THE STORIED YUGOSLAVIA:
A DIALOGUE OF MYTHISTORY, POWER, AND STORIED YUGOSLAV NATIONAL CONTEXT IN IVO ANDRIĆ'S *THE BRIDGE ON THE DRINA* (1945/1959) AND EMIR KUSTURICA'S *UNDERGROUND* (1995)

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES
YORK UNIVERISTY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

May 2013

Abstract

This thesis examines a dialogue between two texts meant to contribute to the mythistory (Aleksić, 2007) and what I term the storied context of the second Yugoslav Experiment (1945-1995). From within the lens of my own diasporic context, I juxtapose Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), published at the nation's outset, against Emir Kusturica's film *Underground* (1995), produced at Yugoslavia's failing end. I analyze the thematic connections and ideological constraints to the conversation between these two texts by establishing the parameters of both Kusturica's successful and unsuccessful attempts to engage Andrić's novel. A template for the continued overlaying of "discrepant voices" (Said, 1993) is revealed for further examination both backward into the mythistories of the Southwest Slavs of the Balkans and forward into the construction of storied contexts in the former Yugoslav states. Finally, a discussion of the influence of the West's own imaginary of the former Yugoslavia and its influence of contextualizing stories of the same is also examined.

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> *There are some traditional stories that are so universal that we forget when and where we heard or read them, and they live in us like the memory of some experience of our own.*
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> *Such a story is the one about a young man who, wandering through the world to seek his fortune, set out along a dangerous road, not knowing where it was leading him. So as not to lose his way, the young man took an axe and carved in the trunks of the trees beside the road signs which would later show him the way back.*
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> *That young man personifies the shared, eternal destiny of all mankind: on the one hand, a dangerous and uncertain road, and on the other our deep human need not to get lost, but to find our way in the world and leave some trace behind us... they convince us that, in everything we do, we are not alone, nor the first, nor unique.*
>
> (Andrić, "Signs by the roadside," 1992, p. 31)

> *Natalija:*
> You write heroic roles for yourself, and I get to play the whore.
>
> (Kusturica, *Underground*, 1995)

> All discourse is "placed," and the heart has its reasons.
>
> (Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", 2003, p. 234)

1991 marked the year that the former Yugoslavia began its violent dissolution. News, film and literature in the West and from the former Yugoslav states focused on the shared humanity and loss across ethnicities in the Yugoslav wars of dissolution 1991-1994. More often, however, these media sought to contextualize, blame and reduce the reasons for the violence to products of ancient tribal hatreds that remained inscrutable to any observer not of Balkan[1] origins (Iordanova, 2001). Frustrated by these reductionist representations, the diasporic former

[1] Todorova, in tracing the roots of the term Balkan as it relates to the people of Southeast Europe within Western discourse, addresses the necessary ambiguity of the term. Todorova cites Mary Douglas' argument that the Balkans, because they do not fit neatly within the East/West dialectic described by Said in *Orientalism* (1979), are necessarily described as "confusing or contradicting elements" that "provoke pollution behaviour that condemns them" (Mary Douglas as cited by Todorova, 1997, p. 17). The Balkan nations' collective inability to fit neatly has marked a "Balkan" experience that transcends national identification (Iordanova, 2006). These collective stereotypes and responses to the same of the people of Southeast Europe, which are usually less than flattering, inform identity as much as any individual national source of identification. Consequently I use the term Balkan when a point extends beyond national compartmentalization and toward the much more general "Balkan" context.

Yugoslav community in the West attempted to respond knowing there were strong feelings in the former Yugoslav community of the Balkans and abroad that the Western media was oversimplifying the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Further, Western media had reduced the people of the region to "third world" peasants (Iordanova, 2001, p. 47), ignoring the cosmopolitan complexity of many of the cities of the former Yugoslavia. What became clear to those familiar and invested in the people of the region[2] was that there had to be other, native perspectives on the nature of the people and the conflict we were witnessing: or, at least, that was the reaction of this member of the diaspora[3].

Emir Kusturica intended to serve as a cultural translator As one of Yugoslavia's most famous film makers, Kusturica responded with a film that was meant to shed light on the conflict for the uninitiated while speaking to the people of the former Yugoslavia of his perspective on the reasons for the failure of the Yugoslav project. His film, *Underground* (1995)[4], winner of the Palme D'or prize at Cannes in 1995, was called out as either "inspired" (Keene, 2001) or "propagandistic" (Finkielkraut, 1999), but what many critics have failed to notice is that

[2] By those invested in the region, I suggest that a large part of this population is composed of diasporic Croats, Slovenes, Bosnians, Montenegrins and Serbs, including myself.

[3] Diaspora is a complicated term. Its most straightforward definition is to "suggest a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and a relocation in one or more nation-states, territories or countries" (Evans Braziel & Mannur, 2003, p. 1), but this utilitarian definition, as Braziel and Mannur go on to suggest, ignores the complex relationships between the country of origin, the initial immigrant and the children brought up abroad, but whose connections to the "homeland" allow for them to hyphenate their own national context: "Serbian-Canadian", "Croatian-Australian" etc. Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, in his essay "Ethnicity in an Age of Diaspora" (Radhakrishnan, 2003), addresses this community directly by ruminating on the meaning of diaspora in relation to his son's own experience of his hyphenated state "Oh, yes, I remember we have different passports" (Radhakrishnan, 2003). This sense of difference becomes more acute in the face of conflict or misunderstanding between the nation of origin and nation of presence. For the various diasporas of the former Yugoslavia, definition of context became important during the wars of secession as the various governments of the nations of presence for diasporic citizens took action "back home". It is the community of diasporic citizens who remain invested in their nation of origin even as they create lives abroad that I address as the diaspora in this thesis.

[4] For the purposes of the analysis for this paper I've used the version of *Underground* (1995) distributed in North America and Europe and the translated version of *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959). There is a longer version of Kusturica's film edited for Yugoslav television, but as part of the interest of this thesis is how Kusturica and Andrić are heard in the West, I focused on the materials available to Western audiences.

Kusturica's film does not stand alone. Kusturica calls directly upon the work of Ivo Andrić, most specifically Andrić's novel *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959)[5]. Through his film, Kusturica engages in a dialogue about the history of the former Yugoslavia which is contextualized by Andrić's historical telling from the beginning of the Yugoslav experiment in *Drina* (1945/1959). Borrowing heavily from both the content and structure of *Drina* (1945/1959), Kusturica begins this dialogue across the span of the life of the second Yugoslav experiment by responding to Andrić's qualified optimism with cynicism and Andrić's conviction with rage and grief. Where Andrić chronicles the events that bring us to the experiment's beginning, Kusturica captures its failing end.

Though Kusturica and Andrić share the common subject of the history of Yugoslavia, (either the "Yugoslavia in miniature" (Ljubišić, 2004, p. xiii) known as Bosnia or the second Yugoslav experiment), expansive differences between the perspectives and world views of the two authors, however, complicate Kusturica's attempt at a second chapter to the history Andrić began with *Drina* (1945/1959). Where Andrić sees writing as a means to connections across the decades, Kusturica sees storytelling as a space of exploitation and corruption. Where Andrić sees an attempt to span divisions created by ontological solitude, Kusturica sees this connection as a fabrication built to facilitate duping those prone to the socio-political machinations of the ruling class.

Kusturica, arguably the most famous film maker out of both Yugoslavia and Bosnia, was at the time of the conflicts part of the Bosnian/Yugoslav diasporas. While teaching film at Columbia University, Kusturica was confronted by the same biased representations of the conflict and context in the Yugoslav republics as the rest of the diasporic community in the West

[5] Andrić's novel will also be referred to as *Drina* (1945/1959) herein.

(Iordanova, 2002, p. 28). His response was to return to Serbia to film "a story that might answer not just questions about our history, but about the nature of our people" (Robinson, 1996, p. 12) with the film *Underground* (1995), producing what many hoped would be the definitive, insider's word on the history of the roots of this violence. Kusturica made, instead, a highly contentious film which failed to overcome the exoticizing discourse of the West. He, in fact, embraced many of the most damaging stereotypes in the Western discourse of the Balkans in the process. Kusturica's film is at its best, then, a reflection of one of the common discourses within Yugoslavia about the differences between the people of the Balkans and the West. Or perhaps at its worst, *Underground* (1995) is a film that entrenches unhelpful paradigms and problematic stereotypes both within the Western understanding of the former Yugoslavia and within the Balkan/Yugoslav/Serbian/Bosnian cultures themselves.

In trying to speak his history of the former Yugoslavia in *Underground* (1995), Kusturica, links the narrative of the film to Andrić's own history of Bosnia from 1516-1914. *Drina* (1945/1959) was arguably the single most recognized book released by a Yugoslav author outside of Yugoslavia (Antić, 2003, p. 1). Tracing the movements of power through the small town of Višegrad, Bosnia across four centuries, Andrić provided a powerful anti-colonial[6] novel. *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) looked hopefully to a collective future for the disparate peoples of the second Yugoslav experiment from Andrić's vantage point at the beginning of the nation. Kusturica's response, offered precisely at the end of second Yugoslav experiment, dialogues directly with the structure and key themes of Andrić's novel. This thesis examines these connections while evaluating the differences in the world views and core beliefs of these

[6] Said defines anti-colonialism as arising out of "the discrepancy between European colonial power and that of the colonialized societies, [producing] a kind of historical necessity by which colonial pressure created anti-colonial resistence" (1994, p. 39).

authors that may have undermined Kusturica's attempt to bookend the nation before his project began.

Who I Am

1992. Sitting in a cubical dialing numbers to conduct pig inoculation surveys with Hutterites and Mennonites across Southern Manitoba, my cubical neighbour who is bored by unanswered attempts and misdials leans over and asks me "So, what do you think about what those bastard Serbs are doing to the Croats?"

For just a moment I freeze. That terrible pause ensues: that space between the delivery of the unintended insult by the innocent speaker who has no idea of my connection to the community he is disparaging and my response. Tired of the stories in the media that have fed his presumption, I opt to make him uncomfortable: "I'm not sure what I'm doing to them. Could you enlighten me?"

Realizing his gaff, my neighbour blanches and returns to his work. However, the interaction is pivotal for me. This is the moment when I cease to be part of the "us" that identifies as Canadian and accepts the stories on the news or through the government at face value, and become one of "them": now overtly linked to what is commonly seen as a genocidal, immoral community of others.

1979. My grandmother (who speaks no English except, weirdly, for the word "garbage") and I travel from Winnipeg to Belgrade to discover that my uncle has forgotten to pick us up at the airport. Eight years old and holding the equivalent of six months' salary of the average Yugoslav for the duration of my two month trip to Yugoslavia, I pile us into a cab to travel the hour and a half to Zrenjanin, a small city north-east of Belgrade. My uncle is horrified at what he sees as a decadent expenditure. My response is to say simply "then you should have been there to

pick us up." Not sure what to do with a fiercely independent Canadian eight-year old, my uncle takes this cab ride as evidence of my spoiled North American character and uses this story to define me for the rest of my life. Tired of fighting over the money I obviously *had* to spend, I leave the house to go on a short walk on the dirt roads outside. Taking an ill-timed left, I find myself surrounded, all at once, by a herd of pigs. The startled "oinking" that follows, along with the tender nuzzles and inquisitive nudges take me right out of my stalwart Canadian demeanour and into an irretrievable culture clash that will inform my experience of the differences between Canada and Yugoslavia/Serbia/Bosnia and Herzegovina/Croatia from this day forward. While this is my introduction to a "less developed" new world, my family (including the appalled uncle) makes me feel loved and accepted in ways during my trips that my North American family seem never to do. I get over my issues with the lack of indoor plumbing (though when a toilet presents itself, I make immediate use of its luxuries) simply because I am treated so lovingly and valued so much. My travels across the former Yugoslavia, which extend over every summer for the next four years, bring a world of new aromas, sensations, and emotions, but with that also offer a solidity of values that places family and friends above possessions. This is a world where a Canadian cousin could show up on a doorstep at any time and be welcomed with a hot cup of coffee, a piece Turkish Delight or baklava, and warm, heartfelt hugs. This is not Canada.

1999. I work as an Associate Producer for an Aboriginal production company on a nationally broadcast indigenous peoples' newsmagazine. Our work strives to retain cultural voice and integrity on the part of Aboriginal people in the face of systemic cultural trauma and physical violence. This work makes me acutely aware of the similarities in the Western discourse around Indigenous Canadians and Serbs as "othered". I often feel as though I am reporting on

recognized realities for Indigenous people here in Canada that remain equally unrecognized but just as relevant to my family and friends in the former Yugoslavia. That Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Defense and architect of the amendments to the NATO mission that allow for the invasion of sovereign Serbia, is a friend of the family, his former wife having been my English teacher, make the realities of the seventy-eight days of bombing no less difficult to cope with. Most of my time in the 1990s is spent feeling torn between my privileged North American upbringing and my sense of social justice that argues vociferously with misrepresentation of events abroad.

It is not that I believe that Serbs are being unjustly accused of rape, genocide, and looting but rather that the reasons for the conflict and the realities of shared responsibility around the wars are being oversimplified for the purposes of easy reportage, easy intervention and easier policy-making both about and in the region. The Balkans, always being peripheral and complex (Todorova, 1997) elude comprehensive understanding in the West and create a reportage and policy quagmire (Antić, 2003; Todorova, 1997; Iordanova, *Emir Kusturica,* 2002). As Peter Gomes says in *Stephen Fry in America*, "one of the many things we can say about this country is that we dislike complexity, so we will make simple solutions to everything that we possibly can even when the complex answer is obviously the correct answer" (Davidson, 2008)[7]. The centuries of convoluted history in the former Yugoslav states, engendered by the waxing and waning of imperial influence, are not conducive to sound bites or easy comprehension, but the stereotypes that arise in the absence of simplicity are. So the war becomes a "simple" matter of stereotyping genocidal Serbs and victimized Croats and Bosniaks in the media as well as in the international policies instituted to control the violence.

[7] While there are significant differences between Canada and the United States in a number of spheres, policy directions of the US are often followed by Canada using the same information and rhetoric on which they based their responses to the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s.

But the reasons offered for the interventions and their directions are unsatisfying and incomplete, despite the fact that intellectuals and activists worldwide are asking some of the same questions about these policies. When NATO bombs Serbia in 1999, all of our questions are effectively muted. I am confronted with a problem many Canadians would be confronted with over the next fourteen years: when my nation of citizenship invokes military intervention in my country of heritage (bombs) using my tax dollars to do so, what do I do? Seventy-eight days of bombing in Serbia and seventy-eight days of demonstrations in Canada would bring me to the point where I wanted nothing more than to find a way of calling out the system we use to communicate our imaginary as leading to uninformed and destructive policies and actions abroad. This thesis will not stop the same kind of interventions that have already occurred but reflect this Canadian's process in disengaging from facile stories in an attempt to be better informed.

As I read materials justifying the act of calling out Serbs as a destructive and uncontrolled presence in the Balkans, I am reminded of the film *My Father's Angel* by Davor Marjanović. I identify with the lead character's wife who questions if her husband believes his friends and family are capable of the atrocities reported (1999). How can I marry the reality I have come to know about my Serbian/Yugoslav heritage with the stereotypes the media employs to tell me who I am? I ask myself if there is a way to change the way these stories are told.

Telling Me Who I Am

Media representations of the Yugoslav wars of secession in the 1990s became subjects of discursive conflict for the Yugoslav diasporic community during and after the wars of secession. The release of almost any film from the now former Yugoslav states was met with close attention and heavy criticism from all national interests. *Pretty village, pretty flame* (Dragojević, 1998),

Cabaret Balkan (Paskaljević, 1999), and *Before the rain* (Manchevski, 1994) were all films that garnered international attention and powerfully ambivalent responses from intellectuals and laypeople alike outside of Yugoslavia. Outside of films devoted to illustrating the ethnic violence of the wars of dissolution in the 1990s, there were comparatively few materials that spoke of or to the former Yugoslavia or Serbia/Bosnia/Croatia in the West. The pieces that fall outside of the discussion of the conflicts of the 1990s that are available are a) distinctly racist in their discourse against the people of the Balkans as a whole[8]: b) romantic and uncritical of the Balkans, often by way of criticizing the West[9]: c) uncomfortably critical of the exoticization the people of the Balkans[10] within Western discourse; or, d) entrenched in Yugoslav cultural conversations and history about a community far enough removed from our Western context so as to make them feel unfamiliar, despite the familiarity of the subjects[11].

In focusing on the history of the people rather than the conflict itself, Kusturica provided important touchstones for the diasporic audience. Much of the diasporic community holds myths and histories around the Second World War as a defining time in the choice to stay or leave the country. Further, the stereotypes Iordanova argues Kusturica supplies are familiar. For example, Blacky, Kusturica's quintessential wild, Balkan man (Bjelić D. I., 2005)[12] whom Iordanova dismisses as a "pugnacious, artless dunce" (Iordanova, 2001, p. 112) reminded me so much of

[8] (Durham, 1924), (Huntington, 1993)
[9] (West, 1995)
[10] (Makavejev, 1981)
[11] (Pavić, 1989)
[12] Defined by Bjelić as "the enemy of European civilization. He is, at the same time, truly European in that he represents a new and energized European man who uninhibitedly acts out a system of masculinity" (Bjelić D. I., 2005, p. 107) which is predicated on fetish and exclusion. Homosocial with "homoerotic desires, effervescing in nationalism ingrained in the institution of the nation-state" (Bjelić, 2005, p. 107), these wild men build their own places and identities through systems of exclusion, primarily of women and minorities, expressing through "passionate physicality what Eurotechnocrats emotionlessly express in economy and law" (Bjelić, 2005, p. 107), But the stereotype of unbridled, uncontrolled reactionism stands in direct opposition to European notions of civility and self, relegating the wild Balkan man to a lower caste in the global social system, while fetishizing the clarity of his actions and his expression of dominance and self. In Blacky, Kusturica has certainly met the West's fascination and need.

my father that it distracted me from my first viewing of the film. *Underground* (1995) became the story of Blacky for me: crazy, proud, passionate and, most importantly, exhibiting preternatural physical strength, Blacky in many ways felt like home. As a member of the Serbian/Yugoslav diasporas, the displacement I felt as a consequence of the representations of the people I thought I knew on Canadian and American television in the nineteen-nineties only made that sense of home more poignant and powerful while watching the film. Reading Iordanova's criticism of Blacky was painful and seemed wrongheaded as my father, the "real" Blacky in my world, was a successful businessman with a great deal of community respect and support here in Canada. But I can't even count the moments during the movie that convinced me that Kusturica had met my father and put him on screen for the world to see. While I admired Pavić's writing and engaged with Kiš intellectually, the moment that Blacky looked frantically in the Sava River for his drowned son actually brought me to tears. It is this emotional engagement, calculated or not, that distinguishes between art that engages the public discourse, particularly diasporic discourse, and art that remains a piece for study. Though Pavić and Kiš both offer potentially more exciting questions to pursue with relation to the construction of national identity and context in the former Yugoslavia, Kusturica's movies, passionate, and orgiastic, have much bigger audiences and much stronger reactions. Accessibility engenders a response. Response generates discussion and attention, even if the attention responds to a character I adore with contentions of stereotype and hyperbole.

Both *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) and *Underground* (1995) remain two of the most accessible and recognized texts from the former Yugoslavia. Though intended to extend

"truths"[13] regarding the people and history of Yugoslavia, the works of Kusturica and Andrić, once integrated into the broader diasporic discourse, provided ways of contextualizing individual discourses of identity and nationhood to people living in the diaspora. Kusturica's argument regarding power and corruptibility (applied as a contextualizing myth) resonated for scores of Yugoslavs, including my father, who left the country for precisely that reason. Though Kusturica spoke as an exile[14] from a defunct state, his cynical vision of the failure of Tito's Yugoslavia was an expected end of the country for many diasporic Yugoslavs. Kusturica's film confirmed for many people who had left Yugoslavia that their expectations of corruption and exploitation had been fulfilled. Where Andrić's novel underscores ethnic tension while highlighting how those tensions were overcome through mutual experiences of oppression, thereby providing a tempered, hopeful welcome to the new nation, Kusturica, conversely, mourns the suicide of the second Yugoslav experiment in *Underground* (1995) by highlighting the power of corrupting, subjugating discourses.

These two texts and authors have a significant impact on the comprehension of context for Yugoslavs and Yugoslavs abroad primarily because they are part of a small pool of Yugoslav materials available in the West in translation. Because Kusturica has deliberately linked these two chronicles in both structure and theme, a close reading of both works to assess philosophical compatibilities and incompatibilities seems necessary to properly contextualize the dialogue between them. I have sought to do this firstly through a close reading juxtaposing sociological contexts of the authors against their works, and secondly through an examination of the

[13] In both cases, the desire to share these "truths" stems from issues with the prevailing discourse both at home and abroad. Stepping in to recontextualize (Kusturica) or to provide a new paradigm of seeing connection where difference was previously highlighted (Andrić), both authors attempt to actively divert discourse in and about the former Yugoslavia.

[14] After an infamous fight in which Kusturica tried to defend the legacy of Andrić's work, Kusturica lamented openly in the press (Iordanova, 2002, p. 18) that if he were to return to Bosnia he would be killed for his "treason" against Izetbegovic's active reimagining of Bosnian history and context, most especially as it related to Andrić's writing

mythistorical structures and intents of each author as they present layered histories (Kusturica attempting to layer his own history over Andrić's) of the now former Yugoslavia.

