” studies on the relationship between self-management and culture in Yugoslavia, like the report of Stevan Majstorović on *Cultural Policy in Yugoslavia* commissioned by UNESCO, the issue is largely approached with a reference to the fundamental contradictions of culture and politics (Majstorović, 1980: 55-62).

except that the “art” of revolutionary change should be intellectual, contradictory (as the broken mirror in Tolstoy) and refined. It is very strange that Makavejev did not refer to these complexities of Lenin on the issue of cultural policy and art while examining this issue in his “*cine-marxist*” works (Baxandall, 1983). Makavejev’s silence on this complexity is a symptom of his own ambiguities on the issue of cultural policy. If cultural policy is an affirmation of polysemy, the question arises as to what plan and programme can render this affirmation effective without being in direct opposition to the indisputable spontaneity and creativity of the arts. Makavejev’s answer to this dilemma is the cultural policy of “*organized spontaneity*”; in an interview published in *Film Quarterly* in 1972 Makavejev explains this with references to what were prevailing extremist policies at the time: “*It seems to me that the all-anarchism of let’s say, the New American Cinema or the anarchism of the New Left, this kind of totally unorganized way in which people are now reacting to power structures, is ineffective because it lacks organization; yet if it turns to organization it takes to the same old forms, like the highly organized militant, puritan, self-sacrificing groups, so this just perpetuates the old system of power and fighting power with power. And it seems to me that we have to fight power with spontaneity and humour, but in a more organized way than it is done*” (Sitton, MacBean & Callenbach, 1971-72: 6). It is possible to reduce the main tension of Makavejev’s cultural policy to the problem of the policing of spontaneity; in WR this tension is expressed in an explicit manifestation of a dead-end, or of violence (Vladimir killing Milena) which is consequently pacified by Vladimir’s retreat into the harmonious ambiance of Gypsy “nature” and Milena’s resurrection as the “post-communist” illuminated woman. As a result, this tension in Makavejev led to a complete abandonment of the cultural policy aspect.

Before coming to this de-policing of culture and art, it is worth looking at Makavejev’s relation to Beethoven. In WR, the reference to Beethoven via Lenin’s ambivalence is very complex; even if the key element of the movie is based on the music of Beethoven, there is not a single reference to him in the soundtrack. We don’t hear the dramatic piano of Dobrovin playing the Appassionata. What we hear after the described scene with Vladimir’s transformation into Stalin is low key relaxing kitsch music. In the reference to Beethoven as a way to illustrate the tension between the concrete and the abstract in the cultural field, or generally between policy and culture, all representation of his music and political inclinations of his art are suspended. Beethoven’s art, as we mentioned earlier, is itself a perfect symbol of the cultural artefact instrumentalised in most antagonistic forms. Especially his *Ninth Symphony* which served as the soundtrack for the celebration of “Stalin’s Law” from 1936 (Skinner, 2003: 65), for National Socialists celebrations (Buch, 2003), as the supranational anthem of the European Community (Clark, 1997) and which was the first composition to be included in January 2003 in the UNESCO Memory of the World programme (an archive for international cultural treasures), is itself a cultural product with very ambiguous and contradictory ideological formations. Makavejev’s

reference to Beethoven in his films also has a very ambiguous character. Apart from *WR*, Makavejev refers or uses Beethoven also in his *Man is Not a Bird* (Čovek nije tica, 1965) and *Love Affair*, films which all have very distinct forms. In his book *Unsettling Scores*, Roger Hillman analyses the history of Beethoven's compositions in various film soundtracks and refers to Makavejev's first feature film *Man is Not a Bird* as one employing the Beethoven/Schiller piece for "the depiction of a multifaceted venue for a socialist *Vanity Fair*" (Hillman 2005: 59). Hillman refers to socialism as a society of spectacle where Beethoven/Schiller's transcendental humanism serves to represent culture (music) as opposite to the original impulses of socialism (Hillman 2005: 61). These residual impulses in socialism, which are the heritage of bourgeoisie culture, are represented with the help of Beethoven's music (Hillman 2005: 165). Consequently the ambivalences of the cultural policies within socialism are akin to the political ambivalence of Socialist ideology which still includes non-socialist elements. To purge it of these elements would mean a further intensification and complementation of the process of change which a proper cultural policy of negativity should accelerate. The soundtrack of Beethoven representing the contradictory character of the socialist state is at best a metaphor of alienation among the different classes within the self-management socialist state: the managers as the cultural class listening to Beethoven, and the workers whose dark faces have to endure the spectacle while in reality favouring popular domestic kitsch melodies. Education (in the case of *Man is Not a Bird* hypnosis, or better truth under hypnosis) is then a part of the general cultural policy of revolution which would regulate these contradictions in society, or more precisely reorganize the residual elements in the socialist state and introduce the subversive polysemy of the policy of revolution. This approach is also present in the work of academic economists and sociologists from the sixties who explain how education is the most effective tool for erasing the class stratifications and the determinacy of social dispositions in the socialist self-management system (Horvat, 1967: 1279-1292). The division which occurred in Yugoslavian society is vividly described in *Man is Not a Bird* with references to Beethoven. At the very beginning of the film, a local manager reports in a phone call from the location of the plot (the industrial city of Bor situated in central Serbia) to Belgrade on the Philharmonic Orchestra performance of Beethoven/Schiller's *Ode to Joy* for workers, describing it as "a magnificent creation reflected on the dark faces of the workers". Realizing his blunder immediately, he corrects the description into "gleaming faces". A discussion between a few members of the orchestra lost among the factory machinery on the way to the concert venue and workers represents this situation in a most Makavejevan way: "Excuse me, is the concert to be held here?" "We smelt raw copper here. Where are you from?" "The philharmonic...Beethoven." "Those are converters." "The Ninth Symphony." "We don't produce that."

In *Man is Not a Bird* Beethoven is a symbol of alienation, of non-revolutionary high-culture, of abstraction detached from the workers and from social reality. He is

a strong element of history, or of pure artistic genius which is irreducible to any kind of collectivist policy.

The Beethoven of Makavejev's second feature film, *Love Affair*, is structured in line with the opposite determinants/matrix: it is a symbol of the joy of life, happiness, labour, collective living, prospects, and everything related to the reality of socialism. For two young socialist lovers, Beethoven serves as an optimistic soundtrack of their transformation, of living freely in a free country of socialistically modernized Yugoslavia. It is the sound of multi-ethnic co-existence in Yugoslavia, of a possibility of living together, reflecting the happiness of an embrace between Yugoslav citizens of Hungarian and Muslim origin. Here, the sound of Beethoven is contrasted with the propagandist films of Dziga Vertov and Brecht/Eisler songs as the symbol of a concrete joy of life.

The cultural policy of revolution, as it is possible to see in the case of Lenin's attitude to Beethoven, has many irresolvable ambiguities and contradictions. It is also possible to recognise these contradictions in the dilemma of Makavejev's cultural policy. As I am trying to show, it is possible to trace these contradictions with the help of the ambiguous representation of Beethoven in Makavejev and also generally when looking at Makavejev's dilemma regarding the irresolvable relation between force and spontaneity in the cultural policy of change. The tension between necessity and spontaneity intensified the contradictions in Makavejev's philosophy to a point that led to a dead-end for the policy, or to its gradual elimination. This irresolvable tension residing in "*spontaneous policy*" had a very strong impact on Makavejev's future cinematic work; on the one hand it established a continuity between the contradictions of this cultural policy and the contradictions of the Yugoslav socialist state, while on the other this tension was pacified via the sublimation of this cultural policy through the counter-culture ideology of the sixties. Manifestations of the first alternative can be observed in his later movies, such as *Montenegro* (1981) and *Gorilla Baths at Noon* (1993), which feature the recurring themes of unrepresentable spontaneous characters versus unifying monolithic ideology — these gave Makavejev the reputation of a typical post-socialist psychoanalytical (deep motives, Jungian universe, etc.) artist subject. Already in the late sixties in an interview for the journal *Positif*, Makavejev was pointing out that Yugoslavia as country was a "*social schizophrenic*", having a perfect constitution based on humanist, democratic and liberal principles which however remain without any concrete application in real life. He describes this situation as an advantage of Yugoslav "*direct democracy*" and adds that this antagonistic situation is also very good for the cinema. (Ciment, 1969: 523).

Makavejev's second alternative was the total elimination of any kind of policy or programme for culture. In an interview with *Cahier du Cinema* in 1968 he states that the difference between him and Godard is based on their approach toward the notion of cultural policy; contrary to Godard, Makavejev is refusing any kind of engagement, even revolutionary (Noguez, 1969: 538). In same interview, he compares

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his filmmaking to the guerrilla tactic of opposing anything that is fixed, predisposed, static, or a dogmatic truth, and adds that the form of montage in his film *Innocence Unprotected* was very much influenced by ongoing political turbulence. He is mostly referring to the June 1968 student movement at Belgrade University and its spontaneity, freedom and openness (Noguez 1969: 539). In the pages of the interview that follow, Makavejev tells Noguez that he has come to understand how necessity, imposition, and force fail to bring about real change, how these forms of the policy of revolution are talking the language of violence, which is the language of the oppressor. It is in this moment that Makavejev reveals his new cultural policy of non-interventionism, a policy of peaceful, harmonious and pacifist change. This policy, which he compares to the "hippy movement" of non-violence and innovative interventions, is based on slow and spontaneous transformation. Unable to solve the contradictions of the negative cultural policy, Makavejev ended up in the field of cultural non-policy as espoused by the prevailing counter-culture philosophy. The main characteristics of the hippy or other counter-cultural movements in the sixties were based on this kind of complete negation of cultural policies; non-intervention, non-decidability, ambiguity, the personal is political, spontaneity, refusal of the collective, non-organization, and self-emancipation were the main characteristic of these radical movements (George & Starr, 1985; Starr, 1985). From the beginning of the seventies onwards, the hippy-philosophy had an enormous influence on Makavejev's filmmaking, especially on *WR: Mysteries of Organism* and *Sweet Movie* (1974). As a conclusion it is possible to state that the reasons for 'socialist' Makavejev turning 'hippy' included the irresolvable tension residing in the antagonism of spontaneity and necessity within the cultural policy of revolution which was difficult to handle through peaceful and transitional modes of production.

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## II

### ON MAKAVEJEV, ON IDEOLOGY: CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT IN READINGS OF DUŠAN MAKAVEJEV FILMS

by

Boynik, S. 2012

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# Sezgin Boynik On Makavejev, On Ideology The Concrete and the Abstract in the Readings of Dušan Makavejev's Films

## I. A New Science for Reading the Films

Amos Vogel, one of the most prominent popularisers and theoreticians of the 'subversive film' genre, proposes an epistemological origin for this cinema genre based on discoveries in science, in particular discoveries in Quantum Mechanics and the Theory of Relativity. The discoveries created such a conception of the world that, according to Vogel, who is quoting Einstein, science has become a version of religion, which then should be specified by terms like "the impenetrable" and "the incomprehensible". The opaqueness of this new science is a new state of being of the world, which has immense consequences for our political, philosophical and artistic conceptions as well: "to withstand these [changes] we need a new breed of man: flexible, tolerant, innovative and questioning."<sup>1</sup> This "new man" who is at the edge of the "decline of Western hegemony and bourgeois civilization" (p. 18) accordingly needs to define modern art in terms of: "dissolution, fragmentation, simultaneity and decomposition". In sum, this is a definition of subversion, which is the scientific, political, philosophical and artistic replacement of the logical with the illogical in shaping the new policy of "fight against the growing international trend toward totalitarianism" (p. 1), which could be described as some kind of kaleidoscopic world view.

The political and artistic consequences of this new epistemology have clear effects on the practice of cinema, which has to be subversive or not at all. This practice of cinema, similar to the complexity of science is, as Alberto Toscano recently argued, referring to the turn that is fashionable in contemporary social science, based on the "refusal of reductionism".<sup>2</sup> This refusal, as Toscano concisely described, "suspends the criteria for distinguishing between the ideal and material" (p. 181), and could be furthermore clarified as the "(re)turn" to vitalism which at the last instance of its theoretical operation suppresses the antagonisms between materialism and idealism. Complex turns in social sciences, as well in the aesthetics, are based on the assumption of the "world's unpredictable and dynamic richness" (p. 183) in which the cognitive position becomes impossible. This ultimate "indeterminacy" (like Vogel-Einstein's "impenetrability" and "incomprehensibility") of the world is fully penetrated by the ideology of science which is constituted by the denegation of the antagonistic contradictions. In this beautiful and harmonious complexity, objects of knowledge are in endless re-figuration between idealism and materialism. This

<sup>1</sup> Amos Vogel, *Film as Subversive Art*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Alberto Toscano, *Partisan Thought, Historical Materialism: Research in Critical Marxist Theory* 17:3, 2009, p. 181.

constant re-figuration which suspends the decision between the antagonisms is the core of this philosophy. What was once material might reappear as ideal, or vice versa. The philosophical effects of this complexity turn are not the abstraction of thought, but the disqualification of the singularity and the "partisanship" of thought that should be based, as Toscano writes, on the antagonistic principles of materialism.

In reading the films by Makavejev, Vogel is most explicit in describing their "complexity". According to Vogel Makavejev's "viewpoint is cosmic: fragmented, kaleidoscopic and multilayered".<sup>3</sup> This "cosmos" is completely different from the classical cosmos of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century man. It is based on the most novel conceptions of scientific knowledge which "[as his films] express[es] time-space continuums, the absence of linear realities, the proven *inability* of our sense organs to 'understand' the world around us". The epistemology which is based on the "conventions of finitude, predictability, narrowness, and order", as was the case with the linear and narrative cinema, no longer exists for Makavejev: "the world is now *seen as infinite*, more complex than ever imagined..." (p. 51). This *inability* is ideological, not only because it enables to decide between antagonistic contradictions, but also because it is suspending the contradictions between the antagonisms. Vogel is dreaming of science (or of Heisenberg's principle or Schrödinger's cat) and retrospectively of cinema-science which would allow an entirely different spectrum of antagonistic positions or conventions to co-exist in one strange but nevertheless harmonious whole. This utopia at the same time does have very social and political consequences, and Vogel is drawing these consequences through the reading of Makavejev's *WR*: the film is "representative of a new breed of international subversion between the October Revolution, Consciousness III (in the USA) and Wilhelm Reich, p. 188" (p. 53). The utopia of this tripartite is introduced as the ideological re-formulation of contradictions, as the complexity in which the antagonisms of the structure are held in the conceptualization of wholeness. This is surely the philosophy of the New Age and apart from an epistemological stalemate it also re-produces the politics based not on struggle but on peaceful co-existence.<sup>4</sup>

Writing on Dušan Makavejev's films in her book-length study thirty years after Vogel, film scholar Lorrain Mortimer is also turning to the new and more complex science in order to understand the films of this type of cinema. This science which Mortimer is hoping to develop as a guiding principle in the reading of Makavejev's films is based on the complexity of antagonisms where the peaceful opposition is no longer between materialism and idealism, but between the philosophies of two different interpretations of "material". These "materials" have different natures. One is abstract, intellectual, sophisticated and cultural. The other is related to the concrete, real, sensual, carnal and human. Even though throughout

the book Mortimer seemingly prefers the second "material", there is no explicit tension between the two that would open the field for the theory of contradictions. Again, antagonisms are not regarded as contradictions, and the complexity between the two "materials" are stalemated in the utopian co-existence. Most clearly we can see this in her interpretation of the end of the film *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, where bewildered and confused Vladimir Illich – who has just cut off the head of his lover Milena, following the irresolvable tension between the intellectual and emotional or the 'ideological' and 'real' part of his consciousness – walks through the woods and finds the Gypsies sitting around a fire, a scene that is accompanied by the soundtrack of Bulat Okudzhava. "That is harmony with communal ethics," writes Mortimer and interprets the conclusion as "the Marxian ideal of creating a society that provides for each according to his or her need, one that respects all living beings".

Finally Vladimir Illich joins the group of gypsies warming themselves around the fire in the snow.<sup>5</sup> The harmony that Mortimer sees in the last sequence of Makavejev's film is psychological because it appears as the post-traumatic solution to the irresolvable tension of the psyche. Nevertheless, this harmony also has a more effective ideological function, as it is based on the co-existence of two antagonistic positions of the "material"; one is

<sup>3</sup> Parapsychology, etc.) and Reich also book includes translation of Margueta and Black Panther's manifesto's, Situationist International pamphlet, Cuban Cinema discussions, Anarcho-Feminist manifesto's (SCUM) among the others. But this "complexity" could be described with the effect of pedagogical and didactical policy of Makavejev and Wermer Herzog which he describes the latter as: "...working solely with the materials of reality, Herzog, in a cosmic pun on *cinema vérité*, recovered the metaphysical beneath the visible. It is only in such works that we achieve intimations of the radical humanism of the future." Amos Vogel, *On Seeing a Mirage*, in Films of Werner Herzog, ed. by Timothy Corrigan, Methuen, London, 1986, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup>

Lorrain Mortimer, *Terror and Joy: The Films of Dušan Makavejev*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & London, 2009, p. 185. Bulat Okudzhava is "underground poet-singer", which enjoyed popularity in Soviet Union at sixties and seventies and as well in Yugoslavian films. His songs can be heard among others in Aleksandar Petrović's *The Master and Margarita* (1972) and in Miloš 'Miša' Radivojević's *The Promising Boy* (1981).

<sup>4</sup> Apart from October Revolution, Consciousness III (Psychedelic Revolution,

an abstract material (the Marxian ideal) and the other is related to concrete material (the needs of human beings). But the Ideology of co-existence in Mortimer's reading of Makavejev's films is not fully realized before this inner tendency toward the harmony is established at the natural setting of the Gypsies warming around the fire. This pattern of "natural" which is strictly ideological is crucial in most of the readings of Makavejev's films. We have to grasp this "nature" in its full complications. In order to realize this, we have to understand first and foremost the epistemology of Mortimer's cinematic theory. This epistemology, similar to Vogel's, is based on the replacement of old scientific paradigms with new ones. Mortimer is very concisely describing this new science as *non-Euclidean*. She immediately emphasizes the political consequences of this knowledge as: "Euclidean mind" haunting our thinking about utopia since Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia and Pol Pot's Cambodia" (p. 58). She adds to this also "Tito's Yugoslavia without Milovan Djilas" in the pages following the above quotation. This "Euclidean mind", which is the episteme at the heart of all the various totalitarianisms, is at the same time the scientific foundation of the classical thought.

The "non-Euclidean mind", as the ontology of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century man with its *n*-dimensionality, the Theory of Relativity and complexity combined are the epistemologies of the new science that Mortimer intends to evaluate in the readings of the art of Makavejev. Showing due respect to the complexity of Mortimer's theory, we could reduce her system to two successive sources of thought. Firstly, to rational thinking that roughly corresponds to the first or abstract "material" of human knowledge. Secondly, to irrational thinking that corresponds to the second or concrete "material" of human knowledge. This concrete and irrational mind is what designs the cinema of Makavejev, but not in its absolute dominance, it has to be in the "dialogue with the rational" (p. 29). The resurrection of the categories of co-existence and harmony is realised by the inclusion of the cinematic theory of Edgar Morin who in his book *The Cinema, or The Imaginary Man* (1957) – which he translated and introduced himself – imagines the "country where the animal, vegetable, and mineral, the spiritual and material, are in some kind of mobile continuity" (p. 28). This continuity battles against the paradigm inherited by Descartes, of "disjunction/reduction/simplification that leads us to shatter and mutilate the complexity of phenomena" (p. 29).<sup>6</sup> This idealist irrationalism has a very special relation to thought, and in the introduction to Morin's book Mortimer is drawing further political consequences from it: "It was the 'mystical epileptic reactionary' Dostoyevsky, rather than all the great secular thinkers, who had more clearly seen the fanatical spirit of Bolshevism before it came into being."<sup>7</sup>

Mortimer takes this thought further to the field of anthropology by elaborating on the early writings by Dennis Wrong on a critique of "over-socialized conceptions of human nature",

concluding that "discursively produced and abstracted human conceptions are repressing the real human existence consisted of flesh, blood and bones" (pp. 51-53). Conjoint to this anthropology is the theory of Michael Jackson on re-enchantment, based on "libidinal and occult economies". They are not against reason, as Mortimer stresses, but against "the fetishization of a logocentric notion of reason...that has eclipsed our sense of the variety of ways in which human beings create viable lives – emotional, bodily, magical, metaphorical, practical and narrative" (p. 54). With these two elaborations we have arrived at the heart of the conception of "nature" in Mortimer's reading of the world (of Makavejev), a critique of over-socialized abstraction and an introduction of sensuous magic. However, we have yet to describe the "materiality" of this universe of the imagination, re-enchantment and the concrete. We have to arrive exactly at the core of the philosophy of the "natural".

Mortimer, in the very beginning of her book on Makavejev, writes: "To talk about Makavejev and his context we need to talk not only of fruit and flowers, of animals, even rats and mice, but of the installation of a shower, the baking of strudel, a strongman hanging from a plane by his teeth, a man singing to a horse in the snow and addressing him as God, and the magic of the severed head coming to life and speaking of its convictions" (p. 7). All these small and big things, normal and paranormal, organic and inorganic are the "materials" of Makavejev. These "materials" are primarily alluding to a concrete existence of things, but a more important and apparent allusion of this concreteness is that the "material" is related to human nature. In many readings the materiality of Makavejev's films, as we will further see in examples yet to come, is concerned with the human concreteness that has been described as the sensual or carnal. Mortimer is constructing from this "materiality" and "concreteness" a specific epistemology based on the ontology of the body or the sensual. The "carnal truth" as she calls it, is the epistemology of the trans-cultural and directly related to a "phenomenon of man", which has its "visible continuities" through man's existence in history. This is why, as she explains, we are affected by old ethnographic photos of people from different cultures. Their laughter, anger, worries and happiness are the same as ours. Over the centuries

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As quoted by Mortimer.

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Translator's Introduction to Edgar Morin, *The Cinema, or Imaginary Man*, transl. by Lorraine Mortimer, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & London, 2005, p. xvii.

and millennia nothing has changed, we are still what we have always been – men in this world. Knowledge of the “carnal truth” is nothing more than the tautology of everyday obviousness. It speaks, as Louis Althusser said, with the ideological language of repetition and identity. Not only the idealist philosophies are infected by this everlasting sameness of the human “materiality,” that guarantees the continuous re-production of the trans-historical “men” or “humans” of ideology.<sup>8</sup>

Mortimer is so much concerned with this “carnal truth” that is based on the re-cognition of the obviousness of “materiality,” (the sameness of the smile, cry or fight) that she is not even bothered if this “truth” is in contradiction with the truth introduced by the sociological, cultural or political facts. The fact, for instance, that Frank Sinatra was a puppet of the Mafia and a corrupted singer does not bother her, because Sinatra is speaking of “carnal truth”. As Mortimer puts it: “whatever he said or sang, the layer of tenderness in the grain of his voice [will always] gave him away.” (p. 31–32). We will soon see that in the theory of Mortimer, even if less explicit, this is also confusing the “understanding” of the carnality of Radovan Karadžić’s racism. Nevertheless, Makavejev is a master of “carnal truth”: His mice, acrobats, partisans, fascists, gypsies, hippies – everything in his movies and all his “materials” are telling this truth of human nature.

Things in Mortimer’s cosmos become more complex when she confronts this “truth” with the concept of ideology. Considering the proposal that this “truth” is obvious, spontaneous, idealist, trans-historical and based on re-cognition we can easily conclude, following the writings of Althusser, that this is not a “truth” or cognition at all, that this is based on the spontaneous knowledge of ideology. But in confronting the concept of ideology with the “carnal truth” Mortimer is drawing two parallel conclusions in which languages are used that are very different from Althusser’s. Even if in complete opposition to Althusser’s problematic, Mortimer’s interrogation of ideology is in communication with Althusser. In fact, she is trying to develop a counter-Althusser theory related to “truth” and ideology. In principle Mortimer claims that the body and

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There are attempts too in Marxist theory, such as Sebastiano Timpanaro’s who in order to strengthen the materialistic theory of human condition and the continuity of its existence derives the theses on constant dimensions of aesthetic-cultural-biologism: “But we should not forget either that this cultural continuity – through which, as Marx observed, we feel so near to the poetry of Homer – has also been rendered possible

by the fact that man as a biological being has remained essentially unchanged from the beginning of civilization to the present; and those sentiments and representations which are closest to the biological facts of human existence have changed little.”

S. Timpanaro, *On Materialism*, transl. by Lawrence Garner, New Left Books, London, 1975, p. 52.

sensuality are speaking of a “truth” that the discursive and constructed elements of ideology (such as sociology and culture) are distorting. The closer we are to our bodies, the lesser we are manipulated and distorted by ideologies. She takes social and epistemological approaches to this claim.

Socially it is related to Makavejev’s film subject of the “Eastern European real people”, or to the place where “the young are the most mad and mature”, which is the exact opposite of the films and lives of the petit bourgeois free world, where young bourgeois intellectuals in the crisis of “post-pubertal” leftism endlessly, dogmatically and abstractly discuss the revolution (p. 71). These “Westerners” were so much under the influence of the political-theoretical “anti-humanism” of Althusser’s Marxist structuralism, Mortimer argues, that they “had not learned lessons from history or contemporary Realpolitik about the ways that the sovereignty of an idealized “people” could be used to bludgeon actual human beings, to legitimize tyrannies and maintain the domination of those who loved wielding power” (p. 72).

