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The Paradox of Documentary Fiction or Fictional Documentary in a Biopic Film Compilation About a Film Actor

Abstract

This study focuses mainly on the genre of biographical compilation in the context of development of the compilation film form in Slovakia after 1989. The author analyses current creative approaches in creating biographical compilations or compilations with biographical motifs. His main interest is the application of film collage techniques by those documentary directors who work with appropriated audiovisual and archival materials. He explores the crossing of authenticity and fiction based on the case study of the biographical compilation film *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch* (*Odpočítavanie - posledný film Ivana Palúcha*, dir. Martin Palúch, 2022). This feature film is a unique example of a biopic about the career and life of a film actor.

Keywords

film compilation, biographical film, Slovak film, documentary, film actor, Ivan Palúch

The Context of Film Compilations in Slovakia after 1989

After the fall of communism in 1989 and with the ongoing change in the political orientation of Czechoslovakia, as well as the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic in 1993, it was only a matter of time before film compilations started to appear in this region that would aim to re-interpret the period of the First Slovak Republic (1939-1945), the Slovak National Uprising (1944), or the period of communism (1948-1989). These efforts were related to the declassification of archives and the revision of research in the field of history and historiography. Similar processes were taking place in parallel in other post-socialist cinemas. The primary intent of these initiatives was to arrange period film materials more “objectively” or “critically” so that, from the subjective perspectives of the filmmakers, the original footage would be freed from the false appearance of ideological interpretation caused by the producer’s earlier interpretations. From 1939 until 1989, their only commissioner was the totalitarian regime of the time in the role of state producer. Other changes were closely related to the transformation of production relations in domestic cinema, most importantly the emergence of private production companies, and the transition to new digital formats at the level of recording, post-production and distribution. Both domestically and internationally, the availability of archive materials has increased considerably thanks to digitalisation.

The initiative to bring new perspectives on the interpretation of historical facts came from the filmmakers themselves. They wanted to express their view of the past events in an unbiased way, freed from political pressure or ideological order. The thematic range of these, often critically attuned works, was wide. Dušan Hanák (*Paper Heads, Papierové hlavy*, 1995) explored repressions during the communist totalitarianism. The residues of national ideology in contemporary society and the role of Slovakia’s first president, Jozef Tiso, were dealt with by Dušan Trančík (*Tiso’s Shadows, Tisove tiene*, 1998). The activities of the Hlinka Guard during WWII by Ivan Ostrochovský and Pavol Pekarčík (*The Guard, Garda*, 2015), the Slovak National Uprising by Vladimír Štric (*The Slovak National Uprising 1939-1945, Slovenské národné povstanie 1939-1945*, 2013) and also by Alois Ditrich - in a hybrid portrait of the governor of the National Bank, Imrich Karvaš (*I Financed the Slovak National Uprising, Financoval som Slovenské národné povstanie*, 2004).

The director Alois Ditrich made a biopic with elements that re-interpret the past. In doing so, he uses a combination of several modes of documentary film representation: interpretive, observational, participatory and reflective. Among the methods of realisation, we can mention compilation, found footage, stag-

ing, reportage or on-camera witness statements in the form of talking heads. In the film, we find combinations of excerpts from feature films and archival news footage. The commentary is subjective, delivered by the performer in first-person singular. It mainly describes the lived experience of the main character Imrich Karvas, which exists written in diaries and police interrogations. It is an original television portrait that formally surpasses all the other compilations on history mentioned above. This biography, however, is not formally a pure film compilation.

Most of the above-mentioned film reinterpretations of history after 2000 have been focused on the treatment of specific myths that were previously fed by the ideology of the time and that emerged during the existence of both totalitarian regimes. Apart from Dušan Hanák's *Paper Heads* in the mid-1990s, the remaining four titles revise or reinterpret predominantly the events from the period of World War II and the First Slovak Republic (1939-1945). The question remains, what is a biographical compilation?

Examples of Film Compilations with Biographical Motifs in the Documentary Tradition after 1989

The intertwining of the great and significant historical events of the 20th century and their impact on the personal destinies of individuals is, in various formal variations, another part of our post-1989 documentary tradition. These are not, however, the conventional films that we normally encounter in compilations about the past on the television screen. Nor do they resemble the popularising compilation formats known as historytainment. These are mostly biographical formats pieced together from official and private family archives or amateur film footage.