Writing from the Diaspora

The process of writing this thesis has been, first and foremost, an academic inquiry. Throughout this process, however, I have had to be attentive to my own experience and context as a diasporan Yugoslav-Serb. Writing about events that took place or are taking place in a country of origin from within the diaspora is a tricky thing. The first generation of children born abroad, of which I am one, are often used as translators between the cultures for our families from a very young age (paperwork, translation of complicated language, translation of clashes of cultural context for our parents, et cetera). When our work extends beyond the family circle, the impulse to continue to try to translate context can remain, especially when we feel that the people from which we come are as misunderstood as I felt was my case in the 1990s. Feeling like one of many Canadians of Yugoslav descent who were attempting to challenge the reductive Western discourse in Canada and the U.S. of the events in the former Yugoslavia, I felt it was somehow my responsibility to clarify misunderstandings I saw presented in the media. And, at least in my case, the responsibility to continue to try to translate between my "peoples" has continued through my work as an adult: I have just broadened my scope from the kitchen table.

As I committed to the analysis contained in this thesis, I was often forced to ask if my work addressed the "real" cultures it examined or if it was a product of the enunciative process (Bhabha, 1994)[15] or my own unintentionally romanticized notions. Outside the nation of origin,

[15] The enunciative process is identified by Homi Bhabha as a product of "the very principle of 'dialectical reorganization'" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 209) in that It is a process by which culture is immediately changed at the moment of contact, normally with colonializing projects. In the case of the diasporic community, living within the subjugating space and attempting to translate identity through that space on a regular basis leads to the development of an articulated entity that consistently shifts in context and structure away from the orginary source, the homeland's culture itself. What this results in is a diasporic culture specific to articulation against

identity associated with the country of origin is in constant transition and is further removed from the process of change within the culture of origin itself. We are, after all, here and not there. Our families came here, leaving their nations at a specific historical point, diverging from the national path back home into a hyphenated national context somewhere new[16]. As I worked with Yugoslav texts and visited Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia as part of my research, small things served as persistent reminders of the differences between my context as a Serbian-Canadian[17]. As a result, I was reminded that while I *might* have a more nuanced appreciation of the values and social mores of the people I was studying, I was still hyphenated: a hyphenate that gave

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events and context away from the source, and thereby changed from it. The footnote I include regarding the *kolo* at my cousin's wedding is an example of the ways in which cultural difference is evidenced between diasporic culture and the culture of the homeland.

[16] John Paskievich's *My mother's village* (2001) presents the case that the Ukranian community in Canada has preserved more of the Ukranian culture than the people of the Ukraine themselves. Under Soviet rule, the Ukranian language ceased to be taught and folklore and history of the Ukraine were forbidden to youth. As a consequence, when Canadian-Ukranians began visiting their homeland post-Glasnost, they were astonished at the lack of connection to Ukranian identity, prized and preserved so proudly back "home", in the country of origin.

[17] Two stories stand out on this point in particular. They both relate to the *kolo,* the traditional folk circle dance from across Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia. Tito's Yugoslavia used these ethnic dances as a performative aspect of the nation (Ugresić, 1998, p. 50), but dancing was relegated to dancing troupes intended to perform at large national festivals and events. While these dances are a binding force, even today, for Serbian youth in Canada, they are far less well known in Serbia itself.(I reference the Serbian community here as my experience is limited to the community in which I was brought up on this point. My understanding is that this is also true for other former Yugoslav groups as well.) One need only attend a holiday dinner at a church in Hamilton to witness dozens of people aged 5-60 dancing the *kolo* expertly and passionately. The largest spontaneous *kolo* circle I witnessed in Serbia was comprised of roughly 10 men and women. Such a big part of the identification process in Canada, the *kolo* seems to be considered a cultural trifle in Serbia proper these days. When I attended parties in Serbia and a *kolo* circle would start, many women would defer from joining because they did not know how to do the dance. Most of these women were astonished at my proficiency with what, to them, was an arcane culture point. But to the Canadian-Serb, *kolo* dancing classes are often our introduction to the larger Serbian community and our fellow Canadian-Serbian peers. The idea, then, that I *wouldn't* know how to do these dances was a bit shocking to me.

The second story relates to the wedding of a distant Canadian-Serbian cousin I had the opportunity to attend in Belgrade. My cousin married a Belgradian man, but the wedding in Serbia was kept very small, with the intention of having a larger wedding "back home". They planned a reception/dinner at her favourite restaurant, a restaurant I'd never been to before. I was horrified when I was greeted, at the door, by a lovely woman in a *nošnja* (traditional Serbian folk outfit) and realized this restaurant was intended to service tourists in search of the romantic notion of "Serbia" and "Serbianess." When the requisite gypsy troupe came upstairs to play music, my cousin and her parents began a small *kolo* of their own, inviting everyone at the table to join them. Not one person got up from the table to dance. The dancing the bride's family was engaged in was seen as unrelated to the lives of the people of the table, and to me seemed to reflect the deluded notion the Canadian family had about what being Serb was to people in Serbia versus what that meant to those of us from Canada. It was an uncomfortable, though eye-opening, experience.

preference to my upbringing in Canada over the life experience I had acquired in my time in Yugoslavia/Serbia. The analysis contained in this thesis is necessarily marked by, and in many ways enabled by, this difference of context. My many trips to Yugoslavia growing up, and more recently my trips to Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, and Serbia during the course of research for this thesis were, intended to force me to examine these works while I explored my own space of "otherness" within both Canada and the former Yugoslav states. I spoke about these authorswith people in each country, testing the academic analyses against how these works lived in conversation. Though the analysis within this thesis is my own, turns in direction were often a product of a well-placed adjustment in my understanding of terminology and context.

Most influential were Kusturica's detractors. Comprised largely of well-educated friends and family in Serbia, these individuals alerted me to issues that might otherwise have escaped my attention if I had read this from a completely Canadian perspective. One conversation with an aunt was of particular note. After I had just finished reifying Kusturica's reading through the filter of development theory in which I was working at the start of this project, my aunt looked at me, appalled, brought the car to a stop in front of the bus station in Belgrade and announced "It was just more of the same as he depicts in the film: more manipulation, more lies, more ideological shenanigans (*frka*)." I might have read this as the sometimes dramatic posturing that acts as an exclamation point at the end of an argument or conversation in the region, but the tremble and the frank sincerity of the stare she gave me at that moment alerted me that I might consider a new course of analysis: that while Kusturica's representation of international power and its role in shaping economic subjugation was, in fact, brilliant, it wasn't the most important thing to look at in the film. I thank my aunt today for stopping me from going down that path. I have not come to the same conclusion as my aunt through my work, but her argument

complicated my understanding and allowed me to reach better conclusions with, I hope, more depth than I might have otherwise. It is my hope that the resulting thesis contributes a fresh perspective to both of these works and that I have been able, as much as possible, to have an understanding of the Yugoslavia that each author presents rather than a romantic notion of my own that is informed by what "Yugoslavia" might have meant to me in my childhood or to my father, my aunt or grandmother.

The Novel and Film

The novel *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) by Ivo Andrić and the film *Underground* (1995) by Emir Kusturica are recognized as two seminal[18] pieces of art representing the history and people of the former Yugoslavia. Awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1961, Andrić's novel depicts four hundred years of the history of Bosnia from the outset of Ottoman rule to the outbreak of World War I. Kusturica's film, by extension, traces the history of the second Yugoslav experiment, beginning at the end of World War II (1945) and ending with the wars of dissolution from 1991-1995. Each of the authors produces a compelling text that has captured international audiences and recognition. While each of these texts traces the historical events of the regions depicted, they further offer a picture of the workings of power and influence on the people of the former Yugoslavia both in the immediate impact of the historical events illustrated and in the resulting sociological effects. Though Andrić's history ends at the outset of World War I, his choice to release the novel on the heels World War II and at the very beginning of the

[18] Both artists' works are distinctly masculinist in their execution, and, as a consequence, my language with reference to these works underlines the lack of female voice and authority in the world-views of these authors. There is a fascinating thesis waiting to be written about the various mechanisms of establishing patriarchal privilege in former Yugoslav literature and art as a whole, and with reference to these two works in particular, but due to the constraints of space and time, this subject could only be touched on in Chapter 2. In brief, Kusturica's female characters are two-dimensional and functional for the most part, their absence of voice denoting a specific view of Yugoslav homosocial culture. Andrić, approaching the role of women from another perspective, prefers to write about women who buck the system (Gorup, 1995) but their ends are inevitably tragic as they fall outside of what he identifies as the natural order of things.

second Yugoslav experiment was deliberate (Hawkesworth, 1984, p. 123). Kusturica's film, on the other hand, was released as Yugoslavia finally dissolved. The end product is a set of bookends looking at many of the same themes and questions, one at the outset and the other at the end of the second Yugoslavia. Each addresses oppression experienced from outside rule and the nature of the people of the former Yugoslavia. In the process, they actively contribute to the body of images and stories[19] upon which the West constructs its "read" of the former Yugoslav and Balkan states.

Andrić, the revolutionary and diplomat, sought to foreground the collective experience of oppression endured by each community under either the Hapsburgs or the Ottomans in his novel: "Andrić… imagined a community of co-sufferers as a cultural model for a common multiethnic entity of emergent post-imperial subjects. …provid[ing] a literary imaginary for the newly created "second Yugoslavia" led by Tito" (Longinović T. , 2011, pp. 92-93). The result was a text that was taught to all Yugoslav children, and to which many have passionate responses, both positive and negative[20]. But the powerful message- of oppression endured collectively by disparate ethnic groups who, despite their tensions, found ways of living and working side by side- held. This message offered a collective context to the people of Yugoslavia, so recently

[19] What Durand would refer to as the Western and Yugoslav imaginaria (the lexicon of images that shape the scope of the national, contextual imagination): "there are limits, cultural or psychological or both, on what it is possible to think. From the point of view of narrative, they permit me to describe narrative statements as the product of an imaginarium, on which they draw, and of an argumentarium that determines the disposition of imaginary elements according to a set of grammatical rules and regularities. The two terms thus define a topology of narrative" (Chambers, 2001, p. 100).

[20] Accused of anti-Islamicism specifically for what are argued as his persistent negative representations of Muslim Bosniaks in *The bridge on the Drina* (Rakić, 2000; Hawkesworth, 2002), scholars sit on a sharp divide between agreement with what is perceived as his inherent prejudice against Islam and the argument that he was being true to the historical depictions of events and terminology of the time (ie: the use of the word 'Turk' for all Muslims in Bosnia). This remains an ambiguity in understanding Andrić's national and moral universes even for the most passionate of scholars on the overarching Yugoslav national context.

divided[21], to work together to build protections against the imperial powers to which they were each vulnerable individually. This discourse of oppression endured, tensions managed and solutions built resonated for generations of Yugoslavs. Kusturica, in particular, was deeply moved by Andrić's writing. While directing the film *Underground* (1995), Kusturica was purportedly also working on a script for Andrić's *Drina* (1945/1959). Though he abandoned the project again until recent years, *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) made a recognizable mark on Kusturica's *Underground* (1995).

The bridge on the Drina (1945/1959) depicted the history of the small frontier town of Višegrad, Bosnia from 1516 to 1914. Covering two empires and multiple rebellions, and incorporating stories from people of varied ethnicities and both genders, Andrić's novel provided a complex ethnographic history of the town, and by extension much of the former Yugoslav state. In the process, he also offered an open critique of capitalism and imperial intervention. The novel was a remarkable accomplishment, awarded for its complexity and universality (Nobelprize.org). Used by the communist government to support a "supranational" (Wachtel, "Imagining Yugoslavia: The historical archeology of Ivo Andrić", 1995) narrative based on the shared experience of oppression among the various ethnicities of the region, Andrić's novel was taught in Yugoslav schools as part of the core curriculum for the nation up until the dissolution of the country.

Seen as either inclusive or anti-Islamic depending on the critic, Andrić's writings became even more contentious as Yugoslavia broke apart (Jacobsen, 2008). Andrić's choice to stay in

[21] Davorka Ljubišić provides perspective on the complexity and challenges of the events of the Second World War to building a cohesive Yugoslavia: "It is important to point out that World War II in Yugoslavia simultaneously included Nazi occupation, civil war and a socialist revolution. After the bloody fraternal war and Nazi occupation, which together resulted in the genocide of 750,000 Serbs, 50,000 Jews and 25,000 Gypsies, the Yugoslav nations and nationalities united voluntarily in a socialist and multinational federation under Marshall Tito, its life-long President." (2004, p. 67)

Belgrade during the Second World War contributed to claims of his preference for the Serbian people over his own Croatian and Bosnian links. But in the general analysis of Andrić's work, his commitment to a common nation for all ethnicities in Yugoslavia spoke to a greater sympathy for the people of the region as a whole, rather than any particular group (Rakić, 2000). Now that the nation for which he wrote and to which he was so devoted no longer exists, no one seems to know where to place his writings (Jacobsen, 2008), most especially *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959).

Underground (1995), Kusturica's Cannes Palme d'or award-winning film, depicts the second Yugoslav experiment from just prior to its birth through to its death (1941-1995) via the stories of two brothers and a close friendship. Tracking the fifty years from the birth to the death of the second Yugoslav experiment through the lives of Marko Dren, his *kum*[22] Petar "Blacky" Popara, and Marko's brother, Ivan, Kusturica highlights the false nature of the independence achieved and the rhetoric used to bind the people of the country together. With the bombing by the Axis powers in March of 1941, Marko hides a group of friends and neighbours in the cellar of his grandfather's home to protect them from capture by the SS. Over time, however, it serves Marko's interests to keep the people in the basement even when their safety is no longer an issue. He convinces them to make munitions for Tito's "cause" (read Marko's bank account) well after the end of the war. Marko's rank opportunism guarantees both political and financial success for the black-marketer-cum-right-hand-man to Tito but explicitly at the expense of his two brothers, Blacky and Ivan and their friends and family. Kusturica examines the manipulation of

[22] *Kum* is a term that is used to describe a relationship that is considered in the Serbian Orthodox Church to be closer than family. A person generally has two *kumovi* in their lifetime, a godfather/godmother acquired at christening and a godmother/godfather (usually from one's own generation) at a person's wedding. These relationships are very precious and when someone says "this is my kum" they are letting you know this person's loyalty and commitment to him or her is greater than can be found with his or her own brothers or sisters. It is a word laden with meaning in the Serbian culture.

contextualizing myths and mythic history for the purposes of exploiting the idealistic and naïve people of Yugoslavia. Kusturica's film serves as a heartbroken, rage-filled love song to the failure of the Yugoslav project to achieve its dreams of peace and unity for the former Yugoslav states.

Approach to Analysis

Assessing these two works, developed in different media, requires first a disciplinary analysis specific to each followed by an analysis of how they dialogue with one another. Looking first at the men and the "Yugoslavias" each presents in hisworks, I assess their careers, their upbringings as well as their roles as both narrators of Yugoslav context to Yugoslavs, but also to audiences abroad. This "grounding" of their stories in their personal experiences is done in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Before I could embark on the larger project of comparing the two pieces to determine their compatibility in dialogue, I first had to commit to a formalist and thematic analysis of both *Drina* (1945/1959) and *Underground* (1995), which is found in Chapter 2.

Structural and thematic analyses. Beginning with Andrić's novel, I look at the structure of the book (an area that is generally less explored by academics than the narrative itself). Establishing the organizing principles of the text itself, I move on the structure of the tale and how it reflects the core themes and politics of the author. I rely heavily on Henry Cooper's work in "The structure of the bridge on the Drina" (1983). Cooper's key conclusion about the novel is that it is constructed around a core pillar, with two supporting "beams": time serving as the central theme of the novel and what he terms as characterization and perspective providing further contextual parameters within which the stories of the novel are built. Characterization, according to Cooper, is Andrić's use of protagonist ages for any given story at any given point in

the novel to reflect the progressive aging of the bridge. The stories at the beginning of the novel focus on children and the end of the novel rests on the death of the aged Alihodja. Perception, as it is used in this thesis, looks to Cooper's original work in assessing the progression of visual language and metaphor from the beginning of the novel through the end as becoming more restrictive and darker. I add to this the correlative notion of perspective. By applying the principals of perspective to the ways in which Andrić tells this story, we watch the details of the events of the novel become blurred through time as a way of illustrating a distillation process from history to legend. This process centralizes the communal contextualization of stories as a core tenant of cultural development for the people of the former Yugoslavia. This reveals two additional factors that contribute heavily to the structure of the novel: native articulation of history and a collective experience of imperial oppression on the part of all Southwest Slavs. As Said reminds us "stories…become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history" (Culture and imperialism, 1993, p. xii). Andrić's deep awareness of this and his own respect for the power of community myth frames the mechanism by which he seeks to create a collective context within *Drina* (1945/1959) with his ethnically variegated chronicle of the stories of the people of Višegrad under the subjugation of Ottoman and Austo-Hungarian rule. Though this idea becomes contentious in *Underground* (1995) , in this way he is articulating what I refer to in this thesis as a "native history": a history spoken by the people whose identities and community affiliations are linked to the land at a specific geographic point in cooperation with others whose identities are equally linked as such. While the term native is understandably problematic as it is derived from a system of "colonial degradations" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 229), it is the best articulation I have for a previously "written over" and often invisible, history held by local, subjugated peoples

For the thematic analysis of Andrić's work, though much of this is done in the structural analysis already, I further explore Andrić's worldview and how it is reflected in the novel. While Andrić's commitment to an ethnically diverse, unified community is evidenced though the structure and much of the philosophy he extends throughout the novel, I then look to the social organizational framework in which this kind of community can exist. I explore how Goy's assessment of Andrić's God as almost pantheistic[23], is responsible for Andrić's articulation of the Yugoslav nation as a construction built by the people of the region to overcome the powerful imperial flows that disrupt their world. They accomplish the building of "Yugoslavia", Andrić seems to argue, in the same way, the bridge is built to enable the people of Višegrad to overcome its obstacles safely and with more ease. I explore how this is made possible through Andrić's unique understanding of how the divine plays a role in the shaping the world in which the characters of his novel live.

Having established the baseline for comparison of *Drina* (1945/1959) to *Underground* (1995), I then undertake to track how Andrić's novel's structures and themes are found in Kusturica's film. The most obvious structural elements (twenty-four chapters, organized in three blocks, history of an era of Southwest Slav life, a non-chronological chapter at the end of the film) indicate that there is, in fact, a direct connection between these works. Further analysis reveals that Kusturica has recognized the structural pillars I identify in Andrić's work and has incorporated and subsumed these ideas within his overriding theme of what Pavle Levi terms the "historical practice of the [distortion of the] Yugoslav Ideal" (Levi, 2007, p. 95): the "ideological distortion and contamination, and its political enslavement, in the aftermath of World War Two, by Tito's socialist regime." (Levi, 2007, p. 95). Time, perspective/perception, characterization,

[23] Present within every element and entity of the world (Knowles, 2005)

and a depiction of multiple ethnicities functioning under Wachtel's "supranational" (1995) Yugoslav identity are all discussed thoroughly in response to Andrić's novel. That Kusturica is, in fact, a child of Tito's state further validates the final tenant of Andrić's organizational system: that of native articulation. The complexities over how Kusturica and Andrić both engage with their Yugoslav and Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian labels is discussed in Chapter 1. Finally, the systems of social organization- how these authors see the people of Yugoslavia "working" together every day- was the next area of inquiry for me. Looking to the universal framework established by Andrić in *Drina* (1945/1959), I address how the divine is conceived as working in Kusturica's world, providing a final argument as to the differences these men hold conceptually of both the people of Yugoslavia and Yugoslavia itself.

Comparative anlaysis. Said's process of contrapuntal analysis (1993) enabled an additional level of analysis to this project that might have otherwise been ignored. Examining seemingly unrelated narratives (primarily novels) situated at the same geographic point at the same historical time, Said reveals differences and similarities between the works, including ideological restrictions and "structures of attitude and reference" which link them at the same time in a conversation about subjugational spaces and the hierarchies of power. Said defines the latter as "structures of location and geographical reference [that] appear in the cultural languages of literature, history, or ethnography, sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted, across several individual works that are not otherwise connected to one another or to an official ideology of 'empire'" (1991, p. 2). The application of this method resulted in the recognition of the detailed conversation between *Drina* (1945/1959) and *Underground* (1995) that had

previously eluded inquiry[24]. Though Kusturica and Andrić represent different periods in their histories, their mutual explorations of oppression and its impact on sociological formation allow for a similar process of juxtaposition. Kusturica makes this process easier by quoting Andrić's work directly, allowing for a straightforward comparison. In the process, Kusturica provides a lengthened conversation on the history of the people of the former Yugoslavia that fuels my analysis. How contrapuntal analysis provides additional clarity to *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) in particular is explained in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Mythistories and Storied Contexts

The term mythistory is used frequently in this thesis, speaking to the "impossibility of delineating a clear-cut distinction between the historical as opposed to the mythological origins of nations" (Aleksić, 2007, p. 3). As Letourneau illustrates, identity is a storied entity "an account of oneself" (Letourneau, 1997, p. 61), a "given narrative in which a community of communication establishes its group thematics, evokes its origins, reestablishes the preeminence of its memorialized state and recites its incantations" (Letourneau, 1997, p. 61). There is little wonder then that "the very act of writing about [nationalism] is equal to walking on thin ice" (Aleksić, 2007, p. 1). Writing about authors who themselves write about the nation and are self-consciously aware that they are also writing about its nationalisms and the nation's construction through stories has had its fair share of complexities. The terms "mythistory" and "storied context" have been selected to be used here because they attend as closely as possible to the process of identity articulation for a community.

[24] Though my thesis was only able to track "structures of attitude and reference" to imperial interventions and the subsequent cultural impacts on the community through two texts, a greater analysis of what, on examination of Kusturica's film amounts to an extensive conversation throughout Yugoslav literature and the literatures in the West of Yugoslavia, would prove to be an exceptionally challenging, though highly satisfying, project. For now, ferreting out the core relationship between Andrić's collectivizing tale and Kusturica's disruptive film has proven a fruitful step to this end in and of itself.

