

Questions of Cinema

Part four deals with the specific region and its cinema: the Balkans. The chapter on Robar-Dorin's film *Rams and Mammoths* (1985) deals with a prophetic anticipation of the looming nationalist upsurge in former Yugoslavia, which was unique as a communist country in which modernist art in all areas was tolerated and even promoted so long as the ruling bureaucracy did not see any political provocation in artistic products or events. The place of modernist Yugoslav films in any classification or in aesthetic terms has yet to be determined.

The next chapter takes a wider look on Balkan cinema. No matter what one may or may not know about the period of communism in the Balkans, we can say that this period coincided with the pattern of organisation of film production in a framework of national cinematographies, which were at the time universal. In this period the activity of filmmaking, especially in countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia, developed in its top products a mode of *auter* cinema. We can generally assert that aesthetics, topics, approaches, and so on, of these cinematographies did not differ much from what we have known as *nouvelle vague* type of cinema in Western Europe. Even after some setbacks following the year 1968, when the political executive and ideological powers of the time rudely interfered with accusations and exclusions of some authors or whole cinematic currents, this kind of cinema persisted in a somewhat softened form until the fall of the Berlin wall and Ceaușescu's departure. In the period after these events, cinematographies in the Balkans had to re-invent themselves due to a double (or even triple) impact of political, cultural and technological changes. More recently, political, economic and social changes have made an impact in the area of culture, that utmost affects cinema. Many changes of circumstances and conditions of film production and distribution, technological ones being especially important, merge with the symbolic transfigurations and new agencies of social imaginary within trends in the Balkan cinema, now shaping itself as a part of world cinema. In the sense of Manovich's (2001) conceptual inventions, the "language" of visual media interferes with the formation of local cultures, where new inventions of traditions and modernising tendencies mingle with one another. Furthermore, digital technologies work not always only in favour of democratisation, yet the accessibility of contemporary visual media is modifying perceptions and modes of appropriating cultural traditions. In such framework, aesthetics become interlaced with the social context. The political