As usual, humanism is on the agenda here with the strategically calculated position of disqualifying the politics of the Eastern European left with the realm of their sensuality. In this trans-ideology, what matters is not the “left” or “right”, but the definitive truths which the bodies of these “left” or “right” men are reproducing in their everyday lives. This is the “concrete” condition of the human, where they could “appear in their existential plenitude, free from their ideological loading” (p. 74). The epistemological relation of carnal truth to the ideology in Mortimer’s book has been most illuminatingly described in the passage where she compares the work of Makavejev to the work of Jean Rouch. She claims that both men have the ethnographic dimension of knowledge in their movies, but this dimension would reveal itself only in “unpredictability and mystery” (p. 100). Apart from political and social circumstances of socialist conditions which, as the dogmatic ideologies, prevent the “truth” from being practiced, there are also academic theories which distort this “truth” or prevent it from being re-cognized. In the introduction to Edgar Morin’s book, Mortimer clearly specifies which academic theories are obstacles in the realization of this “imaginary cinema” that is “stripped of flesh, poetry, scepticism and imagination from film studies”. It is a theory of cinema “inspired by Louis Althusser’s brand of Marxism, film scholars advocated a kind of surgical practice, one that tended to cut out the heart, soul, even the guts of the film experience to get out the cancer of ideology” (p. xi). Here we have two Althusser, one that is the ideologue of the political dogmatism, and the other who is the surgeon of the sensuality of real experience. We will in the following pages make more explicit the philosophical and historical conjunctures of this denegation of ideology from the cinema studies, but first we are dealing with the content of the “truth” which Mortimer recognizes in Mäka-

vejev's carnality. This "carnality" is generally manifested as two antagonistic fields of Makavejev's "cosmos". One is sex and the other is death – joy and terror, in other words.

## II. What is Ideological in Sex?

Almost all the readings of Makavejev's films link the "sexuality" issue – which is explicitly manifested in his films – with a certain ideological background. In these readings sex as the affirmative "material" of Makavejev's concreteness has a clear ideological association. In this chapter we will try to make this relation between the Ideology and the Sex more explicit. According to these readings, if a sense of alienation from the sensual means that human beings are under the spell of ideology and abstraction, then the practice of sex has to have an automatic affirmation of the un-ideological. This formula, as it operates in Mortimer's conceptualization, could be proscribed as: when there is sex, there shall not be ideology. But things get their famous complexity when we apply the structural dichotomy familiar to the "complex theories" to the issue of sex. According to this schema there has to be concrete, real and true sex as opposed to abstract, intellectual and false sex.

The readings of Makavejev's work, including Mortimer's, reproduce these dual sex experiences, as the dichotomies of alienated and non-alienated sex, or as the practices of fixed ideological and non-ideological positions. Many of these readings are related to the two different and antagonistic sexual orientations (Milena's and Vladimir Illich's) as the main forces of the dialectics in the film *WR: Mysteries of Organism*. These two orientations are strictly categorized with their political ideologies. Milena's orientation as the Reichian whose ambiguity ("She is dressed, but talks about fucking," or "She'd rather talk about it than do it") reminds the policy of Yugoslavia's non-alignment or being in-between, whereas Vladimir Illich as the determined communist with the Soviet origins has a more direct but Pavlovian approach to the sex. Milena's ambiguity will make her lose her head (literally), but Vladimir's narrow-mindedness and simplicity will cause him to lose his political beliefs. As we recall, at the end of the film, Vladimir kills Milena and joins the "natural" state of being. Vladimir cannot survive real and concrete sex, because he is dedicated to the abstract and kitschy sex of his ideals, which is an obstacle for him to fully penetrate the materiality of the "earth". Harking back to the terms of the earlier discussion this would mean that he was too academic and ideological to have sex with a liberated Reichian woman. Raymond Durgant in his full-length book on *WR: Mysteries of Organism* is most exemplary in his description of Vladimir: "[his] dominant ideology, rational, altruistic, Behaviourist, would construct his mind, his sense of self, *in toto*. Vladimir's dismissal of 'dying for love' as 'brutishly zoological' evokes a Marxist dismissal of Darwinism, psychoanalysis, biology (and ecology)."<sup>9</sup>

In order to see the connection between Vladimir's ideology, his scientific postulates and politics with sex we have to look at Thomas Elsaesser's early text on the *Love Affair* or the *Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator* published in 1968. *Switchboard Operator*, the second feature film of Makavejev also deals with the impossible relation between free-woman and rigid-man, which ends with the madness of the man and the death of the woman. The man's name is Ahmed,<sup>10</sup> in Elsaesser's interpretation Ahmed's enthusiasm for Dziga Vertov's film and Berthold Brecht/Hans Eisler's music is not part of Makavejevan irony and pastiche.<sup>11</sup> He is fully aware of the euphoric and emancipatory roles these cultural products are playing in the minds of Ahmed (and of Makavejev), but he adds that the real problem starts when euphoria and emancipation are frozen in reality and reside only as an abstraction in the memories of its believers, or its practitioners. The real problem is then that the revolution has lost its permanence or its concreteness and is recuperated into the realm of ideals. This recuperation is most explicit in the fields of sex and love: due to "communism's backwardness in recognizing human emotional needs and gender problems", "together with a strong work ethic that prevails in socialist countries, "traumatizes the relations between the sexes".<sup>12</sup> Elsaesser is adding a new nuance to the familiar pattern of Makavejev as the "film maker of concrete versus abstract" which has deeper historical and epistemological implications. The drive for revolution, which went wrong, was an essential component of the euphoria and emancipation displayed by the socialist countries. The revolution as being made up of dense experience, vitality, vividness of the concrete has disappeared during the course of scientific socialism and turned to a memory "which became too impersonal, too abstract and schematic" (p. 323). The main reasons for this recuperation are, according to Elsaesser, sexologists and criminologists who during the film *Switchboard Operator* are explaining scientifically the film's plot. Then, Ahmed as the true

9 Raymond Durgant, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, British Film Institute, London, 1999, p. 47.

10 Durgant is describing Ahmed as the "Communist with the Muslim roots" and derives the explanation for the tragic end of the film from the "affinities between Islam and Socialism" (p. 88).

11 Makavejev is in interview for Cahiers du Cinema saying that many people who heard this song in film thought, because of the German language, that it is a Nazi song. He is adding that he deliberately chose this song in order to play with this association in Michel Delahaye, Dušan Makavejev: Ljubavni Slučaj [Love Affair], *Filmske Sveske*, number 1, January 1968, Belgrade.

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Thomas Elsaesser, *Of Rats and Revolution: Dušan Makavejev's The Switchboard Operator* [1968], in *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2005, p. 323.

communist who loves Vertov, Brecht and the Revolution, loves them as ideas in his mind, and cannot see the real emancipation of the revolution on a day-to-day basis, which is joy, euphoria, excitement, and orgasm all together.

The article of Constantin Parvulescu on the politics and sexual revolution in the work of three Eastern European film directors is most explicit in its claim that the term "sexual revolution" is a redundant one, since "revolution always, necessarily, is also a sexual revolution."<sup>13</sup> Parvulescu is deducing this pleonasm from the works of Maria Meszaros as the contradiction between the class origin and the love relations in the Socialist state (Hungary) or from the conflict between the labour and the sex policies through the work of Milos Forman related to another socialist state (Czechoslovakia). The labour policy of the respective socialist states is in both examples the real cause of the sexual problems; dully and gauntly it is said that "love and sexuality are distractions from the important things on the agenda of Soviet-style communism: production and five-year plan" (p. 87). The inability to manage sex issues will inevitably haunt the communist states and this repression will ruin the revolution. This has brought us to Herbert Marcuse who in his book *Eros and Civilization* developed the hypothesis on the political causes of socialized psychoanalysis; or the concept of the popularized Freudianism adopted to the organism of the social whole. Parvulescu is taking this tension between sex and revolution to the ontological sphere by asking the crucial question related to the problematic of Makavejev's films: how much (sexual) revolution can man (and woman) endure (p. 92)? Considering the pleonasm of the term sexual revolution we can easily claim that this problematic of "to what degree can man endure the revolution" is also related to another problematic of Makavejev, the one regarding the abundance of corpses in his films.

Raymond Durgant rightly justified this conflict between man and the revolution with the Beatles' song *Revolution* from 1968 which he took as the parole in his reading of the Makavejev's *WR*: "You say you want a Revolution/ well you know..." What is this revolution about? It is best described by Pavlescu through the character of Reichian Milena as the consciousness-thing based on the "spontaneity, noise, and natural" which supports the values of "diversity and originality" (p. 100, 101).<sup>14</sup> The complexity effect of this "revolution" is an immediate task, even if we accept its impossibility, or as Pavlescu puts: "No revolution is ready to have these values as its ultimate goals" (p. 101). We should not forget, as this reading suggests, the catastrophic effects of repressed libido and pleasure that millions of people of various socialist states suffered. From Milena's neighbours who are chanting in the chorus that "life without fucking isn't worth a thing" Pavlescu is drawing far-reaching conclusions about the relation between sexuality and fascism, especially about the (red) fascism of the Soviet republic:

"The promotion of free love is an opportunity to criticize the legacy of Stalinism" (p. 99).

At the end of his intellectual elaboration the author has reduced Makavejev's problematic to the Frommian dilemma of frightened men that run away from freedom. Once again we have arrived at the affirmative concept of the men with a "wealthy and colourful nature" endlessly reproducing themselves in the presence of the "earth".<sup>15</sup> This is the "man" of most of the readings of Makavejev, the man for whom his own manhood is the sole proof of the un-ideological nature of its concreteness, and "materiality".

Nina Power in her brilliant recent article on sexuality in Makavejev's features rethinks the above-mentioned discussions on the relation between sex and politics from the materialist point of view, by querying the content of the "materiality of Makavejev's work".<sup>16</sup> Her answer is direct and unconditional; it is the "dark force that lies beneath the surface of both everyday and the universal" (p. 44). Here we have arrived at a completely different terrain than we did in the previous readings where "beneath" the Makavejev's "earth" lie affirmation and a positive life force waiting to be emancipated. This "dark material" as a constitutive force in Makavejev's films has also a visceral effect, but this is not linked with the celebration of sexual liberation. Power, referring to the materialism of Deleuze and Guattari, claims that the destructivity in Makavejev's plots is due to the "quick 'deterritorialization' of this desire [or material]" (p. 47). Furthermore she suggests that at the core of Makavejev's politics lies the gradualist policy of the "step-

Also he is adding that even at the time of *Switchboard Operator* he was thinking through the problematic of Fromm, he was "subconsciously" a Reichian. Christian Braad Thomsen, *Let's Put the Life Back in Political Life: Interview with Dušan Makavejev*, in Art Politics Cinema: The Cinema Interviews, ed. by D. Georgakas & L. Rubenstein, Pluto Press, London & Sydney, 1984, p. 84.

<sup>16</sup> Nina Power, Blood and Sugar: The Films of Dušan Makavejev, *Film Quarterly*, Spring 2010, Volume 63, Number 3, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Constantin Parvulescu, *Betrayed Promises: Politics and Sexual Revolution in the Films of Maria Meszaros, Milos Forman, and Dušan Makavejev*, *Camera Obscura* 71, Volume 24, Number 2, 2009, p. 77.

<sup>14</sup> The noise in this description shall not disconcert us; in many examples of film, music or literature this "noise" is manifesting as the criteria of "natural". Recommended reading would be Juan A. Suarez, *Pop Modernism: Noise and the Reinvention of the Everyday*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Makavejev told in many interviews that during the making of *WR: Mysteries of Organism* he was completely Reichian and only 5% under the influence of Erich Fromm.



by-step organization of liberation".<sup>17</sup> Theoretically, for us, today, watching the films of Makavejev it would mean that contrary to what is suggested in the agnosticism of the immediate flow of the uncontrollable force or the spontaneous expulsion of the revolutionary drive, we have to deal with these forces on their own terrain and in their own terms. This is indeed the most practical position. It allows possible theoretical and materialist readings of Makavejev's work that are detached from the ideology of man, of freedom, "nature", the tendency of this nature, and from all kind of "spiritualisms". To put it in philosophical terms, using Althusserian terms, it is to avoid the "abstract empiricism" of confusing the object of knowledge with the real object.<sup>18</sup>

Alain Badiou, discussing sex as one of the "passions for the real" in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the reading of five cases of Freud, argued that this insertion of meaning to the object of sex has ended up in "culturalist" and "spiritualist" formalizations: "The enduring aim of this play is to reintroduce meaning into the place of, and instead of, truth, thereby injecting the 'cultural' into libido. This is hermeneutic play, and Freud immediately saw it as an insidious negation of his discovery. Briefly, it was necessary to come back to bare sex and to its radical absence of meaning."<sup>19</sup>

Otherwise we would end up with the constant misanthropy and nihilism of sexual politics, because as Power rightly warns that all "politics based on desire will be [always] unfair" (p. 47).

### III. Corpses and their "Times"

The dark forces that Nina Power has named as the "materiality" of Makavejev's work are also a constitutive part of many idealist readings of Makavejev. Usually this dark force is related to "death" or "corpse" and apart from their concreteness being constantly underlined, another ideological effect of these readings is the "re-humanization" of these corpses, which is either related to the processes of rehabilitation or reconciliation. As Mortimer wrote: "I

want to get blood, flesh, and bones in the picture, to bring back not 'the body', the reified and abstracted one of much social theory, but the tortured, slaughtered, decaying bodies of people whose lives were cut short, people loved and remembered by others" (p. 189).

The famous film critic and film theoretician Cavell, after watching a film experiment of Makavejev at Harvard University in 1978, in which he compiled silent sequences from Ingmar Bergman's various films and produced a strange cinematic experience, wrote a long article on Makavejev's films which is still very influential and often referred to. Cavell's point of departure is that Makavejev's films are truly "concrete" works of art. Writing about *Sweet Movie* he claims that "it is the most concentrated work that follows the idea that the way to assess the state of the world is to find out *how it tastes*."<sup>20</sup> Immediately after this methodological proposition, Cavell adds that "orthodox epistemologists" established in Film Theory cannot penetrate this truth. Cavell's proposal is a gustatory methodology of knowledge, or, as he expresses it with the language of exorcism, the method in which these things "work themselves out" (p. 18). According to him the films of Makavejev are formally and spiritually complex structures (for example, they are endless variations between the documentary and the fictional form) which he describes as "films of excavation" (p. 19). This method which would possibly lead to the gustatory experience of the art work is in the end a "reconstruction of something lost or broken", which eventually could contribute to a better understanding of ourselves. As Cavell puts it: "This search [the excavation] at once traces the integrity of the individual strata of a history and plots the positions of *adjacent strata*" (p. 19). This is not only important as the practices of excavation popularized by the spiritualized psychoanalysis of "digging to unearth buried layers of the psyche" (p. 19), but this methodology has at the same time far-reaching philosophical consequences. According to Cavell this philosophy based on a "principle of aligning the adjacent strata" is directly related to the overall film form of Makavejev's work. This is the principle of

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This step-by-step is the part of Makavejev's policy which he best described in a famous interview for *Film Quarterly* as:

"we have to fight power with spontaneity and humour, but in a more organized way than it is done....kind of well organized anarchy".

R. Sitton, J. R. MacBean, Ernest Callenbach, *Fight Power with Spontaneity and Humour: An Interview with Dušan Makavejev*, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. XXV, no. 2, Winter 1971-72, pp. 3-9.

<sup>18</sup>

Louis Althusser & Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, Verso, London, 2009, p. 148.

<sup>19</sup>

Alain Badiou, *The Century*, transl. By Alberto Toscano, Polity, Cambridge and Malden, 2007, p. 78.

<sup>20</sup>

Stanley Cavell, *On Makavejev On Bergman*, in Cavell on Film, ed. by William Rothman, State University of New York Press, 2005, p. 2005. This "experiment" (in the classical sense of it, as the experimenting with the effects of film to people's behaviour) was part of the "Bergman and Dreams" conference organized at Harvard University.

The papers of the conference together with the Makavejev's statement which he co-authored with M. Duda (*Bergman's Non-Verbal Sequences: Source of a Dream Film Experiment*) and the earlier version of Cavell's text were published in the book which Viada Petric edited: *Film & Dream: An Approach to Bergman*, Redgrave, New York, 1981.

## Black Wave ABC

Makavejev and this alignment has a different meaning than the montage of Eisenstein and the collages of Surrealists.

Alignment of the history and plot in positions of adjacency is possible only with the reintroducing of the historicist conception of history. 'Historical time' has its own tendency, linearity, integrity, and homogeneity and is the history of ideology, a practical field which makes possible the similarity or adjacency between the moments of linear development. Before dealing with the consequences of this historicism for Film Theory we have to ask what the "materials" of this adjacency are. Or we could ask: What constitutes the kinship between the various "materials" (wars, plots, revolutions, fascisms, etc) of the historicist development? A philosophical answer to this would obviously, by the logic of its own schema, imply that the absence of the contradiction between different "materials" is a pre-condition for the alignment to be realised. But this move is not sufficient to "theoretically" satisfy the adjacency between the proximal materials. This thought would need one more step in this operation to fulfil the task of historicist application. It has to name the historical "materials" as the "concrete", as the "real" things, which are beyond earth and history, which actually will reside for a long time in their "materiality" beneath our conception.

These historical materials are, as Cavell puts the real bones of the famous and infamous actors of the various plots of history. This principle of historicism based on the materiality of the bones has "significance as the intersection of nature and history, as a task of a continuous and natural unfolding of interpretations, each felt as a complete and each making possible the next, until a human form of life fits together" (p. 20). The same principle of alignment with adjacency is also operative in the film editing technique favoured by André Bazin as 'continuous shooting', which Cavell compares to the excavation method. Bazin primarily developed this principle in his analyses of the films of Orson Welles and has been described by Andrew Dudley as the "invisible montage". It is most clearly explained in the writings of Bazin that are related to the technique of sequence shooting as the new language of *décalpage*. Bazin describes this technique as such: "If, through a deliberate effort of attention, we try to see the ruptures imposed by the camera on the continuous unfolding of the event represented, and try to understand clearly why we normally take no notice of them, we realize we tolerate them because they nevertheless allow an impression to remain of continuous and homogenous reality...this is universal psychological experience."<sup>21</sup> This is a very sensitive issue to deal with in the limited



<sup>21</sup> André Bazin, *Orson Welles: A Critical View*, trans. Jonathan Rosenbaum, Elm Tree Books, London, 1978, p. 77.

**Inflation of Radical Phrases as Opposed to a Lack of Radical Action**

From "Early Works" (1969) by Željimir Žilnik and on his behalf, men are always debased. They drown before his eyes and on his high heels, they are crushed. It is not a matter of life and death again. Muta pecora, prona et ventri obediencia. ["The herd is silent, docile and obeys its stomach."] For our part, it is our task to drag the old world into the full light of day and to give positive shape to the new one." (Letter from Marx to Arnold Ruge)



Early Works

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scope of this essay, but we have to note that Bazin has underlined the intelligibility and the abstractness of this process of the realization of reality. In his philosophy this realization is too quickly happening without taking a necessary detour for abstraction, which is based on the postulates of revelation driven by the metaphysical concept of history as propagated by Mounier or de Chardin.<sup>22</sup>

If the sameness of the concrete materials of the world constitutes its "nature" and "history" through continuity, the film art that claims to be real will be structured on the editing table as a continuous experience as well. Art has to regain its lost wholeness, "to reconstruct its break", or to claim its integrity. This mimicry of the world by film art is not a simple mimicry of the Aristotelian classical schema; it is based on a complex set of elements. This would be clear if we look at the thought operation of Cavell from the point of his discovery of continuity. After this discovery Cavell expands his philosophy with a claim that Makavejev uses a natural time of continuity to such an extent that his films could appear to us as being a real world that can be "tasted". This possible taste is acquired not only by the historicist ideology used, but also through the ability of these films to reveal the hidden things, or the hidden history. In order to achieve this, the film work has to investigate its truth not through the rational logic of its own discourse, but through the "intuition" that would make the invisible montage of the world apparent. In this case the films of Makavejev are not about the conceptual configuration of the world, they are directly related to the world. They are films that become the world.

This ideology is taken further by the film critic Charles Warren. Under the influence of Cavell, Warren described Makavejev's films as earth-like or a "commitment to the body, a quality of earth, which insists on the body and physical quality of what is before the camera". Furthermore, according to Warren these are the "moments of history apprehensible as such".<sup>23</sup> This apprehension to Cavell happened at the moment of intuition of his thought which following the feast-scene with Otto Muehl's Commune in *Sweet Movie* that associated him of Karl Marx's characterization of religion as the heart of the heartless world (?) arrived at Carl Gustav Jung's

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Bazin described this retort and un-detoured abstraction as necessary: "Obliged to exercise his liberty and his intelligence, the spectator perceives the ontological ambivalence of reality directly, in the very structure of its appearance" (p. 80). For Bazin's metaphysical origins see Duidely Andrew, *Andre Bazin*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1978, p. 66-69, p. 106.

23

Charles Warren, *Earth and Beyond: Dusan Makavejev's WR: Mysteries of Organism*, in *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, ed. by C. Warren, Wesleyan University Press, Hanover & London, 1996, p. 206.

archetype-haunted dream on the “secrets of the earth”.<sup>24</sup> The “missing heart of the world” is compensated by the archetypes of the collective unconsciousness; or the world of Marx is healed by the parapsychology of Jung. In the archetypal dream the secret of the earth is revealed to Jung as the bones resting in the trans-historical time at the bottom of the cave. It is not surprising that Cavell in his intuitive investigation comes to the same conclusion: the bones and the corpses of history as the real earthiness of the world and of Makavejev’s films. His moment of history of this apprehension is the Katyn Forest massacre which he describes as the “ultimate evil” of modern history. This sequence of the dark side of history is re-presented in the film *Sweet Movie* as archival material. This intuition, apart from establishing the materiality that is ‘concrete’ in the films of Makavejev, is also describing this material with the terms of death and terror. By underlining the Katyn massacre as the ultimate dark force Cavell proposes a political explanation for this morbidity, which is Stalinism. We will in the following pages see what this Stalinism stands for, but for now it is important to stay with the line of intuition of Cavell, which ends the story with a moral tale. Even if *Sweet Movie* is “picturing the earth full of corpses”, its ultimate lesson is that “fight for freedom continues to originate in the demands of our instincts, the chaotic cry of our nature, our cry to have a nature” (p. 26).

Lorain Mortimer took this intuition even further, and developed the whole historicist explanation of the world through the films of Makavejev. In this world the bones and the dead occupy a very crucial place. They do not rest in the memories of the people, but are at the core of our understanding of the world which is based on carnality. The bones are the ultimate of carnal truth. They are the guarantors of our “nature” that has yet to be reconciled with the overly socialized and secular world. They are, according to Mortimer, the imaginary, emotional and somatic part of our knowledge that in many cases has more far-reaching consequences than the economical, political or cultural realms. Not to listen to and understand this realm will inevitably end in cataclysm, as was case with Yugoslavia – as Mortimer tries to demonstrate. The fact that the Communist authorities in Yugoslavia discouraged the villagers from opening the sites and removing the remains of the ones

24 Interesting comparison: in his film *Hole in the Soul* (1995), Makavejev is quoting his friend and famous Jungologist of Yugoslavia Vlada Jerotic saying that his problem is having “hole in the soul”.

There are considerable accounts of references on Jung in Makavejev, apart from his last film, he is referring to Bergman as a

director of Jungian soap-opera (in statement *Bergman’s Non-Verbal Sequences: Source of a Dream Film Experiment* co-authored with M. Duda), furthermore his speech in *Source* series starts and ends with Jung (Dušan Makavejev, *Little Monkeys Crawling on My Shoulders*, Source of Inspiration Lectures, 6. September 1994, Sources, Amsterdam, 1995).

massacred by the Partisans had haunted the minds of the Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian men for decades, writes Mortimer. Referring to an article written by Aleksa Đilas in the early 1980s in which is argued that this resistance by the Communists to reconcile with their own horrors (“not properly buried bodies”) might have “implications for the future of the country” is, as Mortimer has it, a prophetic statement. This is a prophecy of the “carnal truth” which does not need ‘sociology’ in order to justify itself. Actually, this discourse on postponing the reconciliation (“proper burial”) was a crucial element in the ideological construction of the Yugoslavian break-up and its devastating transitional aftermath.<sup>25</sup>

This is no longer about the dead who bury the dead, as Marx warned, but a step further from this, about the dead who bury the living and capture them in their trans-historical immobility.<sup>26</sup>

#### IV. Abstract as Ideology, Concrete as Life

At the current philosophical “cosmos” where we have arrived, two dichotomous strata are determining entire readings of Makavejev’s world: an abstract world represented by the ideologies which its ultimate expression reached with Fascism and Communism, and the concrete which is the real material of Makavejev’s world, viz. sex and death. The complexity that this schema implies is actually based on the mutual re-configuration of idealist and materialist philosophies; it is suspending any world that is either materialist or idealist. They are both at the same time. There is not a dividing line, which is essential in any philosophical intervention.<sup>27</sup> The silent assumption of this worldview is that of vitalism, which at the last instance reproduces the philosophies based on idealism. In this case the concreteness which is essential for Makavejev’s world is not a

25 Not only in Yugoslavia, but as Katherine Verdery tries to show in her anthropological study, ‘proper burial’ and post-socialist transition has direct link in many other countries: *Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Post-socialist Changes*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999.