Aleksić addresses what she identifies as the key academic approaches conceptualizing the discursive processes that contribute to nation formation and argues that they are only effective if used in tandem. Mythological nation construction, according to Aleksić, illustrates how stories are used to articulate the historical context and core values of a community as the foundation upon which the material construction of the nation occurs (Aleksić, 2007, p. 3). The historical approach, as she defines it, on the other hand, looks to "[map]… the nation that considers its historically progressive role, but also searches to establish its origins in much older ethnoscapes" (Aleksić, 2007, p. 3). She argues that both systems, if removed from one another, reveal themselves to be too flawed to be sustainable: mythic construction results in a completely artificial entity- so abstract as to defy concrete possibility with any kind of life-span and historic construction relies on materials that predate trackable and verifiable record keeping. The result is that in the end the second relies on the first for substantiation, and the first relies on the second to be "concretized." Each relies on the other for longevity. The term, then, that Aleksić applies to her conception of this symbiosis of discursivities is "mythistory": the interdependent relationship between myth and history in the construction of a national series of stories that convey the "retrospective pattern of moral values, sociological order, and magical belief" (Aleksić, 2007, p. 3). Mythistory stands as a chronological, roughly linear "historiography… [that frames] the historicity of the community" (Letourneau, 1997, p. 59) that is characterized by the way it establishes a "structured time, temporal space" (Frith, 1997, p. 117) within which a people can establish their stories. While this historiography is accepted by the people as their "true" history, the mythic component allows for shifts in identity articulation. Whether a product of changes in common values, "identity changing" events or new fashions in how a people sees themselves, exceptional alterations to the history of a people occur frequently (Letourneau, 1997)

even as the history is seen as constant from generation to generation (Anderson, 2006; Letourneau, 1997). Andrić depicts one way in which the changes to these stories occur in community in the first three chapters of his novel, which I address in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

While the nation looks to its past to provide a contextual framework to understand its present and future, its activities in the present are also "storied": whether news pieces, films or novels, representations of present day events, though informed by mythistory, these pieces articulate how the community mobilizes its conception of its imaginary. Further, the acts of coordinating common projects (industry, households, families) require an understanding of the community within a present context, not simply within the confines of its mythistorical roots. When placed in relation to other "peoples" or in relation to its own past, actions (policy, cultural development etc.) whether in the immediate future (from the small activities such as "we're replacing our street names" to cultural ground swells such as "we're about to allow for gay marriage") or immediate past ("we've changed our street names" or "all people may now marry") are still expressed in storied ways. For this application of mythistory in relation to the present nation, I've applied the terms "storied contexts".

Both Andrić and Kusturica are self-consciously aware of the how their works will be interpellated into the mythistorical process in which they are engaged. As a result, each reflects on his role as a contributing story teller in the nation building process at the outset of the works studied here. In *Drina* (1945/1959), the story teller bears the responsibility of shaping the national ethos. Andrić strove to embody the multicultural complexity of Yugoslav collective experience by providing representations of as many ethnicities within the Yugoslav framework as possible while supplying a storied context for the experiences they share as subjugated. Kusturica, on the other hand, illustrated how the story telling process was corrupted to shape a

"storied context" that mobilized community activity in ways that benefitted the storyteller (Tito's government). In the process, he further examines his own limitations to seeing the "truth" presented as a result of the occlusions in his vision built by the mythistorical falsehoods under which he was brought up. Finally, the mythistory and storied context of a people work in concert to create, as part of the mechanics of self-definition, clarity as to how a given people distinguishes itself from its neighbours. This process of distinction, extrapolated from and validated by discursive nationalism, lays the path for the construction of both the national and international imaginary of a people. Or, as King tells us: "the truth about stories is that's all that we are" (King, 2003).

The imaginary. Kusturica and Andrić respond within these texts to Western discourses both of conflict and tension in the Balkans and the nature of the Balkan peoples. At the same time, they participate in the construction of the 'imaginary'of the 'Balkans' in both locales. Discursively built, the imaginary is the abstract space where the "place" a people inhabits and the ways they inhabit it are imagined (Anderson, 2006). Once a people's context has form in the imaginary, the imaginary then also contributes to the construction of a larger imagining of the peoples around them. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, at least in the conflicts of the 1990s, the ways in which the West conceptualized the imaginary of "the Balkans" and "Serbia", "Croatia", and "Bosnia" had almost more impact on the people of these regions than their own. Consequently, the people of Croatia, Bosnia and, in particular, Serbia often felt as though they were speaking against an immovable wave of stereotype, expectation, and judgement that failed to factor in nuanced understandings of their "real" worlds- as understood and translated through their own imaginaries. This is notable in the writing of Bulgarian scholar Dina Iordanova, whose chapter "Narrative and Putative History" (Iordanova, 2001) foregrounds the Western

construction of the images of the Balkans in the nineteen eighties and nineties, concluding that the imaginary of the Balkans in the West is confirmed as:

> a dark and primitive periphery doomed to eternal trouble… by forfeiting earnest analysis of economic and political factors for a narrative that privileged the explanatory power of fables about bullheaded people beset by historical enmities and mystical cycles of violence (Iordanova, 2001, p. 73).

Longinović addresses the complexity of analysis of a given imaginary, as the roots of these complex lexicons of meaning are ingested and subsumed prior to rational thought:

> I understand the cultural imaginary as a network of meanings articulated through the narratives of the nation imprinted before the possibility of rational choice exists for the subject. It is a realm of phantasms tied to one's collective being, inculcated through the remnants of ritualistic structures that still operate within the network of modern social institutions. Needless to say, 'the serbs' represent such a phantasm within the global cultural landscape, providing myriad mirroring structures both for the native self and the alien other. (Longinović T. , 2011, p. 48).

The process of framing the complex interplay between unproblematized belief and mythistory as they work together through storied contexts to articulate identity is shown here by Longinović to be all the more complicated when a more powerful nation imposes its own imaginary and expectations over those held by a given community of itself. Because the native self is reflected back through a mediated discourse produced by the "alien other" (here the West), the self constructed is both a reaction to the mirror and the mirror's distortions.

For the purposes of the analysis of *Underground* (1995) and *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), I have looked at the personal and professional contexts of the authors in Chapter 1 of this thesis, tracking the differences between the Yugoslavias each inhabited and the resulting effects on the art produced by each. The chapter also addresses fundamental differences between the men that affect how Kusturica reads and interpellates Andrić's work into his own, revealing in the process the parameters of the conversation between Kusturica's *Underground* (1995) and Andrić's *Drina* (1945/1959).

Yugoslavs and Bosnians

The most ethnically diverse of the former Yugoslav republics, Bosnia had strong populations of Croatian, Serbian and Muslim citizens and, prior to the Second World War, a large Sephardic Jewish population. Ethnically diverse and culturally complex parts of the region shifted between Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman rule regularly. Andrić chose to write about Višegrad, Bosnia in no small part because he was brought up there, but also because it represented the closest approximation to the multiethnic Yugoslavia into which the Southwest Slavs of the Balkans were being introduced at publication in 1945.

Both artists were born and reared in "Yugoslavia in miniature" (Ljubišić, 2004, p. xiii): Andrić into the small town of Višegrad, Kusturica into the cosmopolitan city of Sarajevo. Andrić, a product of a pre-Yugoslav generation, attended closely to the ethnic differences of the people of the region and how these differences were overcome through quotidian activities. Kusturica, a product of what was commonly seen as one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Eastern Europe, looks less at ethnic difference and more at the functioning of Yugoslavia as an inclusive concept and how efficiently the supranarrative discourse of Yugoslav identity operated. Kusturica's response was born of his deep grief at the failure of the state: as he says, "I was raised in Yugoslavia. I used to cry when listening to the national anthem and now I have become Bosnian. How is it possible to defend the idea of a multi-ethnic Bosnia?" (Garbarz as cited in Iordanvoa, 2002, p. 20).

Balkan versus Former Yugoslav

There was a predisposition during the wars of secession for media to term the area of the former Yugoslav states in conflict as the "Balkans", popularizing, in the process the term "balkanization" as it related to violent and incrementally divisive breakup (Todorova, 1997, p.

3). Unfortunately, popular discourse persists in reading the term as relating almost exclusively to the former Yugoslavia, somehow ignoring the other distinct nations that populate the peninsula. Consequently, scholarship on "Balkanism" (Todorova, 1997), a specific examination of the "structures of attitude and reference" (Said, 1993, p. 53) of the West in relation to the Balkans, has blossomed across the peninsula, looking first to the shared context of Balkan states as they are reduced and stereotyped in Western discourse, then to the distinct histories and characteristics of the various nations. Scholars in the field across the board, however, support a broader definition of "Balkan" than that popularized by the Western media in the 1990s. Generally, it is accepted that to be considered Balkan a nation must be geographically located on the Balkan peninsula set across the Adriatic sea from Italy, south of Austria, Hungary, and the Ukraine and across the Black Sea from Georgia and the Sea of Mamara from Asian Turkey. The countries that fall within these parameters are Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, European Turkey, Albania, Macedonia, the newly independent state of Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. From a cultural standpoint, these countries often share similar storied histories of subjugation and context often related to the ways in which they have been imagined abroad (Iordanova, 2006) [25].

As it is impossible to identify anyone or anything Yugoslav any longer, the term now references an era in the lives of the South West Slavs that was manifest in two separate entities called "Yugoslavia" from 1918 to 1991. The "Yugoslav experiment", a multi-ethnic construction built from six regional republics: Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Croatia

[25] Iordanova does an exhaustive survey of common tropes and themes in Balkan cinema in both *Cinema of flames* (2001) and *Cinema of the Balkans* (2002), speaking specifically to a shared inferiority complex produced by various processes enacted in the West to contextualize the Balkans within the West's own imaginary. This inferiority complex, a product largely of a mutual experience of stigma and stereotype, has produced both obsequious, self-exoticizing texts in response as well as attacks on the "center", the space of power that produces the stigma (Todorova, 1997, p. 57). The result speaks to a common Balkan experience that allows for analysis of the works from these countries within the context of their shared label as Balkan.

was ethnically largely the same in both incarnations. The first, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1941) failed at the outset of War II when a military coup ousted the Serbian monarchy following the signing of the treaty of non-aggression which would have aligned Yugoslavia with the Axis powers. The years of the war saw extreme civil conflict, the failure of the monarchy, and the rise of the communist party ending with the establishment of the second Yugoslav incarnation which would be named first the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and subsequently the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1963. With the failure of the SFRY in 1991 all six member republics would declare themselves over the next dozen years, establishing Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia each as independent nations for the first time in centuries. To some this was a welcome victory, to others, the death of the nation has been cause for great grief. For Kusturica, it was a deep loss.

A Review of Existing Literature

Recent Balkan studies scholarship deals with a number of recurrent themes, some of which are important to understanding the works of Andrić and Kusturica both. The construction of the Western imaginary and the ways in which it organizes the world conceptually is a strong theme not only in Balkan studies, but post-colonial and oppression studies as well. Iordanova looks specifically at the recurrent themes across film from each of the Balkan states, determining a landscape of shared context and cultural neuroses not previously examined or understood (Iordanova, 2006; Iordanova, 2001). Todorova reflects on Balkanism (Todorova, 1997), the rationale built discursively that justifies the geographic and evolutionary discourse that preferentializes Western society. Aleksić[26] adds an important complicating component to the construction of the imaginary by focusing on the storied construction of collective history,

[26] (Aleksić, 2007)

additionally looking at the absenting of women from these stories. Longinović[27] and Bjelić[28] speak to the social constructions of gender from a male-centric perspective and its role in the mythistory of the Balkans. But most importantly, the analysis of the process of appealing to the West to be understood can then be seen in turn as a process producing self-deprecating and self-exoticizing texts (Iordanova, 2001, p. 56). To scholars such as van de Port (Van de Port, 1999) and Longinović (Longinović T. , 2002), these appeals ultimately prove useless in the face of the untranslatability of Balkan culture to the West; however, this conversation shifts significantly once the "West" is conceived as including the diasporic Yugoslav community in Europe and North America.

Considering the controversy generated by Kusturica's *Underground* (1995) following its win at Cannes, one would expect a fair bit of literature devoted to its analysis. Comprehensive work by Dina Iordanova in her two books *Cinema of flames* (2001) and *Emir Kusturica* (2002), and Pavle Levi's *Disintegretion in frames* (2007) are the most thorough investigations into Kusturica's work. There is also Goran Gocić's *Cinema of Emir Kusturica: Notes from the underground* (2001). It is only Iordanova, of these, who actively addresses the connection between Kusturica's work and Andrić's. Iordanova, however, limits her conversation on Andrić to his contribution to Kusturica's development and opts out of any analysis of the presence of Andrić's ideas in Kusturica's films. Iordanova presents Andrić as an important intellectual and political figure engendering a passionate response from Kusturica when Andrić's work came under attack at the outset of the Yugoslav wars of secession (Iordanova, Emir Kusturica, 2002, pp. 18-19). Gocić's work, disappointingly, announces from the start that Kusturica's film lacks ideology (Gocić, 2001)- an argument I disprove in this thesis. While Gocić seems to define

[27] (Longinović T. , 2005)
[28] (Bjelić D. I., 2005)

ideology as a purely political construct, this assertion illustrates his failure to completely analyze Kusturica's work as representative of Kusturica's world-view, choosing instead to reify the artist without sufficient criticism.

Tomislav Longinović [29] and Judith Keene[30] provide insightful and astute analyses of Kusturica's role as a historian. Longinović looks directly at where Kusturica's film fits in the political melee into which it was introduced. Each overlooks the continuity between Andrić's history and Kusturica's response as contained in my analysis.

Study of Andrić's body of work is detailed by three primary scholars: Celia Hawkesworth[31], Wayne Vucinich[32], and Vanita Singh Mukerji[33]. Hawkesworth, Andrić's most prolific translator, provides insight not only in her book *Ivo Andrić: Bridge between East and West* (1984) but in a number of articles and the introductions to her translated texts of Andrić's writing. Vucinich arranged a symposium in 1995 to address the role of Andrić in a post-Yugoslav literature, situating Andrić's work historically and contextually in the introduction of the book produced from these conference proceedings. The conference, additionally, offered texts used within this analysis that have proven invaluable to this current analysis: Wachtel's "Imagining Yugoslavia: The historical archeology of Ivo Andrić" (1995) and Longinović's "East within the West: Bosnian cultural identity in the works of Ivo Andrić" (1995). Beyond contributions offered from the conference, Ani Kokobobo contributes interesting work centralizing the nation building aspects of Andrić's novel by examining Andrić's failure to examine individual sacrifice in *Drina* (1945/1959) in the same way he does in his other works[34].

[29] (Longinović T. , 2005)
[30] (Keene, 2001)
[31] (Hawkesworth, Ivo Andrić: Bridge between east and west, 1984)
[32] (Vucinich, 1995)
[33] (Mukerji, 1990)
[34] (Kokobobo, 2007)

Studies of the structure of Andrić's novel are, as Cooper notes, in short supply in comparison to the philosophical analyses which tend to be much more popular. Cooper, in the process, offers a very helpful starting point for structural analysis of Andrić's novel with "The structure of *the bridge on the Drina"* (1983). The work of Moravcevich in "Ivo Andrić and the quintessence of time" (1972), and Goy[35] provide further, valuable supports to this end.

While authors such as Bjelić and Longinović analyze the works of both authors, I have yet to find a text that juxtaposes Andrić's work directly with Kusturica's. There are a number of reasons for this. Most importantly, the ideological differences between the two authors are so far removed that analysis may seem counter intuitive. To be fair, very few analysts delve deeply into Kusturica's visual and storied references to other artists because there are simply so many. Committing to any one artist requires preferentializing that artist's role in Kusturica's artistic universe after a substantial bit of work to determine that the quoted artist's work is actually worthy of this attention throughout the film. Iordanova mentions a number of influences on *Underground* (1995), Tarkovsky and Fellini being two of the most cited but she merely touches on the influence Yugoslav artists such as Andrić and Makaveyev though their contributions are deserving of closer scrutiny.

Looking Backward and Forward: Kusturica's Interpretation of Andrić's Yugoslavia

At the heart of Kusturica's film is a dystopic "call back" to Andrić's tempered but hopeful call out at the start of the second Yugoslav experiment. Andrić contends that if the people of Višegrad could work together side by side, overcoming great tragedies even as they managed ethnic tensions between themselves, then so too could the people of the new Yugoslav nation. Andrić's vision contributed to an ethic of hard work and application of will to be united.

[35] (Goy, 1963)

Kusturica is a staunch Yugoslavist whose devastation at the failure of the state is well documented (Iordanova, 2002, p. 20). His response to Andrić's novel, then, matches Andrić's hope with an equal cynicism, the result being, I suggest, Kusturica's "through the looking glass" response to Andrić's modernist views. But where Kusturica openly mourns the failure of Yugoslavia due to the corruptability of even the most trusted friends, his own social nature, a nature not shared with Andrić, brings him to a conclusion in the film that is very surprising: heaven is a nation built in the sun where old friends set aside animosities and live together in celebration. While each of the characters in Kusturica's film contributes in some way to the failure of the project, whether too corrupt or too naïve, divine intervention rescues them from the hell they have built together. Andrić's town folk are never afforded this luxury. The success or failure of their daily interactions contributes directly to the security experienced in the town. God's contribution to Andrić's world is to guide the people through the turmoil, but through their own actions, not by direct interventions. Andrić's town folk are being groomed for something God is pushing them toward, while Kusturica's children play in the muck until they are retrieved from it. I look closely at this fundamental difference between these two works, and the final impact this has on the conversation Kusturica attempts to engage in with Andrić's book in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

In the end, however, both artists reveal themselves as fatalists: a product of the failure to be granted independence. Torn between conflicting interests, ruled and subjugated even when depicted as independent, Kusturica and Andrić are shown to have very different core beliefs about God, the nature of the universe, and the Yugoslavias for which they speak. However, they share a profound sense that the people they depict have little or no control over their own destinies contributing to a common discourse that ensures that the people of the former

Yugoslavia never really overcome subjugation. Whether God, international interventionist ideologies or imperial forces, there is always someone denying the people of Yugoslavia, Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia et cetera their adulthood, independence and, by extension, accountability for their own behaviour. Seemingly tormented by this maturational purgatory, Andrić and Kusturica both offer patriarchal paradigms that consistently end with God (or fate) reinscribing dependence even as levels of independence appear to be achieved in the action of the story. For Kusturica this means liberation. For Andrić it means the people of Yugoslavia just haven't made it there yet.

Chapter 1: Andrić and Kusutrica as Narrators to the Nation

Each artist is a product of a very different national context with reference to the evolution of the former Yugoslavia. Andrić, a member of the student movements that contributed to the establishment of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs (the first Yugoslav experiment), was part of the first generation of Christian youth with social mobility resulting from greater access to education. Kusturica, conversely, was guaranteed a secondary education and access to certain financial and social stability that was never available to Andrić at the same age. Kusturica's was a youth spent playing football with his mischief-making friends and testing the limits of his own moral context (Iordanova, 2002, p. 9), while Andrić's youth was spent renting publishers' catalogues from his friend as he could not afford the books themselves (Mukerji, 1990, p. 3). Andrić grew up in a kind of collective poverty (Hawkesworth, 1984, p. 44) that Kusturica never experienced, ensuring from the start that each would have a different sense of security about his place and ability to survive in this world. Finally, while they were declared Yugoslavists, the expression of this created additional disjunctions between their works. The result: the fundamental differences in the foundational senses of security, identity and personal freedom of each artist had a recognizable impact on their resulting world views, which I look at closely in Chapter 2. In the meantime, Andrić's Yugoslavia was ripe for independence and new beginnings. For Kusturica, however, this was already a lived reality, one that shaped him rather than one that he shaped.

Their careers were radically affected by their mutual commitments to the idea of the Yugoslav nation. Andrić was generally coy about asserting his ethnic heritage (Hawkesworth, 2002, p. 209). While some scholars assert that Andrić's choices to begin writing in the Ekavian dialect, associated with Serbian culture, rather than his own native Ijekavian dialect was a clear

indication of his sympathies for the Serbian nation (Hawkesworth, 2002, p. 202), others look to his wedding license where, when asked, he asserts Serbian ethnicity (Hawkesworth, 2002, p. 208). Finally, his choice to stay in Belgrade during the Second World War rather than returning to Zagreb adds to the notion of Andrić's Serb sympathies (Hawkesworth, 2002, p. 203). Generally, however, it is accepted that Andrić was committed to a unified Yugoslav nation, working toward a community where the composite national identities became less important (Wachtel, 1995, p. 83).

Kusturica had a very different problem, his ethnicity being an issue at the end of the country rather than at its beginning. An established member of the Yugoslav diaspora during the course of the wars of secession, Kusturica's ethnic affiliations shifted radically from the early 1990s to today. With some apparent ambivalence at the start of the conflicts, Kusturica eventually became committed to his Yugoslav identity over his Bosniak context (Iordanova, 2002, p. 15), increasingly speaking out against the Izetbegovic government and eventually claiming that if he were to return to Bosnia, he would be assassinated (Iordanova, 2002, p. 15). Kusturica would later move his family from France, where they spent the better part of the nineties (Iordanova, 2002, p. 30), to Serbia, converting from Islam to the Serbian Orthodox faith when he was christened in 2005. While now a passportholding, card-carrying Serbian citizen, Kusturica's contentious relationship with his ethnicity continues. Despite announcing proudly that he would never return to Bosnia (Iordanova, 2002, p. 15), Kusturica now regularly crosses the border a short distance from his town "Drvengrad" or "Mečavnik"[36] to work on Andrićgrad- the set for his film version of *Drina* (1945/1959), found in the very town where Andrić grew up and where the events of *Drina* (1945/1959) take place. Kusturica's flip-flop of allegiances-

[36] A hotel/ski resort/home to Kusturica and his family that is a big tourist draw, Kusturica's theme park-like home is actually an adjunct to the small mountain town of Mokra Gora in southern Serbia.