The genre of biographical compilation is another way of interpreting the past linked to the life of a particular person. Compared to historical reinterpretations of the past, the shift is in the use of off-screen commentary. It becomes no longer authoritatively omniscient and declamatory, but rather intimate and narrated in first-person singular. In each case, these are documentary biographies made in the style of compilation or found footage film. Their form is influenced by the previous work of Hungarian filmmaker Péter Forgács or Austrian filmmaker Gustav Deutsch.

In addition, the Czech documentary filmmaker Jan Šíkl prefers a counterpoint between commentary and footage from private domestic archives in his compilation portraits as a personal testimony of someone related to the protago-

nist of the film in the past. The content of the voice-over is often family traumas. The verbalized testimony is in direct or partial contrast with the visual content of the domestic footage. Indeed, the home archives mainly capture mundane and undisturbed family moments — leisure time, birthday celebrations or joyful gatherings of relatives. Such a concept can be seen, for example, in Šikl's films *The Statue of Grandfather Vindy* (*Sousoší dědečka Vindy*, 2004) or *Low Flight* (*Nízky let*, 2006). The advantage of such compilations is the fact that the central character of the film is shown directly in the image. On the other hand, in his latest film, *Reconstructing the Occupation* (*Rekonstrukce okupace*, 2021), Šikl ingeniously plays with the archival effect, presenting viewers with an imaginary compendium of creative approaches to found footage filmmaking in general. *Reconstructing the Occupation*, however, is first and foremost a found footage portrait of a historical event: the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in 1968. It is a collective portrait of the citizens' revolt against the occupation.

Another type of biography is an archival collage entitled *Good Old Czechs* (*Let domov*, 2022) by Czech documentary filmmaker Tomáš Bojar. This example of a biographical compilation uses a concentrated form composed only of official archival materials sourced from the world's film archives. It interprets the historical events of World War II as seen from the perspective of two direct witnesses. Although the visual component is based on recycled newsreel material from official institutional collections, the author does not primarily create a historically faithful reconstruction of the course of the fighting. In this case, history is subordinated to biography. Through selected archival documents, Bojar attempts to conceptually grasp an engaged and subjectively rendered view of two pilots' personal experiences with war. Bojar, thus, goes beyond popularisation by replacing the classic off-screen commentary of an "omniscient" narrator with a subjective perspective woven solely from the authentic testimonies of two specific individuals. The commentary, presented in the first person, interprets only the personal experiences of direct participants in the fighting who were part of the anti-Hitler coalition. The perspective of the verbal description of the events subsequently affects the resulting shape of the montage, which is a more visual and musical background illustrating subjective memories, and a less faithful rendering of historical facts. Biographical context is superior to history. Such a method of interpretation enables the author to create unexpected editing connections and to compose shot sequences from often contrasting segments or from temporally and spatially incompatible content.

The theme and content of the film *Good Old Czechs* presents the wartime experiences of two Czechoslovak pilots who served in the British RAF - fighter pi-

lot František Fajtl and bomber crew member Filip Jánský. In terms of originality, this is not a conceptually new approach. Among the most interesting examples of the revival of archival materials in conjunction with personal testimonies of direct participants, we can include the film *They Shall Not Grow Old* (2018) by New Zealand director Peter Jackson, which thematises World War I.

A fundamental shortcoming of the above-mentioned compilations is the problem of the viewer's emotional identification with the stories. In the case of Šikl, Bojar and Jackson's heroes, this is mainly due to the absence of narrators in the visual field. Perhaps this is why compilation films about dictators and historical figures are attractive, because they fill this gap and bridge the discrepancy between the spoken and visual presence of specific figures in the realm of the archival image, for example, in the film compilation *Hitler in Colour* (dir. by David Batty, 2005).

The difficulty of identification is formally solved by the genre of docudrama. Actors portray authentic personalities in staged stories based on real events. This degree of dramatisation and stylisation of facts through fictional techniques is particularly attractive in terms of the audience's identification with the protagonists. For example, in the docudrama *The Conference (Die Wanseekonferenz)*, dir. by Matti Geschonneck, (2022). Some television biographical docudramas may contain archival material.

The way of working with archives in the compilation films of director Sergei Loznitsa is characterized by a different type of approach. Usually, for example in the film *Blockade* (2005), he does not use any off-screen commentary. The archive material is additionally echoed with real sounds and sophisticated sound design, sometimes using authentic period speeches or emotionally impressive music. His films have both a logical and an emotional construction, and the main protagonist of the stories is mostly an anonymous collective, or a non-individualized mass of participants. In this context, two of his last films - *The Kiev Trial* (2022) and *The Ordinary History of Destruction (Luftkrieg - Die Naturgeschichte der Zerstörung)*, (2022) were made. The first is an authentic account of the post-war trial of wartime Nazis in Ukraine, resulting in a public execution by hanging in front of a crowd of onlookers. The second, almost without words, only with the inclusion of realistic sounds, music and a few authentic speeches, thematizes the suffering of the German population, which is confronted with the carpet raids of the Allies on the cities located in the interior of Nazi Germany.