26 This historicist view is clearing is off the discursive terrain for many retroactive readings on the break-up of Yugoslavia. It is not surprise that some texts are directly performing this retro-active reading through the films of Makavejev; there are many examples for this, but probably most amazing is Warren who from the formal

language of the *HR* draws this conclusion: “the explosion in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia may seem anticipated in a film such as *HR*, with its harsh juxtapositions, its tearing in so many different directions.” p. 227.

27 [Intervention] consist of ‘drawing a dividing-line’ inside the theoretical domain between the ideas declared to be true and ideas declared to be false, between the scientific and ideological”, in L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy* in Lenin and Philosophy and other essays, Transl. By Ben Brewster, Monthly Review press, New York, 2001, p. 37.

material of the materialist philosophy. This materiality, as we have shown, has a very strange character. It is a concreteness of idealism, or the reality of ideology. It has a life, ontology, tendency and homogeneity of its own. Furthermore, this concreteness is the merit of the ultimate truth, which has been labelled as “carnal truth”. This carnality reveals its truth either as the real spatial performance as in sexuality or joyfulness (because fucking takes place) or at the level of the spatio-temporality of the dead and the bones (bones manifest themselves for a longer period of time). So concreteness as the idealist imagination can take place both in space and time as the real continuums of our ‘cosmos’ (the word which continuously reappears in these readings). Only those having the real and sex and the deep feeling of history can live the life of un-ideological.

This tautology is visible in almost all humanist ideologies, or as Althusser has shown, humanism is constantly reproducing itself in its absolute self-referentiality. Althusser in his famous article *Marxism and Humanism* in which he developed his anti-humanist hypotheses is primarily dealing with the humanist Marxism of the Eastern European thinkers. It is performed a theoretical reversal of this situation by re-introducing the concept of the human (via concrete and real) at the film studies where the theory of Althusser was most effective. This reversal is most strongly performed in the readings of the Eastern European cinema, especially with the readings of Makavejev’s films.

The book by James Roy MacBean on *Film and Revolution* that deals mostly with Godard’s political films aims at the very rigorous Marxist analysis of the cinema based on the counter-Bazinian position of anti-mysticism and the critical reading of Metz’s denegation of the concept of ideology.<sup>28</sup> Especially dealing with Godard’s Althusser-influenced materialist films of “the break” MacBean is aiming at the theoretization of the anti-humanism of Godard’s films. For example, referring to the political conflict between Godard the materialist and Glauber Rocha who has a spontaneous approach does not fail to describe the position favoured by the first: “Godard rejects the emotional approach as one which plays into the hand of the enemy, and seeks to combat mystification in any form, whether it comes from the right or the left” (p. 137). The book is devoted largely to the political-work of Godard. In the chapter that deals with the work of Makavejev (*Sex and Politics: Wilhelm Reich, World Revolution, and Makavejev’s WR: Mysteries of the Organism*) describes the formal similarity between the two directors (“experiments with montage and collage”) and then repeats the famous comparison that “Makavejev’s films have a greater emotional density than Godard’s most recent films” (p. 241). This emotional density reappears in MacBean’s reading of the famous end scene with Bulat Okudzhava’s song as the invocation of the concrete humanisms of the “Communist

commitment to a just distribution among all citizens, but which also touchingly evoke the personal plight of the individual, who, no matter how great his ideals may be, remains as frail and emotionally vulnerable to the life’s troubles as the rest of us...even if his name happens to be Vladimir Ilyich” (p. 252). This humanism appears as social equality, of “each according to his need” (p. 253).<sup>29</sup> Even the most strict materialist analyses based on the critique of Bazinian mystifications in Makavejev’s cinema are letting their rigour loose and allow them to show emotions. Why is this the case with Makavejev? What makes him so appealing to the concrete humanist Ideologies? I think that the relation of Makavejev to two antagonistic communist figures, Stalin and Marx, would bring us closer to this Ideology of concreteness.

#### V. Makavejev and Stalin

The emotionality of Makavejev as opposed to the intellectuality and the rigour of Godard is the most common comparison between the two directors. Nina Power, who very successfully de-mystified the Ideology of sexuality in Makavejev’s interpretation, has always insisted on Makavejev’s “viscerality” and has described him as “the anti-Godard” (2010: 47). Mortimer has reproduced this difference with far-reaching political and religious consequences: “Godard’s work is marked by a denial of the actual and the sensuous in their own right...he is a Calvinist whose passions are articulated in a cerebral, masculine, ascetic-religious mode akin to those of many ‘revolutionaries’ in the past and present. Makavejev is ‘principled pagan’: hungers to understand things as they are, his intelligence wedded to a passion for living in this, our only world” (Mortimer 2009: 87-88). Raymond Durgant contrasts the “vivacity” with which Makavejev portrayed Mao to the way Godard portrays leftist youth in *La Chinoise* who are reading Mao’s *Little Red Books* like Christians would read the *Guide to the Inner Light*.<sup>30</sup> This division can be

<sup>28</sup> James Roy MacBean, *Film and Revolution*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London, 1975.

<sup>29</sup> It is exactly with this same words that Althusser describes the Ideological “novelty” of Marxist humanism: “It called on man finally – no longer in the imaginary world of religion, in the ‘heaven of the State’, or in the alienated abstraction of Hegelian philosophy, but on the earth, here and now, in real society – to

‘realize’ his true essence, which is the human community – ‘communism’.” *Is it Simple to be a Marxist in Philosophy?* (1975), in *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of Scientists & Other Essays*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, p. 233. In which circumstances MacBean’s anti-humanist hypotheses related to Godard throughout the book turns to its opposite of Okudzhava’s communion humanism in case of Makavejev is probably one of the crucial question for us dealing with Yugoslav studies to thoroughly handle with.

summed up as Makavejev the filmmaker of emotions and sensuality, and Godard as the filmmaker of the intellect and the cerebral. Makavejev as the artist of the concrete in contrast to Godard the artist of the abstract. This division of the concrete and abstract is further contrasted with Makavejev's relation to Stalin, which ultimately is described as one of freedom contra dictatorship.

Stalin is ultimately evil, and theoretically represents the highest position of abstractness; of a total elimination of anything real, concrete and human. It is the ultimate spectacle, and as such corresponds to everything that is the opposite of truth. Stalin is the ideology.

We can approach this Stalinist ideology in relation to Makavejev's work from many different aspects:

*A - Stalin as the heir of Lenin:* in the film of *WR* there is a scene where Vladimir Ilyich (who obviously represents Lenin) hits Milena after their argument. Milena looks at him from a lower position completely petrified and sees his V.I. (Lenin) turned to Stalin. The Stalin that Makavejev uses is not a real Stalin, but the personified one from the movie of Mikhail Chiaurell *The Vow*. This scene according to many interpretations of Makavejev is directly proves that Makavejev's philosophy is based on the fact that Stalin is Lenin who has gone mad. As Mortimer observes with her pop-psychanalytic phraseology: Lenin was a true neurotic who wanted to change people and help them. His ascetism, nonetheless, paved the way for Stalin's rule" (p. 183). MacBean also describes Stalinism as the psychopathological "domination which turned all of the Soviet bloc into an enormous network of insane asylums" (MacBean, p. 251). (N.B. He mistakes the Nazi Germany asylum footage which Makavejev uses in *WR* as originating from the Soviet Republic.)

He specifies the Stalin-Lenin juxtaposition as the "attempt to trace the authoritarian and repressive trends in Soviet Communism to Lenin himself" (MacBean, p. 248). Actually the scene where Makavejev is juxtaposing the image of Stalin with an image of Lenin is based on Chiaurell's film where Stalin is crying to the deceased Lenin, or the Lenin who is no longer among us. The suturing effect of the ideological continuation from Lenin to Stalin is based on the absence, the absence of Lenin as the signifier. Nevertheless this causality between Lenin and Stalin is not necessarily a political or philosophical. For example, it does not always claim that seeds of Stalinist evil lay at the heart of Leninism. It is based on the dichotomy between the concrete and the abstract. Both Lenin as the ascetic, neurotic and idealist and Stalin as the dogmatic, stiff and alienated are abstractions, in contrast to the actual persons' concreteness. This will bring us to the second important aspect.

*B - Stalin as Abstraction, Abstraction as Ideology:* one of the first critiques of the image of Stalin, as represented in the cinema, is written by André Bazin. This comes before Khrushchev's attack on the cult of personality. In now classical article which caused Bazin

many problems at the time when the French Communist Party was overly Stalinist he is describing the Stalin of the Soviet cinematography as the kitsch person abstracted from the real contradictions of the world, which could likely be compared to Tarzan of Hollywood. The one difference between Stalin and Tarzan is that the films about the latter do not pretend to be documentaries.<sup>31</sup> Mighty as he is represented in the movies, without any faults or lacks, Stalin is ontological rather than psychological. It is because he is no longer 'human', Bazin argues, that even while he is alive he could be the main character of a film (p. 36). This is the Stalinism of Milan Kundera's totalitarian kitsch where shit does not exist: the Ideological totalitarianism of absolute. The most important thing is that this Stalin is abstract, detached from real people, and from their pleasures and bodies. This is also the Stalinism of Svetlana Boym who in her article on the Soviet Perestroika documentaries detects a general form of the history of the Russian documentaries. They blur the clear division of the 'factual' and 'fictional'. Russian documentaries of the Stalinist period are staged and camouflaged. Echoing Bazin's Tarzan she is stating that "they are more like the 'docu-dramas' on American television and must be treated with caution".<sup>32</sup> As a conclusion, nothing is true in the universe of Stalin. Makavejev's films are principally anti-Stalinist because their subjects are occupied with their "earthiness" as can be read in the account of Charles Warren. This earthiness is defined and structured with three mutually dependent categories: of humour, people as people or un-idealized people, and sex.<sup>33</sup> This humanist tautology of "people as people" can be traced in many different Makavejev and Yugoslav Marxist problematics. Warren juxtaposes the two and declares that

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Raymond Durganant, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, British Film Institute, London, 1999, p. 52. Or Makavejev's difference from the post-modernist Godard (Andrew Horton, *The Mouse Who Wanted to F.ck a Cow: Cinematic Carnival Laughter in Divan Makavejev*, p. 225). "Godard finds in everyday-trivial the lack of real contact and communication that is reflected in the spatial vacuums and awkwardness of his visual compositions. Makavejev discovers a means of expressing the essence of the intimacy" (Martin Walsh, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, p. 14), or "Where Godard suffers from consipation as Basil Wright has remarked – Makavejev irascibly liberates his floating mystery" (Yvette Bito, *Paths and Irony in Eastern European Films*, p. 44).

31

André Bazin, *The Stalin Myth in Soviet Cinema* [1950], in *Movies and Methods* Volume II, ed. Bill Nichols, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, p. 35.

32

Svetlana Boym, *Stalin is with Us: Soviet Documentary Mythologies*, in *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, ed. By C. Taylor and D. Spring, Routledge, London and New York, 1993, p. 203.

33

Charles Warren, *Earth and Beyond: Divan Makavejev's WR: Mysteries of Organism*, in *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, ed. by C. Warren, Wesleyan University Press, Hanover & London, 1996, p. 206.

"Yugoslavia is not the USSR and it resists Stalinism. Milena tells to Vladimir that Yugoslavs care about 'personal happiness' and do not blur that with State concerns' (p. 227). Yet we have to bear in mind that in the case of Yugoslavia this has been very much blurred, especially the anti-Stalinist state policy which was also widely supported by the 'dissident' philosophy of Yugoslavian Humanist Marxism known as Praxis. Praxis has based its critique of Stalinism on the tautology of the human. This is how Gajo Petrović, one of the founders of Praxis, reflects on this philosophy: "What makes man man is the general structure of his Being, which Marx called 'praxis'"<sup>34</sup>. The way in which Praxis defines man as man is contra to Stalin, so their philosophy is contra Stalin. This anti-Stalinist Marxism in the case of Praxis is neither materialist nor idealist, it is "consistent naturalism and humanism" (p. 29), which they derived philosophically from the Erich Fromm's version of "authentic Marxism". Apart from being positively defined, this concreteness of the people is at the same time far from grim and serious and is full of joy. This is how Andrew Horton describes the carnival laughter in Makavejev's work in spite of the apparent Marxism in his films: "laughter of the people, by the people, and for the people as individuals emerges as form of salvation".<sup>35</sup> That is why Stalinism cannot grasp irony, joy and pleasure.

<sup>c -</sup> *Stalin the Hitler*. "He was a true Red Fascist!" These are the last words of Milena, describing Vladimir in *W/R*. Red Fascism as the merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American image of totalitarianism is a political terminology par excellence. It has played a crucial role in post-WWII America, constructing the policy of anti-communism which was paved through the troubled equivalency of Hitler with Stalin. Apart from generating the discourse on the acuteness of the task to fight communism, Red Fascism also served the fantasies of what might happen.

For example, we have to look at Hitler in the 1930s in order to avoid a possible coming of Stalin's Fascism.<sup>36</sup> This fantasy is somehow at the core of totalitarian ideology, as a bizarre psychopathological paranoiac state that confuses the abstract and the real. This is how Stanley Cavell in his article on Makavejev describes the archive materials of the ultimate evil of Stalinism, or the Katyn Forest massacre shown in *Sweet Movie*, as a "dreamlike sequence"<sup>37</sup> and poses the great moralist question that a freedom lover would: "Isn't that forest a name for the region inhabited by regimes that no longer know that there is a difference between dream and reality, acting out the one, wiping out the other?"<sup>37</sup> Stalin mistook the concrete for the abstract, and according to his critics it is this confusion that makes him so uncanny. The imagination of totalitarianism is best described by its principal ideologue and the architect of the "containment policy" Georg F. Kennan as: "When I try to picture totalitarianism to myself as a general phenomenon, what comes into my mind most prominently is neither Soviet picture

nor the Nazi picture as I have known them in the flesh, but rather the fictional and symbolic images created by such people as Orwell or Kafka or Koestler or the early Soviet satirists. The purest expression of the phenomenon, in other words, seems to me to have been rendered not in its physical reality but in its power as a dream, or nightmare. Not that it lacks the physical reality, or that this reality is lacking in power; but it is precisely in the way it appears to people, in the impact it has on the subconscious, in the state of mind it creates in its victims, that totalitarianism reveals most deeply its meaning and nature. Here, then, we seem to have phenomenon of which it can be said that it is both a reality and a bad dream, but that its deepest reality lies strangely enough in its manifestation as a dream..."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>d -</sup> *Re-Stalinization of de-Stalinized Yugoslavia*: When Gajo Petrović discusses the encouraging developments in the field of philosophy in Yugoslavia he does not fail to mention that there are certain "remnants of Stalinism in us opposing free discussions on philosophy" (p. 30). This is similar to what Makavejev told Jonas Mekas in interview in 1972: "I feel that in my country Stalin's ghost is living in different corners and comes out from time to time just to tell us we are not as free as we believe we are" (Mortimer, op. cit., p. 169). How we could understand these statements, coming from the philosopher and the artist of the country which officially declared its socialism as non-Stalinist? We could understand this only as part of the observation that true de-Stalinization is possible only with the arrival of the concrete and of polyvalence in socialist politics.

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Gajo Petrović, *Marx in the Mid-twentieth Century: a Yugoslav Philosopher Considers Karl Marx*, Anchor Books, New York, 1967, p. 171.

35

Andrew Horton, *The Movies who Wanted to F.k.a Cow: Cinematic Carnival Laughter in Dusan Makavejev's Films*, in *Comedy/Cinema/Theory*, ed. by A. Horton, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1991, p. 232.

In same volume article by Charles Eidsvik is picturing this concrete and abstract dichotomies with more complex and surreal terms: "Eastern Europeans lived in paradoxical, multiple and incongruous realities. In such realities what is normally taken for humour is serious and seriousness itself is comic". *Mock Realism: The Comedy of Futility in Eastern Europe*, *ibid*, p. 103.

36

Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Peterson, *Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's*, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 4, April 1970, pp. 1046-1064.

37

Stanley Cavell, *On Makavejev On Bergman* [1978] in Cavell on Film, ed. by William Rothman, State University of New York Press, 2005, p. 30.

38

George Keenan, *Totalitarianism in the Modern World*, op. cit. Les Adler and Thomas Paterson, *ibid*, p. 1062.

The Yugoslavian socialism of self-management, which necessarily brought with it the process of de-Stalinization, did not detach from the abstractness of the socialism which is a constitutive element of the orthodoxy and ideology of Stalinism. Their detachment was false, it didn't imply the cosmic re-order of things, or it was never able to introduce the un-ideology of concreteness. Or, as Herbert Eagle noted, the concern of Makavejev's films, as was the philosophy of the group *Praxis*, was the failure of Yugoslavian socialism to foster individual development.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, *Man is not a Bird* is a film about "un-freedom". As Eagle puts it, the "central conflict of all Eastern European societies is between Marxist humanist praxis and repressive regimented institutions" (p. 136). The possible emancipation that humanist Marxist films might introduce is most clearly described by Daniel Goulding as "[daily practice] of transforming a single collective mythology into a multitude of private mythologies".<sup>40</sup> Goulding is quoting from Makavejev's essay on another representative of the New Yugoslavian Film, Kokan Rakonjac. He says that the physiognomy of this new tendency is based on "viewing the world as it is, without hierarchy and ideological intervention" (p. 72). Since Goulding has based his idea of Socialist Yugoslavia on the fluctuating theory of the successive policies between the centralist (latent Stalinist) and liberalist (self-managing) tendencies as developed by the Dennison Rusinow in his classical book *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, the "liberated cinema" of Yugoslavia was accordingly never truly liberated from the constraints of Stalinist strata. According to this philosophy it should be declared that Makavejev's utopia of "an un-mediated 'real' society ('as it is') is a logical oxymoron in any state of affairs, because it categorically suspends the possibility of the spontaneous expression of concreteness of human creativity. Probably it is something more than a matter of style to name this prevalence Stalinism."<sup>41</sup>

## VI. Makavejev and Marx

Another important pattern when reading Makavejev's films is that they could have very different meaning depending on the position of

<sup>39</sup> Herbert Eagle, *Yugoslav Marxist Humanism and the Films of Dušan Makavejev*, in *Politics Art and Commitment in the East European Cinema*, ed. David Paul, Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, 1983, p. 133.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1985, p. 66. Actually this policy of polyvalency was primarily developed by the theoretician of the Yugoslavian New Film Dušan Stojanović.

<sup>41</sup> For example attack to the New Yugoslavian Film as "Black Wave" was interpreted by Goulding as Stalinist counter-offensive move of latent nationalists, and the initiators been labelled following the style of Stalinism as "Jankovcivites" (referring to a local "Stankhovcivites") [p. 83]

looking at them and the ocular regimes or ideological beliefs of the spectator who enjoys them. As Durgant, referring to Hitchcock's *Strangers in Train* noted, this cognitive polyvalence could be proclaimed with the term 'the joy of perpetual analysis. This polyvalence has been the constitutive philosophy of the entire New Yugoslav Cinema, including Dušan Makavejev who described this as a policy of multi-reading influenced by the psychological investigations introduced by the Gestalt theories. These readings could suggest that Makavejev's films can be reduced to the primary tension between the artist as individual and society as a collective, where the role of the artist is to be the creative emancipator to represent the full potentiality of this individual and the subject.

Everything said and done, this would lead us to the ideological position of Makavejev's films as the guarantors of the freedom despite the repressive socialist state. The re-occurring Stalinism of Yugoslavian ambiguity and the discourse of sexual emancipation as part of political freedom could likely end up as the Marcusean cultural policy of the *n*-dimensional man, where Makavejev's central problematic would be labelled as Martin Walsh did in his text on *HR* as "ultimate disparity between individual and the state: sex/the individual versus politics/the state".<sup>42</sup> Since the potential ghost of Stalin has been haunting Yugoslavia in the spaces of this "politics/the state" field, this policy of the individualism is un-conditional for the emancipation from the constraints of society and ideology. It is this philosophy of the "personal is political" that appeared before postmodernism which encouraged Durgant to label *HR* as the "humanist postmodern" (p. 69). Makavejev, before being humanist postmodernist, was for a long time a cinematic representative of "humanist Marxism". This cinematic Marxism, or cine-marxism is counter to Stalin and it is in direct anti-thesis of Godard's Althusserian Marxism.

What is Makavejev thought in relation to Marx? In what sense is the principle of Makavejev based on individual freedom, the sensual, carnality, emotions, sex, the cosmos and the polyvalence of all of these, connected to the Marxian theory and practice? It is possible to grasp the Ideological discourses related to these questions once we clarify Makavejev's Marxism as related to the dichotomy between the individual and the state. Up until now we have seen many examples of how these discourses criticized the film studies influenced by certain dogmatic brands of Marxism which repressed the concreteness of human being such as pleasure, hedonism and sensuality. Durgant, as many others did, called them "political correct" film studies "underestimating the hedonistic counter-cultures, and emphasising Althusser-style syntheses of

<sup>42</sup> Martin Walsh, *WR: Mysteries of Organism*, *Monogram* no. 5, London, p. 15.



structuralism, Leninism, Maoism" (p. 88).<sup>43</sup> But still there is the fact that Makavejev himself was a Marxist, humanist or not, that has to be dealt with by his appreciators. The polyvalence of his films has been the key for introducing the peculiarity of Makavejev's Marx. This was most clearly agitated by the Marxist aesthetician and the founder, long-time international authority and the high representative of the Naturist and Free Beach Movement, Lee Baxandall in his article on Eastern European Cine-Marxism. This peculiar cine-Marxism differs from the original version by Godard, in the sense that this Eastern European version fully grasped Brecht's rule of "never failing to give the pleasure".<sup>44</sup> Apart from this local specificity, Baxandall is introducing the ontological multiplicity of Marxism as: "there has not been one Marxism, but many" (p. 73), with his open preference of the "real" one which has full "awareness of the value of subjectivity". This Marx is precisely the opposite of Marx as "scientist" impostor concocted by such interpreters as the neo-Stalinist Louis Althusser, who was said to have stifled the 'humanist' in himself to go on to discover the laws of "scientific materialism" (p. 83). The Marx of Makavejev is humanist, that much we understood, but how does this humanism correspond to polyvalence? Since humanism could be the signifier of the 'project of men' initiated by the collective socialism of the Stalin, it is not so easy to connect polyvalence with humanism.

The usual answer is that Stalin's humanism is based on the abstract, ideological or kitsch concept of man, whereas real humanism is based on real man, or "the human genotype, the innate nature that undergoes socialization" as Baxandall clarifies (p. 92). A crucial element here is the concept of human "nature", as the eternal and complex reality of the concrete. This schema allows the "humanist Marxist" to avoid the possible paradoxes of the "individual versus collective" dichotomy with the polyvalence of Makavejev. According to this schema, what has been labelled as the collective in socialist countries does not have a polyvalent nature, it is abstract and stiff, or granite of univocal ideology. The nature of the individual is in its elements based on the complexity of the concreteness, and it is truly a polysemic. This is why it is so distinctly

43

The brand of Yugoslav Marxism known as *Praxis* is usually linked, as in Herbert Eagle's observation, with the Makavejev's film-philosophy.

The fact that the journal of Yugoslav Marxist's *The Praxis* in 1965 refused to publish Louis Althusser's article due to its "Stalinist positivist" thesis is seen as extra encouragement for the idea of linking films of Makavejev with the philosophy of Praxis.

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Lee Baxandall, *Toward and East European Cinema/Praxis*, in *Politics, Art and Commitment in the East European Cinema*, ed. by David Paul Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, 1983, p. 88.

subversive, as Amos Vogel calls it, as "the eternal subversion": essence of life, under all circumstances and in all societies, was eternal change, the constant transformation of all forms and systems" (*Film as Subversive Art*). We arrived at the main Ideological pattern of the reading of Makavejev's polyvalence. It is referring to the multiplicity, richness, multi-colouredness of the naked man un-mediated by any ideological abstraction with his concrete nature in full bloom. Real concrete is evidence of polyvalence.

Marx is redundant here, as Durgant, who is a non-Marxist admirer of Makavejev, observed: this ambiguity makes up the socialist position, which is not, after all, among one man's vision, but a range of positions, and not a single statement, 'once and for all', but a progression of reflections, a network of changing ideas. Many of which non-Socialist can share" (p. 63).

Conclusion: Concretely Watching Films  
(of Makavejev)

In fact, we have reached the main dilemma of the relation between polyvalence, change, knowledge, arts and politics. The readings based on the ideological conception of the concrete are not able to propose a dividing line between progressive and regressive politics and given this hibernation the "carnal truth" cannot generate any other thought except the obvious knowledge about its own "nature" or "material". We can demonstrate this by showing the political implications of carnal truth in the case of Mortimer.