Bosnian, though never Bosniak, Yugoslav, French (and thereby a member of the Yugoslav diaspora) and Serbian- is very different from Andrić's cultivated aversion to national compartmentalization.

Though the ways in which they identify with Yugoslavia might differ and in spite of the social chasm between them, Andrić's power over Kusturica persists. That Kusturica would turn to Andrić's novel, a key contributor to the establishment of the second Yugoslav mythistory project at the nation's end, is no great surprise. The quantity and persistence of Kusturica's engagement with *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), and Andrić's writing as a whole, is remarkable. Whether the sly sequence of the wandering elephant who steals Blacky's shoes during the bombing, or the more obvious bombing of the zoo and the tiny bridge it contains, Kusturica speaks to two of Andrić's most famous passages in the novel at once[37]. *Underground* (1995) is chock full of direct references to Andrić's writing, but specifically Andrić's *Drina* (1945/1959). This engagement with Andrić's work does not stop with the obvious textual references I look at in Chapter 2 but extends into the artistic structure of the narrative of Kusturica's film.

Both artists devote the works studied in this thesis to providing histories of the Yugoslavias into which each was born. Andrić, a product of the generation that acquired independence for Bosnia from the Austro-Hungarian government, writes of the imperial era and its impact on the cultural development of the Southwest Slavs. Kusturica, born into the new communist nation of Yugoslavia under Tito, shares a history of the nation from 1945-1995, from

[37] The structural complexity of this reference is all the more rich for the fact that Andrić's animal metaphor may well have been a product of the actual bombing of the Belgrade zoo at the outset of the Germans declaring war on Yugoslavia (Gocić, 2001, p. 33). Both men, then, reference a historical reality of the bombing even as Andrić's novel could not contain the true event within its chronology and as Kusturica takes the actual event and raises it to an all-consuming metaphor within the first half of the film

its conception to its dissolution. Both artists focus on providing native versions of the events depicted.

Geography of Ambivalence

My time spent in Yugoslavia in the seventies and eighties provided me a specific understanding of the placement of the former Yugoslavia in the world. As a child, I knew it was part of Europe, but I also knew that while my classmates in Canada could list off all of the Western European countries, when I said where my family was from they would look at me blankly. Europe meant England, France, Italy: places where weird films, designer clothes, and exotic foods were made. Their understanding of Europe did not include a small, eastern nation of South Slavs found just across the water from Italy. In the twelfth grade, I moved to New York with my father and attended a girls' school. In history class, one day, our teacher rolled down a map on the wall, revealing the physical parameters of "Europe" and "Asia." Europe, on this map, had all the colours of Easter eggs, denoting a continent of variegated nationalities. Asia, on the other hand, was a uniform goldenrod colour throughout. The people of Asia may have been complex and diverse, but the map wasn't interested in reflecting anything other than a large block of consistent "not European." Looking at the map, I was shocked. In the representation of the world this map maker conceptualized, my family's home wasn't found in Europe but was designated as Asian. I raised my hand immediately and asked my teacher about the error. She glanced at the map, looked back at me and said: "If the map says it is in Asia, then it is Asian". I am confident that my teacher had no clue of the existential distress this move of my ancestral context from European to Asian had on me. She couldn't know that I would run to the library right after class looking through any and every atlas to ascertain my European status over a foreign, unknown Asian one. I am also certain that the wars that would bring the former

Yugoslavia into the headlines only a year later caused a bit of a stir for her as the media corroborated my geography over the map maker's.

The lesson learned here, for me, was that the Balkan peninsula is alternately seen as part of Europe or Asia, depending on the viewer. Its geographic placement "in between" various conflicted Eastern and Western powers has contributed to the metaphor of the Balkans as the bridge between East and West. This geography, according to McClintock and others, became conflated with Darwinian theories of evolution (McClintock, 1995, p. 37), prompting some to argue the people of the peninsula were the "the missing link" (Antić, 2003, p. 19) graduating the "savage native cultures of Africa, Asia, and the Americas" (Antić, 2003, p. 3) to the civilized, genetically superior West (Durham, 1924).

But the push and pull of power shifts in the region have made it difficult for the people of the former Yugoslav states to develop an identity of self-determinism, marking their social context by the "semicolonial" space (Todorova, 1997, p. 17) in which they live and their resistance to the same . The ambivalent relationship experienced with European identity (Iordanova, *Cinema of flames*, 2001, pp. 29-54) as a result of the West's vision of the Balkans as a transition space (Antić, 2003, p. 9) is one of the key elements informing contemporary national histories in the Balkans. It is certainly an important concern in Kusturica's *Underground* (1995).

Literally meaning "land of Southern Slavs", the romantic discourse of identity and history in the country depicts Yugoslavia as the first independence achieved collectively by the Southwest Slavs of the Balkans:

> The myth of nationhood in ex-Yugoslavia, tirelessly invoked in the slogan 'Unity and Brotherhood", consisted of three elements. The first was the myth of the Partisan Resistance during World War Two … Indeed, between 1941 and 1945 more Yugoslavs died at the hands of the country men than fighting the invaders (quoting Djordjevic, 1992: 324)…The second element in the myth of nationhood was grounded in the historic rupture with the Soviet Union in 1948, which launched Yugoslavia on a 'separate road to

> socialism'…The third element of nationhood eventually came to eclipse almost all other aspects of the national myth. This was the figure of Tito who represented the living embodiment of the nation: the fearless Partisan fighter and courageous nationalist (Keene, 2001, pp. 244-245).

It is a testament to Tito's charisma, in combination with the collective sense of vulnerability of the various nations (Bowman, 2007), that he was able to corral the people of Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Macedonia once again on a mission for a collective nation. Tito attained cult figure status, with many homes sporting his picture over the dinner table or living room couch. Kusturica touches on this collective reverence in a number of scenes in *Underground* (1995), none more poignant than the sequence where we see the cellar dwellers enter their home-made tank for the last time singing "Druže Tito".

Dina Iordanova writes that the greatest challenge to Balkan identity is the persistent pursuit of European admissibility (Iordanova, 2001, p. 29-54). Western discourse of the former Yugoslavia highlighted the space of difference the people of the former Yugoslavia inhabited from that of their Western European neighbours (Iordanova, 2001, p. 45), thereby creating a need on the part of the formerly Hapsburg ruled states to try to distance themselves from their neighbors suffering from the "Turkish taint" (Živković, 2011, p. 116). It is not hard to imagine that the people of the former Yugoslavia felt marked by the already extant rhetoric of Eastern backwardness, lack of development and (as in the writing of Edith Durham) genetic flaw. It is also not hard to imagine how Kusturica and Andrić, both with extensive ties to Western Europe through education and vocation, may have felt compelled to "translate" Southwest Slav culture and history in their own ways back to the West.

The Shape of the Yugoslav Mythistory

In the 1980s Benedict Anderson established a formal, scholarly course of inquiry into understanding nation formation based on the role mythistory plays in creating the illusion of

commonality among people. Identifying key mechanisms by which the common context and relatedness in a national framework are extended, he contended that language (in print in particular), both as a common form of expression and as a means of extending communal information (novels, newspapers, maps) was at the heart of any nationalist project (Anderson, 2006). For Anderson, the secularization of language and subsequent illusion of communal knowledge and common context created by written text expedited the national projects that swept across Europe, East and West, in the 19th Century (Anderson, 2006, p. 11). Anderson's imagined communities rely largely on the communication of boundaries: first physical boundaries (the borders of the conceived nation), and second social boundaries (social context and expectations as conveyed through language artefacts, the primary examples in Anderson being the novel and newspapers). Each set of boundaries seems firm in the community imaginary, but when examined over time reveals itself to be highly elastic, contingent on the discourse of identity and nation at a given point: "The nation is imagined as *limited* [emphasis in text] because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind" (Anderson, 2006, p. 7). The former Yugoslavia is one of the more ambitious examples of this elasticity, actively encompassing multiple nationalities under a single, supranational identity (Wachtel, 1995), with the boundaries of the nation determined by linguistic and territorial characteristics that defined the idea of the "Southwest Slav".

The ideological framework for the second Yugoslavia was heavily dependent on the image of Tito as the father (Ugresić, 1998, p. 51): head of the Yugoslav brotherhood, presiding over the needs of his disparate, and conflicted member republics. Tito's persistent concern with how his nation was articulated speaks to the power of language and discourse in sustaining the

Yugoslav nation as a whole (Turajlić, 2010). Behaviour and daily living were constructed on a base of myths built on the Partisans' successes during World War II (Keene, 2001, p. 243), that used members from all nations, including children, in the volunteer fighting corps.

The national mythistory was extended through text per Anderson, but also through film, Yugoslav rock music, sports, and distinctly Yugoslav consumer products[38] (Turajlić, 2010; Volčič, 2007). The consumer products that effectively branded Yugoslav life combined with a liberal use of public displays of punishment and celebration to provide a two-pronged approach to use of spectacle and sensation as a means to discourse (Volčič, 2007). Whether a table filled with Yugoslav-made sweets, streets filled with Yugoslav-made cars, the work camps depicted in Kusturica's film *When father was away on business* (1985), or the yearly national youth run that extended across the length of the nation on Tito's birthday, the sensational, performative and spectacular aspects of Yugoslav life were intended to articulate the boundaries Anderson suggests in *Imagined communities* (2006).

Kusturica and Andrić as Contributors to Yugoslavia's Mythic History and Storied Context

Andrić's attempt to provide a polyvocal, native history for the region was commended for the "epic force with which he has… depicted human destinies drawn from the history of his country" (Nobelprize.org). His novel was – and still is- recognized to have overcome its subject, Višegrad, Bosnia, to represent not only a greater history for the people of Yugoslavia, but to contain universal truths beyond the literal scope of his text (Hawkesworth, 2002, p. 216).

At the heart of Andrić's novel is the deep conviction that religious and ethnic divisions among the Southwest Slavs of (the now former) Yugoslavia were unhelpful to their continued

[38] A list of distinctly "Yugoslav" products that populated my youthful summers in the former Yugoslavia includes Smoki (a cheeto-like snackfood made with peanut butter rather than cheese), Munchmallows (the Yugoslav version of Mallowmars that have a preternaturally addictive quality), Walter movies (satirical but patriotic films that celebrate the Titoist version of the Second World War), Zastava cars (designed and built in Yugoslavia and ultimately exported to the U.S. in the 1980s) and Kokta (a syrupy concoction intended to substitute for Coca Cola).

development. Longinović contends that Andrić, a member of the revolutionary student group Mlada Bosna throughout his academic career, was influenced by the group's particular view of Yugoslavism: a product of "Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim students and intellectuals gathered by this revolutionary movement [which] call[ed] for the abolition of the religious divisions as the only way for Bosnians to overcome their backwardness and isolation" (Longinović T. , 1995, p. 124). Carrying the idea of overcoming division through collective identity forward, Andrić's perspective on empowering Bosnia seems to have extended to the amalgam of nationalities of Yugoslavia.

Beginning in the late 1980s, great debates were waged about whether his work was discriminatory and to whom his work belonged after the dismantling of what many saw as an "artificial country" (Samary, 1995, p. 25). In addition, his work was used by Western interests attempting to establish the tribalist nature of the wars of secession (Antić, 2003, p. 4).

Lost to these primordialist readers is the appreciation of the nuance of Andrić's text which argues that while these tensions existed, there was an:

> unavoidability of intercourse among seemingly irreconcilably opposed groups; and… that difference is potentially surmountable on a mundane level through the actions of people in the world and in literary texts through the ability of the storyteller to know the truth and to unify the world through his work. And it is on this basis that Andrić constructs an imagined community of Yugoslavia. (Wachtel, 1997, p. 637).

The imagined community of Yugoslavia noted by Wachtel, however, was neither simply Andrić's vision nor the experience of the Yugoslavs who mourn to this day the loss of the once unified nation. It was precisely this faith in the performance of daily activity combined with contextualizing historicity for the nation as eventual connecters that fueled both the political and discursive machines of the former Yugoslavia as a whole, all while being branded through consumer goods and spectacles of national prowess.

The Artists' Yugoslavias

Andrić's Yugoslavia. Born in 1892, Andrić grew up in a period of rapid and aggressive sociological change. With Bosnia's annexation from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, for the first time, Christian children were able to obtain extensive educations. Okey notes that the lack of educational infrastructure, however, resulted in an exponential growth in child mortality rates from the onset of Habsburg rule, producing a kind of social Darwinian process where only the strongest of children made it through the system (Okey, 2007, p. 195). Still, access to education meant access to social mobility, something not readily available to Christians under the feudal Ottoman administration. Andrić himself tells us in the novel of his own generation:

> These sons of peasants, traders or artisans from a remote Bosnian township had obtained from fate, without any special effort of their own, a free entry into the world and the great illusion of freedom. With their inborn small-town characteristics, they went out into the world, chose more or less for themselves and according to their own inclinations, momentary moods or whims of chance, the subject of their studies, the nature of their entertainments and the circle of their friends and acquaintances. For the most part they were unable, or did not know how to seize and make use of what they succeeded in seeing, but there was not one of them who did not have the feeling that he could take what he wished and that all that he took was his (1945/1959, pp. 232-233).

When this taste of access and freedom came to be replaced with the inevitable knowledge of the enclosures inherent to any imperial system[39], this same group of students spearheaded the movements that resulted in the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and the beginning of the end of the formally imperial era. It was, in fact, a colleague of Andrić's, Gavrilo Princip, from the student group *Mlada Bosna* (Young Bosnia) who would light the match of the proverbial powder

[39] Said defines Imperialism as "the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory… [which] in our time… lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices" (Said, 1993). His view of imperial controls includes cultural mechanisms of distribution context to subject states, contingent on contributing to the political and economic advancement of the metropole, often at the satellite's own expense. Iordanova, in her analysis of the film Colonel Redle, illustrates the social restrictions associated with coming from the wrong part of empire. Though his character is hiding his Hungarian roots, on the social scale of empire, the experiences of those from the Balkan peninsula itself would only be more restrictive (Iordanova, 2001, pp. 29-30).

keg by assassinating the leader of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Sarajevo. Arrested for suspected involvement in the act, Andrić spent the years of the First World War in prison. On release, cleared of charges, Andrić began a diplomatic career under the first Yugoslav government that would ultimately place him in the position of Ambassador to Germany, stationed in Berlin, (Mukerji, 1990, p. 35). Andrić worked to ensure that the Yugoslav state would refuse to align with Germany, but despite Andrić's efforts, the monarchy signed the treaty of non-aggression, which would provide the impetus for a military coup which overturned the Yugoslav government. Informed that he had twenty-four hours to leave Berlin, Andrić once again returned to Belgrade (Mukerji, 1990, p. 37). Key then, to understanding Andrić's material and social contexts is the recognition of the difficulties he would have had to overcome to acquire the education that allowed for his incredible success as both a writer and diplomat and, that in the process, his work in both vocations was infused with an authority on behalf of his "people"[40].

Finally, the consistency of conflict and subjugation imposed on the region due to geo-political movements over which the people of Yugoslavia had no control is easily traced and clearly impactful on Andrić's writing. Though his novel speaks to Austro-Hungarian and Muslim rule over Bosnia, he wrote it as two Western powers fought over control of the region. His attempt at illustrating the complicated effects of imperial conflict and shifts in rule on the people of Bosnia, and by extension Yugoslavia, is a remarkable combination of ethnography,

[40] The idea of Andrić's people has become significantly more muddled since the dissolution of the now former Yugoslavia. Identifying as a Yugoslav, Andrić's work, both artistically and politically, was always about encouraging the people of the former Yugoslav states to identify as a collective community. As the country fractured in the 1990s, his work was often parcelled up into eras and divided among Croats, Bosnians and Serbs dependent on either the dialect in which the pieces were written or their themes (Jacobsen, 2006). But as a devoted Yugoslavist, Andrić's "people" were inevitably the people intent on overcoming religious/ethnic difference in the spirit of obtaining strength, independence and at least a modicum of control over the powerful imperial forces that would wash through the region (Longinović T. , 1995).

accountability to historical information, anticipation of post-modern writing techniques, and archeological methodology. What shines through, in this process, is his indefatigable commitment to providing a literature of a *narod* (his people), even as he illustrates the forces that shaped them.

The archeologies of Andrić. During his time back from Berlin and in Belgrade during the Second World War, Andrić wrote three of his best known works: *The Bosnian chronicle* (1996), *The woman from Sarajevo* (1965) and *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959). These books were published immediately at the end of the war and, in the case of *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), were used explicitly by the communist Yugoslav government to help narrate a common history of the multicultural nation.

Wachtel argues that *The bridge on the Drina* (Andrić, 1945/1959) and the *Bosnian chronicle* (Andrić, 1996) go further than simply narrating a past to the people, but actually provide what he conceives as the literary equivalent of a cross-sectional archeological dig incorporating three different styles of analysis: core sampling, longitudinal analysis, and random sampling. Wachtel argues that *Bosnian chronicle* is Andrić's longitudinal study of Bosnian society. Longitudinal analysis requires that the archeologist dig a settlement or area looking at only one stratum of ground, covering a large space within a settlement but a restricted period of time. Wachtel goes on to attribute a prose version of core sampling to *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), arguing that by using only a finite geographic point through a very long period of analysis (the deeper the bore, the more periods of time covered, each layer representing a period where the layers were in fact exposed ground and the space inhabited by people) Andrić provides a highly detailed perspective on Bosnian life. I would actually argue that while Wachtel places random sampling methodologies elsewhere in Andrić's work, this too is evident in *The bridge on*

the Drina (1945/1959). The point of random sampling is to take elements from disparate areas of a dig site to acquire a sense of the complexity of the area. Andrić's explicit use of diverse ethnic and gendered voices is arguably as representative of a random sampling approach to his writing as core sampling is through the breadth of time covered in the novel at the finite point of the bridge. In any case, Andrić's narration as a whole provides a three dimensional ethnography of the people of Yugoslavia (Wachtel, 1995). Wachtel's assessment of Andrić's work within a structured, methodological framework is persuasive, and in many ways supports my own appreciation of Andrić's writing as inherently ethnographic and intricately structured. Mining time and culture across imperial interventions, Andrić keeps his attention closely fixed on the people of the region and the stories they tell themselves. With one qualification: he persists, in each and every text, as the omniscient narrator.

Contrapuntalism: multiple voices, multiple contexts. Edward Said offers us another way of viewing of Andrić's writing, specifically with reference to the narrative structure of *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959). Said, in addition to his other vocations, was also a trained musician. He often used concepts from music to explain the kind of work he was trying to do in his literary analysis. In the case of contrapuntalism, he took the methodology used in producing music that offsets counterpoint or oppositions, seemingly discordant musical movements "laid" over one another to produce a complex, but usually beautiful and mostly whole, melody. Music produced this way can take the form, simply, of oppositional chords, or in more ambitious works, the overlaying of music of entirely different artists to produce something new- the most common contemporary example of which is the mashup and/or sampling in pop music. When this method is applied to comparative literature it examines multiple narratives of the same point in history at the same point in geography and overlays them, looking to see what they share and on what

points they diverge. Said is quick to point out that this process does not discount ideology and its influence on these narratives, but rather, "in juxtaposing experiences with each other, in letting them play off each other, it is [his] interpretive political aim (in the broadest sense) to make concurrent those views and experiences that are ideologically and culturally closed to each other and that attempt to distance or suppress other views and experiences. … the exposure and dramatization of discrepancy highlights its cultural importance, this enables us to appreciate its power and understand its continuing influence" (Said, 1993, pp. 32-33).

The bridge on the Drina (1945/1959): multiple voices, one mythic history. Situating the narrative at the site of the bridge, both before and after its construction, Andrić conveys Višegrad's history as it is lived and experienced around its site. Because the novel spans four centuries, we cannot follow a hero from beginning to end, but rather we follow a series of people through vignettes This is a common place for critics to stop examining the structure of the book.

Having identified the novel's twenty-four chapter structure as "a day in the life"[41], most critics begin a textual analysis of Andrić's prose. What next calls our attention for structural analysis, however, is the composition of the subjects of the stories:

- Čorkan, a recurring character through much of Andrić's body of work- a simple, silly man who provides comic relief and sentiment,
- Radisav, the rebellious Serb instigator whose impalement is one of the best known and most contentious parts of the book even today,
- Fata Osmanagić, the devoted and proud Muslim daughter whose family honour requires she kill herself after marrying the man selected by her father rather than allowing herself to become the groom's wife,
- Lotte, the hotel keeper of Galician Jewish descent who comes with the Austro-Hungarians and leaves with them as well,
- Alihodja, grandson of the original keeper of the *han*[42], and outspoken elder in the Muslim community among many others (*The bridge on the Drina*, 1945/1959).

[41] Many assume of the bridge, though the more convincing argument, the one held by Cooper (1983) and Wachtel (1995) among others, is that of humanity at this specific point in the world.
[42] The *han* was a small building used by travellers to rest that was constructed beside the bridge.

Andrić explores the stories not only of each of the generations that have followed the construction of the bridge but of each religious/ethnic background (these concepts conflated at this specific geographic point at the time studied in the novel). Andrić also illustrates the roles, constraints, and expectations of each gender within the social constructions made possible under each administration and within the cultural contexts appropriate to each. By then placing each of these stories on or around the bridge, Andrić adheres to the parameters of Said's contrapuntal approach to analysis, but does so within a prose/fictive format, with the intention of expressing the entirety of the Bosnian/Yugoslav experience.