Unlike Loznitsa, who avoids adding commentaries, the performers' voices reading the commentaries cover the silent archival footage with informative con-

tent. On the other hand, they fail to adequately cover the illustrative nature of archival news or amateur footage. Most situations captured by war cameramen from battles, conflicts, revolutions or disasters have such shortcomings. Each of Šikl, Bojar and Jackson, but in a different way, add the missing subjective-individual dimension to archival reportage footage through the annotated accounts of direct participants. On the other hand, oral history genres usually avoid the use of archival footage precisely because of its illustrative inconclusiveness¹.

In terms of biographical compilation, the film *Diego Maradona* (2019) by director Asif Kapadia became an exceptional work. The documentary portrait of the famous Argentinian soccer player had everything a quality biographical compilation should contain. Rich archival material - reportage and random records of a football player, from his professional career and behind the scenes, numerous interviews and amateur footage, material from football broadcasts and the like. We hear voice-over off-screen about the footballer's career without the archival footage being disturbed by even one of the talking heads of an expert who mentions Maradona. The pure form of the documentary biographical compilation is attractive, mainly due to the constant presence of the protagonist in the picture. Archives in this case do not illustrate memories. They are chosen to confirm the personal story of the main character and to support the biographical facts captured in the archives.

A different approach to the biographical film can be found in the case of the documentary *Doomed Beauty (Zkáza krásou)*, 2016) by Helena Třeštíková and Jakub Hejna. It is a biographical story told by actress Lída Baarová based on her personal memories. The directors combine her on-camera testimony with unique archival footage from several European archives with excerpts from feature films in which Lída Baarová acted during her lifetime. The young girl quickly became the biggest Czechoslovak film star. However, her relationship with Reich Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels turned her into a national enemy and traitor.

Biographical Film Compilation About the Film Actor - The Paradox of Documentary Fiction or Fictional Documentary

In this subsection, we will look at the blending of fictional and documentary conventions. In other words, we will look at the use of fictional materials in order to create a non-fictional discourse in a compilation film biography about a film actor.

¹ For example, in the film *Shoah* (1985) by Claude Lanzmann.

André Bazin's ontological realism, which concerns the blending of cinematic representation with reality, is explained by Francesco Casetti as follows: "...between cinema and reality there is an existential relationship, a deep continuity, and they belong to each other at an ontological level." (Casetti 1999, p. 32) ... "The principle that cinema obeys becomes explicit in all those situations that we may call circular, in which the tight connection between reality and images allows them to trigger one another. The two poles interact freely, without having to move in a predefined direction" (Casetti 1999, p. 32).

In the concept of the compilation film *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch* the main character maintains a Bazinian flow and lavishes on both poles - imagery and reality. Palúch's film acting is authentic and natural. He had no problem blending in with professionals and non-actors, which was especially appreciated by important directors such as František Vlácil, Aleksandar Petrović, Volker Schlöndorff and Eduard Grečner. The actor's career had a fundamental influence on the protagonist's actual and real fate in his personal life and vice versa. We have tried to make creative use of this fusion and circular structure on the axis of reality and film representation.

Another inspiration was the polemical assertions of Carl Plantinga, who, in his study *Documentary*, in a section devoted to statements about ubiquitous fictionality and ubiquitous documentary (Plantinga 2009, p. 495), polemizes with the assertions: "...that all films are fiction films, and conversely, that all films are documentaries" (Plantinga 2009, p. 495). In the first case, it is based on the opinion of the director Fred Wiseman, a representative of direct cinema, who referred to his documentaries as "reality fictions". In the second, from Bill Nichols, who refers to *The Wizard of Oz* (dir. by Victor Fleming and King Vidor, 1939) as a kind of anthropological documentary that offers a key to understanding Hollywood production of the 1930s and American culture of the period. Plantinga belongs to the cognitive stream of film philosophers who, at the turn of the millennium, sought to characterize documentary film and thus defend it against the views of postmodernists who argued that there was no difference between fiction and documentary.