Mortimer's attempt to derive any correct political conclusions from the carnal truth ends with the ambiguous morality of confusion. She might call this confusion beautiful, as she did in the case of the tenderness in Frank Sinatra's voice, but things get problematic when she links this carnality with the specificity of the subjects of Makavejev's films. This specificity is the 'Yugoslavian people', with notable Balkan origins. She is very determined when explaining the emancipatory potential of these Balkan bodies in reading the immigrants Dionysian joyfulness at the Zamzi-Bar in Makavejev's film *Montenegro*: "vitality of the immigrants, their genius for resourcefulness, the obstinate and inveterate art of surviving, whether the circumstances" (Mortimer, p. 239). This inveterate capability of lasting might be part of their special material, of their different and more enduring bodies. Also these Balkan bodies are representatives of the different epistemology that Mortimer is picturing through the character of Alex who "embodies what serious ideologues find hard to appreciate: an active vulgarity that goes against too earnest and abstract a conception of the person on the wrong end of the immigrant worker/capitalist exploiter, poor country/rich country continuum.

It is a vulgarity that is a part of human being" (p. 232). The antagonisms of capitalist colonization and the antagonisms of the class struggle in this "cosmos" are done away with as political

correctness by Mortimer, and furthermore posed the critique for this correctness as the theoretical reductionism of people to social designations “performed by the right-minded thinkers”, which doubles the already existing social diminishment (Mortimer, p. 233-234). The political emancipation of the Balkan immigrants, according to this, can only be based on their own bodies, which is proof of their durability, their resourcefulness. Throughout the article we have seen that the carnal and sensual truths are based primarily on reference of its own resources. It is all about the concrete truth of concrete things; or the real knowledge of our bodies. But are there no antagonisms at the core of carnal truth itself? Does sensual vulgarity contradict itself? How to explain the confrontation of two different concrete bodies? What are the limits of their “truths”?

Is there any “dividing line” between their truths? The most crucial question is this: Is there a possibility to divide right from wrong in the carnal truth? In the end, how to explain the violence of concreteness? Mortimer in this case too re-produces two different types of violence: the “hot” one which is a direct, erupted and spontaneous violence; and the “cold” violence of the calculated, opportunistic and analytical mind. For example according to her at the Srebrenica there were two kind of violences operating, the “hot” violence of Ratko Mladic and his pupils “equally drunk on plumb brandy and ethnic paranoia” and the “cold” violence of the liberal democracies of the Dutch officers (Mortimer, p. 181-182). Trying to explain the “material” of Radovan Karadzic himself, who is assumed as the representative of the “hot” part of the world, Mortimer is not able to say the last word. At once Karadzic is a representative of the abstractness that harks back to the Lenin-Stalin “asceticism” and alienation (p. 182-183); but at the same time he is the men of the Balkan, with his grotesque of the carnality. He is, as Mortimer explains in the pages discussing the *Montenegro* movie, one of Montenegro’s (referring to Karadzic’s Montenegrin origin) shameful sons (p. 250).

He is a Zanzi-Bar Dionysos gone mad, or went “uglier and more brutal”. But still there is no possibility to divide this monster from Dr. Frankenstein; neither the class or colonial antagonisms nor any other discourse of “cold”, politically correct and abstract world can help to make this decision. At the end there is only one perspective for the carnal truth in order to operate in the world of politics: it’s the “trust”, the trust in its own truth, or as Mortimer puts: “in the end it is the question of t r u s t” (p. 178).<sup>45</sup>

Throughout the text I have deliberately based my arguments on the examples of the ideological readings of Makavejev’s films in order to make clear their theoretical and political consequences. The consequences are the un-dialectical approach of sameness, ending most of the time in the historicist interpretation of the development (which consequently opens variety of regressive and retroactive political positions). This process is grounded in the knowledge that is

strictly based on self-referential and absolute truths, in the text referred to as ‘concrete’ or precisely as ‘carnal’, ‘natural’ or ‘sensuous’, which are strictly related to human nature. The readings, whose abundance is quite impressive, are in almost all cases reproducing the ideology of the re-humanization of the theory, especially the film theory. The lure of these theories are their insistence on the concept of concrete, as material of our everyday, of our intimacy, essence, obviousness and human nature which continuously hangs on our daily worries of bread, water, love, sex, wine or loss. These hypotheses are not naïve; they are reproducing the most conservative and regressive thoughts on society and politics if not handled with caution and reserve. Their obviousness is their lure, but at the same time it might guarantee their succession, which considering the current state of affair in film theory it would be fair to announce this theoretical caution as acute.

As I mentioned earlier this text is not about the new proposal of reading Makavejev, its sole purpose was to deal with the ideological origins and confusions which some idealist and phenomenologist inspired readings generates. What is most striking, to say it scandalously, is that Makavejev films which supposed to have polyvalence of readings and patterns are always ending in the same pattern of identity, carnality, sensuality, and humanist tautologies. Are there not any other patterns which the polyvalence of Makavejev’s films could offer to us? There are signs of this; we can mention the reading of Pavle Levi who clearly indicates the simplicity of reduction of Makavejev to Herbert Marcuse’s “essential incompatibility between the notion of human freedom and the various institutionalized and reified forms of social and political life”.<sup>46</sup> Levi is instead proposing more active conception of polyvalence, which could offer a possibility of “debate” for the spectators of Makavejev films, “possibility accompanying the freedom granted to him or her, to choose a specific perspective, a concrete idea, he or she will stand for” (p. 34). This is a full possibility of polyvalence, or the possibility for cultural policy through the polyvalence, which according to Levi, “does in the end, implicitly presuppose a basic leftist political inclinations of its viewer-participants” (p. 34). This reading is crucial in underlining under-estimated possibility of pedagogy of the Makavejev films which is

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Referring to Wilhelm Reich’s attack to FBI investigators approaching this property, a sequence also mentioned in the film *WR*, Raymond Durganant writes that: “this may well be left-wing ‘direct action’ against incipient Fascism, but it is also right-wing anarchy autonomy, against democratic state tyranny”, p. 21.

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Pavle Levi, *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2007, p. 29.

continuously de-negated in the idealist readings based on 'psychologization' and 'personalism'.

Another reading, but a less affirmative one, is based neither on policy nor culture is a recent elaboration on the Black Wave, primarily referring to a work of another of its protagonists, Željimir Žilnik, by Boris Buden as a practice of disengagement with the representational identity policies of the Yugoslavian socialism. The films of Yugoslavian alternative cinema known as New Yugoslavian Cinema, or better Black Wave, probably for the first time, has been interpreted in this reading with the non-representational politics, which is neither the critique of that system (the socialism), nor any engagement with this representation; "the black" stands for what it is, without any extrapolation of culturalism, or as we have said earlier on "the sex", without any further additive meaning. It is this "black" which is the material of the Makavejev, and which is the driving force all the avant-garde arts, the negation; not the subversion, but the simple and concise negation. Or as Buden puts:

"[t]he black of black wave] is about where the society as society is absent and about what politics, however democratic, cannot represent."<sup>47</sup>

This position of negation is important in the case of Makavejev films, not only because his films are constituted by the "dark" materials, but that this negativity is a theoretical partisanship for further investigation of possibilities detached from humanist affirmations, phenomenologist tautologies and spiritual communions. It is not exaggeration to claim that the negation is starting point for the materialist reading that could bring us more closely to the concrete.

<sup>47</sup> Boris Buden, Shot it Black! An Introduction to Željimir Žilnik, *Alterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, No. 25, Autumn 2010, p. 47. In his earlier article dealing especially with Makavejev, Buden took a risk of "sociological" explanation of this non-representative a-culturalist position.

This risk ended up in the intensification of falseness of the Yugoslav socialism; which materialized, as Buden interpreted in the last words of Milena's in *HR*: Yugoslavia was already a capitalist when it claimed it was socialist. Boris Buden, Behind the Velvet Curtain: Remembering Dušan Makavejev's *WR*: *Mysterries of Organism, Alterall: A Journal of Art, context and Enquiry*, No. 18, 2008.

## Kapi, vode, ratnici

Drops, waters, warriors (1962) is a black and white omnibus feature directed by Marko Babac. Živojin Pavlović, Kokan Rakonjac and written by Marko Babac, Slobodan Novaković, Živojin Pavlović, Olga Vujiadinović, Dušan Makavejev, Kokan Rakonjac. The cast includes Stole Arandelović, Ljuba Tadić, Janez Vrhovec, Snežana Lukić, Petar Lupa, Dušan Jamičević, Olga Vujiadinović. Produced by Cinema club Belgrade and Sutjeska film.

Three segments, originally shot as three short amateur films produced by the cinema club Belgrade, after an idea of cinema-tographer Aleksandar Pečković, were 'packed' as an omnibus and with the help of Sutjeska film from Sarajevo, presented at the professional Yugoslav Film Festival in Pula. It was the first official stepping out of amateurs into the professional field.

## Korčula Summer School

Between 1963 and 1974 the island and city of Korčula were a meeting point for critical leftist intellectuals from East and West. The local House of Culture would, for a brief period of time, become the centre of debates on the position of critical philosophy, sociology and political perspectives.

Henri Lefebvre, Herbert Marcuse, Ernst Bloch, Jürgen Habermas, Zygmunt Bauman were, among many others, frequent guests of the summer school. The Korčula Summer School was organised by the Yugoslav philosophers gathered around the journal Praxis. One can speculate that the experiences at the summer school impelled Lefebvre to coin the term 'Dionysian socialism'.

## League of Communists of Yugoslavia

In 1952, during the sixth Congress of the Communist Party it was decided to give the Communist Party of Yugoslavia a new name, which became the League of Commu-

nists of Yugoslavia in order to reflect the transformation the state was going through and the change in the party's role in society under the influence of workers self-management and the ongoing state reforms.

## Lipanjaska gibanja

The June Turmoil (1968) is a black and white documentary short written and directed by Željimir Žilnik, camera is by Dušan Ninkov, sound by Bogdan Tirmanić and Branko Vučićević and edited by Miodrag Petrović-Šario. Produced by Neoplanta film, Novi Sad.

The film is documenting the student demonstrations in Belgrade in June 1968. It was primarily shot in the courtyard of Kapetan Mišino Zdanje (Faculty of Philosophy building) where students gathered and in which famous artists participated, showing solidarity with the students.

See Interview with Željimir Žilnik, p. 57  
See also Student protests, p. 188

## Ljubavni slučaj, ili tragedija službenice PTT-a

Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator (1967) is a black and white feature film written by Branko Vučićević and Dušan Makavejev. It has been directed by Dušan Makavejev with assistance from Branko Vučićević and Željimir Žilnik.

The cinematographer was Aleksandar Petković; it has been edited by Katarina Stojanović and the cast included Eva Ras, Slobodan Aligrudić, Ružica Sokić, Miodrag Andrić. Produced by Avala film.

## Makavejev, Dušan

(Belgrade, 1932). Film director and screenwriter. One of the most prominent figures of the Yugoslav new film. Although psychologist by education, he entered the film world via the Belgrade cinema club, of which he was one of the most prominent early

### **III**

#### **NEW COLLECTIVES: ART NETWORKS AND CULTURAL POLI- CIES IN POST-YUGOSLAV SPACES**

by

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NEW COLLECTIVES: ART NETWORKS AND CULTURAL POLICIES  
IN POST-YUGOSLAV SPACES

Sezgin Boynik

*Introduction*

This article deals with cultural policies of the artistic collectives in post-Yugoslav contexts. Since most of the artistic collectives discussed here were founded in the 1990s, we feel permitted to take and analyze them as important indicators of the transitional dynamics and predicaments that occurred within the post-Yugoslav cultural domain during that historical period. We are going to discuss the role of the artistic collectives from different angles. To presage our main thesis, artistic collectives were playing a key role for the re-articulation of the cultural policy in the sense of bringing about the shift from a state-centered socialist planning strategy to de-centralized and neo-liberal open-market networking. It is clear that the terms related to cultural politics such as 'decentralization' and 'liberalization' could invoke confusion when applied to the case of Yugoslavia. We have the impression that this confusion must be traced to the complex and perplexing discourse around the theory and practice of 'self-management,' which had constituted one of the keystones of the Yugoslav path to socialism. However, we will not propose any theory on the cultural policy of self-management in Yugoslavia and its after-life in the post-Yugoslav spaces whatsoever. Yet, a critical light must be shed upon the contemporary, post-Yugoslav appropriation of this conceptualization put forward by artistic collectives. Here, the original meaning of 'self-management' is in a positivist fashion reduced to the managerial aspects. To discriminate between Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav artistic collectives in the following, we are going to use the terms 'First' and 'Second Collectives.' Thereby the term 'Second Collectives' is reserved for the current post-Yugoslav artistic collectives. It must also be stated that most of the Second Collectives, and especially the ones referred to in this article, were not collectives managed by the artists, but on the contrary, they were artistic collectives who were managing the artists. They are artistic collectives of art curators, art critics, art producers and art designers. This demarcation is vital for the sake of preventing a generalization of the

proposed thesis of this article – concerning the role of art collectives during the transitional period – to the function of art as a whole.

In addition, I need to emphasize that our analytical focus in this article does not lie on art practices as such, but rather on art systems in general. Tackling the question of the relation between art and ideology, Louis Althusser defended the autonomy of art as a distinct way of producing knowledge-effects: “*I do not rank real art among the ideologies, although art does have a quite particular and specific relationship with the ideology*” (1971: 203). On that account, the following proposition on the relation between artistic collectives and ideology concerns the relationship between art systems functioning as collectives on the one hand and ideology on the other – or, as Althusser would put it, between the ‘empiricist,’ ‘historicist,’ and ‘humanist’ art and the ideological state apparatuses. To sum up, the main subject of my article is the Second artistic collectives, which typically do not possess a coherent and fixed organizational structure. For several reasons that will become clearer in the following pages, I am mostly drawing from Croatian examples, especially from Zagreb. Yet, one can assume, in principle, analogous correlations with regard to form and content in other post-Yugoslav spaces.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Managerial Aspects of Artistic Collectives*

Before we concentrate on the ideological implications of the managerial aspects of artistic collectives in various post-Yugoslav settings, we first have to engage in the already existing international debates on this subject. This detour is apposite for at least two reasons: first, because significant segments of the post-Yugoslav Art Theory hinge on international (mostly European) discourses on artistic collectives; second, because the largest part of the post-Yugoslav artistic practices are financed by international (again mostly European) cultural agents and foundations.

For reasons that will become clear while I expose my argument, I want to display the betokened affinity by referring to Maria Lind, the renowned curator, theoretician, and ideologue of the recent tendencies in artistic collaborations and collectives. Lind’s approach rests upon the assumption according to which collaborations in the contemporary art field were inevitable, necessary, and even “obvious.” In her explication of this

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<sup>1</sup> The main protagonists of the Second collectives are *WHW* Collective, *Mama* (Zagreb), *Prelom* Collective, *RUK* (Belgrade), *kuda.org* and *Apsolutno* (Novi Sad).

stipulation, she draws on the thesis coined by Brian Holmes, which holds “that even the lone artists in their studios are dependent upon contributions from others” (Lind 2007: 16). However, this thesis certainly does not indicate more than an obvious and undeniable matter of fact: Throughout the whole history of art, one may say, artists have always been dependent upon some external structures. What is problematic in Lind’s argumentation, though, is the dogmatization and rationalization of this idea of external conditioning. At the same time, the transgressive and emancipatory potentials of art become blanked out entirely. In consequence, the definition of art is bereft of a constitutive component and reduced to the mere managerial aspect. As I am going to delineate on the next pages, a better understanding of the working of the indicated dogmatizing strategy may prepare us for a critical evaluation of the current utilitarian approaches in contemporary art practices. A closer look reveals two different tactics by which this absolutization of collectivist tendencies in contemporary art is accomplished: first, by ridiculizing and satirizing any kind of political-emancipatory potential of contemporary art per se and, second, by omitting any historical reference to those (leftist and avant-garde) art practices, whose collectivism was more or less explicitly bound with the communist ideas of resistance, invention and affirmation.<sup>2</sup> Apart from that, the crucial paradox of Lind’s approach is conveyed through her belief that contemporary art as a creative social force would have nothing to do with economy and monetary systems whatsoever. Accordingly, art is seen as an abstracted creativity in which any connection with profane matters such as economy is only ephemeral. Moreover, art is depicted as the single remaining shelter from the cruel world of capitalist economy. Consequently, Lind closes her article with underlining the importance of contemporary art’s “neo-idealism” and its right for claiming “forgotten problems of our society” (ibid., 34). This stipulation must be interpreted from her understanding of politics and culture more generally:

[P]olitics in principle are completely steered by economics and the economy follows a capitalist logic, then culture tends to become an arena for ideological debate. (ibid., 28)

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<sup>2</sup> To be more concrete, the first is achieved by Lind’s paraphrasing of the definition of ‘collaborative art practices,’ as put by Shollette and Stimpson, with “techno-anarchist activism to hippie-capitalist, pseudo-countercultural imperialism.” The second line of argument is reflected in Lind’s quotation of the glossary from *Wikipedia* for the definition of ‘collective,’ which “gives an echo of working forms within a socialist social system” (2007: 17).

Apparently, one is led to believe that cultural practice – abstracted from the economical constraints – could harbor itself as a new domain of idealist, metaphysical aesthetics. As I shall try to prove in the pages to come, this approach is symptomatic of many contemporary art collectives, collaborations, and networks from the Western as well as from contemporary post-Yugoslav cultural spheres.

\* \* \*

Eve Chiapello has delineated how a “new spirit of capitalism” (Boltanski/Chiapello 2004) emerged with “neo-management’s adoption of practices similar to those found in the artworld” (2004: 585). Analyzing the historical transformation of ‘artist critique’, she distinguished three historical forms of critique ranging from “complaint” (ibid., 586), in which the artist appears as “the positive figure of the excluded person: rejected, but not exploited” (ibid., 587), over to the form of critique which “presupposes the existence of a speaker *whose status is such that other people feel they have to listen to what she/he has to say*” (ibid., 587–588), to another form which presumes “*a body of doctrine that is at once coherent, generally recognised as something acceptable and which provides a sound basis for argumentation*” (ibid., 588). Among the latter, Chiapello identified two doctrines, one that put emphasis on the “the grandeur that is associated with artistic activities,” and a second that “sees creation as an activity which must be, and which can only be, fundamentally free” (ibid.). On the basis of Chiapello’s records we may better understand the mysticisms that still suffuse the contemporary art system. We will focus on formal aspects of contemporary art and thereby ignore the phenomenological details. However, it is clear that these attributes of art did not exist in any given moment of its modern history. Rather, for the largest episode of art history, artist’s ideas had been informed by mythology. Chiapello inferred that

one of the reasons why neo-management has adopted practices that are similar to those found in the artworld is that it has listened to the complaints that emanated from ‘artist critique’. [...] ‘Artist critique’ has lost much of poignancy precisely because it has been successful. (ibid., 592)

To start with the first artistic strategy that Chiapello delineated and which according to her hypothesis is reflected in contemporary neo-management discourse we may hint at the positive definition of artist (“rejected, but not exploited”). Secondly, a more formal correspondence refers to a far-reaching turn with respect to the relation towards labor. Paradigmatically, the claims raised by the French May ‘68 demonstrators argued on behalf of providing for a particularly artistic lifestyle:



[I]n May 1968 many of the demonstrators (especially students) had been demanding a professional life with greater similarity to an artist's idealised lifestyle, meaning a creative profession where they could use all the powers of their imagination; a job that was not routine-laden; and above all, a job with minimal subordination, that is, without any boss who had to be obeyed even if one did not agree with him/her. (ibid., 592)

As can also be seen from theoretical conceptualizations that still today prevail in the current artistic discourse such as 'immaterial labour,' 'post-fordist art condition,' or 'self-management,' art has not lost much of its poignancy following its co-optation by neo-management. Rather, it is more accurate to assess that the new 'artist critique' is striving for more innovative strategies of operating inside the predominant neo-management paradigm, while still preserving its ancient mythology of the artist being detached from any economic-political constraints.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly and symptomatically, Lind takes Chiapello's theory of 'artist critique' for an attempt to re-affirm the neo-managements' tactics in an opportunistic manner for the sake of providing new proficiency for contemporary art managers. However, Lind at the same time acknowledges the arguments of 'artist critique' to be constructive advices for managers as well:

[Y]ou must be able to alternate between working on your own, being self-motivating, acting as part of a group and working in a team. This requires even greater flexibility – and lack of security – than that associated with working (in a steady job). (2007: 20)<sup>4</sup>

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On the occasion of a panel discussion on "Collectivism and Art in Croatia after the 1990s," a member of the Croatian curatorial collective *WHW* (What, How & for Whom), Ana Dević, recalled the period of the Socialist Republic of Croatia from the 1960s (with special regard to *Gorgona*) and the 1970s (particularly referring to the Group of *Six Artists*) as an era of realization of the "truly radical and romantic idea" of 'collective art.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Apart from this, 'artistic critique' sustains 'capitalist' attitudes such as risk, innovation, and progress. The symbiosis of art and capital is far more than the result of the contemporary post-modern categorical disorientation. For a more detailed description, see the valuable research by Wu (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Lind herself has shown to be very skilful in applying neo-management tactics, since in the last ten years she occupied positions as director in *Kunstverein* (Munich); *IASPIS* (Stockholm), *Graduate Programme for Curatorial Studies at Bard College* (New York).

<sup>5</sup> The discussion took place in Zagreb in August 2005 and was moderated by Boris Buden. Among the participants, besides Dević, were Dejan Krsić, Pero Kvesić and Tomislav Medak.

According to Dević, the reason why these art collectives were indeed “radical” (and “innocent” at the same time) was “because the level on which they were organized and financed was really quite minimal” (Buden 2006: 440), i.e. economical concerns as a factor for art production did not really matter. For example, the members of *Gorgona*, a conceptual artistic group active in Zagreb between 1959 and 1966, were organizing their exhibitions in the window display of a picture frame shop in downtown Zagreb. The money they needed was collectively provided by the artists themselves and managed by the cashier at the local bookstore. According to this almost idyllic and pastoral picture of the self-sustained economy-of-art, there was nothing but creativity, improvisation, fun, and game. Dević continued to set herself in opposition to this idealized regime of today’s artworld networks, which entwined with bureaucratic activities. For an empirical proof of these two different regimes belonging to the economy of art we may refer to Mladen Stilinović’s *Praise to Laziness* (1993). In this eminent document Stilinović, a member of the *Group of Six*, argued that, in contrast to an artist-as-producer of today’s bureaucratic art world, a genuine artist accounted for the importance of laziness, slowness, and such aspects, which were not subjected to the rules of money.<sup>6</sup> He goes even further by stressing that there was more to the opposition of bureaucratic vs. creative art than mere individual taste of the artist, namely it furthermore represented the distance between the Western world of capitalism and the Eastern, non-capitalist world.

Recalling Chiapello’s narration that it was exactly the espousal of non-routine and visionary labor which rendered ‘artistic critique’ amenable to current neo-management strategies, we may depict Dević’s reminiscence of the romantic-radical idea of art pertaining to the 1970s as an invocation of contemporary management practices such as innovation, flexibility, and self-management. In this sense, the figure of the artist as a self-manager emerges as the counter-foil to the bureaucratic system and thus as the ultimate enemy of the artworld.