Andrić provided a text that incorporated the stories of many people from many backgrounds to offer one of the first "native", polyvocal histories in text form narrated for the people of Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia. The success or failure of his attempts continue to be debated as his role in Balkan, Yugoslav, Bosnian and Croatian literatures is unfixed (Jacobson, 2008). As the nation of Yugoslavia disintegrated in the eighties and nineties, Andrić was alternately reified and vilified by his people; his people being anyone from Croats to Serbs to Bosnians to Yugoslav depending on the political context of the critic. The reasons for this are complex but are generally linked with his explicit imagining of the Southwest Slavic people as one nation- each side wanting to distance themselves from this conception in favour of a competing nationalist identity that replaced Andrić's conceptualization

Kusturica's Beginnings and Direction

Born in 1954, sixty-three years after Andrić and nine years after the publication of *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), the Yugoslavia into which Kusturica was introduced was

vastly different from that of his idol. Brought up in a quintessentially middle-class household[43] as the child of two teachers, Kusturica was rambunctious. His was a world ordered by *hajvan* culture[44]. Kusturica's parents became concerned as he entered his teen years that his future would lack direction. Kusturica's father eventually sent him to Prague to attend the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU), one of the most prestigious programs in film internationally. Kusturica attended the program just behind a group of filmmakers later defined as the Prague Group from Yugoslavia. While he excelled in his film work, his relationships with his Yugoslav FAMU peers were strained and seem to continue to be so today (Iordanova, 2002, p. 35).

Andrić's work, primarily concerned with reflecting diversity, offered a starting point to Kusturica's own artistic examinations of the Yugoslav nation. Kusturica's second production for Yugoslav television was Andrić's short story *Titanic buffet* (1979). The story of a Jewish bar owner affected by the Nazi and Ustasha occupation of Sarajevo during World War II, the film reflects at once the ethnic diversity of Sarajevo and the corrosive effects of fascism.

His next film, *Sjećaš li se Dolly Bell*? (1981) (*Do you remember Dolly Bell?*), while it was primarily a coming of age story, offered a picture of life growing up in the house of a "diligent communist" (Iordanova, 2002, p. 51) in 1960s Yugoslavia and gives, further, a view into Kusturica's own home growing up: "Kusturica has said that many of these dialogues are based on the type of exchanges he had with his own father" (Iordanova, 2002, p. 53).

Kusturica's overt concern with the reality versus the rhetoric of the functioning of the Yugoslav state becomes more ambitious in his first Cannes award-winning film *When father was*

[43] The socialist nature of the Yugoslav system of governance technically aimed at eliminating class distinctions, but levels of education and access to power differed from one household to the next, making the illusion of classlessness precisely that, an illusion.

[44] Iordanova is the first author to apply this term to Kusturica and defines it as "literally meaning 'animals' and figuratively translating as 'vagabonds'… usually used to describe a group of mischievous male buddies loitering in small groups and having a good time" (Iordanova, 2002, p. 10).

away on business (1985). When the lead character, Meša, makes the mistake of appearing to be slightly sympathetic to Stalinist communism, his frustrated mistress reports him to the authorities (his brother-in-law), and he is sent off to a labour camp for a year, followed by placement, with his family, in Bosnia for a short period. Kusturica juxtaposes community fairs depicting technological might (airplane shows) and the physical prowess of good socialist Yugoslavs against the stark, exhausting life of the labour camp: no more sunny picnics, Meša's world in the coal mine is grey, and ascetic. His lover's petty betrayal results in a complete overturning of Meša's family's life, illustrating the level of concern the Yugoslav authorities had over even the slightest suggestion of support for Stalin over Tito. The message sent about the Yugoslav project is one of paranoia and insecurity. In the process, Kusturica advances his exploration of rhetoric over practice in the former Yugoslavia.

Kusturica addresses a community little examined by Andrić in his next film, *Time of the gypsies* (1989). Though the film is criticized as romanticizing the Roma by suggesting that they inhabit a world that "transcends concrete social frameworks and ultimately dwells in a fantasy world" (Iordanova, 2002, p. 69), Kusturica focuses on the marginalization and exploitation of the Roma in both Yugoslavia and Italy. Inspired by a story of Romani children smuggled across the border, Kusturica's film attempts to examine the lives of the most reviled and mistreated community in the Balkans. While, as Iordanova tells us, gypsies are a common topic for Yugoslav film, rather than use them in this film as "as a winning recipe for the self-exoticisation willingly sought by many Balkan filmmakers" (Iordanova, p. 152), Kusturica places issues affecting the Roma community exclusively at the heart of this film. He also, in the process, reminds us that Yugoslav ethnicity is not just about Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosniaks and Macedonians- there are other communities hidden under the swath of nationalist generalizations.

Kusturica's *Underground* (1995), intended to provide native clarity on the people of Tito's Yugoslavia, did little to appease Western readings of the events in the region, confirming expectations regarding the hostility, violence, and amorality of the people of the Balkans (Iordanova, 2001, p. 119). Generally received by critics from the Balkans as self-exoticizing and in the West as fulfilling stereotypical expectations, Kusturica's contribution to the discourse of the region became controversial based on contentions that the film was propaganda for the Serbian government (Finkielkraut, 1999).

Kusturica's Relationship to Andrić and his Work

The importance of Andrić's body of work to the former Yugoslavia lay in his vision, taught in schools and celebrated as a regional and international masterpiece. Andrić's story in *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) helped identify and define the challenges of cultural interstitiality[45] both as a cornerstone of Yugoslav culture and as a way of interpreting the region by the West. Most importantly, it illustrated the cost of that very interstitiality on the formation of the people in the region over four centuries. It is not difficult to understand why then, Andrić's book would have such an attraction for Kusturica as he watched the dissolution of the country:

> A long time ago I said that it would be the biggest film of Yugoslav cinema. The state disappeared, and I shot Underground. The idea about "Bridge" survived, because the novel is the best response about who we are and where we are going. It would be much easier to make another bridge, rather than a film… When the audience watches a good

[45] The term interstitial is used by Paul Stubbs in his article *Translation, Intermediaries and Welfare Reforms in South Eastern Europe*, reflecting a perspective on the former Yugoslav states as "contact zones" or sites where there is no fixity but that are "always becoming" (quoting Homi Bhabha). For me the meaning relies on Stubb's context, but also speaks to the structural complexity of the culture of the contact zone: rather than "always becoming", the people of the region develop a culture of transition, dependant on the forces around them for the space of constant change they inhabit, but "becoming" something different than either of these opposing forces. The culture of the people of this region has developed into something that 'never changes' from 'changing': in constant transition, the state of being becomes transition itself and, in the process, ceases to be identified as transition, but rather stasis- just a different stasis than is understood by the imperial/hegemonic forces that induce the change. This argument is supported by Andrić's own metaphor of the bridge: "It's shining line in the composition of the town did not change, any more than the outlines of the mountains against the sky. In the changes and the quick burgeoning of human generations, it remained as unchanged as the waters that flowed beneath it" (Andrić, 1945/1959, p. 71).

> film, they are impressed with art above lives, and in those moments, all regions disappear. I want the film to unite the nations (Janković, 2009)[46].

The responsibility of helping to unify the people is clearly articulated here by the filmmaker as a contextualizing process executed through art. However, Kusturica illustrates less about interstitiality through his film and more about the process of being buried by subjugating discourse: his cellar-dwellers receive mediated information, controlled carefully for the benefit of their "benefactor" and guardian even though he is technically a "brother". Where Andrić's narrated world is one of finally achieving voice and independence collectively, Kusturica's film world is cynically focussed on the lies told by those in control to exploit the idealism and naiveté of those over whom they have dominion.

Kusturica's commitment to filming Ivo Andrić's novel has been embraced and abandoned by the filmmaker so many times it resembles a tumultuous love affair- an affair that is finally culminating in marriage with the production of the film in Bosnia, and with the scheduled release of Kusturica's *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) in 2014. The filmmaker's obsession with Andrić's text, especially during the wars of secession of the 1990s, has resulted in a unique dialogue between Kusturica and Andrić that extends far beyond the film he is currently producing of the novel itself. Kusturica's engagement with, and commitment to, Andrić's legacy galvanized itself through the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. How Kusturica "reads" Andrić however, comes into immediate question when juxtaposing the hope of the author versus the cynicism of the filmmaker. Perhaps a product of perspective, one from the Yugoslav "upsurge" (Andrić, 1945/1959, p. 233) and one from its "extinction" (Andrić, p. 233), or a product of the very different values each artist has at the heart of his work, it is difficult not to

[46] Interview with Kusturica in Večernje novosti, a Serbian publication.

see the two communities described as vastly different regardless of the dialogue Kusturica actively cultivates between *Underground* (1995) and *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959).

Chapter 2: Structural and Thematic Analysis of

Underground (1995) and *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959)

"Stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history" (Said, 1993, p. xii).

When the wars of dissolution began in the former Yugoslavia, what had been an unhidden secret of my identity became a glaring boil that I was not making sufficient attempts to hide. Because most people knew very little about Yugoslavia or Serbia while I was growing up, my heritage prior to the 1990s was usually casually linked to Eastern Europe, and any stereotypes applied to me were dependent on how Russia was seen on that particular day. I was acutely aware, even then, of how a nation was dependent on representations in the media to be known (the media not merely being the news, but literature and film as well). Yugoslavia simply did not come up all that often. Movie stars who may or may not have had Yugoslav heritage (Karl Malden and John Malkovich come to mind immediately) were spoken of reverently around me. After 1991, however, not only was the word Yugoslavia on almost everyone's lips, but the composite nations of the country were common topics of discussion. Movie stars, often not of Yugoslav descent, were suddenly fighting to be seen as heroes or villains in stories about this now "hot" region. In the process, I went from relative national anonymity to fielding questions about the conflict regularly. The truth was, I was ill-equipped to answer most of the questions I was asked. These unanswerable questions started a chain reaction in the development of questions of my own.

Frustrated by the depictions available to me in Western media and art of the Yugoslav conflicts and the nation's history, I turned to Yugoslav works available in the West. The first and most obvious text was Andrić 's *Drina* (1945/1959), long ignored on my family bookshelf.

Following a personal survey of texts in translation, I turned to contemporary movies about the conflicts and found my way to Kusturica's film in the process. The connections to Andrić's novel became clear almost immediately. I put this information aside until I began a course on the construction of the "other" which relied heavily on Saidian theory, most particularly Said's *Culture and imperialism* (1994). As I read page after page, so much of Said's work seemed directly applicable to the analysis of Andrić's novel and Kusturica's film. This thesis became an inevitability to me. And as I worked to explain these pieces as indigenous expressions of cultural history that were linked at the core, I came to rely on Goy, Cooper, Levi, Aleksić, Iordanova and Wachtel for their comprehensive theoretical analyses.

How Andrić Built his Bridge

Cooper provides a starting point when analyzing the structure of *Drina* (1945/1959) by identifying three sections built around three organizing principles that provide us a framework to look at Andrić's influence on the structure of *Underground* (1995). Andrić, according to Cooper, breaks time in the novel into three blocks:

> The first, Chapters 1-4, covers the introduction (Chapter 1) and the events concerning the conception and building of the bridge in the sixteenth century (Chapters 2-4)... The second block comprises Chapters 5-15. The first of these (5) traces in broad strokes the history of the bridge through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 cover the first 75 years or so of the nineteenth century. Chapters 9 through 12 focus on just one year, 1878, when the Austrians replaced the Turks as overlords of Bosnia, and Chapters 13-15 cover the remaining quarter of the nineteenth century… The third block runs from 16-24 (1983, pp. 367-368).

A more simple breakdown presents itself in the reading, however. While still conceptualized as three separate sections, the division between Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule of the region seems quite neat, with Chapter 1 offering an introduction from Andrić's contemporary perspective, Chapters 2 to 9 covering Ottoman rule, and Chapter 10 to 24, Austro-Hungarian

rule. In either analysis, however, three sections are identifiable and serviceable for the purposes of this study.

Moving from sections of text to the organizing principles, Cooper addresses three important pillars on which Andrić builds his novel, two of which are useful to this analysis: time and perception. Further examination reveals two additional, if linked, themes that are inherent to the construction of the novel itself: polyvocality of native history and "the depth of trauma caused by foreign occupations and colonizations" (Longinović T. , 1995, p. 135). Andrić engages these key themes to build the novel using literary mechanisms to provide a foundation on which other incidental, though equally compelling, themes are explored in the text.

Cooper asserts time as the core concern of the novel, an argument upheld by Moravcevich: "*The bridge on the Drina* is primarily neither about the bridge and the river it spans nor about life in the Višegrad microcosm of Bosnia and beyond, but about the passing of all these through time" (Moravcevich, 1972, p. 315). When analysing the construction of the novel, its 24 chapter, day-in-the-life narrative that tracks four hundred years of history in three hundred pages, the virtually monastic adherence to historical time and the fact that the author himself subtitled the book a "chronicle" work together to reveal Andrić's preoccupation with "the effects of that passing [of time]" on the river, the bridge and the people of Višegrad (Moravcevich, 1972, p. 315). The time depicted, however, while flowing ever forward does so at speeds and volume set by the author: "Not only do the years flow by, like the green waters of the Drina itself, but they flow at a carefully measured rate, sometimes in a flood, sometimes in a trickle. They flow, in fact, according to the author's clearly devised plan," (Cooper, 1983, p. 368).

Though the novel itself follows a chronological path from Chapters 2 through 24, Andrić underlines his key interests in the formation of mythic history, time and perspective by making the very first chapter take place well after the last. He establishes the broad view of the narrator as both an "omniscient self personally detached from the related story and a mouthpiece of the entire *čaršija*, a champion of the human multitude" (Moravcevich, 1972, p. 316). Rather than upsetting the chronology, Andrić merely offers the point of perspective of the narrator: able to speak from the end, but also able to speak as though present during the events depicted, the narrator is both of and apart from the people whose story he tells, providing us context in the first chapter, and then immersing us in the history of the region for the next twenty-three. Further, by having foregrounded the changes that occur to history as it is burnished into legend in the first chapter, the narrator prepares the reader for the shortened examination of Ottoman rule (three hundred and sixty years of history in eight chapters, three of which are devoted to the construction of the bridge itself) in opposition to the detailed and lengthy analysis of Austro-Hungarian rule (forty years of history covered in fifteen chapters). Cooper himself notes the protracted length of the final chapters: "within the last two blocks, there is an even greater reduction in the chronological focus, when Andrić devotes four full chapters (9 to 12 in the second block and Twenty-one to Twenty-four in the third) to just one year, 1878 and 1914 respectively," (Cooper, 1983, p. 368).

The next organizing principle Cooper offers[47] that is useful to this analysis is perception. Perception, and its correlative extension perspective, are exceptionally important structural

[47] I have avoided including Cooper's second organizing principle for the novel as an organizing principle for my analysis. Terming it "characterization", Cooper offers that in the stories that comprise this history the ages of the people of the town progress and age as the bridge does: children begin the novel, the aged Alihodja's death ends it. For the purposes of this analysis, I would argue that rather than being an organizing principle in itself, characterization is a tool used by the author to express both time and perspective, the two organizing principles of Cooper's that I do analyze here.

components to the novel, but Cooper's exclusive focus on the visual representation of this (zooming and panning of visuals in text, the broad vistas of the first chapter versus the failing vision and claustrophobic point of view of Alihodja at his death [Cooper, 1983, p. 370]) is myopic. Andrić showcases the importance of perspective, especially as it is affected by time, explicitly in the first three chapters of the novel. By juxtaposing present-time depictions of events on the bridge against the legends into which they transform, Andrić illustrates the like characteristics of time and space in the process of perception. Over time, as over a great distance, the details of the events in Chapters 2 to 4 become less distinct, becoming prone to re-articulation, eventually becoming the legends recounted in Chapter 1. In the process of illustrating the role of perspective in recounting "truths", he also foregrounds his third organizing principle for the novel: story telling.

Andrić offers us two more structural pillars in his novel. The first of these is the nature of communal mythistory itself. By containing the history he depicts within the confines of the conception, birth, and life of the bridge, though the story is told chronologically, Andrić's persistent return to the experiences of the people depicted as they occur on the bridge enable a layering of history on the bridge's body. Andrić's detour in his chronology, his opening chapter (from his perspective at the end of the chronicle), offers the mythicized version of the stories he will unveil as lived truth in Chapters 2 and 3.

For example, one of the most famous (or at least memorable) characters in Andrić's novel, Radisav, is depicted in the first chapter of the novel as a rebel who:

> stirred up the people to revolt… told the Vizier not to continue with this work for he would meet with great difficulties in building a bridge across the Drina. And the Vizier had many troubles before he succeeded in overcoming Radisav for he was a man greater than other men; there was no rifle or sword that could harm him, nor was there rope or chains that could bind him [except silk]" (1945/1959, p. 18).

The "truth" of Radisav's story is revealed, however, in Chapter 3. We are made witness not only to Radisav's inspiration to revolt, but to the mischief he enacts in destroying work on the bridge while starting the rumour that it is an angry fairy[48] bent on undermining the Vizier's goals. Once caught, Radisav is subject to terrible torture and is ultimately impaled in one of the most horrific passages in contemporary literature. His death occurs at the conception of the bridge and at its very site of construction:

> There was not an eye in the whole town or about the building work that did not turn towards the intricate criss-cross of beams and planks over the waters, at the farther end of which, upright and apart was the man on the stake. Amongst the workers there was still the hush of the day before, filled with pity and bitterness… everyone realized that the peasant had at last died. Those who were Serbs felt a certain easing of the spirit, as at an invisible victory (1945/1959, p. 54).

Radisav's martyrdom ensured, the details of his revolt and death then become subject to mythic revision, making him greater, stronger, more powerful with each retelling than his reality and preserving his sacrifice if not his truth.

Though a lie created by Radisav to explain the damage done to the bridge in Chapter 3, the story of the angry fairy determined to disrupt the building of the bridge persists even as it is separated from Radisav's story itself. The angry *vila*[49] of Chapter 1, demanding a sacrifice of twins, becomes attached instead to a generic, nameless, though devoted, mother:

> The children were walled into the pier, for it could not be otherwise, but Rade, they say, had pity on them and left openings in the pier through which the unhappy mother could feed her sacrificed children… In memory of that, the mother's milk has flowed from those walls for hundreds of years. That is the thin white stream which, at certain times of year, flows from that faultless masonry and leaves an indelible mark on the stone (1945/1959, p. 16).

The mother of this story, grieving though she might be, has found a solution, with the help of the mason, to ensure her children's comfort as best she can in their, and her own, sacrifice. Chapter

[48] The story of the fairy is taken from the traditional story of The Building of Skadar (Karadzić, 1997), where we also see the roots of the myth further illustrated in Chapter 1 of the twin boys sacrificed in the foundations of the city.
[49] *Vila* is the Serbo-Croatian term for fairy.

3, once again, contains the "real" story of the sacrificed twins revealed as a different type of tragedy. Mentally challenged and suggested to have been the victim of sexual assault, a young woman named Ilinka bears two stillborn children in a town close to Višegrad. Bereft and grieving, she believes they have been taken to the bridge and follows:

> Weak and distraught, she wandered down into the town… looking fearfully into the eyes of the men there and asking in incomprehensible stutterings for her children… Seeing that they did not understand what she wanted, she unbuttoned her course peasant shift and showed them her breasts, painful and swollen, on which the nipples had already begun to crack and showed all bloody from the milk that flowed from them irresistibly (1945/1959, pp. 36-37).

Ilinka's desperate attempts to get information on her lost children are ultimately translated into the heroic act of care for the live sacrifice of twins in myth, retaining the symbolism of the milk but changing it from a sign of her grief into a symbol of the power of motherhood.

By using two of a number of examples from *Drina* (1945/1959), we see that Andrić is providing evidence of a discursive process that at once alters history into legend but retains the integrity of the core lessons at the same time:

> There are a few points of human activity around which legends have been gradually built up in thin layers over the years… it is useless and mistaken to look for sense in the seemingly important but meaningless events taking place around us, but that we should look for it in those layers which the centuries have built up around the few main legends of humanity. These layers constantly, if ever less faithfully, reproduce the form of the grain of truth around which they gather, and so carry it through the centuries. The true history of mankind is contained in fairy stories (Andrić, "Conversation with Goya", 1992, p. 16).

Recognizing Andrić's training as a historian and the reliability of his research in building a fictive text around factual occurrences (Goy, 1963), Andrić appears to be arguing that the history he conveys is already in the process of distillation from "history" to "legend"; moreover, the process of building communal history and myth proves to be as subject to change over time as visual perspective (also used by Andrić in the novel) (Cooper, 1983) is to space.

Celia Hawkesworth also looks at the "real" versus the "legendary" stories around the building of the bridge in Chapters 1-4 (Hawkesworth, 1984, pp. 128-131), but her read on Andrić's novel focuses on communal imagination rather than a communal imaginary, making the contextual parameters of her analysis incompatible with my own. Hawkesworth sees the production of these legends as "the perennial human need to give scope to the imagination; to colour natural phenomena with supernatural dimensions; to give shape to emotions of excitement, wonder, admiration and fear" (Hawkesworth, 1984, p. 130). For her, the story mutations depicted provide a creative space for the people of the area that colours their world but does not necessarily define it. Reading Andrić's juxtaposition of "truth" v. myth making as a constructivist project wherein these stories become a mechanism for the expression of community values and context, I see Andrić's exposition of the roots of the community legends as a way of illustrating these very values and how the people of the region highlight what actually matters to their own community through the burnishing of these stories into myth. Radisav ceases to be a martyr, and overcomes the evil Vizier, linking his story with the success of Serbian independence we see toward the end of the novel. By making the twins' mother a conscious participant in the sacrifice of her children rather than a victim of circumstance (per Mad Ilinka's intellectual challenges and the stillbirth of her twins), gender roles in the construction of community and nation are very clearly articulated. While imagination allows for creative and contextual expression, the imaginary is the active construction of community through the expression of mythic history. Andrić sees art as much more engaged and active in the construction of community than Hawkesworth's interpretation allows for.