Gregory Currie has also commented on the clarification of the paradox that interests us. He proves his point with a simple example, where the image of Cary Grant in the fictional *North by Northwest Line* (dir. by Alfred Hitchcock, 1959) is a literal trace of Cary Grant, but at the same time it carries an additional function by representing the fictional character of Roger Thornhill. The documentary, by contrast, is deficient in such additional features. Photographic images, by their very nature, signify only what they signify. Currie's comparison of fiction

and documentary film is also interesting in terms of the distribution of meanings found in the narrative. He argues that in the case of documentary film, the cinematic image brings meanings into the narrative, whereas in the case of fiction film, meanings are extracted from the narrative (Plantinga 2009, p. 497). Currie demonstrates his claims with another example: “So let us distinguish between a cinematic image contributing meaning to a narrative, and such an image obtaining meaning from a narrative. The images of Flint, Michigan in *Roger and Me* contribute to the meaning of that film’s narrative in virtue of representing Flint. The images of Chico, California used in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* obtain, from the narrative of that film, the property of representing Sherwood Forest. In the first case the content that concerns us is photographic content, in the second case it is narrative content” (Currie 2006, p. 146).

In this context, it should be added that *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch* as a hybrid compilation documentary combines both of the above-mentioned methods, which emphasize the viewer’s attention by contributing meanings into the narrative on the one hand and obtaining them from it on the other. It is collage at the level of audio-visual representation and editing practices that enables this hybrid cycle of meanings. In this way, the paradox of fiction and documentary is methodologically the essence of the construction of the narrative about the real life personality of the actor Ivan Palúch.

A Case Study of Compilation Biopic: *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch*

This case study is based on my experience with practical film directing during the realization of the feature compilation film titled *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch*. For me, it’s a very personal story about my father. Formally, it is an experimental work in the form of a biographical film - intended for cinemas - which biographically interprets the circumstances and contexts of the life and work of an important personality of Slovak film acting. The hybrid character of the audiovisual work in the result enhances the crossing of the boundaries between fiction and documentary film.

The narrative in the film is edited into an original film compilation. The plot relates to authentic events from the personal life of the protagonist, Ivan Palúch, but the narrative about him consists mostly of archival segments taken from previously made fiction films. Palúch acted in them during his lifetime and portrayed fictional characters. The excerpts used in the biopic were mainly made during his professional career as a film actor between 1960 and 2015. But when combined with the protagonist’s personal testimonies or the authentic memories/

testimonies of his colleagues, the resulting film resembles an audiovisual collage that conveys biographical facts in the form of a fiction film. In the audience's reception, the footage taken from the fiction films evoke biographical connotations that refer to real events in the life of Palúch, who died in 2015.

This paradox of documentary fiction, or fictional documentary, should be clarified by the following theoretical justification. If the central protagonist were not a film actor, and in real life worked in a different profession, the natural interchangeability of authenticity and fiction on the protagonist-character axis would not be functional. From the perspective of the viewer, there would be no purposeful psychological identification with the protagonist based on his direct performance on the cinema screen.

The plot of the biopic is told in reverse sequence. From a historical point of view, we follow first the consequences and later the causes that led to them. First we see an ageing and forgotten actor at the end of his life and professional career - from 1989 to 2015. Then the period of socialism and normalisation - from the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in 1968 to the Velvet Revolution in 1989. And finally, the golden sixties, the most successful part of the actor's life - from 1960 to 1969. At that time, the young aspiring actor was starring in European films. In a single year, 1969, he had no less than three films screened at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival.

The film compilation is equally original in the way it reflects the historical turning points key to the development of Central Europe, which have been reflected in the works of feature film directors. It reveals the relationship between East and West. And last but not least, it captures the history of Czech and Slovak cinema between 1960 and 2015.

The viewer perceives the freedom of creation and artistic ambitions of the authors of the 1960s, the dependence on the pro-Soviet ideology and normalizing aesthetics of the 1970s and 1980s, and finally the birth of transformed cinema, adapted after 1989 to the conditions of emerging capitalism. History, the development of national cinema and the fate of the individual are combined here into a coherent whole, forming a critically tuned collage.

The plot of the biopic consists of a re-constructed narrative composed of archival audiovisual traces. The basic concept of the viewer's identification with the plot derives from the protagonist's distinctive character, who vividly portrays his own life story. The essence of the narrative is the interchangeability of authenticity and fiction on both the visual and audio level at the same time. This is illustrated at several points directly in the film.