In the post-Yugoslav context, such debates resonated with ambiguous and disparate echoes. While the anti-bureaucratic and neo-liberal doctrines here are commonly associated with the discourses of anti-communism, anti-totalitarianism, and all the paraphernalia of the transition-induced shock therapies, the catchword of ‘self-management’ is

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<sup>6</sup> Another of Stilinović’s renowned works entitled *Artist at Work* (1973–1983) consists of a series of photographs, which expose the artist himself sleeping or resting in his bed.

often contrasted with the famed Yugoslav ideologue of the same name. Such reactions harken back to the habituated property to look at self-management in Yugoslavia merely as an 'economic ideology' invented by the Titoists to yield legitimation for their de-Stalinization policy within the global context of the Cold War, which therefore could never really function in practice. In both renderings, negative and positive, the notion of self-management functions as a catalyst for a form of discourse that detaches the term from its original socialist context, thereby blending its contemporary meaning in neo-management theories with its Yugoslav socialist formulation by Edvard Kardelj. Even though in both cases 'self-management' denotes a particular type of socio-economic organization, they of course have dissimilar connotations. In the former case, it is related to new and microscopic tactics, whereas in the second it signifies a particular theory and practice of workers that, accordingly, would leave ownership and administrative decision-making in the hands of the workers themselves. In short, the difference lies between an individualist self-management theory (with a nod to Foucault's terms one might speak of "liberal biopolitics") on the one side, and the collectivist socialist approach towards social organization on the other. This must be accentuated against the widespread neglect of this diversity. What is more, the socialist model of 'self-management' had often been defined down as a cheap ideological or even psychological catalyst rather than a singular political and ambitious economical concept of socialism. The psychologization tendency is betrayed in such accounts that claim, in the spirit of 'artist critique,' that the Yugoslav self-management idea in Yugoslavia was a sheer 'instrumentalization of communication', similar to the slogan 'production means communication' in post-Fordist systems. Here, the main thrust is that in the post-Fordist production systems, in order to avoid the 'monological,' i.e. boring, nature of labor, managers had to find means to render jobs more flexible and tolerable and to create more sociable relations between workers and managers. The utilitarian impetus behind this reform move is, apparently, to provide more humanist means of exploitation of the workers. Finally, on that account the Yugoslav self-management approach could be equated with the capitalist post-Fordist productive conditions where workers' councils are serving as some kind of 'psychological and consultative pseudo-participation' in order to keep workers calm and give them the sensation of participation.<sup>7</sup> One could

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<sup>7</sup> Here I am referring to Branka Ćurčić (2009).

argue in this vein that socialism thus incorporated market-driven semi-capitalist relations. In conclusion, we have tracked down some of the strategies by which the Yugoslav self-management concept is misrepresented as an inherently bureaucratic, centralist, and proto-capitalist project of 'socialized economy.'<sup>8</sup> Contemporary debates about art in the post-Yugoslav context feature many cases that still distort the meaning of the socialist self-management concept by trying to show the actuality of local conceptual artists' works in comparison to the developed liberal economic trends such as immaterial labor, post-Fordism, etc.<sup>9</sup>

In her article on the Novi Sad neo-avant-garde of the 1960's and 1970's, Branka Ćurčić explains how collective cultural practices in Western and Eastern Europe as well as in Vojvodina (Serbia) existed well before the Internet networks that ensued since the 1990s. The most famous of these collectives from the 1970s, like *KOD Group*, *E Group*, *The January* as well as *The February*, used to gather in the *Youth Tribune* in Novi Sad. One of the most unique places was the *DT 20* studio of Dejan and Bogdanka Poznanović, where many informal gatherings of numerous Yugoslav and European artists, theorists, critics, and writers were taking place. It was one of the places, as Ćurčić expounds, where the Novi Sad neo-avant-garde scene assembled, discussing issues of interest, and reading the most up-to-date books, magazines and catalogues. Similarly to Ana Dević, Ćurčić is also confronting today's artistic practices with the ideas of 1970s artistic collectives, which, as already seen, had valued the need for collaboration above any opportunistic relations. In her conclusion the author points out how

those collective cultural practices were based on values that are beyond what can be understood through [...] 'utilitarian filters of economic survival' (2006: 33).

Again, the informal contemporary art practices are set up against the allegedly repressive 'economic vulgarism,' which would aim to

rearrange collective efforts through the endeavours based on the principles of co-operation, solidarity and positive social relations that maintain the life drive [...] for possible remove of the results of the death drive (ibid., 33).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> One of the earliest academic examples of this sort of interpretation is represented in the 'empirical' research of Zukin (1975).

<sup>9</sup> For an intimate account of a different contemporary, even though not artistic, approach towards Yugoslavia's self-management system, see Olujić-Oluja (2008).

<sup>10</sup> This thesis draws from the psychologist account of A. Carpintero, which also serves as a base for an article of Ljiljana Filipović entitled *Breakdown of Collective*, which is going to be discussed in the conclusion of this article.

As we can notice, Dević's espousal of anti-economic collectivism is replaced by a certain psychologism, which in the same way reproduces the dualist opposition of an ideal artistic collaboration on the one side and 'profane' economics on the other. This psychologism reveals important insights into some conservative aspects of the new 'post-socialist' collectivism: firstly, psychologization entails a belittling of the economical part of art practice by identifying the collective with the escape from profane materialism and economic calculation; secondly, collectivism only comes into view because of its normalization functions ("positive social relations") and therapeutic potentials ("maintaining the life drive... against death drive"). Yet, as I will try to disclose, there is another hidden presumption in Ćurčić's depiction according to which the situation in Eastern Europe (and in the post-Yugoslav spaces in particular) has not reached its "normal state of mind," but still was unable to transpose its "life drive" into economic energy and relations. In this view, art and other cultural practices exist to accelerate, and if possible, to monitor the current economic transformations.

We could observe similar interpretive schemes as depicted in Dević's critique of bureaucracy from the Zagreb panel discussion on the *Second Life of the Collectives*. The analogous tendencies were also displayed in the contributions by Dejan Kršić, art theorist and designer, as well as Tomislav Medak on the same event. In each rendition, the collectives' activities become interlinked with money and economics, thereby suggesting that if they were operating on their own terms they would rather prefer to remain invisible. On the same footing, visibility of economics within post-Yugoslav cultural collectives is taken for a symbol of theoretical decay and miscalculation instead – as would be more appropriate in our view – for a starting point from which to grasp and analyze the constraints that obstruct the collectives. This constellation might explain why so often contemporary artists on the one side and their critics on the other have failed to grasp even the acute problems of art.

The case of Croatia seems to provide genuine evidence on behalf of art networks and collectives in Eastern Europe, especially because it features one of the best-organized networks of cultural collectives and groups in the post-Yugoslav scope. In the multi-national project *Relations* (2003–2006),<sup>11</sup> funded by the *German Cultural Foundation*, the "cultural positions and political conditions" of seven European cities were presented. Interestingly, certain topics have been consigned to particular cities; Zagreb,

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<sup>11</sup> For details, check: <http://www.projekt-relations.de/index2.php>.

for instance, was bestowed with a project devoted to aspects of collectivism, Prishtina with nationalism and Ljubljana with internationalism. Thus, one could assume collectivism to be a constitutive and even 'ontological' quality of the contemporary Croatian cultural scene. The questionnaire, which the curatorial collective *WHW* conducted for the project-related publication on the network *Zagreb – Capital of Cultural 3000* (*Z – CK 3000*), describes the "work in networks today as no longer a question of choice but one of necessity" (Klingan/Kappert 2006: 390). *Z – CK 3000* is a Zagreb based network consisting of the following collectives: *WHW* (initiators of the network), *BLOK* (Local Base for Cultural Refreshment), *Shadow Casters*, *CDU* (Center for Drama Art), *Platforma 9,81*, *Container*, *Community Art* and *miz Multimedia Institute*. Minna Henriksson, in her map on the contemporary art scene of Zagreb (see *Figure 1*), described the network as follows:

*Z – CK 3000* is a collaborative platform of eight Zagreb based NGOs aiming at establishing a cultural policy in Croatia. [...] They received about 500.000 Euro, which they divided between the four initial members, and each used it as they liked – for salaries, rental fees, and projects. It didn't create more collaboration than would have been ensued anyway. Now *Z – CK 3000* is funded by *Relations* and *Erste-Bank* (2006).<sup>12</sup>

This network, which is bringing together a colorful spectrum of different collectives from various ideological backgrounds, had such a strong impact on the reorganization of cultural policy that one member of the network (*Platforma 9,81*) defined it as an

idealistic attempt to outline a cultural master plan, [...] directed toward reforming the institutional setting of independent culture, increasing its influence, and strengthening its resources (Klingan/Kappert 2006: 390).

After having traced the masterplan of the cultural policy of the Zagreb networks above, which involved many of the contemporary art practitioners, we can conclude that Dević's invocation of 'bureaucracy', Krsić's

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<sup>12</sup> Minna L. Henriksson, in the like manner, compiled several more maps depicting the contemporary art scenes of Istanbul (2005), Zagreb (2006), Ljubljana (2008), Belgrade (2009) and Helsinki (2009). They all disclose the 'public secrets' and rumor structures of these networks, thereby indicating amicable as well as adversarial interrelations between the active artists in the field. More than a sole description of the aforementioned field of collectivist policies, the maps of Henriksson offer valuable materials for a reappraisal of the material conditions of contemporary art institutions. The social as well as the materialist dimensions are regularly overlooked by art historians as well.



Figure 1 'Zagreb Notes'. © 2006 by Minna L. Henriksson, by permission.

'economism,' or Medak's "surplus in terms of production in collectives" (Buden 2006: 436) are not as naïve and romantic as we might have suggested in the first instance.

An empirical research conducted by three members of another network, which is covering the entire Croatian contemporary cultural scene, *Culture*, can serve as a trigger for the theoretical investigation which I promised to realize in the beginning of the article. Their publication headlined *Survey on Independent Cultural Sector: Culture Network* (from now on *Survey*) sets out with bringing to the reader's attention the importance of the new media and technologies, which, in contrast to traditional

activities, would open up a new domain of cultural cooperation. As the writers<sup>33</sup> of the *Survey* explain:

[A] side effect of the development of new technologies, as well as short-term partnership projects, is a large number of *ad hoc* cultural activities that enrich life of many communities. But cultural activities are also intervening backwards influencing diversification and fluidity of cultural market, as well as on broad social environment that constantly changes, offering always-new products. Consequently, it is presumed that basic characteristic of a contemporary culture worker are more likely to be compared to a characteristic of a stock broker, rather than the stereotype view of a cultural worker as a bohemian and loner (Kardov/Pavić/Višnić 2006: 3).

This long quotation is vital for understanding the effectiveness of the innovations of 'artistic critique' and the adoption of new managerial and market properties. The authors are emphasizing – if not yet clearly – the aggressive character of the cultural workers in this new trend of post-socialist culture in Croatia. Accordingly, they would not display the attitude of the old-style Bohemian, who passively analyzes ongoing transformations, but rather take a vigorous stance and militantly participate in the active creation of a platform for the "fluidity of cultural market." As the authors of the *Survey* expound in the following passage, collectives and networks played a crucial role in the restoration process, because the

trend of establishment of networks and platforms produces new, more flexible institutional forms that are imposed as an adequate answer to the demands of the current environment (ibid.).

This "current environment" is, apparently, that of capitalism. The *Survey* on also accentuates that

since independent cultural organizations are primarily oriented towards projects and programs, institutional support has a crucial role and enables continuity of activities and its minimal independency (ibid., 8).

This minimal support, which may have provided for basic infrastructure and hire charges as well as for collaboration with official institutions, was, according to the *Survey* findings, necessary for the maintenance of an independent cultural sector. To be more concrete, while most organizations had some experience with cooperation with regional (62%) and municipal (86%) authorities, the *Survey* indicated that the opposite tendency prevailed with respect to public administration bodies: 40% of the

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<sup>33</sup> The research was conducted by Emina Višnić, Ivana Pavić and Kruno Kadrov.



art organizations could not look upon any type of collaboration with the Ministry of Culture or any other representative body of public administration (ibid., 9). Yet, it is remarkable that the *Survey*, which according to its title would spotlight the 'independent cultural sector,' actually fails to provide a demarcation criterion between 'independent' and 'representational/state' organizations. The nexus between them is apparent from the fact that the former is dependent upon institutional support and thus for providing for an autonomous cultural sphere on the one hand, and the latter's interest or constraint to take care for innovation and to overcome those institutional structures which have rendered it backward in the first place on the other hand. As shown by the example, the idea of an 'independent cultural sector' is not at odds with the notion of 'representative institutions' in this special context. Of course, the diction of the *Survey* is put in another style as the 'romantic' renderings introduced above. The *Survey's* authors seemed quite aware of the importance of a well-regulated budget plan for the normal functioning of (cultural) policies. Similar to the old verdict of Branko Horvat, dating back to the late 1960s, according to which the normal functioning of political administration is dependent upon professional and strictly economical rules of conduct instead of traditional habits of political decision-making,<sup>14</sup> the Croatian 'independent cultural sector' today aims at establishing professionalism in the sphere of culture and thus getting rid of the remnants of the 'socialist' regime such as a slow, corrupted, and backward bureaucratic structure.

Minna Henriksson's Zagreb map brings to the fore how the contemporary representatives of the Croatian art scene mock at the sterility and unproductiveness of the state institutions. For a symptomatic case, we may quote a comment on the Zagreb Contemporary Art Museum:

Many of the people working there don't know much about contemporary art, and they don't like it. The museum director used to run some ethnographic-folklore museum before. There was a scandal following from the wiretapping of workers' telephone calls. There is a split between two groups – one guided by the museum director, and the other by the senior curator. (Henriksson 2006)

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<sup>14</sup> "If Yugoslav policy-makers had been better educated in contemporary economics, including particularly post-and-neo-Keynesian economics, they would have been more successful in timing the reforms" (*Vjesnik* September 1967, No. 14–23.). The quotation of Branko Horvat is taken from Rusinow (1978).

We may paraphrase the alternative strategy implied in these criticisms like follows: If the official cultural sector worked according to more rational criteria, the cultural policy in the whole country would function more effectively. Yet, since this is not the case, the independent cultural sector was forced to implement the masterplan of democratization, decentralization, transparency, and flexibility. What is more, the independent artists even portray their role as momentous for overcoming the rule of the still prevailing ‘communist-style bureaucrats.’ Hence, we find this ideology of covert anti-communism in Eastern-European cultural policies to be symptomatic of the bulk of the academic articles and surveys on the topic of art policy.

Frequently, this anti-communist ideology appears in the shape of an “anti-totalitarian” outlook. Typically, this stance comes along with an ironic distancing from socialist traditions. Works of art are often denounced either as a ‘burlesque’ of the Stalinist *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total-art-work) (Groys) or as a reflection of the ‘terror’ of socialist-realist aesthetics. However, in contrast to this perspective, many of the contemporary artists and art theorists in the present field do not fail to recognize the emancipatory potentials inherent to the arts of the socialist period. As had been widely accounted, the socialist Yugoslavia had developed one of the most decentralized, heterogeneous, and interesting alternative cultural sectors. Stefan Toepler, whose important research on Eastern European cultural policies had a strong impact on the advancement of this field,<sup>15</sup> argued vehemently against any misrepresentation of the cultural policies in socialist states. As he could show, many Eastern European countries had in fact seen the spread of a multitude of alternative and semi-independent youth cultural practices inside the official/state-run institutions during the era of ‘communist dictatorship.’ What is more, Toepler detects a contemporary crisis of the cultural system in the post-socialist Eastern European states, identifying as main cause the fact that

the political leadership but not the cultural administrators and bureaucrats, [are those] who continued to occupy the same positions they had held under socialism, potentially limiting their ability to shed old structures and ideologies (2000: 12).

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<sup>15</sup> This impact can also be grasped in the *Survey* proper, whose authors refer to him as a key influence.

Furthermore, he pinpointed how

the establishment of independent non-profit organizations for artistic and aesthetic purposes, on the other hand, allowed a fuller exploration of formerly suppressed works or styles, as well as avant-garde and other artistic expressions, not feasible in the context of existing institutions (ibid., 13).

Maja Breznik, a Slovenian cultural scientist concerned with similar topics as Toepler, has delineated how the use of pivotal political concepts such as ‘democratization’ and ‘liberalization’ is not uniform, but changing constantly according to the political development within each country (i.e. failure of social-democracy, rise of political far-right, global economic crisis, etc.). For instance, the slogan ‘democratization’ of culture, which originally meant the extension of the population’s accessibility to culture, came to denote – as initially had occurred in Austria and Italy – the ‘liberalization’ of culture and arts, signifying that “culture and arts would better serve the needs of people, if the state abandoned the paternalistic approach that put cultural institutions to sleep” (Breznik 2004: 49). In a similar fashion, Breznik goes on to demonstrate how

liberalization – meaning a ‘more liberal’ cultural policy and ‘modernization’ of cultural institutions that should transpose culture to a more ‘economic platform’ – is usually advocated by artists who defend modern arts against traditional art (ibid., 46).<sup>16</sup>

This bond between the political far-right and the artistic avant-garde, which becomes more and more visible in basically all cultural fields, leads, according to Breznik, to one important political consequence:

[B]y withdrawing its financial aid to cultural institutions the state better serves the ‘consumer’, who can better satisfy their needs in the capitalist market environment [...] based on viewpoint of ‘consumer’s choice’ (ibid., 47–48).

Following Breznik, we must characterize the given constellation in the post-socialist condition as ultimately twisted. Accordingly, it was because an efficient cultural market or a cultural industry had not yet evolved in Eastern Europe that those societies would first have to strive for the institutionalization of market economy. Hence, the transitional policies were

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<sup>16</sup> The opposition between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional arts’ finds its equivalent in the economic realm with the dichotomization of, for example, ‘flexible’ vs. ‘fixed,’ or ‘self-managing’ vs. ‘centralized’ organizations.

reformulated in order to restore the market turbulences for the sake of the new 'consumer democracy,' investment fluidity, or capital decentralization. A real – although hidden – assumption behind this 'transitional' art and market ideology beholds that there is an inescapable requirement for overcoming the Eastern European ideological heritage.

Similar to the authors of the *Survey*, the sociologist Jaka Primorac, in her awarded research on South-Eastern European cultural industries, supports the argument by Milena Dragičević-Šešić and Sanjin Dragojević that in times of transition to liberal market economy, or rather, as the latter euphemistically put it, under 'turbulent circumstances,' a crisis is quite expectable to appear, i.e. a

crisis in public policies and in the public sector; no communication flow between the three sectors; crisis in institutional and their social role; and crisis of participation in the local market. (Dragičević-Šešić/Dragojević 2005: 28–29)

Now, Primorac goes further in explaining that such drastic rhetorics and threats of 'turbulent circumstances' could be easily dispensed with thanks to the functional and symbolic changes, which would be provided by the creative sector:

Changes in the functional level are such as non-hierarchical exchange of information and products, organizations and function on project-to-project basis, changes in the relationship between work and leisure, which can not be said for (public) cultural institutions (2007: 18).

As is apparent from this quote, Primorac assumes that changes on the symbolic level would have deeper political social impact than institutional transformations. Here, culture is not any longer taken for a "burden on the budget, [...] the symbolic décor of political power," but rather

culture identifies more and more through production in creative industries, and less as an instrument of 'enlightenment', which was the role that it tended to be allocated in the context of planned economy (ibid., 19).<sup>17</sup>

In the same paragraph, Primorac concludes, with a nod to Dragičević-Šešić/Dragojević, that in order to prepare for a more efficient approach to the problems of cultural policy one would have to follow the 'inter-sectorial way,' which introduces cultural policy into the economic, political,

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<sup>17</sup> This neo-liberal cultural policy can also be paraphrased with the demand that "cultural productions have to survive in non-planned economy" (ibid.).

or even the urban planning sectors. Yet, this ‘inter-sectorialism’ has been a very well practiced strategy of an independent cultural sector, as the *Survey* already marked out. In Croatia, for example, nobody would be surprised to see an anarchist giving a lecture right after the presentation of an architect or urban planner in the multi-media institute, which is advocating the strategy of ‘bureaucratization’ as a new cultural policy. However, such a twisted perplexity of (different) ideologies in one and the same network is only possible within the discourse of ‘transition,’ in which any contradiction becomes ‘normalized’ in the fashion we have tried to disclose in this section.

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From the neo-managerial perspective art, collectivity, and transition could seem as three phenomenological dimension of avant-garde history. Goran Djordjević’s statement that “recent art history is the history of friendships,” which he took up from the eminent article on friendship in art by Viktor Misiano (2003: 168), should therefore be altered to: “recent art history is the history of friendship (in difficult times).”

Misiano’s article *The Institutionalization of Friendship* is practically about Moscow and Ljubljana art communities and their interrelations, which developed since 1992 with the *Apt-Art International* exhibition organized in Moscow, followed up by *Moscow Embassy*, *Interpol* and *Transnacionala*. What these projects have in common is their approach to accounting for the dialectics between the Eastern Europe and the Western gaze as well as the orientation and preservation of earlier avant-garde movements and political systems.<sup>18</sup> As Misiano put more concretely, they shared the “[employment] of the resources of friendly relationships as part of the program” (2003: 168). He therefore designates these projects as “confidential projects” (ibid.), based on “freedom from hierarchy and functional specializations,” “absence of any thematic program” so that “the theme emerges spontaneously out of the communication itself” (ibid., 170). He goes on to define the nature or rather “structure of the *confidential project*” (ibid.) as “nothing but an attempt to create a structure for a collective artistic practice in the situation of the absence of an art system” (ibid.). Hence, at the bottom of the friendly relationship between the Moscow and Ljubljana art scenes lies, as we learn from Misiano, their suffering from an “institutional, ideological, and moral vacuum” (ibid.) and the

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<sup>18</sup> For a further analysis of these movements, see Komelj’s chapter, this volume.

misfortunes induced by the transition processes. This common ground is historically familiarized in the article by going back to the banned conceptual artists' strategy of *Apt-Art International*. While during the 1960s and 1970s 'the common affair' of avant-garde artists had been the ferocity of the communist system, the contemporary avant-garde scenes would struggle with the "mad dynamics of social transformation" (ibid., 172). Furthermore, one can still trace a particular 'thematic programme' of this art collective despite of Misiano's suggestion at the outset of his article. For once, the 'confidential community' is not only about 'deconstruction,' but also about 'reconstruction.' More importantly, the "openness to the Other" of the "*confidential community* can avoid ideological dogmatism, and can remain open to the chaos of the transitional epoch" (ibid.). The hidden political presumption rendered by this 'reconstructive openness' is that the artistic communities managed to survive communism and can now easily adapt to the chaos of capitalism.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Representational Aspects of Artistic Collectives*

After all, the question of how to adequately theorize and conceive of the artistic collectives is still left to be answered. Even if the managerial aspects warrant their support by official institutions, they cannot fully account for the question why art and culture continue to affirm collectivism to be a new political as well as aesthetical solution. Actually, an answer to this question appears to be very easy. As we had already anticipated in our theoretical introduction at the onset of this paper: due to the adoption of managerial structures, art collectives sustain the notion of 'co-operation' as the ontology of their structures. In this section we want to tackle a particular problem resulting from the indicated constellation for the art collectives, namely how to legitimize their long lost autonomy of 'artistic critique.' This autonomy is maintained with the help of representational politics, which is widely perceptible in arts and culture. Many theoretical attempts to reckon with the complex entanglements of contemporary art make reference to the theory of antagonistic relations developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Especially Mouffe's theory of 'agonism' has attracted the attention of art theorists. Here 'agonism' denotes a

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<sup>19</sup> Misiano is demonstrating this confidence of friendship by obliterating the ideological fights between the participants, especially between Alexander Brener, Yuri Leiderman, and the *IRWIN* group (2003: 172–176).

different mode of manifestation of antagonism because it involves a relation not between enemies but between 'adversaries', adversaries being defined in a paradoxical way as 'friendly enemies', that is, persons who are friends because they share a common symbolic space but also enemies because they want to organize this common symbolic space in a different way (2000: 13).

This quotation from Mouffe is cited in numerous catalogue essays and articles by art curators and critics. It earns this attention because it renders a theoretical justification strategy for the existence of art networks, based on paradoxes and contradictions. As we have shown above, the contemporary form of artistic critique betrays a paradoxical amalgamation of romantic-bohemian ideas on the one hand and neo-managerial ideas on the other. Even curators who stand for a Marxist tradition of aesthetical innovations, such as Charles Esche, speak highly of Mouffe's theoretical accounts. In Esche's view, Mouffe's idea of 'agonism' in combination with Giorgio Agamben's theory of communication designate the contemporary "task of the community of art," namely to take a

step towards an idea of creative solidarity expressed not in a common political programme but in shared speculative discourse within an agonistic art sphere. This is neither the forced solidarity of real socialism or nationalism nor the vague shared interests of geographical communities. Rather it is a willed and individual choice to combine and communicate collectively without the need for clear, objective results. (2005: 17)

What becomes clear from this description about the utopian conception of the art community is the lack of any ideological program. This trait at the same time demonstrates the key difference against the original avant-garde movements and eventually impels them to accept 'agonism' as the ultimate summit in their agenda. For another instance we may again return to Maria Lind, who takes Mouffe's theory of agonistic relation for a potent and liberal-democratic means to curb the dangers of centre-right and far-right extremism (2007: 19). Lind takes it for granted that the dispersal of different and antagonistic ideas would *per se* provide for the emergence of an alternative in the political arena, which, in addition, would split up the extremist groups. Despite its appearance as entailing a particular political reasoning – which Esche is renouncing outright – it is quite obvious that this 'programme' consists of nothing but a justification of those policies which warrant artistic practices to be possible. To make it plain, the agonistic art theories in the end purvey the aestheticization of already established and predominating practices of liberal democracies. The 'resolutions,' which are offered by the agonistic paradigm to the art

community, boil down to a strategy of adaptation to the contemporary socio-economic conditions.

Claire Bishop puts the finger of suspicion at this inter-relatedness of the art community. Bishop, referring to curators like Nicolas Bourriaud and artists like Rirkrit Tiravanija or Liam Gillick, claims that the whole set of beliefs, which conceives of art to be communicative, collective, relational, and experiential with respect to utopian ideas, is in fact just referring to the art community proper, i.e. the art communities' own relatedness. Therefore, she concludes the democratic impetus of Bourriaud's 'relational arts' to be untruthful, "since they rest too comfortably within an ideal of subjectivity as whole and community as immanent togetherness" (2004: 67). Relatedness in art, which is logically unavoidable, would thus be reduced to gossip, chats, and flirtations of like-minded art dealers, art lovers and art practitioners. For a decisive step to overcome such mistakes, she reiterates arguments from Laclau/Mouffe's democratic theory, thereby pointing out that

without the concept of utopia there is no possibility of a radical imaginary. The task is to balance the tension between imaginary ideal and pragmatic management of a social positivity without lapsing into a totalitarianism (ibid., 66).