The final structural theme for the novel rests in its anti-interventionist, anti-imperialist message. Andrić's novel, set on the finite point of the bridge in a small, backwater town at the

outskirts, in turn, of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires provides the experiences of dozens of protagonists and hundreds of characters all played out in one spot over the course of four hundred years. Andrić constructs the novel in this manner so that changes in the experiences of the villagers can be tracked across time and empires even as "the people choose not to notice how different things are" (Wachtel, 1995, p. 97):

> Always each group believes that its way of doing things at a particular time and place is as permanent and as "natural" as the Višegrad bridge. But as all of Andrić's historical narratives show, the only permanent thing is their constant conflict, interaction, and interrelationships… Andrić imagined a Yugoslav nation that would be unified through its common legacy of change and stasis (Wachtel, 1995, p. 99).

At the core of Andrić's novel is the assertion that the one constant for the people of Višegrad is the consistent imposition of change. Anticipating the post-colonial context of Said's contrapuntal analysis by anticipating the commitment to a polyvocal framework designed to provide a space for voices outside of the colonial master-history, Andrić depicts both the changes and the discursive and practical efforts made by the people of the town to convince themselves that everything remains the same all the more convincingly by doing so through multiple depictions from multiple experiences of the change AND the stasis .

Reconstructing the Bridge: Kusturica's Use of Andrić's Structural Elements from *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) in *Underground* (1995)

Structurally, *Underground* (1995) adheres to a number of the key elements of *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959). Separated into 24 chapters in three sections, and covering the span of the life of the second, communist, Yugoslav experiment, Kusturica responds to Andrić's history of imperial rule in the former Yugoslav states with a history of the communal "independence" to which Andrić alludes so passionately at the end of his novel.

Beginning with the organizational structure of the narrative, the most telling connection is the choice on the part of the filmmaker to suggest he has constructed his piece in 24 chapters (as evidenced in the scene index for the DVD)[50]. Andrić's novel adheres to a generally linear flow of time with the exception of the asynchronous chapter at the beginning of *Drina* (1945/1959). Kusturica adopts Andrić's technique of temporal distortion, but rather than disrupting time at the start, his non-chronological chapter comes at the end of the film. Though the DVD for the movie indicates a 24 chapter structure, the final sequence is read by the disc as Chapter 25. Within this chapter, each of Kusturica's characters is in perfect physical condition, beautiful, young and joyous: returned to his or he youth if they lived into old age and oblivious to the partings engendered by early deaths. This mirrored structure of Kusturica's film, passages from the beginning of Andrić's novel appearing at the end of Kusturica's film and vice versa, holds throughout *Underground* (1995). Andrić's vision of beginnings and endings is brought into the film's structure through this technique rather than addressing it explicitly, as Kusturica does with other passages examined in this chapter. Andrić's vision of where his own work was situated with reference to the construction of the new Yugoslavia is made explicit in *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), and Kusturica's response with *Underground* (1995) adheres to Andrić's vision:

> Every human generation has its own illusions with regard to civilization; some believe that they are taking part in its upsurge, others that they are witnesses of its extinction. In fact, it always both flames up and smoulders and is extinguished, according to the place and angle of view (1945/1959, p. 233).

[50] While it is common practice for distributors to establish the chapters for films in the transfer to DVD, the deliberate play on the final chapter as 25 rather than its true position as 24 is too coincidental to allow for anything other than Kusturica's direct intervention on this point. That, and Kusturica is known to be invested in the details of his work, even in distribution, suggesting, once again, that he was well aware of the division of scenes in building the disc for distribution.

Andrić chooses to see the conflicts of 1914 that led to the First World War and Yugoslav independence as a flaring up of civilization, and Kusturica speaks from the end of the Yugoslav experiments with a specific view of the country's failures. Beginnings and endings from disparate positions of the structure and life of the former Yugoslavia: opposite ends of the bridge, as it were.

Supporting the argument that Kusturica self-consciously adheres to much of the structure of *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959), is the free manipulation of time (slowing and speeding up) put into motion by both authors within their works (Cooper, 1983, p.368) and mechanisms used by each author to underline time flow. In Andrić's case, characterization (referenced by Cooper in his analysis of *The bridge on the Drina* [1945/1959]) is a key mechanism to track time passage. Cooper argues that the progressive aging of protagonists in the novel paired with physical descriptions of the bridge as it grows older offer an anthropomorphic dimension to Andrić's depiction of the bridge, contextualizing the progression of time (1983, pp. 368-370) which Cooper refers to as characterization. For the rivers depicted at the beginning of the novel, the four hundred years that pass are drops in the bucket. For the bridge, the four hundred years mark the movement from birth to old age. For the people of the region, the passage of four hundred years spans generations, each serving as a contributor to the history of the region, but also unable to watch the events depicted in the novel from beginning to end.

Where time is an organizing principle of Andrić's novel (Cooper, 1983), it becomes subjugated in *Underground* (1995) to Kusturica's key concern: corrupted mythistories and storied contexts. Adhering largely to historical time, Kusturica ensures that the unbroken progress of the chronology is clear in the film (until the end) through two prominent tracking methods. The first is the straight-forward expository tool of intertitles: "War", "Cold War" and

”War”, all events that are well documented and recognized in the international community. These divisions provide identifiable epochs in the life of the former Yugoslavia. The second method used by the film maker is to ensure that the key characters at the start of the film live to its end, aging appropriately, encapsulating the life of Yugoslavia within the lives of Blacky, Marko, Ivan, and Natalija. The fact that their lives survive the span of the experiment, unlike the characters of Andrić’s novel, underlines the youth of the country at its death.

Part of Kusturica’s core contention in *Underground* (1995), however, is that the entire communist Yugoslav project was a practice in delusion through deformed representations of national “truths” (Levi, 2001). The manipulation of time by Marko and his grandfather is illustrated as another means of maintaining passivity on the part of the cellar-dwellers:

Marko
Are you working on the time?

Grandfather
I’m reducing the hours for them as you said. Six hours per day!

Marko
Don’t overdo it, okay?

Grandfather
In twenty years, I’ve saved them five years. You can imagine what five years less in a cellar means!

(Kusturica, *Underground,* 1995)

The manipulation of time by Marko and his grandfather comes up again at the end of the film when Vera and Blacky argue over their son’s age:

Vera
He’s grown up so fast. Look at him. Big guy, isn’t he? **Blacky**
Fifteen years, Vera. Fifteen years.

Vera
What do you mean, fifteen? Twenty!

Blacky
No, fifteen!

Vera
Twenty!

Blacky
Fifteen!

Vera
Twenty!

Blacky
I know my own son's age! Uh, how you annoy me!

(Kusturica, *Underground*, 1995)

Even though Blacky is found fighting in the wars of secession in the nineteen-nineties, he reveals here he has never done the math on five missing years of his life. His time in the cellar, and consequently his son's age, are forever frozen in the timescape Marko, and his grandfather create. This might be due to the embroidery Marko provides on this point by offering Blacky a watch with Tito's hologram on the face in the same sequence as the revelation of the Grandfather's time manipulation. Time, patriotism, personal history, and identity, as well as hero worship, all become inextricably bound so that when confronted with the truth of the passage of time following his escape from the cellar, Blacky cannot shake the lie: it is simply too ingrained in his identity and reality. Kusturica seems to argue that even time, something that seems intractable and solid, can be manipulated by recontextualizing interventions through stories.

The next two organizing principles of Andrić's novel are linked in Kusturica's film. Kusturica's concern with social metacontexts (Keene, 2001; Iordanova, 2001) subordinates both perception and native history. While Andrić is self-reflexive on the history/storytelling process by focusing on how perspective and perception affect the telling, Kusturica's film rejects faith in

the ability of the people of the region to have sufficient perspective themselves to provide a clear, truthful history. Kusturica makes this point in enough ways to merit a thesis of its own, but the three main comments he makes on perception are a) references to Plato's cave, b) the use of subjugating contextualizing processes to "skew the view" and c) the differences in view from above and below.

The allegory of Plato's cave is a common theme for analysis in film: the flickering shadows on the cave walls are too closely linked to the medium of film for multiple examinations to be avoided. Speaking of people chained in an underground cave and forced to watch flickering images that cross the walls in front of them, Plato illustrates the functioning of state, conceptualized in vertical terms with the "people" ruled depending on incomplete images for information living in the ground, blind as moles except for the flickering shadows on the cave wall before them. Unable to turn their heads, unable to communicate with one another, their realities, though fed by the same indistinct images, remain individual and untranslatable. This imposed ignorance reflects the failing of what we think is our perception of the truth. Plato's argument continues that those who rule well are those whose eyes have been trained to see in the dark as well as the light, contending "the happiness was to be in the whole State, and he held the citizens together by persuasion and necessity, making them benefactors of the State, and therefore benefactors of one another; to this end he created them, not to please themselves, but to be his instruments in binding up the State" (Plato, tr.1894, p. 182). Plato might well have been speaking about Tito and his Yugoslavia. Kusturica's choice to foreground his parable/history with Plato's work would suggest his vision of Tito's rule is just that: a ruler able to see above and below creating a nation for those who cannot see, but the result was happiness in ignorance and a prime situation for exploitation.

The version of *Underground* (1995) released for Western European and North American distribution begins with the image of Blacky and Marko in a debauched cart ride back to Kalemegdan[51] after a successful theft of munitions. Followed by a gypsy band desperately trying to keep up with the cart even as they play their instruments, Blacky and Marko send money and bullets flying in equal turn. The camera sticks to choke shots[52] and close-ups for the most part, adding to the urgency of the mania onscreen. But Kusturica then makes a choice to pull the camera back, jarringly, into a wide-shot to capture the entire side of Kalemegdan. The walls of the fort act "like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets" (Plato, tr. 1893, p. 177) with the giant shadows reflected of the cart and its riders providing a general sense of the shape of the participants and events depicted, but without colour, light or definition. Kusturica announces, from the start, that what is displayed are merely the shadows on cave walls even in the film he is presenting. The metaphoric correlation between Plato's cave-dwellers and Kusturica's cellar-dwellers is then brought full circle when Kusturica places film within the film to be viewed by the cellar-dwellers themselves. Marko's grandfather, his key ally in the basement, shows newsreels of the war well after its end. Without the ability (or perspective) to know better, the cellar dwellers take these plays of shadow and light to be contemporary rather than historical truths. Marko watches the duping of his charges and the acceptance of this deception rendering the people of the cellar compliant until the next round of historical news reels and fake air raids continue the illusion.

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[51] Kalemegdan's history is longer than that of most buildings in the area, certainly of either history studied in this thesis. Originally a Celtic settlement in the 3rd Century B.C., after a series of changes to the construction it ultimately became a fort, passing into the hands of Serbs in the 13th Century. It sits at the heart of Belgrade's "old city" (*stari grad)*. It is also the site of the zoo that is highlighted in the second and third sequences of the film, which is so symbolically important to the film, further addressed in this thesis.

[52] "Choke shot" is a term used in film to describe an extreme close up. This particular camera technique is generally used to draw attention to intense emotion and reduce distraction from other elements in the frame.

Kusturica, I would argue, explicitly begins *Underground* (1995) referencing Plato's allegory as a way of situating his own fallibility in sharing "truths" about the people on screen and the people of the former Yugoslavia, while also illustrating what he sees as a key structural flaw in the nation's framework. Though in control of the camera, Kusturica's attempt to provide perspective on the "nature" of the people of the region and their history (Iordanova, 2002) is as limited by his own lack of vision and context as our own: we see what we are given to see by the film maker, but the foregrounding of the lack of detail on the characters undermines the very truths we are about to witness before they are presented. Kusturica, after all, is a product of Tito's Yugoslavia with the occlusions and exploitations depicted in the film shaping the film maker's view itself, marring his ability to present a full picture. Kusturica's argument about perspective and the former Yugoslav state is thus: if multiple layers of manipulation of the images occur, the inherent ignorance of those ruled is inevitable, regardless of their education, worldliness or cosmopolitanism. They have shadows where truths should be, and no ability to perceive beyond the scope of shadows and light. Kusturica, Plato's transgressive man who attempts to enter the light, is admitting to his own struggles in understanding what is real above as his eyes acclimate to the sun. Kusturica, like Andrić, foregrounds perspective and perception in the structure of his film (in the first chapter, in fact, as in Andrić's novel), but does so by illustrating its limitations and how it can be manipulated, unlike Andrić's primary concern with time as the distinguishing factor in the wholeness of a given perspective.

In illustrating the ways in which storied contexts can be manipulated, Kusturica shows how culture is effected. He offers examples not only of individuals duped by the process unwittingly but those who knowingly buy in. The "victims" of the subjugating manipulations of storied contexts in *Underground* (1995) are the citizens of his cellar. The cellar dwellers never

question Marko. They accept the films, performances and fake air raids as fact and allow their world to be made small in the process. But while the choice to remain ignorant may be part of their process, the cellar dwellers' trust in Marko enables an exploitative space Marko broadens and sustains through lies and misinformation.

The choice to acquiesce knowingly to the subjugation process, however, is most visible with Marko's sex partners in the film. Marko fashions the images of the women he is in a relationship with for his own amusement. They, whether for pay or pleasure (though both partners are depicted as "having their price"), are to allow this writing of their images to happen if engaged with Marko. As with many aspects of Natalija's relationship with Marko, much of it is alluded to in his brief tryst with a prostitute at the beginning of the film. As the woman prepares herself for sex by bathing, Marko places a carnation between her buttocks and then lies down in bed with a shaving mirror, illustrating in each of the three tiny frames the bouncing of the flower in her ample rump as she washes. Each image is very similar, though slightly shifted based on its point of reflection (or perspective). Marko's visible joy, not only at the humour of the image but its making, sits in direct opposition to the boredom he experiences in the actual carnal act a few minutes later. Making her image is much more fun than the sex itself. He, in fact, mocks the prostitute's sounds of pleasure as if her presence, at this point, is an imposition rather than the result of an invitation.

Later in the film, when wooing Natalija, Marko's ambitious building of Natalija's image takes over the whole of his living room: publicity stills, articles, and a painted portrait fill his walls and tell a story of the woman with whom he is in love. No mere shaving mirror, Natalija is reflected in multiple frames around the room. Utterly seduced by his ardour and his commitment of the house to her:

Natalija
It's all mine.

(Kusturica, *Underground*, 1995)

and the depiction of herself on his walls, Natalija falls as much for the image he has created of her as for the man:

Natalija
"Marko, you lie so beautifully".

(Kusturica, *Underground*, 1995)

Her capitulation to his seduction becomes the haunting truth underlining the whole of the film. Where the cellar dwellers are kept in ignorance by circumstance, not choice, Natalija's relinquishment of herself to Marko's subjugating story is entirely voluntary. Marko creates her characters while using her to disseminate the fictions they both need to support the exploitation and myths they create to the end. Marko's fictions sit not only at the heart of his exploitation of his friends and comrades, but also at the heart of his home.

The third and final space for examination of perspective in *Underground* (1995) returns us to Plato's allegory of the cave. The people of the cellar are not the only individuals duped by Marko. Those who live above ground during Tito's rule are subject to a second fiction: that of Marko and Blacky as national heroes rather than opportunistic black-marketeers. Reciting tepid poetry written in honour of his comrade, Marko tells a tale both at a statue dedication in Blacky's "memory" (Blacky being dead in the story told above ground while alive below) and in the epic film of their exploits of patriotic and devoted communist activity in lieu of brash opportunism. Marko has rewritten the narrative above ground to advance his political and economic opportunities in the peaceful new country. Below ground, while the story is different, it is equally fictitious. Marko presents the case for an ongoing war between the Nazis and the Axis

powers, forcing Blacky to lead the cellar-dwellers in the name of Tito and keeping the potential threat to Natalija's affections under his thumb:

Marko
Tito orders you to wait

Blacky
Tito?

Marko
He said to me, "Give Blacky my regards and tell him not to move. He'll be precious to me in the final battle."

Blacky
He said that?

Marko
Every word.

(Kusturica, *Underground*, 1995)

By naming the realities in each world, Marko is able to maintain his own interests in each. But, as the Bregović song sung by Marko, Blacky, and Natalija multiple times in the film illustrates, "no one knows what is shining" (1995): even the master of the narrative has lost his place in his stories, betraying every relationship he protected prior to the imprisonment of his charges. Prepared to kill all of the villagers, Marko and Natalija bomb the house they live in, destroying the basement in the process, before leaving for lucrative lives as arms dealers. They are unaware that Ivan and Blacky have both escaped the cellar, and are more than willing to sacrifice two of the most important people in their pre-cellar lives. There is a sense of justice, if sadness, when it is Ivan, eyes opened and fully aware of Marko's lies, who kills his brother toward the end of the film. His attack on Marko is silent and unrelenting, Marko alternates between bargaining and guilt to try and get his brother to stop the attack. Ivan says nothing until he thinks Marko is finally dead, only asking God's forgiveness before walking to the little church and to hang himself. Once Natalija finds Marko half dead in his chair, a soldier in Blacky's paramilitary

troupe asks Blacky what to do with the two "profiteers" and Blacky orders "execute them on the spot" (1995). Marko is finally destroyed by the two brothers he betrayed.

Plato illustrates in detail the challenges faced by the transgressive man[53]: the one that steps from the darkness of the cave to the light. The person who makes the transition will first have difficulty seeing in the sun, his eyes having been acclimated to the dark. But once he achieves the ability to see, a clarity of understanding and then, in the subsequent pages, the "real" stories from which these legends were built (not available to either sun-dwellers or cave-dwellers) will be afforded him. If he is a good ruler, his clarity should allow him to lead the people well, despite their challenges in perspective. Plato does not speak of the malformed, contextualizing myth that can occur under the care of an amoral leader, but Kusturica's argument appears to be "a version of the past which highlights the authentic spirit and universal values of ordinary Yugoslavs even as misguidedly they toiled within the bunker of Tito's Yugoslavia" (Keene, 2001, p. 234). Though victims of Marko's exploitation, the life built underground is peaceful and lively. Weddings, religious worship, and socialization are all depicted as occurring without conflict and with hearty enthusiasm; this is certainly different from the world we see in the second last sequence above ground. Daily life, while linked to events of the state, is depicted as a protection against the state's invasions and exploitations (Keene, 2001, p. 244). The state may change, but the relationships that surround us are based on the same basic principles and remain constant in the face of policy, cultural and economic changes. Above, the world goes on. Below, as in the lives of Andrić's Višegradians, the people of the cellar wake up, eat, go to work, worship, and find ways of living peacefully and well together in spite of their hardships. That the cellar-dwellers are separated from connections to the rest of the world by a few inches of brick,

[53] I use the term man rather than person, here, because in Plato's universe, as in Kusturica's, it would be left to men to be mobile and politically or socially engaged.

when revealed, has little impact on their world. Most of the dwellers opt to stay in the cellar even after the breaking of the wall, a reflection of their reliance on Marko's fictions with regard to placing their daily activities in the world at large. Sadly, this choice also makes them victims of Marko's assassination plan when he and Natalija escape. Unlike Andrić's town folk, for whom stories are a means to survival, Kusturica's cellar-dwellers are the victims of their own adherence to subjugating stories produced to keep them passive.

While Andrić's novel is built around the key concepts of time, native articulation of history, and imperial oppression, Kusturica's film subsumes each of Andrić's architectural pillars to manipulation of mythistory and its discontents. The corrosive and unrelenting power of the discourse infuses itself into every nook and cranny of Kusturica's film, producing a dark twin to Andrić's novel anticipating the new Yugoslavia. Where Andrić speaks of coming of age, building a new nation collectively to overcome the powerful forces that buffet and shape the region and its people[54], Kusturica speaks to the inability to overcome these powers, the corrosion taking hold in places of power whether local or global. But as Judith Keene notes, Kusturica's light in this darkness rests with families:

> In *Underground* Kusturica deals explicity (sic) with the foundations (sic) myths of Yugoslav nationhood, and suggests that the family is the buffer between the individual and the state. The networks of the extended family provided spaces in which individuals could negotiate their way around Communist Party functionaries and the overbearing institutions of the national state. The family was also the place where, for good or ill, individuals were able to reveal their authentic selves (Keene, 2001, p. 245)**.**

Despite the fact that Kusturica also illustrates how the truths upon which families function can be corrupted by the same discursive instruments as the state (Marko is, after all, Ivan's brother and the equivalent of Blacky's blood brother), the daily activities and commitments of people to one another generally transcend the corrosion, creating space for happiness even in the lies.

[54] Including the tensions between them (Longinović T. , 2011).

The Conversation

Having addressed Andrić's core organizing principles with relation to his telling of Yugoslav history and responded with his own, Kusturica does not stop with the self-conscious incorporation of Andrić's thematic pillars as core themes of his film. He also takes on key passages from Andrić's novel and examines them through the lens of the Yugoslavia he experienced rather than the Yugoslavia Andrić anticipates in *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959). While many passages are referenced from Andrić's novel and other works throughout *Underground* (1995), two, in particular,, are examined and addressed explicitly within the film.