If one of the actor's colleagues remember his collaboration with Palúch, we hear his authentic statement - a personal voice testimony. At the same time, we also see this actor in a specific visual excerpt from the fiction film together with the main character to whom the memory is addressed. The audiovisual collage is accompanied by a caption that is placed on the fictional character. This caption shows the real name of the actor along with his profession underneath - actor. This method of labelling fictional characters with real actor's names, who talk about Palúch, is used for a number of acting personalities. On the one hand, they appear as fictional characters in excerpts from appropriated films, but on the other hand, we perceive these memories as authentic statements interpreted using voice-over. This approach is used by actors and actress such as Karol Čalik, Andy Hryc, František Velecký, Annie Girardot, Eva Ras and Magda Vášáryová.

The creative approach described above could not always be applied in all circumstances, for example, during the statements of directors Volker Schlöndorff and Eduard Grečner, as well as DOP Jan Ďuriš or 1st AC Viktor Fančovič. In such cases, the caption showed only their real names and profession, but they do not appear in person in the footage as a visualized character on the screen. In the eyes of a less focused viewer, it could sound confusing if he did not notice the profession listed under the caption of the narrating voice speaking via voice-over off-screen. The crossing of fiction and authenticity is based on the functional connection between the visual track - from a fictional film, and the authentic auditory track - a real testimony via voice-over.

The overall difficulty of this method for creating an audiovisual collage was based on the assumption that, from the director's point of view, it is necessary to avoid techniques taken from the television environment, which overuse talking heads for clarity of communication on the artwork-audience axis. This method was unacceptable to us, because it would significantly disrupt the flow of the narrative and make it difficult to build the plot, which was intended for the big screen in the cinema. In the end, the chosen compromise turned out to be sufficiently functional, even though it placed higher demands on the editing composition and the audience's attention, as well as on the audience's willingness to connect the narrator's voice with the performer, who always appeared on the screen in the case of actors, but may not have appeared in the case of other film professions. In this respect, the graphic representation of the profession by the subtitle under the name was a fundamental identifier of the specific voice of the narrator in the film through voice-over.

A completely different directorial solution was used, for example, in the editing sequence, where shots from the film *The Ear* (*Ucho*, dir. by Karel Kachyňa, 1970) were combined with shots from the film fairy tale *Prince Bajaja* (*Princ Bajaja*, dir. by Antonín Kachlík, 1971). The described juxtaposition of shots is located in the middle of the film, when the viewer already understands very well the way the film is constructed and understands the principle of interchangeability of fiction and authenticity at the level of audiovisual collage.

The sequence begins with the arrival of Radoslav Brzobohatý and Jiřina Bohdalová, the title couple of the film *The Ear*, at a banquet of political representation from the communist period. As she gets out of the car, Bohdalová's handbag falls out of her hands. Palúch, as a police officer, picks it up and hands it to her. Through an off-screen voice-over, we hear Palúch's authentic testimony about his politically motivated ban from performing in theatres throughout Czechoslovakia, with the addition that as an actor he could only play episodic roles in the film. The informational content of the memoir is visually illustrated by Palúch's fleeting entrance into the shot with the dropped handbag, which on a visual level symbolically confirms his new status as a marginal episodic actor.

To depict the arrival of the characters at the party, director Kachyňa uses a subjective camera view that evokes the perspective seen by the arriving character. Then the subjective camera view floats in between the party-goers, with no one standing around noticing it, as if it were invisible. This shot, thus, imaginatively constructs the testimony of the ban. Visually demonstrating Palúch's new social status as an undesirable person for the regime and the surroundings. The voice-over outside the image then confirms this with another authentic memory, in which Palúch claims that suddenly nobody knew him and his friends began to turn their backs on him.

The subjective shot of the wandering camera ends with a hand, belonging to the body under its gaze, appearing in subjective perspective and a tap on the shoulder of one of the guests present. The latter responds with a surprised look straight into the camera. At this point, we hear his line directly from the film *The Ear*. Informatively picking up on the assertions Palúch made earlier through an off-screen voice-over. The visibly startled guest addresses the subjective camera directly: "Hello, Bedrich. Are you here? I thought... I thought you were outside. That you left Prague. Now when..."² It's obvious he's not happy about the encounter, and the forced conversation makes him uncomfortable. In terms of factual information, everything fits. After the invasion of

² Quoted from the film.

Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in 1968, the political situation changed. At the beginning of normalisation in the 1970s, Palúch was banned from acting in theatre and film. He really left Prague despite living in the city centre, being married and famous. However, his wife and daughter soon emigrated to Austria. Palúch left Prague due to the ban and lack of job opportunities and moved to his hometown in Slovakia.