As we have seen in these examples, the artistic collectives defend a representational politics that would be fit for bridging opposing ideologies and thus provide for the symbolical readjustment to the new realities and the suppression of 'extremist' formations. For another indication, we may hint at a recent incident that had occurred in Belgrade. In the wake of the prohibition of the exhibition entitled *EXCEPTION – Contemporary Art Scene from Prishtina*, scheduled to open on 7th of February 2008, a new art collective was formed under the name of *Radnici u Kulturi* (RUK, Workers in Culture). The event, which was designed to present young artists from Prishtina, was finally cancelled due to a fierce protest campaign launched by far-right extremist groups, during which one of the art works had been vandalized. After this had happened, the police declared that it was incapable to warrant security to the organizers and the visitors. The *RUK* featured various initiatives and individuals working in different fields of culture. Besides the immediate agenda to have the exhibition taking place, *RUK* soon expanded to stand up against the repression in the domain of culture (censorship) and the spread of (far-right) nationalism in the country. They even succeeded in launching their own publication organ named *7/February* – in commemoration of the day of the protests against the exhibition. *RUK*'s efforts must also be interpreted against the background



of the particularities of the Serbian political discourse which is structured along the divide between the 'nationalist-authoritarian' and the 'democratic' (the 'Other Serbia') factions. With providing a unique platform for all antagonistic opposition movements, which were loosely subsumed under the label 'Other Serbia,' *RUK* attempted to render some orientation to this chaotic and ambivalent sphere. Eventually, a wide spectrum of anti-nationalist oriented groups, varying from liberal anti-nationalists to Marxist leftists, found themselves under the same umbrella and unified in the goal to defend the progressive, urban, and open Serbia.<sup>20</sup>

As we have seen, the *RUK* strategy assumes the same representational strategies as we had outlined above on behalf of diverse collectivist art groups.

#### *Concluding remarks*

For a concluding remark, we can finally turn to one of the *Z – CK 3000* members, namely Boris Bakal. In his article *Recognizing Networks* he sets out underlining the metaphysical, or 'Emersonian,' sense of understanding the world, according to which

everything teaches transition, transference, metamorphosis: therein is human power, in transference, not in creation; and therein is human destiny, not in longevity, but in removal. We dive and reappear in new places (2006: 415).

This continuous existence, according to Bakal, was

part of networks in these regions [...] from mid-nineteenth century to 1946, when the new state abolished all existing networks and civic activities or placed them under centralized control (ibid.).

Under this totalitarian and centralized power, "the individual was deprived of the possibility of being the generator of small changes," and, according to Bakal, this was the reason for the "death or disappearance of socialist models of management" (ibid.).

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<sup>20</sup> Due to the limited space I have to restrict my comments on this complex matter to a few remarks. The question about the urban character of the 'Other Serbia' is highly disputed in the discussions of *RUK*. In his opening article to *7/February*, Branimir Stojanović distinguishes between 'progressive' and 'regressive' Serbian citizens, thereby applying the criterion of being pro or contra the exhibition. In another article of the same edition, Dejan Sretenović compares the *EXCEPTION* incident with Joseph Beuys' expulsion from the *Dortmund Art Academy* in the 1970s.

As we can guess, this discourse aims at discarding the real historical collective moment (of the Yugoslav socialist revolution 1941–1945 and the post-revolutionary concept of socialist self-management) and at supporting the charity based non-governmental middle-class humanitarian organizations (such as *Društvo čovječnosti* – Society of Humanity). The history of artistic collectives in Yugoslavia and, as Bakal implies, especially in Croatia, had

rested precisely in that their work and socialization were not determined by any material preconditions but were exclusively based on volunteering and on spiritual strength (ibid., 417).<sup>21</sup>

The fact that these collectives with ‘spiritual strength’, such as *Gorgona*, *Exat*, *Podroom*, *Group of Six* and *New Tendencies*, had been actually financed by state foundations only receives random attention in Bakal’s account. A true creative collaboration in Bakal’s view only ensued in the post-Tito period, when “Yugoslavia [...] was turning into an inefficient obstacle to the interest groups of corporate capital” (ibid.).

One of the first initiatives was the project/group *Katedrala* (Cathedral), initiated by Boris Bakal himself in 1987. It consisted of a multi-media installation set up in Zagreb, Belgrade which was intended to stimulate a new sense of community in a scattered society by creating a broad network of collaborations and interdisciplinary endeavors. This goal is reflected in a particular visual imaginary such as, for instance, the collage of all the Zagreb churches from the late 1980s, comprising the demolished Jewish synagogue, the Catholic cathedral, the Orthodox Church on Preradović square, and the new Zagreb mosque.<sup>22</sup> As becomes clear from this strategy, Bakal and his colleagues had been under the impression that the socialist society

was already deeply torn in all its aspects by great antagonisms and violent economic conflicts that, in the hands of adroit politicians, were soon to be turned into religious-nationalistic and ethnic wars. (ibid., 416)

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<sup>21</sup> What was a ‘positive social relations’ of non-utilitarian art collective practices in pseudo-leftist discourse of Ana Dević and Branka Ćurčić, with the formulation of Bakal’s discourse it gets clear formulation of its fundamentals. That is the reason why we will look at Bakal’s network-theory, because it will take this tendency to its logical conclusion.

<sup>22</sup> For a similar case that reveals the spiritualism of art collectives in the late 1980s we may hint at the internationally acclaimed last Yugoslav show, curated by Jadran Adamović, *Fra-Yu-Kult*, exhibited in the monastery Široki Brijeg, Lištica, in 1990. See also Adamović (1992).

As we have so far introduced a variety of art theoretical positions from the Yugoslav art sphere, we may summarize the predominating view among the art groups that the Yugoslav socialist society had been an obstacle to the normal flow of capital (“obstacle in the interest groups of corporate capital”) as well as humanistic spiritual emancipation. Its destruction is thus seen as the consequence of that entropic situation. Bakal’s account of an alternative, which is based on ‘networking normalization,’ still prevails for the following reasons: first, because it provides a broad representative and neo-liberal justification for art collectives; second, because his doctrines and activities still inform a large part of the contemporary artistic and cultural discourse in Croatia.<sup>23</sup> Immediately after “the savagery of nationalist extremism” broke out, Bakal and his associates founded the *Anti-War Campaign of Croatia* (AWCC), which gathered many different initiatives. This organization, which collaborated with various opposing groups such as *Hare Krishna*, gay movements, as well as the Catholic University of Louvain, launched one of the most critical journals named *Arkzin*. Their ideology, according to Bakal, eventually led to the formation of the successful co-operational network *Z – CK 3000*. Bakal again coined a theoretical concept to provide for a base for this social utopian movement: “tangible revenue” (ibid., 420). He defines it as

the surplus of social value of the community, deriving from the quality and creativity of the collective, becomes a precondition for a potential surplus of the production value of community. (ibid.)

This definition features all of the attributes of art and cultural networks ideology which we have outlined in this article and which typically combines ideological elements of the managerial, national, and democratic discourses. In this way, as we already critically commented, art and culture are reduced to a pillar for the unobstructed flow of the capital, which is thus achieved with cultural means.

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<sup>23</sup> For an excellent analysis of late 1980s enthusiasm with Laclau and Mouffe’s theories in the Slovenian art scene see Pupovac (2006).

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## IV

### THE ART OF SLOGANS (THE PERFORMATIVE PART)

by

Boynik, S. 2011

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# THE ART OF SLOGANS (THE PERFORMATIVE PART)

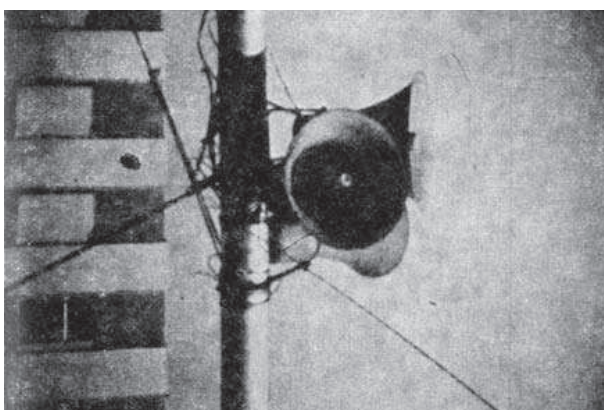
SEZGIN BOYNIK

## 1. SLOGANS ACCORDING TO DUŠAN MAKAVEJEV

*Art cannot be politically kicked around and whoever tries to do it will break his legs.  
And those who did broke their legs.*

Dušan Makavejev, quoted by Bora Ćosić in *Sadoma i Gomora* (Sodom and Gomorrah), 1984

Slogans, explicit or implicit, are probably the most frequent form of expression that Dušan Makavejev uses in his films. They are so full of all kinds of statements, declarations, directives, blurts, and other types of performative speech acts, that one may well argue that slogans constitute both the form and content of Makavejev's films. To begin, this proliferation of slogans contains a special association to "socialism" usually connected with the language of bureaucratic decrees. Typically, this comes as a part of a general belief that slogans, as a product of collective ideologies (with the socialist ideology as the most enduring one), stand in direct opposition to ordinary human communication. To penetrate into the historiography of this line of reception, we would have to deconstruct the entire apparatus of Cold War ideological discourse, which is still with us. But for now, it will suffice to say that these non-communicative aspects of slogans constitute the elements of the *ideology* of Makavejev's slogans. It is not an exaggeration to claim that Makavejev's slogans have a formally important role in suturing his film work. It is this *suturing* effect of slogans that I want to address here. It is clear that this effect has a very ideological function (for example, that of unifying contradictory elements into a single consistent narrative), but at the same time, the role of slogans in this suturing process grounds the tension that is elementary in producing the conditions that are necessary for any political performance, the ultimate goal of which is collective emancipation. In this text I will try to insist on an even further intensification of this political performance, by looking at possibilities of un-suturing slogans. To lay out the complex nature of slogans, we must begin by addressing their formal (in our case even epistemic) nature. My position here is that in socialist theory and practice (historical materialism), slogans possess all the elements necessary for constituting a critical theory of language and action, which will consequently help us to understand the role of art and politics in this theorisation. To get to this formal or theoretical aspect of slogans, one must begin by criticising their narrow or ideological elements, or, more precisely, the practical and everyday use of slogans, which is a fashionable critical manoeuvre in many critiques of socialist theory and practice.



"Loudspeakers, which only transmit decrees, orders, and resolutions", in *Enver Hadžina Albanija* [Enver Hoxha's Albania], Tanjug news agency, Belgrade, 1981.

Probably the most extreme version of this anti-slogan approach in criticising real-socialist regimes is commonly applied in the case of the Socialist Republic of Albania. According to this interpretation, communication among ordinary men and women was completely imbued with abstract and alienated slogans, which in the socialist Albania penetrated every pore of one's living being. Usually, Albanian communism is described as a place of decrees, slogans, and orders, which continuously harassed both the souls and bodies of its population. It is hardly surprising, then, that the title of the first successful auteur or independent film made in the post-socialist Albania was *Slogans*. Directed by Gjergj Xhuvani in 2001, *Slogans* tells the story of the good-hearted people of Albania who happily submit to the foreign element of socialism (the slogans) without acknowledging the supposed meanings of these condensed thoughts. It is a familiar story of misunderstanding, so dear to the intellectual atmosphere of post-socialist intellectuals, which ends with a real (tragic?) story of human relations interwoven with endless comedy situations. Regarding not only Albania but the entire former Eastern Bloc in general, the accommodation of its socialist past in today's cinematic and artistic imagery is based on the following anti-slogan ideology/assumption: slogans are far from everyday reality, they are alienated utterances that belong in the linguistic domain of bureaucracy and ideology. The constant reproduction of this same old story of Cold War ideology is common to all artistic interpretations of the socialist past, which is now making, due to the independent institutional context (multi-capital co-productions, independent film festivals, etc.), an even more subtle and successful impact on "democratic" audiences.<sup>1</sup>

Already in the early 1960s, Makavejev was writing about this issue in relation to filming or documenting the ultimate practice of socialist collectivism known as the youth work action (*radna akcija*):

It is impossible to make documentary films about youth work actions without including the slogans. I decided, then, *not to escape the slogans*. I had to approach them, to hear them, and to understand their inner meaning. This is the task that we [i.e., film makers] must undertake now in a more general fashion. (Makavejev 1965, 36)

Referring especially to slogans chanted in collective actions such as youth work actions, Makavejev was underscoring here the ambivalent nature of these proclamations as manifestations of sensual as well as ironic gestures. Because of this ambivalent nature of slogans used in socialist practice, Makavejev proposed a new slogan, a slogan for a new cultural policy of the new socialist Yugoslavia: a new work duty – to read the writings of comrade Oskar Davičo!

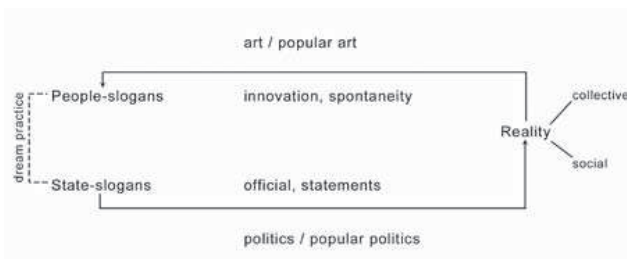
As a pre-war surrealist, a prominent member of the National Liberation Movement during the war, and an important writer, editor, and cultural-policy maker after the war, Davičo was an interesting choice. This slogan, which also refers to the historical ambivalences of Davičo's writings, or to the much acclaimed ambivalence of Serbian surrealist writings between sensuousness, irrationality, political commitment, playfulness, and concrete antagonisms, constitutes the most serious textual influence on Makavejev's artistic work. In a few words it is the contradiction of a situation that induces the necessity of uttering a slogan on ambivalence. According to Makavejev, the reality (or the index of various social realities) of the Socialist Yugoslavia was contradictory. It is a reality that he describes as an "everyday Dadaism" (Makavejev 1965, 53) and a "spontaneous Dada of modern urban folklore" (Makavejev 1965, 54). Reminding us of Gramsci's optimistic conceptions of the raw, materialist, contradictory, and rebellious common sense of the proletariat, he also provides many examples of this strange Dadaist reality, drawing them mostly from the "transitional" social realm of mass-media popular (or folk) culture. As I tried to show elsewhere (Boynik 2011, 12-15), Makavejev's worldview of Yugoslav socialism was neither naïve nor idealist; rather, he developed a very complex position on the issue of cultural policy, which in turn informed his film-making in general. Here one must briefly note that for Makavejev there were always two realities in the Socialist Yugoslavia: the one based on the official representation of the State and the other, which can be described as the unofficial or unorthodox reality of the People. Accordingly, these two worlds developed their own respective collections of slogans. At this point we can already recognise that Makavejev was somehow aware, if only intuitively, that slogans and language have

<sup>1</sup> In the sleeve notes to his LP *Albanian Summer* (performed by Jan Steele and Janet Sherbourne, Practical Music No. 2, 1984), Dave Smith, an English avant-garde composer who worked with Cornelius Cardew, Gavin Byars, and Christian Wolff, among others, describes the situation in Albania as one of a "real material, social and cultural progress", in which the "communist government enjoys an almost unanimous support from its people". He also cites the kinds of music he was able to hear on the radio in Albania during 1973 – folk music, compositions, "light" music, and revolutionary songs – no mention of Tanjug's nightmarish Orwellian dystopic loudspeakers constantly blaring the same slogans and orders.



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very determined structural causalities. The antagonisms of these two distinct worlds of slogans were the driving force of Yugoslavia's contradictions. Makavejev's decision not to escape the slogans initially referred to the slogans of the People, about which "the newspapers were not writing much" (Makavejev 1965, 34), not to the ubiquitous slogans of the State. Examples of these People's slogans vary from the sensuous (such as "Long live Dara the Nigger" painted by a Belgrade secondary-school youth-work-action brigade in letters as big as those used in the "Everybody to the polling stations" official slogan) and spontaneous (such as "A lončići a lončići u red u red u red bum bum aaaaaaa!" / "And pots and pots into the line into the line boom boom aaaaaah", chanted by the Osijek brigade) to surrealist (such as the five-foot-tall lower case letter "a" painted in one of the barracks of a youth camp). Their common characteristics include rhyming, their potential for different variables and language distortions, their grounding in primitive expressions and frequent connotations of music and various sounds. Makavejev describes the complex structure of the People's slogans as an "interest toward things fresh, alive, and strange", an interest of an "ordinary character", the peculiar function of which is the "demystification of all possible slogans" (Makavejev 1965, 37). A digression must be made here, to consider the emancipatory possibilities of these two dichotomous types of slogans. Makavejev does not oppose the State slogans (such as "Long live comrade Tito" or "Long live Brotherhood and Unity") to the People's slogans as the utterances of a supposedly free creative individuality or expressions of an emancipated self-realisation. Both kinds of slogans are *collective* and social; the key difference between them concerns their respective geneses. In other words, the State slogans were conceived behind closed doors, under the strict censorship of the Party; with their elitism, they were in direct contrast to the People's slogans, which were spontaneous, direct, down-to-earth, and considerably more imaginative.<sup>2</sup> This imaginative moment, which Makavejev in another text describes as *Dream-Practice*, constitutes the real emancipatory potential of the People's slogans. It is the collective spontaneous pragmatic language of a new reality that is the stuff of these slogans, a reality that could only be verbalised through slogans: "we live in a reality that is more innovative than dreams... we are able to invite, as Mayakovski did, the sun for tea!" (Makavejev 1965, 29). Considering that this reality is a product of innovative labour of previous generations, now reified as the State, Makavejev quotes the most oxymoronic and paradoxical slogan, inscribed by the side of Highway 60: "Let us overcome our fathers so we can be their equals!" (Makavejev 1965, 29)



One can glean from the above that the world of slogans comprised two separate configurations, the People's slogans and the State slogans, which never came together, but were connected through the nature of their shared "reality", which carried social and collective attributes. These different slogans related to this reality in different ways. It is obvious that State slogans, with their force, decrees, and statements, participated in the construction of this reality (e.g., the participation of the communists in the National Liberation Struggle was a force that generated a different, socialist Yugoslavia), which in turn shaped the conditions for the production of the People's slogans (e.g., collective youth work actions and policies of mass education are direct consequences of socialist politics). Apart from these conditions, the "reality" had no direct influence on the production of the People's slogans. These slogans were an independent and spontaneously generated set of practices that appeared to be an intrinsic part of the universal human condition called creativity. Makavejev's world of slogans can be divided into two fields: the political and the artistic. In that division, politics would be the field of State slogans and art the field of the People's slogans. Also, Makavejev distinguished between

<sup>2</sup> Stating that imaginative solutions in youth work actions are beneficial for the "social health" of youth, Makavejev apparently felt obliged to clarify, perhaps owing to the fascist connotations of the term, that he borrowed that statement from the American Marxist (?) Erich Fromm.

those two fields by their respective degrees of appropriation (for example, the popular politics of the partisans becomes reified and appropriated by Party "politics", just as the popular art of collective youth could be distorted in the form of pure or high "art"). Even if this subdivision may not be entirely arbitrary for our purposes, it will be better to concentrate here on the main division in this world, that between politics and art. It seems that those two fields, with their respective sets of actions (art = innovation, creativity; politics = force, decrees), are completely detached from each other. State slogans are not influenced or impacted by those of the People. Makavejev's proposal in his theory of slogans is most clearly manifested in his elaboration of the concept of "dream-practice", which offers a clue for the renewal of this alienated system. Or, in more straightforward terms, to add "innovation", "imagination", "spontaneity", and some "surrealism" to State slogans. It is related to a creative change in the language of politics; or, one could say to the making of "artful politics". Makavejev introduced the concept of dream-practice in order to stabilise the antagonisms between politics and art; this schema makes it clear that even if the role of "art" *post facto* concerns this refreshment of social circulation (the reason might be as banal and optimistically affirmative as "social health"), its existence matters the most in the constitution of this world of "creativity". This schema does not offer any clues as to how and under what conditions this dream-practice (which has an artistic character) occurs: in the end, it concerns a pure intrusion of artistic elements (such as spontaneity) into politics. Certain elements that are common to both worlds, such as the "collective", "social", and the "popular", are concepts that enable this intrusion, which, in the last instance, serves to enable the appropriation of politics by means of the elements of art.

## 2. THE STUTTERING SLOGANS OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI

*O-o-o ... The Language of the Working Class is Uni-ve-er-er-sal;  
Its Lyricism Lightens the Heart-art-art-tt  
Art & Language, Singing Man, 1975*

Associating Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari with the problematic of "language" by means of slogans and suggesting that these slogans "stutter" might seem a very perverse provocation. Deleuze, who was very much against the "language turn" in philosophy, advanced, in fact, some rather strong claims regarding language, which directly related to his overall philosophical conceptions. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari open the chapter on the "Postulates of Linguistics" with the following assertion: the elementary unit of language – the statement – is the order-word (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 76). "Order-word", which is a translation of the French *mot d'ordre*, means "slogan". So, the elementary unit of language is the slogan. This assertion, itself a theory slogan or a transmission of a theoretical statement, is crucial in understanding the importance of the performative in speech. Only through this performative act may language, consisting of elements of slogans, leave its idealist associations behind and entirely move into the world of action. This was Deleuze and Guattari's starting point: to overcome the idea that language is all about information and communication (or what J. L. Austin called the "descriptive fallacy") and to reach a more subtle and at the same time pragmatic and political theory of language. In this world, language as "the set of all order-words, implicit presuppositions, or speech acts current in a language at a given moment" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 79) is by definition the transmission of collective utterances. Or, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, there is no such thing as individual enunciation. Rather, every enunciation has a "necessarily social character" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 80). In other words, every enunciation is a *collective assemblage*. If language boils down to the transmission of slogans, which are collective and social, as Makavejev tells us, then it makes ample sense to presuppose that language is based on collective enunciations. It is at various moments of declarations and statements, usually pregnant with a political character (such as 20 November 1923, the date cited in the title of the chapter on linguistics, when the authorities of Germany *declared* that the Reichsmark no longer constituted money in that country; according to Deleuze and Guattari, that declaration was an order-word with a political character) that we are constituted as subjects with no possibility of individual enunciation. Every utterance is collective; even "I love you", typically considered the most intimate and individual of utterances, is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a declaration of a collective character. Or, to put it more interestingly, every declaration of love is a slogan. Here, we are still in the same field of Makavejev's slogans of youth, full of love and passion, which in their collective rejoicing make the most beautiful and sensuous of slogans, belonging to everyone. But this is only a seeming similarity; in their scheme, Deleuze and

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Guattari have no need for extrapolation in order to collectivise slogans. By contrast, as we saw above, Makavejev did postulate the need for an extra – that is, political – field, the role of which was to ensure the conditions of production for spontaneous and amorous slogans. In Deleuze and Guattari – and this is the best part of their theory of order-words – the “amorous” situations, various arts, and “ordinary daily conversation” (or more simply the “ordinary” in Makavejev) are themselves political. The way we enunciate language, through its slogan elements (that is, collective and social), makes all our “cultural” acts necessarily political. At the same time, this suggestion implies that the art field of slogans needs no “reality” to materialise them in it; rather, their immanence is the sole factor or force of their materialisation.