In the beginning, there were animals. Once Plato's allegory of the cave warns us of the failings in perspective of the story we are about to watch, Kusturica immediately breaks into his tale with the carnivalesque passion that marks the whole of the film. At the heart of the chaos of the first four sequences of the movie, though not limited here, Kusturica integrates one of Andrić's most famous passages from *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959):

> That wild beast, which lives in man and does not dare to show itself until the barriers of law and custom have been removed, was now set free… As has so often happened in the history of man, permission was tacitly granted for acts of violence and plunder even for murder, if they were carried in the name of higher interests, according to established rules, and against a limited number of men of a particular type and belief (1945/1959, p. 282-283).

While Andrić makes a universal argument with this statement, damning all men in war to a state of beastliness, Kusturica's depiction of this beastliness is kept hermetically sealed to the Slavs. The images he associates with the German occupying forces are organized and comparatively civilized, though always a bit ridiculous (Colonel Franz's attempt to protect himself from Blacky's gunshot with a bouquet of tulips being one of the more absurd examples). But in the end, the gaze of the film rests firmly on the relationship between Blacky, Marko, and Natalija,

making the story of animal instinct and baseness theirs. That Kusturica goes on to link this to a pre-existing chronicle spanning four centuries of history in the region suggests that he is arguing the contemporary nature of the Southwest Slav was established long before the Yugoslav experiment he historicizes on screen was even conceived. Andrić's passage provides a context from which to understand this moral decay as it progresses within what is technically a peaceful country: the people of the underground have been misled to believe that they exist in a perpetual state of war. If peace is never achieved, the animals need never be caged. This progression allows for an extension of "acceptably" animalistic behaviour long past the parameters set by Andrić in the above passage, even as such acceptable conditions are merely a well-constructed series of illusions. The fact that the people are nonetheless caged in the basement and, therefore, not part of the animal activity described by Andrić is further complicated by the fact that the one person who does behave as such is the man who keeps them caged, but is himself free: Marko.

The second portion of the opening sequence of *Underground* (1995) provides us an interesting relief against which most of the rest of the film refers. Once within the gates of Belgrade, Marko and Blacky pass through the zoo and come across, in the process, Marko's younger brother Ivan. A zookeeper and caretaker by nature, Ivan is still at work late at night, diligently tending to his animals and cataloguing the meat he has fed the wild cats that day. On top of the radio is a statue of Lupa, the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome: the twins suggesting something of the relationship between Marko and Blacky- suckled at a wild teat and preserved to build a new country. The statue, however, also acts as foreshadowing for the final reversal of fortunes between brothers at the end of the film. Marko and Blacky continue on with their caravan. As they do, they pass the lion's cage in the zoo, and Marko roars back at the mighty beasts as they go. Marko is playing at being one of them. Marko

will soon be the king of his underground domain, and therefore the king of Kusturica's beasts. The next morning, just prior to the bombing of Belgrade by the Nazis, we see Ivan feeding the animals of the zoo. Listless, the anxiety of the animals rises as the planes get closer. Once the bombs drop, there is a huge cacophony of sound. A baby chimp, who is very attached to Ivan, loses his mother and Ivan becomes his de facto caregiver. Each of the lead male characters is visually paired with an animal animus in the opening of the film, allowing for an aesthetic exploration of the beasts within. In the meantime, the cages of the animals have literally come down, and in the second nod to Andrić, the little bridge spanning the pond is blown up, disturbing the flock of geese surrounding it. The symbolic "barriers of law and custom" (1945/1959, p. 282) have been removed and so begins the war. The term "goose" in Serbo-Croatian, not unlike English, is often used to refer to silly or incompetent people: talkers who go nowhere. More to the point, geese are often associated with silly and nosy women. The presence of geese in *Underground* (Kusturica, 1995) and both the opera and film of *Time of the gypsies* (Kusturica, 2007 & 1989) tend to occur in moments representing silly group activities or moments where people might be seen as "sheep" in our own vernacular. In the case of *Underground* (Kusturica, 1995), flocks of geese are present at Marko's selection from a group of prostitutes, the scene with Blacky and Ivan sitting amongst the rubble of the bombing as people run around trying to save what little they have, and finally, the bombing of the tiny bridge at the zoo with geese, storks and pelicans surrounding it. The importance of this symbol cannot be overlooked, not only because of its frequency in Kusturica's body of work, but also because of the sheer insanity of placing a flock of live geese on a Paris stage not once, but twice in a live performance of the opera *Time of the gypsies* (2007) and expecting them to behave.

A scene is intercut with the many scenes of animal mayhem that is an unmistakable metaphor on the animal nature of humanity in this conflict. A goose finds its way into a trench with an injured tiger and begins pecking at the tiger's nose. The tiger, finishing the confrontation the way any good predator would, promptly takes the head and neck of the goose in his mouth for what we can only assume are the goose's last seconds. The predators of Yugoslavia are now free to seek their own food amongst their fellow citizens. The tiger and the goose, after all, were both animal residents of the zoo. This entire sequence, short and disturbing as it is, is foreshadowing of the events to follow. We are to understand that it is the nature of the tiger and the lion to hunt and kill the weaker animals, even if they are neighbours, or in the case of Marko, de facto subjects.

Meanwhile, as a way of underscoring the beast in the men of the film, Marko, who has been lying back passively waiting for a sex act to finish, suddenly becomes much more interested as the bombs start to drop. Marko is now fully present and aroused, but the prostitute responsible for the act runs from the bed. Marko grabs her to get her back, and she uses the heel of her shoe to knock him on the head. When she runs off, Marko masturbates, crying out in pleasure as the bombs drop around him. Like any well-conditioned animal, every situation where a sex act will occur in the film between Natalija and Marko from this point on will begin with Natalija knocking him on the head with the heel of her shoe, generating a Pavlovian response in Marko. To Marko, then, there is simply no bigger turn-on than the memory of almost dying in the German bombing of Belgrade. And there is no greater link between Marko and Kusturica's point regarding Marko's behaviour throughout the film than Marko and his animal need at the moment of his potential death.

In the commotion, an elephant[55], a lion, geese, ponies and other animals run rampant through the streets of Belgrade. There are a number of animal references, both immediately after the drive past the lion cage and throughout the first chapter, but it is the recurring theme of cats, big and small, that is most striking. Blacky grabs a black cat to polish his shoes as he pacifies a terrified and broken-hearted Ivan, while a tiger reclines behind them. Ivan, on the other hand, is pulling along a Shetland pony with one hand and carrying baby Soni (the chimp) with the other. Ivan is domesticated, bright and harmless we seem to be told, while Blacky is the black cat with the heart of the tiger[56]. Marko, conversely, is the king of beasts, the lion, with whom he shared a primal roar at the beginning of the film.

Kusturica, taking the notion of primordialism literally, gives us visual metaphors not only for the characters in his film but for the interplay of society as a whole. Blacky and Marko are predatory big cats whose instincts are unleashed on society by the war. Ivan, the zoo keeper, is depicted as the keeper of an animal that comes just before humans on the evolutionary scale – not quite human, but somehow the more innocent for it. This pairing is made more explicit in a sequence close to the end of the film as the three most innocent male characters sit witnessing the performance of an ostensibly tortured Natalija. They assume, of course, that her torment is real. As Jovan (Blacky's son), Ivan, and Soni sit across from Blacky, waiting for Natalija to regain consciousness, they take the poses of the three wise monkeys: see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. As these are the only male characters as yet untarnished by the corruption that

[55] This is Kusturica's third nod to Andrić in the opening sequence. Referencing the short story "The Vizier's Elephant" (Andrić, 1993). The pachyderm wandering the city streets comes to a stop at Blacky's window, only to steal Blacky's newly shone shoes. Andrić's short story examining the power dynamics in a small town between an Ottoman Vizier who has imported an elephant from abroad as a display of wealth and power, and the bitter villagers forced to care for the elephant, is a clear shot at the extravagance of the bombs that destroyed Belgrade. The bombing is depicted here as an overstated imposition on the Yugoslav people, born not by choice, but by necessity. That, and the elephant in Kusturica's film allows for a moment of carnivalesque humour, also typical of Kusturica's work. Kusturica is drawing our attention, with this film to the proverbial "elephant in the room."

[56] Or it suggests that Blacky has the heart of the tiger, using his bad luck to shine his shoes.

surrounds them, Kusturica has underlined their collective innocence. This is, for all intents and purposes, the last scene in the film where that innocence remains intact. Departures from innocence (not falls from grace but passages from ignorance to knowledge) are integral in bringing us to the dystopic end of Yugoslavia we see at the end of the film. Kusturica has these characters come to their places of knowledge not through Oedipal conflicts, but rather through the avoidance of the same: Soni runs away, Jovan drowns as he is left by his father to learn to swim, and Ivan is given the information about his brother's betrayal when he is completely removed from his friends and family as a result of the search for his charge, Soni. While each of them achieves complex understandings that take them away from their innocent beginnings, the only one who gains clear knowledge of the whole of events is Ivan. And his heartbreak is palpable.

Iordanova notes that many critics speak to unresolved Oedipal relationships in Kusturica's films (Iordanova, 2002, p. 9), but perhaps reframing this from the defeat of the father by the son to the son's inability to achieve full independence is a more accurate reading of the relationships in *Underground* (1995). These "innocents" travel through a rite of passage, but cannot pass through to the other side: ill-equipped, they each (with the exception of Soni) die with the knowledge that they could not be the men they wanted to be. Theirs are the tragedies that result from the eventual exposure of the lies of a false mythic history that lures them towards completeness without resolution.

The opening of the film therefore centralizes the primordialist argument, removed from its tribalist context as illustrated in Kaplan's *Balkan ghosts* (2005) and defined by the original meaning of the term: ancient and foundational. Kusturica joins a long line of self-exoticizing, self-critical Balkan scholars and artists (Iordanova, 2001) who, in some ways, suggest that the

problems of the Balkans are a product of a fundamentally "incomplete" (Todorova, 1997, p. 58), even feral, development on the part of the Balkan people. Soni serves as the visual metaphor for this incomplete development throughout the film. Iordanova argues that Kusturica attributes this to the impaired moral standards innate to the Balkan social character, an approach which is nothing less than a refined version of the primordialist argument, according to which the passions that are being played out in the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s are of a pre-moral level. This incompleteness, or ill-formed moral context, has been attributed to everything from the place of the Balkan man on the evolutionary scale, serving as the missing link between the "long-skulled, fair" Europeans (Durham, 1924, p. 140) and the "savage native cultures of Africa, Asia, and the Americas" (Antić, 2003, p. 3), to an "omnivorous vigour" (Iordanova, 2001, p. 119) that has resulted from centuries of trying to create stability in an unstable political and cultural environment. Kusturica chooses not to validate any of these, while still acknowledging each. Soni is a nod to the evolutionary argument[57]. Marko's machinations to keep his basement dwellers convinced they are protected from a war twenty years after it has finished illustrates, in turn, the myths and misinformation used to manipulate perception that was the rule of thumb for the communist regime:

> Kusturica's work… holds up to scrutiny the hollowness of the official version of Yugoslav history and the hypocrisy of the leaders who promoted it (Keene, 2001, p. 243)**.**

In the end, life is an incomprehensible marvel. At the heart of each artist's work is an examination of community characteristics that are either overcome (Andrić) or act as fatal flaws in the great work of the imagining and execution of the Yugoslav project (Kusturica). Both base

[57] From the moment Soni appears on film, it is difficult to shake the connection his presence makes to the chimp who starts Makaveyev's film *Montenegro* (1981), a film that explores Western exoticism of Balkan people, specifically Yugoslav people. Clearly speaking to the evolutionary argument that underscores Western superiority and hierarchal imaginary (as explicated by Anne McClintock in *Imperial Leather* [1995]), Kusturica furthers the connection between Soni and the film by casting the actor who "owns" the Zanzibar club of Makaveyev's film as Soni's target for mischief and violence in *Underground*(1995).

their works on the daily lives of the people as they are or are not affected by changes contingent on power shifts beyond their own reckoning. Yugoslavs, in short, are presented as husky survivalists (Iordanova, 2001, p. 120) in each work, though the means to survival is conceived differently in each. The lives the people are depicted as creating, together and individually, are conceptualized in fundamentally different ways.

Kusturica's self-conscious awareness of differences between his own world-view and that of Andrić is never more obvious than in the way he addresses the single most famous passage from *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) and provides his own response. Following the tale of a harrowing flood in Višegrad and the collective community response, life in the town, just as in response to power shifts and community shocks, returns to its own version of stasis:

> So, on the *kapia*[58], between the skies, the river and the hills, generation after generation learnt not to mourn overmuch what the troubled waters had borne away. They entered there into the unconscious philosophy of the town; that life was an incomprehensible marvel, since it was incessantly wasted and spent, yet none the less it lasted and endured 'like The bridge on the Drina' (1945/1959, p. 81).

Wachtel contends that the reliable constant for life in Andrić's Višegrad is change, but that the need for the mythistory to remain unchanged in identifying the people as a "people" requires Renan's selective amnesia:

> The unifying feature in Bosnian and Yugoslav history that Andrić's novels uncover (or perhaps create) is the paradox that on a territory that has been characterized both vertically and horizontally by a continuous and radical mix of civilizations and influences, the inhabitants are convinced that nothing ever changes. The tension – or dialectic, if you will – between constant change and the constant denial of change drives Andrić's historical narratives and forms a basis for shared nationhood (Wachtel, 1995, p. 93).

[58] The kapia on the bridge in Višegrad is a large, three sided stone sofa situated in a portion of the bridge that projects out over the river. It is depicted in the novel as the centre of social life in Višegrad.

Wachtel seems to suggest that knowing how to forget the changes imposed on the community and accepting them as historical constants, rewriting communal context in the process, is a core tenant of survival for the people of Višegrad.

Goy sees Andrić's concern with the denial of change differently than Wachtel. While he acknowledges the persistence of collective amnesia regarding the sociological impacts of natural and imperial forces on the people of the region, he conceives it not as a paradox for the people of Andrić's Bosnia and Yugoslavia, but as motivated by:

> movement, change… Na Drini Ćuprija, dominated by the bridge, with its sense of passing time, its many accounts of human tragedy linked together by legend as the collective memory (Goy, 1963, p. 321).

Oral tradition and the legends it produces replace Anderson's print material in the extension of national identity and experience, but only because the town, according to Goy, has a concrete expression of connectedness unifying the community. The bridge stands in for a book, newspapers, maps or any of Anderson's other examples of community unifiers from the 19th century, as the layers of history and experience are laid over the bridge's body like dust, making "the symbol of the bridge [a] …link between change, between the past and the present, between generations, countries and epochs, the symbol of the constancy for which man yearns," (Goy, 1963, p. 324). By extension of Goy's argument Andrić, in illustrating the re-articulation and creation of legends from historical events, is embodying the process of "forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error… a crucial factor in the creation of a nation" (Renan, 2001, para. 10). In brief "the truth about stories is that is all we are" (King, 2003, p. 3), and according to Goy's argument the people of Višegrad, at least as presented in Andrić's text, conceptualize these stories around the bridge as the key connective symbol of the area. The more mutable the stories and collective memory, the more successful the community is at surviving change.

Change ceases to feel like the violation articulated so clearly in Andrić's text, enabling the people of the region to move forward as though they continue to have some semblance of autonomy and control over their daily lives:

> But misfortunes do not last forever (this they have in common with joys) but pass away or are at least diminished and become lost in oblivion. Life on the *kapia* always renews itself despite everything and the bridge does not change with the years or with the centuries or with the most painful turns in human affairs. All these pass over it, even as the unquiet waters pass beneath its smooth and perfect arches (1945/1959, p.101).

So Wachtel advises that the development of the people of the region has been to accept that change is the single constant in life. Goy, however, illustrates how the community bears the shock of these changes by choosing to simply rewrite their stories.

Kusturica's take on the use of stories is different from that of Andrić in that he does not see it as a survival technique, but rather a source of manipulation and control. As illustrated in the above section devoted to Andrić's passage on the release of the animal of man in war, Kusturica's film is fundamentally concerned with the manipulation of collective context. Marko shapes the reality of the people he holds captive in the cellar by showing outdated newsreels, staging fake air raids and writing complex plays for his wife and himself to play out to convince his subjects that they are helping Tito's partisans to win the war against the Nazis. In reality, Yugoslavia has been an independent nation for twenty years under Tito's leadership, and Marko has been exceedingly successful as one of Tito's advisors. All the while, the munitions made by his cellar-dwellers have been sold on the black market, making Marko and Natalija wealthy and mobile in ways the average Yugoslav could not have accessed. Where the stories of Andrić's Višegrad are about change, the story of the cellar-dwellers in *Underground* (1995) is of stasis. The world around them moves forward even as they are trapped in a two decade time-warp, only to be released in death at the hands of Marko and Natalija themselves. Marko plays God with his

subjects, changing time and reality, and even determining when they die. But Marko is inherently human, and the world he creates, as a result,, is flawed, ugly and deeply damaging which brings us to the second great difference in the conceptions of life between these two artists: God.

God is in the water: Andrić`s divine organizing principles. Where Kusturica's film is a study of the power of the corruption of communal contextualizing mythistory based on malformed moral development at a primeval level, Andrić's book is about precisely the opposite. *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) is about the collection of changes that occur naturally in a community over time, denoting meta-progression that each generation contributes to equally but cannot recognize on its own. In Kusturica`s world, humanity is inherently flawed, animalized and, to some degree, infantilized so that it cannot be blamed, only forgiven, for its failings. To Andrić, humanity grows up almost in spite of itself and in a direction set by a power too big for humanity to even conceive. This process takes place within a framework too large for humanity to understand. The changes that cannot be made in Kusturica's world occur incrementally in Andrić's, in precisely the same way that the landscape and geography out of which Višegrad grows in *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) form over time. Concurrently erosive and life-giving, the river over which the bridge is built determines the patterns of development and change on the land where the town grows. This provides clarity as to why Andrić situates the river and not the bridge or the town in the opening lines of the novel:

> For the greater part of its course the river Drina flows through narrow gorges between steep mountains or through deep ravines with precipitous banks. In a few places only the river banks spread out to form valleys with level or rolling stretches of fertile land suitable for cultivation and settlement on both sides (1945/1959, p. 13).

Having established that the geography of the region is dictated by the shape and nature of the river, Andrić also establishes the role of the bridge built at this site:

> Here where the Drina flows with the whole force of its green and foaming waters from the apparently closed mass of the dark steep mountains, stands a great clean cut stone bridge with eleven wide sweeping arches. From this bridge the little oriental town of Višegrad and all its surroundings… spreads fanlike the whole rolling valley with the little oriental town of Višegrad… Thus the bridge, uniting the two parts of the Sarajevo road, linked the town with its surrounding villages. Actually to say 'linked' was just as true as to say that the sun rises in the morning so that men may see around them and finish their daily tasks, and sets in the evening that they may be able to sleep and rest from the labours of the day (1945/1959, p. 13).

The chain of development is made explicit from the outset. The river splits the land and shapes it, making some places habitable and others not. The bridge, however, once built reshapes the structure of the settlement and quality of life available to the people of the region and increases their value exponentially. Each develops and moves forward in a series of links that are dependent on the foundational process of the river flowing. Moravcevich picks up on this interdependence of the symbols of the bridge, the river and the town as providing a "supersymbolism [that] is the perpetually unidirectional current of time" (1972, p. 315), with the river representing the "perennially renewed, infinitely variable force of nature [that] symbolizes the great law of change" (1972, p. 314). Moravcevich suggests within this supersymbolic structure that Andrić argues that the only thing that really stays the same is change itself. What is of concern here, however, is the question "and what shapes the river and its flow?"

Goy argues that within his early works Andrić's depiction of God is "a challenging force, a struggle in everything. It is only on coming into communion with this universal power that man can escape isolation… This God is close to what is called pantheistic… less a person than a force of life, its sense and unity" (Goy, 1963, p. 303). Theoretically, a logical extension of man's fear of isolation from God as depicted by Goy in this article is the fear of failure to meet the challenges and needs of God; that Andrić's God in some way denies those who fail to follow His path, meet His challenges or suffer sufficiently or appropriately. I would contend rather that the

pantheistic God Goy argues Andrić depicts is closely aligned to the then-contemporary notions of progress as described in the work of Teodor Shanin. These ideologies are/were important in narrativizing the nation-building schemas Andrić participated in. The idea of progress was:

> secular, departing from the medieval mind-set where everything could be explained by God's will, and it offered a powerful and pervasive supra-theory that ordered and interpreted everything within the life of humanity- past, present and future. … all societies are advancing naturally and consistently 'up', on a route from poverty, barbarism, despotism and ignorance to riches, civilization, democracy and rationality… The idea of progress- its conceptual apparatus as much as the values, images and the emotions it attracted – was not restricted to the philosophers and to the philosophizing community of scholars, but penetrated all strata of contemporary societies to become the popular common sense, and as such resistant to challenge (Shanin, 1997, p. 65).

At first glance, it would seem counter-intuitive to combine a secular idea of material development with God's guidance, but when we dismantle Andrić's God, we quickly find support for Goy's contention that He is synchretic at least, a philosophical amalgam at most. While Goy argues:

> In accepting this view of existence as a process involving suffering as necessity, Andrić appears to lose any Christian sense of God. God becomes the whole, the mystery, because the whole cannot be directly perceived by the part. 'Life is an endless tide,' but 'God is the night in which our fate lies like something quiet and small' (Džadžić, 1957, p. 10). Yet God is also in everything, in the day-to-day struggle of things in the shadow of a great mystery (Goy, 1963, p. 305).

