

Changing Perspectives

Hajnal Király

hajnal.kiraly@gmail.com

At the recently organised *Contact Zones* conference (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 28-30 September), the participants to panel discussions repeatedly raised the question about the specificity of an Eastern European cinema, only to agree that if there is such a thing, it is definitely related to typical spaces and their modes of representation. The articles of this issue seem to articulate this argument by considering spaces in the Romanian and Hungarian films under analysis as key factors in the discursive strategies of meaning production. As most authors point out, these spatial configurations and performances can be interpreted in close correlation with the characters' and spectators' perspective, that is, their cultural, ideological standpoint and value system. Romanian director Cristi Puiu's recent film, *Sieranevada* (2016) is a paradigmatic example of this specificity. As a new initiative in our journal's history, the *Q and A* entry focuses on controversial concepts or works of art: after a virtual roundtable dialogue about the meaning of Eastern Europe from the perspective of Eastern European scholars in the previous issue, the *Q and A* bloc of articles edited by László Strausz addresses this time the *pars pro toto* correlation between the secrets and lies of a post-socialist family and society in Puiu's film. The five takes on this issue add original, personal perspectives to the interpretation of spatial performances and the meaning of the perspective represented by the camera, placed either in the hall of the apartment or the back seat of the car. Whose perspective does it represent? The missing father's (as Hajnal Király and László Strausz argues)? The spectator's, shaping an uncanny, familiar-unfamiliar space of intimacy (as Teréz Vincze and Katalin Sándor point out)? Or, as Doru Pop proposes, by presenting the same event from different perspectives, does it represent a strong authorial perspective dominated by the philosophy of "la mișto" (the Balkanized mockery), revealing the profound ambiguity of the historical event itself addressing the cinematic conditions of the possibility of knowledge? All these arguments seem to reinforce the central hypothesis of László Strausz's book entitled *Hesitant Histories on the Romanian Screen* (reviewed in this issue by Zsolt Gyenge), placing a great emphasis on the ideology-shaping force of the ambivalent camera movement in the New Romanian Cinema.

In the context of contemporary Hungarian Cinema, spatial performances become figurative of a changing generational perspective. Anna Bátori in her article comparing *For Some Inexplicable Reason* (2014) and *Liza, the Fox Fairy* through an institutional, contextual and diegetic perspective discusses the outsider's position of the Hungarian Y generation within the post-socialist, consumerist-capitalist structure, as well as the discursive realm the spatial interplays present in these films. Last but not least, two further articles add to the topic of changing perspective: Gábor Schein's essay, written originally in Hungarian on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Kalligram journal, adds new perspectives to the scholarly dialogue around the concept of Eastern Europe from the previous issue by arguing that the not least controversial concept of Central Europe is nothing other than an idea constructed in literary essays. Marie Laura Judge analyses a group of contemporary Romania-located non-fiction human rights films (Edet Belzberg's *Children Underground* (2001), Mona Nicoară and Miruna Coca-Cozma's *Școala noastră* [Our School] (2011), Alexandre Nanău's *Toto și surorile lui* [Toto and His Sisters] (2014)) and the ways in which a postcolonial theoretical reading of these films' and their makers' engagement in transnational production and international festivalisation processes assists in cementing the global divide between centre and periphery. At the end of her article, referring back to Homi Bhabha, she reiterates the relevance of a mobile ideological and theoretical perspective when analysing the cultural products of Eastern Europe, thus reinforcing the arguments of the other essays: "Can the subaltern speak?' will have to be reworded to ask, "Can the subaltern be heard?' I would argue that this be pushed further to include: can the subaltern be seen, and if so, through whose looking glass?"