In order to avoid any possible implications of “banality” in the arts (e.g., equating ordinary language with art-language), Deleuze and Guattari propose the concept of “incorporeal transformation”. It is this concept that makes things complicated; the concept of slogans as collective assemblages that guaranteed the materiality of language (and art) is now seemingly dematerialised in this new dynamic concept of incorporeal transformation. Notwithstanding their role in saving art from everyday banality, incorporeal transformations at the same time abolish the autonomy and stratification of the field of politics. Just as the declaration that the *Reichsmark* was no longer money made it no longer money, so the act of hijacking an airplane occurs when the hijackers declare that the plane has been hijacked; or, in Deleuze and Guattari’s explanation: “the transformation of the passengers into hostages, and of the plane-body into a prison-body, is an instantaneous incorporeal transformation” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 81). Given Deleuze and Guattari’s aversion toward metaphors, we must take these things seriously: an incorporeal transformation is a non-material effect with a concrete figuration. In this theory, slogans constitute the most powerful kind of utterances or declarations, which brings incorporeal transformation to its most effective. It is at this point that Deleuze and Guattari invoke Lenin’s theory of slogans, which, according to them, constitutes an incorporeal transformation of the new proletarian class. In his text *On Slogans*, which he wrote in 1917 whilst hiding somewhere in Finland, Lenin asserted that every slogan had its time of validity. For example, the slogan “All Power to the Soviets” was valid only from 27 February to 4 July 1917. Deleuze and Guattari take this as an account of the ultimately pragmatic implications of utterances (order-words), which imply constant variables and different configurations. In more direct terms, they argue that slogans are declarations with temporal political effectuality valid only in appropriate conditions. But herein lies the problem: if slogans are the elementary units of language and if, reciprocally, language is the transmission of slogans, then how may one distinguish ordinary language from political language, which initiates transformations in the existing ordinary structure? Since Deleuze and Guattari make no distinction between “just” slogans and those that are more than “just” slogans, one may claim that order-words, slogans, and declarations are those elements that secure the omnipresence of politics by means of their ultimate pragmatism. As a consequence of this, any politics that becomes present everywhere ends up denying/annihilating itself. In this theory, there is no place for an exclusive or distinct political field; rather, incorporeal transformations occur through the immanence of language pragmatism. This is why Lenin’s theory of slogans with its pragmatism, transformation, and ad hoc character is so dear to Deleuze and Guattari: it places language into the field of effectivity and force (seeing it as more than just communicating information) and introduces new elements into it. For example, Lenin argues for the necessity of a *new slogan* to replace the old, reified slogan of the Bolshevik party. It seems that what Deleuze and Guattari find really exciting in Lenin is this element of the *new*, even more than his theorisation of slogans. Only by introducing a new language (or a new set of order-words) is it possible to initiate an incorporeal transformation. Its unprecedented character is one of the possibilities for announcing this new element – which for Lenin was the crucial element in his theory; see, for instance, Lenin’s “April Theses”, which he wrote at the same time as “On Slogans”; in the respective cases of the replacement of the Reichsmark and the hijacking of an airplane, discussed above, the respective declarations (that the Reichsmark is no longer money and that the airplane has been hijacked) would constitute that new element. But, as Deleuze and Guattari would no doubt remind us, these new elements or changes must happen without any extrapolation, inside the immanence of language. Here we arrive to the theory of the stuttering of language, which introduces a completely new configuration of utterance and the possibility of a new pragmatics, which they named metamorphosis. The stuttering of language is a very strange notion, which should be, again, understood as a non-metaphorical and concrete novelty. Deleuze and Guattari make it clear that this incorporeal change will

not happen in the sphere of everyday (or a major) language (or set of slogans): it is only possible in metamorphosing, stuttering, stammering, deconstructing, or in minor languages. Obviously enough, this definition of slogans did not come from Lenin, but his insistence on novelty, transformation, and pragmatism does have certain similarities with it. It seems that this element of incorporeal transformation is somehow artistic in nature. If we look at Deleuze and Guattari's own examples of this transformation in language, we will see that they all come from avant-garde art: the writings of Beckett and Gherasim Luca, music by Dieter Schnebel or Luciano Berio, films by Godard or Carmelo Bene are all examples of works that make "language itself stammer" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 98). These are moments when language completely transforms itself and because it has this immanent force in its slogan elements, of which it consists, then any transformation in language will also impact (imply) a transformation of the world. But this will not happen all by itself. This is the main difference between Makavejev's and Deleuze and Guattari's respective conceptions of artistic slogans. In Makavejev, artistic slogans spontaneously emerge from the collective being of ideological materialist conditions and are by their nature opposed to the reified ordinary world. This was possible in Makavejev's world, as we might remember, only through the element of the "popular" as immanent both to the political and the artistic fields, and always having an attribute of immersing creativity. In Deleuze and Guattari, by contrast, this element does not exist; the transformation of language (i.e., the set of slogans) will not happen by itself, but must be induced by working on language, or, to put it more clearly, by consciously working on language (which sometimes might imply even non-verbal variables). Deleuze and Guattari even outline a policy for this transformation: opposing legislation by constants, not prohibiting metamorphoses, refusing to give figures clear and stable contours, not setting forms in binary oppositions... (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 107). By the end of their chapter on language it becomes clear that slogans are impenetrable in this theory of incorporeal transformation. With their overall associations or relations to normative politics (all those "do-not's" prescribed by Deleuze and Guattari), slogans present obstacles to a full realisation of metamorphoses; so instead of order-words, Deleuze and Guattari propose pass-words, which are beneath order-words *qua* organised and stratified compositions (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 110). So, whereas in Makavejev politics is to be made artful and exist separately from art, in Deleuze and Guattari it disappears by becoming art.

Jean-Jacques Lecerclé, who wrote a book-length study on Deleuze and language, understood this theoretical problem, or contradiction, as he calls it, in the same way as a disposition of the performativity of language. If Deleuze's theory of language interprets utterance mostly by means of Leninist concepts of materialist elements, pragmatism, force, and the decentralisation of the subject into collective enunciations, how may one, then, connect this set of norms to the high-modernist avant-garde deconstruction of language (Lecerclé 2002, 219)? Or more precisely, how may one combine the structure and coherence of slogans with the stutter of the avant-garde? Or, how does one combine politics with art? This would not be so much of a contradiction for Lecerclé if he did not, in his problematisation of Deleuze (by "Deleuze" he really means "Deleuze and Guattari"), place slogans at the core of his theory of language. Since to "communicate is not to co-operate but to claim and ascribe places in a power game, an agonistic exchange", as Lecerclé explains, then force and pragmatism constitute the most important aspects of this philosophy. Lecerclé accordingly concludes that "the most notorious expression of this philosophy of forces is the question of slogans, of *mots d'ordre*" (Lecerclé 2002, 169). Apart from adding the elements of force and materiality, slogans at the same time allow us to conceptualise language as entirely collective and indirect (i.e., the assemblages) (Lecerclé 2002, 172). This conceptualisation also has a political character itself. But, Lecerclé warns, this political character of slogans is not restricted to *political and historical events* but may be found everywhere in daily life (Lecerclé 2002, 172). This clearly means that politics occurs not only in political and historical events, but also in language and utterance itself. As Lecerclé puts it, in what almost sounds like a linguistic slogan, "Language is made up of sedimented slogans". This notion of sedimentation is important in understanding the Deleuzian conception of language; since assemblages are a crucial element of this strand of linguistics and make the best examples of the sedimentation of collective enunciation (i.e., "assemblage is described as a mode of segmentation", Lecerclé 2002, 186-187) then it seems that slogans and assemblages are similar in nature. If the policy of Deleuze's "new pragmatics" is a de-sloganisation of language (or changing order-words to pass-words), then de-assemblage is its necessary conclusion. Or as Lecerclé wittily puts it, the ultimate Deleuzian slogan would be: Always experiment with assemblages! (Lecerclé 2002, 185-186) This is a very arbitrary definition of slogans; it sounds like a tautology: Our slogan is always to experiment with slogans!

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This conclusion makes it apparent that in Deleuze slogans are those conceptual elements that make thought practical or pragmatic; or, one could say that they perform the trick of justifying the practical aspects of a theoretical practice. Now at last may we fully understand the contradiction or tension that Lecerclé has identified in Deleuze: slogans are political, but in order to have any real political effect, they must disappear (or eliminate their contours and stable figurations). Only in experimentation may the performativity of language flourish to its full potential. So a real metamorphosis, pass-words, or re-assemblages, or even de-sloganisation can be expressed, as Lecerclé puts it, by parodying the famous feminist slogan: the artistic is political. As Lecerclé admits at the very end of his book, this is “an avant-garde position: the avant-garde artist as revolutionary” (Lecerclé 2002, 246). This conclusion, which is similar to mine, has but one very serious strategic problem: it enables the artistic avant-garde to take up a pragmatic (i.e., political) position mobilising the conceptual elements of revolutionary theory. It is about appropriating revolutionary theory. Now we must see whether one could develop a fine and complex set of theses on language and slogans from revolutionary theory and practice.

### 3. HOW TO DO THINGS WITH THE WORDS OF SLOGANS

*People have now adopted a new slogan,  
the slogan of the “different uses of language”.*  
J. L. Austin, “Performative Utterances”, 1956

The pragmatism of language, so crucial for Deleuze and Guattari’s theorisation of order-words, is based on speech-act theory, first developed by Anglo-American philosophers. The initial thrust of this philosophy of language, most famously advanced by J. L. Austin, was to overthrow the idealist fallacy of the supposedly neutral descriptiveness of language and put the performativity of speech and utterance at the core of the human condition. By showing that there is no such thing as a purely verbal criterion that might enable us to distinguish between performative and constative utterances, Austin asked if “constative utterances are not, after all, the performance of an act, namely of stating” (Austin 1971, 20). Instead of treating communication as the transmission of information, we are invited to treat it as the transmission of statements. Austin dubbed these units of communication “performative-constatives”, which sounds similar to Deleuze’s order-words.

Or, as Austin put it himself:

To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* to perform an illocutionary act [...] Thus in performing a locutionary act we shall also be performing such an act as: asking or answering a question, giving some information or an assurance or a warning, announcing a verdict or an intention (Austin 1975, 98) According to Austin, there is no such thing as pure and idealist communication – language is a pragmatic business in every sense. One should note here that Austin was not trying to posit the effects of the performativity of locutions as an extrapolated act of some hidden illocutionary remnants of our strange everyday utterances. This would be more appropriate to the romantic pragmatism of Makavejev’s slogans. To the contrary, Austin insisted on the *force* as immanent to all locutions: We must avoid the idea that the illocutionary act is a *consequence* of the locutionary act, and even the idea that what is imported by the nomenclature of illocutions is an *additional* reference to *some* of the consequences of the locutions (Austin 1975, 114).

This means that in fact, locutions are illocutions and constatives are performatives. These speech-acts produce effects by securing an *uptake* (Austin 1975, 117) and in “certain ways”, which means that they produce changes in the natural course of events (Austin 1975, 117). This means that an illocutionary act is most effective when, for example, it is addressed and consumed by conditions that make the uptake as a normal procedure. That is when perlocution takes place, or when a certain effect is achieved by saying something. Austin provides an example of a

failed uptake with his ship-naming story:

Suppose that you are just about to name the ship [“Queen Elizabeth”], you have been appointed to name it, and you are just about to bang the bottle against the stem; but at that very moment, some low type comes up, snatches the bottle out of your hand, breaks it on the stem, shout out “I name this ship the Generalissimo Stalin”, and then for good measure kicks away the chocks. (Austin 1961, 226–227) This is a classic case of infelicity, or an infelicitous speech-act, in which the uptake does not take place. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Lecerclé explains:

If the scandalous working-class militant in Austin's text is only a passing example of infelicity, a wink at the reader, it is because the universe of which he is the representative or the symptom (the universe of class struggle) is absent from speech-act theory. (Lecercle 2002, 162)

But even if the politics of class struggle is absent from Austin's philosophy of language, the pragmatism he offers is enough to mobilise *a politics* from this theory; again, reverting to Lecercle's explanation regarding the ship-naming: "[even if it is a case of infelicity] it shows that politics is always near at hand, lying in ambush, eager to seize the pretext for re-entering language that pragmatics is willing to offer it" (Lecercle 2002, 161). This automatically political *effect* of language, as I tried to show in the previous section, might lead to a complete disavowal of politics as an arbitrary element in a philosophy based on the pragmatism of language.

At this point it becomes clear that "performative-constative" could be used as a "slogan", following Deleuze and Guattari's Leninism;<sup>3</sup> but as Lecercle observes, Austin's pragmatism is too cooperative and rooted in the *status quo*, as well as not materialistic enough to realise this possibility. One can say that Lecercle's interpretation of Deleuze's philosophy of language rests on enhancing Austin's speech-act theory with certain elements of the artistic avant-garde's deconstructive potential. Following Lecercle's reading, apart from his ahistoricism, non-materialism,

and methodological individualism, Austin also shows a lack of consideration for institutions. What Lecercle implies as a Deleuzian novelty, but actually and inevitably refers to Althusser, is the possibility of using speech-act theory in institutional interpellation: institution – ritual – practice – speech-act (Lecercle 2002, 163). This practically means that "performative-constatives" are the

missing link in the seemingly too representational chain of interpellation, as theorised by Louis Althusser. Even if Lecercle still sees Althusser's theory as a constellation of Deleuzian philosophy, this should pose us no difficulties, given that he uses "Deleuze" as a collective enunciation, or some kind of sedimented slogan of intellectual-collective property.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, Lecercle's application of speech-act theory to Althusser's theorisation of ideological interpellation is not an isolated example; for instance, Rastko Močnik in his article "Toward a Materialist Concept of Literature" attempted to concretise a rather "abstract indication" of Althusserian theory of interpellation through the work of J. L. Austin. If interpellation occurs, as Althusser wrote, through the process of re-cognition, or, as Močnik explains: "to 'understand' an (ideological) utterance is to submit oneself to its specific 'rationality' that is, swallow its (ideological) presuppositions", then in the final instance communication emerges as an elementary condition, without which no ideological interpellation can be complete (Močnik 1986, 76). Since every ideological interpellation reaches its completion in the process of *subjectivisation*, one could clearly consider communication "a nuclear instance of the ideological mediation of social integration" (Močnik 1986, 176). The practical force of language or its performative devices, which are crucial in Austin's theory of speech-acts, are what enable the process of interpellation to take place in its full materialist import. To put it more directly, Močnik claims that the force of illocutionary acts is a precondition for any materialisation of (ideological) interpellation. Reverting to Austin's vocabulary, then, interpellation is thus an instance of a happily concluded proper "uptake" (Močnik 1986, 179–181). Since social integration conditions all ideologies (and Močnik is clearly aware of this, quoting Marx that "speech, passions, and illusions are necessary for the ideological integration of a revolutionary movement") and given that its realisation/materialisation occurs in communication, then how may one deal with the inherent ambiguity of speech acts? Precisely how is it possible to situate the concept of "performative-constative" in the chain of interpellation when this concept has a constative as well as performative character both at once? And furthermore, if the uptake is realised in the context of a particular piece of communication (i.e., in the "natural" course of events or Austin's "normal way"), which itself is a condition of the subjectivisation of illocution (of the integrated subject), then we face an "unpleasant metaphysical dilemma", as Močnik describes it. The dilemma of illocutionary ambiguity is this: either we want to save the human condition from

<sup>3</sup> Lecercle draws several examples from the ranks of analytical philosophers, who dealt with language and came to similar conclusions: "J. R. Ross, an early disciple of Chomsky, proposed the performative hypothesis, whereby every declarative sentence was, in deep structure, subordinate to a performative clause, which being performative, is closer to a slogan [...]; Ann Banfield sought to add to the first node of Chomsky's rewriting rules a special node [...] which was meant to accommodate all 'expressive' utterances, insults, exclamations, perhaps even slogans; and J. C. Milner sought to develop what he called a 'grammar of insults'" (Lecercle 2002, 170).

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere, this also allowed Lecercle to propose his notion of *counter-interpellation*, inspired by Judith Butler's reading of Althusser: "The concept aims to describe the fact that, while speakers enters [*sic!*] into a language that is prior and external to them, they appropriate it (this is called a style)" (Lecercle 2006, 209).

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equivocation, but then must abandon the concept of illocution to its inherent ambiguity; or, we decide to keep the concept, but then we have to take a rather pessimistic view of the very possibility of communication among humans (and as a consequence of that, finally have to abandon the concept altogether) (Močnik 1986, 180). This fundamental dilemma is important in helping us understand why the simplistic approach of so-called deconstructing ideology by deconstructing language is a dead end. If we accepted that ideology = language = slogans, then a simple reversal of this set of equivalences would imply that different slogans could induce a different social integration. Apart from its "purity", this scheme would also contradict speech-act theory, that is, its claims that a proper uptake of a slogan will hold only under proper ideological conditions. Austin's pragmatism is very conditional and status quo practicalism which introduces the ideology as a conscious set of beliefs which one shares about the world. He does not have much of contradictions, in his idealist cosmos of uptakes the order-word (slogan) is a production of the order-world (ideology) and vice-versa. But in Močnik's conception, the performative character of illocutionary acts, which ultimately conditions every ideological operation, is at the same time also an obstacle to an unconditional subjectivisation of ideology, idealistically predicated on human beings *qua* free agents of constative communication.

Simply, this metaphysical conundrum is the following: if communication is that which generates subjectivity, the genesis of subjectivity in communication is that which suspends the subject itself. In other words, if we assume, as it is generally assumed, that communication preconditions our entering into ideology and that our "entrance" materialises through the "performative" characteristic of our communicat-

ing, then we end up powerless to say anything that is not ideological. The dilemma is metaphysical because a "human agent" and process of identification are among its main concepts. But if we moved away from the "human" part and applied this problematic to the concept of slogans, we could reach a more contradictory, therefore also materialist theory of slogans. I think that now we have reached the point where we can pose the following question: what is the role of slogans in the process of ideological interpellation? As the most direct manifestation of perlocution, slogans certainly aim for collective recruitment. But at the same time, slogans do not target "ordinary" audiences (or an already existing collective), but seek to effect a transformation in the social integration by introducing a new thought. If so, then we have just made a long detour almost for nothing: we have reached a position where we must admit that slogans are performative and constative both at once. That is exactly where we began. But actually, we are in a different "move" now, one of trying to strengthen the *constative* nature of slogans. As we saw above, Lecerclé, as well as Deleuze and Guattari all criticise as a fallacy the idealistic conception of language as based on constative communication and view its *sloganic* character as evidence of the materialism and performative nature of utterance. This enables us, for example, to improvise on the idea that language itself (as the sedimentation of slogans) is political. In adherence to the materialist conceptions of Rastko Močnik, I would like to propose that we try to think slogans as constatives, which would initially entail considering the "content" and "theory" of slogans more seriously than it has been done before. This would not be a simple détournement or turning Deleuze and Guattari's position on its head; rather, it would be a possibility to enhance Lenin's theorisation of slogans even further.

Before making this position more explicit, I should clarify that a necessary precondition for including the notion of theory slogans (we can call them Althusserian slogans) to philosophy is to occupy a materialist position. Lecerclé introduces this notion, which is not there in Deleuze and Guattari, through the idea of "institution", which he includes in the otherwise abstract process of the effectivity of order-words. The materialistic existence of words and their transformative effects should not be understood as simple empiricism, or, to caricature it a bit, as word atoms flowing from those in the mouth to those in the ear and effecting changes in those in the brain, concluding in the proximity of atoms in the lips (for example, the effect of "I love you", Deleuze and Guattari's favourite slogan, would be something along those lines). Rather than a materialistic explanation of the world, this would be more of a mechanistic, or to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari a "mechanistic" explanation, turning everything to atoms, that is, everything but "knowledge", which always stays somewhere in between atoms, in other words, the famed "ether" of communication. It is clear that the notion of incorporeal transformation was added to this theory in order to keep that of a materialist "uptake" possible. Nevertheless, the content or constative part of slogans is not important in this conception; in Deleuze, for example, Lenin's slogan is not important as a concrete analysis of a concrete situation, but primarily as a potential for transformation. When it comes to slogans and language, because the constative is less important than the performative (i.e., "I love you" and "Power to the Soviets" are both equally

political), then the only possibility to thwart the completion of this "ideological" (or assembling) system lies in de-sloganization; or, as I tried to show above, in the stuttering slogans. This is a common emphasis in the deconstructive tendencies (their "artistic" character) of all critical/different theories of language. But in the last instance, I could say that whereas Deleuze and Guattari sought to problematise language through slogans, my aim is to problematise slogans by means of language and the notion of the Althusserian slogan. This means that if slogans are performative, which lends force to language, then it is equally legitimate to claim that this performativity is also of a very visible constative, or theoretical nature. Given that so many examples make it clear that slogans are performative and constative at the same time, it is surprising to note that in most interpretations the "performative" aroused such an excitement that it completely overshadowed the constative. This means that apart from having explicit "practical" implications, slogans are also quite "theoretical" in nature. Of course, these "theoretical" aspects of slogans are not so easy to identify, but must be demonstrated through a rigorous research of concrete situations inside language. My aim here is to make this more explicit. Some readers will be surprised, perhaps, that I have chosen to perform the following survey in the field of artistic production.

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V

**THE ART OF SLOGANS (THE CONSTATIVE PART)**

by

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# THE ART OF SLOGANS (THE CONSTATIVE PART)

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THE ART OF SLOGANS  
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## 4. ART & LANGUAGE *QUA* ART & SLOGANS

Art is what we do; culture is what we do to other artists.

Art & Language, 1975

As Michael Corris, a former member of the Art & Language group, stated recently, the reasoning in the 60s was that "the pragmatic dimension of language would enable a conceptual art with socializing potential" (Corris 2004, 8) and due to this approach artists developed a wide interest in issues of language. This was related to the "linguistic turn", familiar to Conceptual Art; and it was a symptom of a general interest in the relations between language and power, as well as the role of ideology in the processes of representation. Also, due to the pragmatic effects of language, it was possible to engage those issues in political terms, such as transformation, deconstruction, and, in more optimistic cases, revolution. In this section of the essay I want to look briefly at the possibilities of problematising the philosophical issues discussed above, in the field of Art & Language's theory and practice.

One of the major activities of the Art & Language group (henceforth A&L) was the publication of *Art-Language: The Journal of Conceptual Art*, which was especially dedicated to theoretical discussions of language-related issues in art. With their participation at Documenta V in 1972, the group modified their strict theoretical and analytical programme in favour of a broader self-reflexive direction. This is not to say that with their *Indexing* project A&L retreated from their erstwhile theoretical rigour, but apart from broadening their capacity (adding new members to the group) and branching out geographically by including members living and working in New York, the group also decided to schematise and structuralise their earlier as well as current work. The *Indexing* project, which Charles Harrison describes as a "summary work of Conceptual Art", is "a model of the sorts of connectedness there might be between various texts" (Harrison 2001, 71 and 75). These various texts were produced by people affiliated with A&L: critiques, statements, declarations, analyses, etc. *Indexing* was a reflection of A&L's general interest, or, in Christopher Gilbert's words, the group's *raison d'être*, defined by "conversational activity" and its own "intra-group relations" (Gilbert 2004, 326). Apart from being a genuine solution for the problem of using paper-text as an aesthetic object, the project realised in Documenta V also raised a further philosophical problematic related to the "inadequacy of extant theory for addressing the complexities of the conversational matrix" and to the issue of the relation of pragmatics to language (Gilbert 2004, 330). Later projects, initiated after the indexes, such as *Blurring in New York* and *Dialectical Materialism*, were all dealing with issues pertaining to the group's positioning itself; more precisely, with the theoretical and philosophical problematics and conditions of

collective working. The use of language, which was crucial in these *Indexing* projects, pushed the group into a more explicitly political direction; or in Harrison's words, to "ideological self-examination", which intensified the problematic of a "language community" among the members of A&L. A&L probably took the pragmatism of language more seriously than any other conceptual artist or group did and exposed its consequences in their most extreme political manifestations.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, working on language leads one to politics, as we saw in the previous instalment of this text, but in A&L's case, working on language also led to a more solid interest in working on theory as well.<sup>2</sup> What happened after the *Indexing* project is that A&L completely dedicated themselves to the above-mentioned ideological self-examination of their own language constraints; or, to partake in their experience, we might say that A&L were now becoming interested in clarifying their own slogans and rigorously criticising the false slogans of the fashionable art discourse. For example, Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden's *Comparative Models* (1972) was based on a deconstructive reading of the *Artforum's* language. They commented on texts published in the *Artforum* by making explicit the annotations used in those texts and trying to expose their limited scope and ideological underpinning. Their critique was based on a survey that showed that the *Artforum's* critics' approach to art was "experience-laden", as opposed to the "theory-ladenness" of their own practice. This would amount to saying that while the *Artforum's* slogans were "experiential" (which now they are even

<sup>1</sup> This concerns the rather delicate issue of the "politicisation" of A&L, which mostly happened in New York, with the group's work on the publication of *The Fox* journal and with A&L's involvement with organisations such as AWC (Art Workers Coalition), AMCC (Artists Meeting for Cultural Change), and AICU (The Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union). There is a limited body of literature on this interesting issue. For example, Zoran Popović's film *Borba u Njujorku / The Struggle in New York* was made in the heat of that transition. Of course, A&L's "political turn" was neither simple nor easy. For example, Harrison, who rightly censured *The Sunday Times* (2 July 1972) for reviewing the Documenta-Index as "a Stalinist reading-room", in the same book criticised the people involved in AICU, with whom A&L were collaborating at the time, as "Maoist-Stalinist" (Harrison 2001, 120).