What Goy does not address is that to Andrić, God is guiding "progress" and humanity toward a kind of liberation that, as Goy himself identifies, cannot be perceived by the people who serve as the agents of that very change. As the agent of change, and participant in process, humanity has no more control over it than the river has over its direction or force of flow. Each is in place acting autonomously but with direction from and processional foundation created by God. So, in Andrić's hierarchy God created nature, and within that he created humankind. Human activities are shaped by the processes inherent to nature, which communicates these rules on behalf of God through the way nature shapes man's development and "progress."

To understand Andrić's general philosophy of the world we have to consider his unique appreciation of paradigmatic formation as reflected in his short story "Conversations with Goya*"*:

> … it is useless and mistaken to look for sense in the seemingly important but meaningless events taking place around us, but that we should look for it in those layers which the centuries have built up around the few main legends of humanity. These layers constantly, if ever less faithfully, reproduce the form of that grain of truth around which they gather, and so carry it through the centuries (1992, p. 16).

Revealing that the important truths of mankind are found in mythistory, he also reveals an appreciation for patterning at a foundational level. Andrić goes on to have Goya tell him of God's intention and place for the artist: a tormented space that is closer to God than the average man and that of deliverer of God's will (Andrić, "Conversation with Goya", 1992, pp. 5-6). If, as Andrić tells us, these core truths revealed through myth serve as the patterns for our continued development, and that these come through the artist from God himself, it is reasonable to assume that he may argue further that God, in creating the world, created other grains upon which humanity relies for shaping: namely natural order and flow.

Stealing blueprints from God: Andrić`s architectures and art.

"The hellish torment and incomparable charm of [making art] make us feel that we are seizing something from someone else, taking it from one dark world to another, which we do not know, transforming it from nothing into something, without knowing what that something is" (Andrić, "Conversations with Goya", 1992, p. 6).

Frequently concerned with the marriage between form and function, Andrić examines structures created to ease the effects of obstacles to human life in his writing. Bridges[59], power lines [60], *kapias*[61], and even prisons[62] are subjects of his work: these structures "point out places

[59] Žepa (1926) and *Drina* (1945/1959)
[60] "Conversations with Goya" (1992)
[61] *Drina* (1945/1959)
[62] *The Damned Yard* (1992)

where a man came across an obstacle and did not turn away, but overcame it, bridged it as best he could, according to his way of thinking, taste and the circumstances around him" (Andrić, "Bridges", 1992, p. 26). Andrić's respect for the synergy between a structure and its impact on the people it serves has been examined by a number of scholars. Cootes' discussion of the circular story mirrored in the circular structure of the prison in *The damned yard* (Andrić, 1992) is an excellent example of this line of thought, but no one addresses the question more powerfully or succinctly than Andrić himself:

> Thus the bridge, uniting the two parts of Sarajevo road, linked the town with its surrounding villages. Actually, to say 'linked' was just as true as to say that the sun rises in the morning so that men may see around them and finish their daily tasks, and sets in the evening that they may be able to sleep and rest from the labours of the day (*The bridge on the Drina,* 1945/1959, pp. 13-14).

A product of human invention or not, the activities of the people of the region, in using the bridge, are changed by the idiosyncrasies and requirements the bridge has of them even as it serves them.

Andrić reiterates the effects of the natural world on the patterns of daily life of the town. We see Andrić's obsession with patterning reiterated throughout the novel: the natural, material world, and the superhuman forces that shape it create the obstacles that enabled the conception and construction of brilliant tools like the bridge. But even as the people overcome the natural forces that previously hindered them, their activity is still shaped by the patterns and behaviours of those forces. Andrić ends the chapter by giving the biggest clue as to the metaphor he intends the bridge to represent, without ever explicitly stating it in the novel:

> There are no buildings that have been built by chance, remote from human society where they have grown and its needs, hopes and understanding, even as there are no arbitrary lines and motiveless forms in the work of the masons. The life and existence of every great, beautiful and useful building, as well as its relation to the place where it has been built, often bears within itself complex and mysterious drama and history… the story of the foundation and

> destiny of the bridge is at the same time the story of the life of the town and of its people (*The bridge on the Drina*, 1945/1959, p. 21).

The progression to the composition of the chapter clarifies ways in which Andrić conceives the formation of Višegradian life, both materially and culturally. He also provides us a blueprint as to how to read his book. Through all of this, Andrić illustrates the power of major forces outside of the control of a people in the formation and sustenance of community: be it natural forces shaping the world in which they live, forces of power in the shape of empire and domination, or the overarching influence of God, *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) is a study in the analysis of the structures and interplay between these structures as they affect and are affected by the people of Višegrad.

Serving as a foundation for each of these conceptions, however, is Andrić's own conviction that stories contain elemental nuggets[63] about peoples and humanity as a whole that supersede and undermine the teller's original act of creation: that whether speaking truths from God or truths of people[64], the teller is a conduit of knowledge. How the story is then interpellated, reconfigured and reproduced is a collaborative act of articulation of core values and truths or a mythistory: "our individual ideas, however hard we try, do not mean much and cannot achieve anything… we must listen closely to legends, those traces of collective human endeavor

[63] Elemental nuggets became a useful metaphor for me as I was analyzing Andrić`s worldview: his progress based conception of both quotidian and divine subjects, coupled with his concern with incremental progress indicate a kind of conception of the world wherein it appears concrete, but its only true material constructs are those cobble stones we have been guided to while slowly advancing us on a path to God. These cobblestones are identified as paths (Hawkesworth, 1984), roads and 'grains of truth' (Andrić, "Conversations with Goya", 1992) in Andrić`s work (another paper called for out of this research) but serve as small pieces that are elementary in the foundation of the life, divine and otherwise, of man: hence the term elemental nuggets.

[64] Andrić's own beliefs regarding the Divine are complex, with his own conviction that people exist to work toward a divine vision of human accomplishment serving as a foundation for his larger vision of history and humanity as an epic project: individuals are of little consequence, their ideas and works contributing to the Human species and its legacy unless they are the handful of great men who speed humanity along God's path (Andrić, *The bridge on the Drina*, 1945/1959, p. 314). Mehmed Sokolović, the Vizier who conceives and executes the plan for the bridge in the novel, is one such example.

through the centuries and try to make out from them, as far as possible, the sense of our destiny" (Andrić, "Conversation with Goya", 1992, p. 16).

Man plans, God laughs: Kusturica's flawed children. The animalistic opening of *Underground* (1995) situates Kusturica's argument in an evolutionary line and provides one of two powerful symbols suggesting the people of Yugoslavia were simply ill-equipped to develop healthy independence. Too flawed as humans and requiring "saving" by an omniscient and forgiving father-God Kusturica depicts these failures as a product of the people of the former Yugoslavia's incomplete development as humans; hence the deliberate links to animal animas at the beginning of the film. Kusturica suggests in multiple ways that the people of Yugoslavia were doomed from the start by their own limitations and nature. Iordanova adds:

> Kusturica ultimately attributes it all to impaired moral standards innate in the Balkan social character, an approach which is nothing else but a refined version of the primordialist argument, according to which the passions that are being played out in the Balkan conflict are of a pre-moral level (Iordanova, *Cinema of Flames*,2001, p. 119).

Evolutionarily challenged, developmentally stunted and morally impaired, the people of Yugoslavia prove time and again that they "know not what they do." It is precisely this ignorance, or lack of access to knowledge, that enables Marko's machinations to be effective. Marko keeps his basement dwellers convinced they are protected from a war twenty years after it has finished which pays homage, in turn, to the myths and misinformation used to manipulate cultural paranoia that resulted from five hundred years of imperial rule. Ivan and Marko are set in direct comparison as caretakers. Ivan is depicted as compassionate and gentle where Marko is seen as exploitative and greedy[65]. The more convincing case, however, in Kusturica's film is that

[65] The most forthright example of the disparity in the care each brother gives his charges in the film begins in the second sequence and is echoed close to the middle. As Marko and Blacky drive back into Belgrade late at night, Ivan fills in the ledger of the food he has given his predatory cats for the day: Lions 11 kg etc. Later in the movie, Marko is seen taking dog food out of cans and repackaging it for the cellar dwellers to consume as though

his characters are fundamentally infantilized by the patriarchy from which Kusturica cannot extricate himself. There is, in Kusturica's film, always a subjugating keeper: a father, a God or an empire to whom his characters look. Blacky looks to Tito, Marko away from God, and the rest of the characters look to one or the other of these men.

In Kusturica's view the final word, within these patriarchal constructs, rests with the final patriarch, God. This is most evident in the last sequence of the film. Returning to the prominent animal themes of the first sequences, Blacky is guided to his son's wedding redux, this one organized by his late wife Vera, by a swimming herd of cows. Reaching the shore to the little peninsula of land where Jovan's wedding takes place for the second time in the film, Blacky finds every person who was part of his underground experience. There are dancing and feasting and a beautiful warm sun on the Sava River to greet him. Once he has arrived, it is Ivan who brings us back to the images of animals and, more importantly, the kind of life they look to build after the absolute disaster we have just witnessed:

> **Ivan**
>
> Here we built new houses with red roofs and chimneys where storks will rest. With wide-open doors for dear guests. We'll thank the soil for feeding us and the sun for warming us. And the fields for reminding us of the green grass of home. With pain, sorrow and joy, we shall remember our country as we tell our children stories that start like fairy tales: Once upon a time there was a country… (Kusturica, *Underground*, 1995).

This seems to be Kusturica's direct response to Andrić's perspective on the continuity of the people of the region in spite of the forces and events that occur around them. Matching Andric's lyrical structure and flow, Kusturica speaks of a foundation in time, land and legacy that is clearly meant to connect the end of his film to the Andric's novel. At the same time he reflects

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purchased from the butcher and made for their consumption. Prime cuts from Ivan to his cats, remnants from Marko to his cellar dwellers.

the differences in values and context between the Yugoslavs of his film and Višegradians of *Drina* (1945/1959)[66]*:*

> So, on the *kapia*, between the skies, the river and the hills, generation after generation learnt not to mourn overmuch what the troubled waters had borne away. They entered there into the unconscious philosophy of the town; that life was an incomprehensible marvel, since it was incessantly wasted and spent, yet none the less it lasted and endured 'like the bridge on the Drina' (Andrić, *The bridge on the Drina*, 1945/1959, p. 81).

While Andrić speaks of overcoming conflict, tragedy, and difficulty to continue to move forward, Kusturica depicts complete annihilation that can only be rectified with God's intervention. This vision of heaven where enemies become friends, old grudges are forgiven, and the passage of youth into maturity is celebrated, all happens under a radiant sun. The "reboot" that they've been offered has come from some supernatural or external force that, given the theme of men as caretakers in this film, can only be conceived of as God. Kusturica gives us very little explanation beyond his "Deus ex-machina" ending. But, coming back to the notion of cows- complacent, productive and easy to herd- it is difficult not to see Kusturica's final argument in their passivity when all old friends turned enemies become friends again: Blacky forgives Marko, Vera tolerates Natalija and everyone dances and celebrates the passage into the new generation.

Idyllic ideal or God's redemption? Critics who otherwise find themselves largely in agreement about the themes and intent of Kusutrica's *Underground* (1995) tend to diverge on the point of the final sequence of the film. Where Pavle Levi argues it is an example of magical realism (Levi, 2007, p. 94), Dina Iordanova holds that "magic realist elements are scarce in the film" (Iordanova, 2002, p. 82) suggesting her view of the final sequence may be different from Levi's. Iordanova, when speaking to the meaning of this final sequence, underlines its

[66] The comparison between these two passages warrants significantly further investigation, but I include it as a way of indicating the extensive connections between these two pieces that still require further analysis.

importance by stating that it contains the image that drove the making of the film in the first place- the wedding feast itself (2001, p. 114). Her reading of the message of the final sequence is to draw attention to the continued naiveté of the cellar dwellers and how it persists as their new idyllic land floats away (2002, p. 80), "*Underground'*s final wedding scene is a plot device to gather everyone together for a culmination that cannot be compared with the standard intense eventfulness of an ordinary wedding. Rather, it is used to deliver a warning about an oblivious drifting away towards an uncertain future" (2002, p. 122). Levi, however, argues that the sequence, a "choreography of enjoyment" (2007, p. 94), is "reaching beyond contemporary ethnonationalist hatred among the South Slavs" (2007, p. 94). Levi's read of Kusturica's final sequence is that it represents the "national Ideal" (Levi, 2007, p. 94) while at the same time underlining the key message of the film preceding it regarding the nation's "history of its deformation of practice" (2007, p. 94).

Keene, by extension, argues that the final "boisterous" scene represents what she sees as Kusturica's redemptive message in the film: storied contexts were in fact manipulated and exploitative, but Kusturica's hope for the people of the region is that "family and its networks provide the main buffer against the randomness and impersonality of party and state" (2011, p. 244).

Few critics have noted in the materials I've been able to acquire that *Underground* (1995), known for its flamboyant, orgiastic energy, is an exceptional piece of *art*- not an academic or political treatise (though Kusturica may argue that parts of this film are intended to serve just as such). Consequently, where academic work requires we pursue a line of inquiry and make conclusions and arguments that support or disprove our thesis, art is a space of contemplation, exercise and even play. Multiple lines of interpretation and inquiry can co-exist

effectively within a single scene, not to mention an entire film, and remain unresolved without damaging the film's diegesis or the audience's ability to follow and resolve these tensions.

In the case of Kusturica's *Underground* (1995), I argue that the energy and tension we experience is a direct product of the unresolved tensions between the various lines of inquiry that run alongside each other in any given sequence. Kusturica is keenly aware of the depth of the movie frame. Iordanova offers Kusturica's own relationship to his *mise-en-scène*, stating that he sees it as "a moving mosaic with notes that it is difficult for him to distinguish the central thing that is happening in a scene because he doesn't approach as rationally or logically as other film-makers… we can talk of Kusturica's style as one that combines such layers within each sequence and frame. This elaborate choreography involves complex *mise-en-scènes*, where the whole seems on the brink of collapsing, but is miraculously kept under control by the director who brings it all together and balances the entropy" (2002, p. 101). I suggest that Kusturica's relationship to his visual work in a film is the same as his relationship with every other aspect of his production. For academics, the reward lies in problematizing the pieces of the Gordian knot of Kusturica's influences, references, and under-examined relationships to philosophy, belief, and feeling. This process is intoxicating and productive, but ultimately unsatisfying for anyone bent on finding "one true answer" about this work. Cognitive dissonances serve as the fuel for *Underground* (1995). I offer this explanation of Kusturica's work by way of explanation of my reading of the final scene of his film and why I argue it sits alongside the readings offered by the scholars listed above.

The final sequence of Kusturica's film is, alternately, a cynical and tragic, though aesthetically lovely and idyllic, vision that Kusturica offers, but one that is potentially far too simple. In trusting in the "nested" patriarchies depicted in Kusturica's film, he advocates the

surrender of personal responsibility for one's life. Not only is this resolution unsatisfying, but it is inherently dangerous, perpetuating an absence Kusturica himself addresses in the final sequence. On arriving at the wedding, Blacky asks who organized it all and Jovan responds "Mama". Blacky is impressed at the event, and we are reminded that this is the first time we`ve seen a woman offered the opportunity for leadership or authority in the film. Under God`s radiant sunlight, even as he argues for the inevitability of a patriarchal system, Kusturica also seems to argue that the absence of feminine influence was a fatal flaw in the Yugoslav project. But, unable to resolve the conundrum he creates within the film, he once again disinvests the people of his film from ultimate authority over the way they live their lives and portrays them as herd animals: cows and geese. And like the flock of geese that wander about in the film, quacking, and fighting, the people of Kusturica's Yugoslavia wind up going nowhere and getting blown up, stepped on and eaten by tigers. Their only hope, it would seem, is redemption at death.

Kusturica's film conveys a dystopic world that is animalistic, sensation driven and ultimately lost. His characters wander or charge through the events of their lives leaving a wake of destruction and confusion. Andrić's world, conversely, speaks to a process of steady, methodical change occurring over generations, progress happening almost without the knowledge of the agents of change themselves: the people of Višegrad. His world is one of progress, incremental though it may be, toward something that must be better, greater or at the very least guided. God, in Andrić's world, saves those who help themselves. This fundamental difference is actually exceptionally important when looking to Kusturica's *Underground* (1995) as a purported second chapter in the Southwest Slav historical chronicle he appears to be trying to create. Kusturica, in dialoguing directly with Andrić's novel through the film, is moving Andrić's tempered, if hopeful, vision of the future from its modernist, progress-based roots into

Kusturica's own cynical, post-modern, dystopic abandon. If the walls came down, as Kusturica suggests, at the outset of the Second World War, and were never really allowed to come back up, the people of the former Yugoslavia were, in so many ways, damned to repeat the same mistakes with no progression forward. This view effectively erases the very foundation of Andrić's work, moving Kusturica into the Oedipal consumption of his hero.

Conclusion

"The true nature, worth and value of a man's life is determined, basically, by his geographical position, in other words by his relationship to the sun and the sun's relationship to him" (Andrić, "Signs by the roadside", 1992, p. 61).

This thesis has looked at questions of origins and context. In my case, I have been able to touch on ideas of Southwest Slav identity and its impact on the diaspora. In the case of Kusturica, I have looked at the foundational importance of Andrić's *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959) on the filmmaker in his film *Underground* (1995). As an academic inquiry, this thesis has offered some comforting and challenging conclusions with regard to each.

First, I establish the dialogue Kusturica explicitly cultivates between his film *Underground* (1995) and Ivo Andrić's novel *The bridge on the Drina* (1945/1959). I then look at the complexity of these representations on the construction of national identity within the former Yugoslavia as illustrated in these works.

I track the thematic and structural connections between *Drina* (1945/1959) and *Undergound* (1995) in Chapter 2, taking into account complicating differences between the two artists' fundamental world views. The result is a clear line of history begun by Andrić in 1945 and continued by Kusturica in 1995 intended to serve as a native history for the people of the now former Yugoslavia. The artists' core concerns with mythistory, subjugation, and independence are shared across both texts, revealing the artists' interpretations of the people's experiences of the workings of international power and empire through four hundred and eighty years of history. Andrić and Kusturica, as a result, profile the central values and preoccupations of the people of the former Yugoslav states across two epochs of cultural development and national composition. Some of the differences in their ideologies are linked to the differing

contexts of each of the authors in their upbringings and experiences of Yugoslavia as examined in Chapter 1.

Owing to Kusturica's extension of the conversation of the nature of mythistory in shaping cultural, social and political life for the people of Yugoslavia across two distinct eras of Southwest Slav national composition, we have the rare opportunity to track how the stories told of and by the people of Yugoslavia shaped the building of the world they created together. Moreover, Kusturica's explicit integration of the formal structure and key themes of Andrić's novel offers "grains of truth" (Andrić,"Conversation with Goya", 1992, p. 16) around which Kusturica's story is built. Kusturica's dystopic fairy tale that begins "once upon a time there was a country" (Kusturica, *Underground,* 1995) becomes the second chapter in the story of the Southwest Slavs of the Balkans, but, at the same time the first to reflect persistent cultural concerns as they are defined and shaped by the people's imaginary: outlining some of the limits, as it were, "on what it is possible to think" (Chambers, 2001, p. 100) for the people of the former Yugoslavia even as they are no longer Yugoslavian.

As the various nations of the second Yugoslav experiment move forward into the next chapter of their mythistory, it is important to understand the cultural values and concerns that span generations, empires, and national constructions. These values, in the end, are the central elements of the nature of the people of the region far more than the interpretations of any one artist on the subject, allowing those of us who track their progression through the works of Andrić and Kusturica insights into the "real nature of the people" (Robinson, 1996). The hope is that at the end of this new era, or at the beginning of the next, another artist will continue the conversation, and another analyst will continue the inquiry into how these themes, concerns, and

histories allow us to better understand the nature of the borders of how the Southwest Slavs of the Balkans can conceptualize their world.

My own experience as a diasporic Canadian-Serb, watching depictions of the events in the former Yugoslavia during the wars of dissolution, was complicated. I was not able to make my two worlds fit with the version of events I was watching on TV and reading in the news. The result is this thesis. Andrić and Kusturica, two of the most readily available artists from the former Yugoslavia beyond its borders, became touchstones for me as I worked through the very stereotypes illustrated by Kusturica in *Underground* (1995) and studied by Iordanova, Todorova, Longinović, Bjelić, etc. I recognized a familiarity in the depictions, but also, within these, a failure to recognize qualities I had come to value from people in the region: warmth, kindness, sensitivity and much more concern with the politics and construction of their nation than most Canadians. The devil, though, is in the details. Through this work, I've found that Kusturica fails to overcome the stereotypes imposed by the West in their own imaginary. He engages in the act of self-exoticization as part of his contention that the people of the former Yugoslavia brought about its failure through their own ill-formed morality (Iordanova, 2001).

Andrić, like many Yugoslavs, anticipated an opportunity for a nation where ethnicity could be maintained under the mantle of a multinational shared identity and where religious division would be secondary to collective progress (Longinović T. , 1995). Kusturica's heartbreak at the failure of this idea resulted in *Underground* (1995). His disappointment translates into a dystopian vision of the weaknesses and failings of the people of Yugoslavia.

The gift of Kusturica's *Underground* (1995) is to have started a conversation that can now move backwards, as it does with Andrić, and potentially forwards with the next historian/author who takes up the cause. Kusturica's film opens the door to the next generation to

offer the coming chapter in the history of the people of the former Yugoslav states. By using Andrić's work as a formal structure for examination of the stories of the people, Kusturica has created a template that allows for comparison between generations and authors. Though his own views and ideologies are very different from Andrić's, we are still able to witness the conversation between these two artists and the history they convey. Their works, together, provide a platform for a better understanding of the Southwest Slav experience of life in the Balkans and serve as important touchstones for the Southwest Slavs found abroad.

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