

Closure and Opening

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For three years, the journal has been the most important site of dissemination of the results of our research project mainly concerned with spatial figurations of identity in Hungarian and Romanian literature and cinema. The topics of the previous issues reached even beyond those of the project, extending the focus to Serbian and Russian cinemas, as well as colonizing and self-colonizing strategies through Dracula and Eastern European superhero films. Cultural theoretical approaches were used to tackle thematisation of migration in Hungarian and Romanian co-productions, intercultural exchange in the work of Hungarian novelists Ádám Bodor and Péter Esterházy, changing gender roles and decline of patriarchy symptomatic of post-communist societies, cinematic representations of otherness and isolation, the gender-genre correlation and an Eastern European version of the crime / gangster movie. Starting with the third issue the editors introduced a Q and A section, comprising a core question concerning a controversial concept (What does “Eastern European” mean?) a representative, puzzling movie (Cristi Puiu’s *Sieranevada*, 2016) or the social relevance of Romanian and Hungarian thrillers, and a set of short essays written by our researchers and invited authors as replies to these questions. In this issue, which closes down the research project, our focus is directed to our results and future projects, as well as our self-assessment as Eastern European researchers in Humanities, mediating interpretations of local socio-cultural phenomena towards a wider European and international audience. Or, as the editors of this section, Mónika Dánél and Teri Szűcs put it: “producing and transmitting 'Eastern European knowledge' – how do we position ourselves in the academic / theoretical space? What terms, phenomena and constellations can be used to describe our cultural and professional positions?” Those engaging in this dialogue nuanced these questions, looking for answers from the perspective of their own research interests: they raised the issue of one’s /our own Eastern European canons and of films beyond our “comfort zones” (Balázs Varga), called for academic solidarity in times of political limitations (Teri Szűcs), emphasized the technological challenges in Humanities in the era of

Posthumanism (Eszter Vidos), discovered similarities in postcolonial approaches to the Dracula myth and the Hungarian film, *The Whiskey Bandit* (András Hlavacska), considered the advantages of the international project in terms of intercultural learning (Bence Kránicz) and finally reflected upon ongoing changes in the region that would keep contact zones and their cultural-political discourses open (Zsolt Győri). Mónika Dánél summarized and evaluated the results of the teamwork that characterised the four years of the research project.

As an already consecrated practice, this issue contains articles of both literary and cinematic interest. The literary chapter, signed by Ferenc Vincze, offers an insight into the methodological issues raised by a Hungarian literary history in Romanian, a project undertaken by an international research group and conducted at the University of Bucharest, Romania. Vincze considers contextualisation as a methodological possibility in undertaking such a difficult task: he offers an overview of the international practice of literary historiography and its influence on the Hungarian discourse, he analyses the narrative of the literary history in progress, which cannot be avoided regardless of the language of the work and takes into account the tendencies of the past 25 years of Hungarian literary historiography, which are related to the theoretical problems of the narrative formulation of literary historiography. A pertinent perspective of such an endeavour represents the localisation of the texts of Hungarian literature within the context of Romanian literature. As he argues, the literary representations of peripheric parallels or differences, cultural overlaps, literatures bordering on each other, similar social and/or regional phenomena, as well as confluences (the most prominent example being the work of Hungarian writer Ádám Bodor), should be also considered.

The comparative method, partly characterising Vincze's approach, is at the centre of Balázs Zágoni's article dealing with contemporary cinematic narratives of the Romanian and Hungarian revolutions. Through two representative films, one from each country, *Children of Glory* by Kriszta Goda from Hungary (*Szabadság, szerelem*, 2006, thematising the 1956 revolution) and *The Paper Will Be Blue* by Radu Muntean from Romania (*Hârtia va fi albastră*, 2006, about the 1989 revolution) he aims to demonstrate that, despite the many similarities, the movies are built on very different narrative structures and cinematic elements. In Bordwellian terms, one adopts the *classical*, while the other the *art cinema* narrative model. Without going into deeper issues of historico-cultural causality, Zágoni characterises Hungarian re-configurations of history as a tendency from forbidden fairytales to teenage traumas and

Romanian ones from biased B-films to the Trilogy of Revolution, the main points of comparison concerning narrative causality, the agency of characters, the narrative construction of time and space, filming, editing and music, as well as genres and sentiments.

The third article by Csilla Patrubby, from Sapientia University of Transylvania, Romania, also contributes to the interpretation of the New Romanian Cinema, by an in-depth analysis of a single film, *Everybody in our family* (*Toată lumea din familia noastră*, Radu Jude, 2012), through the lens of Thomas Elsaesser's groundbreaking article on melodrama, *Tales of Sound and Fury*, as well as Michel Foucault's concept of crisis heterotopia. Writing about *Tales of claustrophobia and fury*, Patrubby proposes to look at the way Radu Jude combines melodrama elements with specific aspects of a post/communist Eastern European setting, an apartment where three generations are brought together in a transgenerational crisis and where framing becomes a key figuration of narrative defocalisation and emotional excess.

The cooperation with Romanian colleagues from the same Sapientia University was reinforced by a conference echoing the main directions of our research project, titled Border Crossing International Conference (Csíkszereda / Miercurea Ciuc, 20–21 April 2018), reported by a member of our team, András Hlavacska and concentrating on areas like the changing meanings and functions of borders, redefining boundaries; material, symbolic and discursive dimensions of borders; culture and identity across borders; border and difference, border and otherness; transit zones, non-places, heterotopias; language and border crossing; translation, translanguaging practices etc. Hungarian films and film industry came into focus through Zsolt Györi's exhaustive review of Balázs Varga's new book on Hungarian filmmaking trends, also raising the possibility of an institutional turn in Hungarian Film Studies. Both the authors of the book and of the article emphasise the need for films that find a balance between inward-orientation and outward-orientation and a third way of Hungarian film culture. As Varga remarks, "the image of Hungary in popular cinema is as if the country lay a few hundred kilometres towards the West while art cinema offers an image as if the country was located a few hundred kilometres towards the East or Southeast" (2016, 179–180). At the closure of the project we can gladly assume that offering new ways of criticism in the interpretation of contemporary Hungarian and Romanian cinemas and literatures is the main result of the research project: the generation of researchers and critics involved in it have set a trend of self-reflexion through

cultural artefacts, thus fulfilling a demand coming from both the Western and the local audience.