<sup>2</sup> In his article "Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy", Peter Osborne writes that the *Indexing* project "marks both the culmination and the demise of strong [i.e. rigorous] Conceptualism: the fantasy of the resolution of the constitutive ambiguity of philosophy's double-coding" (Osborne 1999, 64). By "philosophy's double-coding", Osborne is referring here to its twofold role in Conceptual Art: first, that of eliminating the aesthetic or artistic element in the work of art and second, that of introducing a new artfulness to it, which was in this case theory. The inescapability of Modernist aesthetic elements forms the tension of the philosophy of Conceptual Art. According to Osborne, A&L, who problematised this tendency to the most, broke with conceptualising "art as philosophy" in favour of "philosophy as art". Discussing the philosophy of A&L, Osborne refers to the first six issues of the *Art-Language* journal, in other words, the *Indexing* project, which introduced the schematisation of these issues and brought the tension of philosophy's double-coding to a breaking point. My opinion is that Osborne's article, notwithstanding its great importance regarding this issue, overlooked the important twin notions of politics and ideology, both of which play a significant role in the constitution of philosophy. In other words, Osborne's interpretation appears to suggest that once A&L began focusing on slogans, they lost the "radical openness of purely logical possibility" that used to mesmerise their philosophy (Osborne 1999, 63).

more), A&L's slogans were "theoretical". In the following year, A&L initiated their project *Blurting in New York*, which was completely based on the group's theoretical and ideological self-examination. The project's participants, including Ian Burn, Michael Corris, Preston Heller, Joseph Kosuth, Andrew Menard, Mel Ramsden, and Terry Smith, contributed by intervening in and commenting on (based on their readings of philosophical literature or earlier writings) a set of annotations that the group had chosen. The end-result, which was a book, included a schema of these "theory-laden" annotations based on their "narrow" and "wider" conjunctions. It was an attempt to demystify the concepts of collaboration, relation, work, and interest (i.e. ideology), by means of a rigorous re-examination of the patterns involved in these formations. From today's perspective, the work that A&L performed in *Blurting in New York* could clearly be described as an attempt to assemble their own "theoretical [ladenness/practice]", basing their references exclusively on their own annotations/slogans. To put it in Althusserian terms, they were working in the field of the "object of knowledge" and not on the "real-object"; and A&L took great care not to conflate those two. As they wrote in their "Introduction to *Blurting in New York*": "the 400-odd blurts have been approached textually, as a self-defining/containing 'imploded' 'world'. The only relations suggested are internal, i.e., between blurts, not from the blurts to anything else" (*Art & Language* 1975). A&L rather schematically describe the structure of the conjunctions between individual blurts; however, there are different possibilities of using those conjunctions. As they note in the "Introduction", the meanings embedded in the various connections between individual blurts are "not meanings in the normal sense of reference but in the sense of pragmatic function". This means that reassembling them is always possible and that this possibility results from the pragmatic nature of language; but at the same time, any realisation of it must be internal and needs no extrapolation from outer "reality" (or "noise", as A&L sometimes called it, which could also be productive, though its inclusion would entail stricter and harder intellectual work). As we can surely tell, this is a completely un-Makavejevic world of words, which in some way may remind one of some of Deleuze and Guattari's conceptions (e.g. immanence, pragmatism, assemblage, etc). But I think that in their theory and practice A&L took these conceptions even further; first, they did not reduce the importance of working with language (blurts, annotations, slogans) to its capacity of being ultimately performative and second, they consequently underscored the necessarily constative character of utterances. A&L thereby drew a clear demarcation line from all tendencies that might be called "experiential". In practical terms, that means that artists who wish to work on the practical issues of the "world" (such as politics and language) must be vigilant and rigorous about their own theoretical positions, or to put it differently, they must be aware of the conjunction schema of their own theoretical references. To make it even more explicit, artists, same as communists, must know their own slogans. In this respect, no critical position could base its

practice in the improvisational nature of the use of language, or in the extreme conditions of language-suspensions-in-the-field-of-language, which were crucial in Deleuze and Guattari's world, as we saw in the first chapter of this essay. This does not mean that A&L were after some pure, natural language (notwithstanding some rather curious references they made to Noam Chomsky at one point), or some totalising language. To the contrary, A&L's practice of knowing their slogans leads to a very serious, heuristic practice of theoretical pedagogy, which consequently produces a state of pandemonium with the possible result of "unsorting" or "re-assembling" language (Art & Language 1975).<sup>3</sup> But such an adventure, the production of new slogans, is possible only in theoretical work or theoretical practice.

This theoretical practice also produces some nasty consequences in art, which calls for further discussion. As Thomas Dreher notes, writing on the *Blurting* project, mutual relations between annotations constitute a kind of "language environment" where "possibilities of self-embedding in the art-world are presented as conditions of the latter's transformation from the inside through 'theoretical practice'". This is the difficulty. The really nasty situation is exactly this: if by means of this "theoretical practice" working on oneself produces a certain assemblage that relates to that closed system, then how does this system connect to the outer world and what is this "theoretical practice" if not a simple construction of an (artistic) identity? How may one avoid the issue of fixation (as it relates to all constructed identities) and is it possible to communicate with identities other than those of a similar nature? As Charles Harrison notes, between 1972 and 1976, on both sides of the Atlantic, the main question for A&L was this: "how was a domain of Art & Language discourse to be distinguished from the world of all other utterances?" (Harrison 2001, 104). This problematic was directly related to the issue of ideology, or more precisely to the issue of ideological interpellation. If "theoretical practice" achieves some kind of social integration by means of synthetic subjectification (i.e. by means of schematised conjunctions), then there arises the question of the relation of this distinct ideological tendency (i.e. A&L's group ideology) to the general disposition of ideology (or more precisely to the Ideological State Apparatuses). In *Blurting in New York* one can trace some hints of this "problematisation": the annotation related to *problematic* (No. 282) directly refers to Althusser's conception of "theoretical practice", understood as the proposition that "concepts cannot be considered in isolation". This blurring could be familiarised (or conjoined) with another two annotations on *theory*, No. 346, which states that theory must be used in its own domain and with No. 347, which defends theory as a disavowal of experience and personality-laden orientations. No. 195 (*Language*) tells us that working on language is in some respects similar to working in theory and No. 201 (the *language environment* annotation) tells us that language is connected to ideology. The

<sup>3</sup> In their "Draft for an Anti-Textbook" A&L also wrote that "most of our shows [...] deal with possible cultural/social transformation in language" (quoted from Gilbert 2004, 339).

annotations on *ideology* can be perplexing, but two of them, Nos. 172 and 173, suggest how difficult it is to relate to ideologies other than your own; which consequently causes concern about the possibility of participating in the real world (i.e. politics), communicating with other artistic ideologies, and agreeing on a single ideological discourse within a group of various and heterogeneous individuals working together. Generally speaking, this is about the difficulty of working on one's own slogans, translating them to the outer world, and trying not to be normative with the statements that they propose. It is a difficult task, but A&L, I believe, took up this endeavour in the most effective way. For that reason A&L's modification of Carl Andre's slogan "Art is what we do, culture is what is done to us" to "Art is what we do, culture is what we do to other artists" should be understood from this perspective, the perspective of political participation. But unlike Andre's slogan, A&L's notion of political participation does not equate ideology to normative culture, nor does it posit (autonomous) art as a shelter, a political decision still within ideology *qua* normative culture, or a detachment from it. But A&L's politics is only halfway politics. Apart from attaining an alternative organisational practice,<sup>4</sup> art is also the practice of building new formulations, new cultures, and new ideologies. This "what we do to other[s]", which is related to impact and effect as the moment of transformation in art is related to a "culture", is what A&L strove to realise in their own theoretical (art) practice. They understood perfectly that such a practice could not be realised with a retreat to "autonomy",<sup>5</sup> but with participation, with this "what we do to other[s]" attitude, which sees art also as a practice of issuing declarations, statements, and slogans. A task for the future might probably be to intensify these discussions by transferring the Art and Language discourse into a less euphemistically Art and Slogans practice.

##### 5. LENIN ON SLOGANS

[I]n "Anarchy in the U.K." they had damned the present, and in "God Save the Queen" they had damned the past with a curse so hard that it took the future with it. [...] "No Future in England's dah-rrrrreemng!": England's dream of its glorious past, as represented by the Queen, the "moron", the nation's basic tourist attraction, linchpin of an economy based on nothing, *salve* on England's collective amputee's

<sup>4</sup> Some critics tend to dismiss A&L's problematic of working together as some kind of escapist and introverted socialising. For example, Gilbert sees it as having "a political significance which they obtained by opening a space of learning, or a sheltered conversational community, within the highly administrated culture of advanced capitalism" (Gilbert 2004, 331).

<sup>5</sup> Here are two blurts on the annotation about *autonomy* that are linked to each other: "The scientist does not ask himself about the historical presuppositions of his work while working. He takes the trivialities which he lives and works with (his Lebenswelt) for granted. Husserl has said that you can't ignore these trivialities if you want to understand the meaning of science" (No. 60) and "Autonomy has been a condition of art's ideology. An art without autonomy would be an ideologically different art" (No. 62) (Art & Language, 1975).

itch for Empire... So one heard, when Johnny Rotten rolled his r's; [... Richard Huelsenbeck's Dadaism from 1918, Ranter Abiezer Coppe's cruelty from 1649, and the Situationist International's prophecy from 1961] (Marcus 1989, 11, 27)

I would call this system Lloyd-Georgism, after the English Minister Lloyd George, one of the foremost and most dexterous representatives of this system in the classic land of the "bourgeois labour party". A first-class bourgeois manipulator, an astute politician, a popular orator who will deliver any speeches you like, even r-r-revolutionary ones, to a labour audience, and a man who is capable of obtaining sizeable sops for docile workers in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.), Lloyd George serves the bourgeoisie splendidly, and serves it precisely among the workers, brings its influence precisely to the proletariat, to where the bourgeoisie needs it most and where it finds it most difficult to subject the masses morally. (Lenin 1964, 117–118)

Lenin's short text *On Slogans* faces us with a strange situation: even though he criticises unjust and false slogans, Lenin does not propose a correct slogan to replace the old ones. Most of Lenin's text is a critique of "slogans which lost all meaning — lost it as 'suddenly' as the sharp turn in history was 'sudden'" (Lenin 1964, 183). Lenin is alluding to the slogan "All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets", which was valid from 27 February to 4 July 1917, while a peaceful transfer of power to the Soviets was still possible. But the course of history changed and after July the peaceful option was no longer there, so the only possibility for revolution was a violent takeover of power. But nowhere in his text does Lenin propose this "new slogan" to replace the old ones. Here we see that slogans are collective enunciations (i.e. a slogan cannot be written by an isolated individual), that they keep evolving all the time, and that they are elements of language related to power (Lenin is interested in slogans primarily due to their performative character, which will be realised when the revolution comes: "the fundamental issue of revolution is the issue of power" (Lenin 1964, 183)). All of these characteristics and elements of slogans were also used and theorised by Deleuze and Guattari in interesting and exciting ways. But there is one characteristic of slogans according to Lenin that Deleuze and Guattari overlooked or, perhaps, chose to ignore: slogans must tell the "truth". This obligation, which is tightly related to the "thought" content of slogans, is at the same time also strongly connected to force and power; or in Lenin's own words: "primarily, and above all, the people must know the truth — they must know who actually wields state power" (Lenin 1964, 185). The intellectual or, as we dubbed it above, constative aspect of slogans Lenin defines thus: "every particular slogan must be deduced from the totality of specific features of a definite political situation" (Lenin 1964, 183). This is a purely theoretical axiom of slogan politics, at loggerheads with Deleuze and Guattari's politics and its opposition to any legislation by constants or stable contours. Given that the

performative (or *force-related*) character of slogans is obvious in their appearance, I believe that insisting on their intellectual (or, better, theoretical) aspect is very important, not only for any "theoretical practice", but also for any evaluation of the programme of art (primarily Conceptual Art) as a heuristic practice.

Louis Althusser even wrote in slogans (earlier on, I called this theoretical manifestation of slogans *Althusserian slogans*): *Reading Capital, For Marx, Lenin and Philosophy*, considering just the titles of his books. Describing Althusser's philosophy in Leninist terms, as "the ability to draw lines of demarcation within the theoretical", Alain Badiou reminds us that those lines are drawn with theses (Badiou 2009, 63). This is, as Badiou writes, a philosophy conceived as a *declaration*, which is, or must be, a political word (Badiou 2009, 66–67). What makes Althusser's philosophical theses so close to slogans is not only his insistence on demarcating his materialist philosophy off from the idealist ideology, but also his conception of philosophy not as isolated cognitive appropriation but as a forceful declaration and statement.

In his article "Lenin the Just, or Marxism Unrecycled" and book *A Marxist Philosophy of Language*, Jean-Jacques Lecercle discusses Lenin's pamphlet on slogans as crucial in Marxist linguistics. In Lecercle's view, not only Deleuze and Guattari but also Althusser and his followers gathered around *Les Cahiers marxistes-léninistes* were influenced by Lenin's pamphlet. Lecercle analysed the "Vive le léninisme" issue of *Les Cahiers marxistes-léninistes*, where a considerable number of discussions concerned slogans. According to Lecercle, what was most important for Althusser in his reading of "On Slogans" was his understanding that, apart from being concrete analyses of concrete situations, slogans also command great strategic importance. In this reading, slogans constitute a conjunctural analysis that is strongly related to the struggle, or to "the power relationship that it establishes", as well as a "concept *linguistic conjuncture* which combines the state of the encyclopaedia (the compendium of knowledge and beliefs of the community of speakers); the state of the language (sedimentation of the history of the community of speakers: taken together, the language and the encyclopaedia from what Gramsci calls a 'concenter of the world'); and the potentialities of interpellation and counter-interpellation that exist in the situation" (Lecercle 2006, 100–104).

In order to assess the use of Leninist slogans and slogans as a theoretical practice in the arts, in the concluding part of this essay I will address the use of "Lenin" by Art & Language and Dušan Makavejev, representing two antagonistic artistic directions.

After the *Blurring project*, A&L continued working on issues in the philosophy of language, with special emphasis on the conversational matrix inside their collective. Their discussions concerning this

problematic were published in their collectively signed *Draft for an Anti-Textbook* in 1974. A similar text was published the following year under the title of "The Lumpen-Headache", which discussed issues in the philosophy of language as well as "the [group's] relation to the name 'A&L', its commitment to socialism and its basis of unity" (Gilbert 2004, 335). This commitment to socialism introduced "external elements" into A&L's practice, elements that were foreign to their previous work undertaken in the *Indexing* project. This broadening of A&L's field of interest was seen as a schism between the group's UK and New York factions. Beginning with the *Blurring* project, a number of works that incorporated this "socialisation" effect in A&L's theory and practice (communicating with external elements and broadening the group's field of interest) were realised in New York with significant international participation. Many of the participants in these projects regarded A&L's work as not political enough to make a meaningful impact on cultural politics inside the very repressive art system of the United States. So they decided to collaborate with different, more politically engaged artistic groups, such as AWC and UICA, to expand the work methods of previous A&L projects so as to include various other communities, such as repressed sexual and ethnic groups, and to work more openly with labour movements. This was the route that Ian Burn took, among others; for some ten years following the definite schism between A&L's "artistic" and "political" factions, Burn concentrated exclusively on various organisational activities among Australia's labour movements. By 1976 *The Fox* and along with it the New York section of A&L ceased to exist. This was not simply because one section was less political than the other; the conventional wisdom has it that A&L's UK faction was more interested in the formal problematic of the pragmatics of language, as opposed to the New York faction, whose political activism was more explicitly pronounced. This is partly true, because the group's very consideration of their group problematics, including issues of theoretical practice, ideology, autonomy, etc. as constatives of the performativity of language was that which made A&L on both sides of the Atlantic into a political art theory and practice group. I believe that the inclusion of external elements in the group's theoretical practice without dealing with the issues of communication, relation, and ideology in their full complexity contributed to the dissolution of the group. Without having dealt rigorously enough with the problematic of the influence of their "culture" (i.e. "what we do to other artists"), A&L decided in favour of an unrestricted openness. This is not to suggest that the problem was caused by Amiri Baraka's "Stalinism", to which they decided to open up; rather, it was more of a technical issue, involving uncritical cooperativeness that seemed to arise from this activist practice. A&L regarded cooperation and harmony as stalemate practices that would bring not only theory to a dead-end but also any kind of heuristic activity, without which there could be no revolutionary practice. As A&L's UK faction stated in 1975, their politics was based on conflict: "It's no good just carrying-on with good intentions. The progressive intellectual's task is to generate ideological conflict" (*Art & Language* 1999, 352).

Before returning to "Lenin", I would like to remind us of Močnik's theory, the starting point of which was that "communication is a nuclear instance of the ideological mediation of social integration" (Močnik 1986, 176). As Močnik clearly realised, social integration was integral to the communist ideology; also, the communists used "speeches, passions and illusions" to integrate and consolidate their own ranks. It seems then that this ideological integration transcends all individual "ideologies" and constitutes itself as a general "human" condition of sorts. The ground for its self-constitution is communication that sucks everything into its force field. Then how are we to think the difference between communists and non-communists? Is it the same "speeches, passions, and illusions" but with different *constatives* and their structures of conjunction that distinguish the speeches of communists from those of non-communists? I think so. We can likewise arrive at the same problem from the point of the discussion above if we consider that communication takes place, or that language materialises in the process of ideological interpellation through the force of "constative-performatives", which we called slogans. So we might claim then that both communists and non-communists communicate through slogans, but that the constative aspects of their slogans and their intra-relations differ. Following Lenin's argument, apart from having the effects of force and power (the strategic point), communist slogans are also utterances, words that are related to truth and knowledge. That is why we may refer to those slogans as theory slogans. Therefore it is possible to say that communist slogans aim at truth-effect. That would be enough to demarcate them from advertisement.<sup>6</sup>

But it is common knowledge that communist slogans are indeed different from non-communist slogans. From this perspective it seems that the "problematic" is different: how is it possible for two communists to communicate? If they are to integrate socially with the communist ideology by means of communicable "performative-constatives" *qua* collective enunciations, then how may communication between the two of them amount to anything else than tautology? The question comes down to this: how is it possible to communicate differently as a communist? That is why theory slogans, with their double role of articulating the collective nature of enunciation and providing at the same time elements for non-personal communication, are crucial here.

So far, we have seen that it is possible to claim that one of A&L's primary concerns was precisely this problematic. A&L's policy was to intensify research on their theory slogans, to schematise them without succumbing to any kind of "personal is political"

<sup>6</sup> Or as Lecerclé distinguishes between those two: "The insistence on the correctness of the naming of the moment of the conjunction by the slogan is what distinguishes good old 'propaganda', in the Leninist sense of the term, from the 'political communication' that the imperialists are so fond of, which aims to sell a policy in the same way that an advertising slogan sells a product" (Lecerclé 2006, 103).

emotionalism, to place their production outside subjectification by means of abstract elements of theory, and to try to communicate with other communists along these lines (remember, A&L was a "Marxist-Leninist" group).<sup>7</sup> In A&L's case, this was an immensely difficult task, because their integration was to be realised in the general field of artistic production or, more precisely, in a theory and practice of art that inclined toward the communist tradition.

According to Močnik, who separates "aesthetic interpellation" from normal interpellation, the former, apart from subjectifying illusion (which is common to all ideologies), must also meet the condition of being subversive (in order to realise itself as an artistic process) (Močnik 1986, 185). This daunting task, almost impossible, is only thinkable in the context of those artworks that have a "multi-serial" or *polyphonic* character, which always manages to thwart interpellation. In Močnik's words, the illusion never ends – but neither is it ever consummated (Močnik 1976, 187–188). This particular feature of the nature of art is why A&L insisted on working on their theory slogans from within their field. The meaning of communication between two communists may be understood as making explicit the structures involved in the constitution of their integration. This process is in itself a re-assemblage, as we saw from the "Introduction to Blurring in New York"; but it is not the same as the Deleuzian position of escaping schematisation through constant/permanent variables or through the transition of eternal pass-words. The problem might be simplified even further if we consider what is the minimum required practice that aesthetic interpellation entails: to look at art. What we want to know is whether there is any difference as to how communists look at art. After 1976 this question was probably the main source of headache for A&L.

Their provisional answer was *A Portrait of V. I. Lenin in the Style of Jackson Pollock*, which comprised a series of paintings, an essay, and a song recorded with Red Krayola, all realised in 1980. This "impossible picture" or, in Harrison's words, a "monstrous détente", was a summary of A&L's long-time "communist headache", as it were. How are we to understand a painting of Lenin rendered in a style that art criticism typically sees as quintessentially non-communist, or even anti-communist? Harrison, who took part in its production, interprets it as a "critique of fashionable artistic forms of left-wing theory" (Harrison 2001, 139). But at the same time, according to Harrison's interpretation this was a practical solution

<sup>7</sup> In Charles Harrison's opinion, when A&L used slogans, for example in *Nine Gross and Conspicuous Errors*, their musical work realised in collaboration with Red Krayola in 1976, they were "self-consciously ironic to naive optimism associated with Chinese propaganda posters" (Harrison 2001, 109). Nevertheless, Harrison is indeed aware of the theoretical – even if reduced only to aesthetics – character of collective enunciations (as diverse as, for instance, Constructivist and Surrealist imagery): "both were treated simply as episodes, from which certain durable and canonically acceptable works of art might nevertheless be extruded in order to be admitted into Modernist critical and technical categories" (Harrison 2001, 110).

against the appropriation of Conceptual Art by a superficial detached semiotic aesthetic that was starting to look a lot like commercial advertisement. Accordingly, the *Lenin-Pollock* project could be seen as a possibility of bringing two completely antagonistic signs inside a single frame and of generating tension between at least two modernist collective enunciations. But if that was indeed all, then it could be seen as a step back from A&L's theory and practice, which had been so cautious not to include extrapolations in their system or limit their interest to the aesthetic problems of the Modernist canon (see Annotation No. 37). First we have to be clear that A&L were not homogenous or very consistent about their theory, which included many contradictory elements, ranging from analytical philosophy to communist theory. But we should remember that at times A&L comprised as many as ten different people. So one might claim that the idea behind *Lenin-Pollock*, in terms of bringing contradictions together, had been present in the work of A&L as far back as the early 70s. Second, at the time of *Lenin-Pollock*, politics in Europe and the United States was undergoing a swing to the right, which resulted in the oppression of all kinds of communist thought. The *Lenin-Pollock* project was also strategic inasmuch as it brought much-needed abstraction to the issue of communism, which was previously lacking, either due to fashion or reductionism. In order to avoid these constraints, which affect the way one sees a picture, A&L proposed the "reconstruction of the causal relations, rather than any iconic consideration", which meant shifting their interest from structural to generic analyses (Art & Language 1984, 154). This might also strike one as a very regressive decision, since A&L introduced the schematisation of the conditions of production in its most extreme manifestations (as indexes and annotations of the existing conjunctions) as a critical practice; a retreat to "causality" might then seem like a theoretical step back to determinism, historicism, or, worse, evolutionism. A&L's interest in the generic conditions of a picture (or, say, a slogan) did not come out of the blue: it was already present in the problematic of Conceptual Art. It is hardly surprising that Ian Burn, writing at the same time about his personal dissatisfaction with Conceptual Art, conceptualised its failure as the disappearance of history.

A&L's insistence on the concept of genesis instead of iconic analysis should thus be understood as an attempt to re-historicise those slogans that were no longer used and, perhaps more importantly, to trace their transformations by looking at what had happened to them. That is what A&L attempted to do with their portrait of Lenin in the style of Pollock: to direct our attention to forgotten but still not thoroughly processed conjunctions in modernist cultural history, of routes of ideas from overall ambition to stupefied recuperation and more importantly to all-beautiful slogans that meant so much for the emancipation of millions. In their own words, "the notion of genesis directs our attention to the world, to the problem of material causation and not to the patrician intricacies of an idealised cultural coherence"

(Art & Language 1984, 154). Considering Lenin in conjunction with art is somehow usually a bit of a problem, which, I believe, A&L's theory and practice might help us to address. If we tried to reconstruct Lenin's relationship with art based on the recollections of Lunacharsky, Gorky, or Krupskaya, and the snippets that he wrote on the subject, we would face a man who was apparently uneasy about art. Most notably, this would include his unpredictable relationship with Mayakovsky, as well as some works of art that he admired, such as the sonatas of Beethoven. His remarks allegedly made to Gorky whilst listening to Isaiah Dobrovin's rendering of Beethoven's *Appassionata* are probably the most commonly quoted passage in all of Lenin's writings:

I don't know of anything better than the *Appassionata*, I can listen to it every day. Amazing, superhuman music! I always think with a pride that may be naive: look what miracles people can perform! But I can't listen to music often, it affects my nerves, it makes me want to say sweet nothings and pat the heads of people who, living in a filthy hell, can create such beauty. But today we mustn't pat anyone on the head or we'll get our hand bitten off; we've got to hit them on the heads; hit them without mercy, though in the ideal we are against doing any violence to people. Hm-hm — it's a hellishly difficult task! (Gorky 1967, 247)

This passage occupies a central place in Dušan Makavejev's 1971 film *W. R. — Misterije organizma* (*WR: Mysteries of the Organism*). In this film classic, when Makavejev posits a Lenin unable to confront art, he is actually reproducing Lenin's own world, in which politics and art formed two completely separate fields of interest. As an irresolvable tension, this incompatibility is a dead-end for thinking art in terms of concepts, theoretical postulates, and declarations. As I tried to show elsewhere, to take up this position is not to disavow Lenin, but rather to include him as an external factor in an otherwise transcendental and experiential art practice. More precisely, it amounts to a cultural politics based on the following postulate: to create an "artistic politics" by means of an artistic immanency based on experience, creativity, and spontaneity. By pointing to Art & Language, I tried to show that there is another possibility, that of thinking art as a practice in itself, a "theoretical practice" that poses the question of purity not as a question of identity anymore, but as a position of demarcation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Here we must add one more recollection of Lenin's relationship with art. Among other things, Lenin made the following remarks to Clara Zetkin: "I have the courage to display myself as 'barbarian'. I cannot regard the works of Impressionism, Futurism, Cubism, and other 'isms' as the highest revelations of artistic genius. I simply don't understand them and I get no pleasure from them" (Zetkin 1967, 250). In his article "Lenin in Las Meninas", Geoffrey Waite uses this recollection to develop his thesis that demarcation is the condition and attitude necessary for a truly historical materialist description of, among other things, artworks. Waite applies his thesis, which I have also found extremely useful, to Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (Waite 1986).

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