At this point, the first cut occurs in Kachyna's subjective shot, and in the original film we should see a shot of the character played by Radoslav Brzobohatý. In our collage, we have replaced the original shot from the film *The Ear* with another, taken from the film fairy tale *Prince Bajaja*. Palúch portraying a prince stands still and looks straight ahead. The juxtaposition of these shots in the editing gives the impression that Prince Bajaja is listening to the words of the protagonist from the previous shot. Factually, this is again fitting, because both films were made at the beginning of normalisation in the 1970s, while *The Ear* was banned for nineteen years due to its politically undesirable content. In this meaning the film *The Ear*, thus, received the same imaginary stop sign as the film actor Ivan Palúch. A knowledge of the history of Czechoslovak cinema helps to decode the content of the cut sequence³.

From the portrait of the prince, we return again to the figure of the surprised guest and observe his subsequent reaction. With the words "I am looking for Mary. Haven't you seen Mary?", he turns away from the subjective camera, from Prince Bajaja's perspective, and heads away from it into the space between the other guests. With this sequence, Palúch's new social status is definitively confirmed. His general exclusion and career ignorance. The formal content is enhanced by the rock-like structure of the interiors in the background of the fictional characters in the shots from both films - *The Ear* and *Prince Bajaja*.

The viewer accepts the interchangeability of roles naturally. He understands the way the narrative is constructed and at the same time does not problematise his understanding of the plot. It is up to the viewer's mindfulness how much authentic information can be read directly from the plot, made up of feature films and authentic memories. Any extra-filmic knowledge will only add to the mosaic of multiplied meanings present and implied in the resulting montage. But the composition of the narrative is primarily constructed in such a way that the main axis of the narrative can be understood even by a viewer unfamiliar with the history of cinema or the facts about Palúch's life.

³ Paradoxically, Prince Bajaja is one of the actor's most famous film characters in Czechoslovakia.

On the other hand, it is more engaging for the audience's perception to watch a narrative constructed in this way than to watch a purely documentary film that would convey factual information only through the talking heads of memoirists, experts or film historians.

The above described principle of crossing authenticity and fiction is used in many places in *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch*. Through voice-over, we hear authentic testimonies, their meaning being emphasized:

1. Directly through an excerpt from an appropriated feature film
2. Through informational and / or formal content
3. Through the juxtaposition of the shots and the situational position of the protagonist in the footage from different films.

The only directorial constraint was that all the excerpts used had to come from the main character's filmography. For this reason, the realisation phase was preceded by meticulous research, which resulted in the final selection of suitable archive footage as well as suitable archive testimonies. Some of them, especially the memories of personalities - actors, directors, etc., were filmed/recorded afterwards. Subsequently, the main phase of the film's realisation took place in the editing room.

In the compilation biographical film *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch*, the paradox of documentary fiction or fictional documentary is used creatively. It is also a practical response to several theoretical concepts. To André Bazin's Ontological Realism. To Carl Plantinga's polemic on ubiquitous fictionality and ubiquitous documentary. And also to Gregory Currie's claims about the differences between documentary and fiction. For him, documentary is an indexical record of traces. In fiction film, the indexical qualities are enriched by other additional features, resulting in narrative content. And of course there is an influence of Jamie Baron's archive effect and Katherine Rusel's archiveology theories.

Conclusion

The production of the subgenre of biographical compilation intended for cinemas, as we could see in the examples mentioned above, requires filmmakers to find creative solutions to eliminate problems on multiple levels in the process-

ing of archival materials. Every single one of the creative approaches we talked about had to deal with numerous limitations imposed on the director making films made from appropriated archival materials - both fictional and documentary. One of the biggest limitations at the level of reception is the thoughtful work with the audience's identification with the protagonist of the biographical story. The realisation of the compilation biography *Countdown - The Last Film of Ivan Palúch* tried to deal with this issue creatively. It was a biographical compilation about the film actor that provided a unique space for working with archive material, which consisted of a collage of authentic memories and samples taken from feature films. Thanks to this combination, the result was an emotionally strong collage, which built its persuasive expression on the constant presence of the main character in the image field. Crossing the boundaries between fiction and documentary in the case of a biographical film compilation thus fulfilled the basic characteristics of ontological realism by André Bazin. It also managed to follow up on polemical views about the ubiquitous fiction and ubiquitous documentary in film in general. A biographical film compilation in the form of a feature film will be a real and exciting challenge in the future for any of the new filmmakers who choose this way of storytelling.

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