

**Border Crossing International Conference
Csíkszereda / Miercurea Ciuc, 20–21 April 2018¹³**

**András Hlavacska
hlavacskandras@gmail.com**

Borders, borderlines, transit zones and border crossings are among the central topics of the project *Space-ing Otherness. Cultural Images of Space, Contact Zones in Contemporary Hungarian and Romanian Film and Literature*. Besides conducting research and writing extensively on these topics, on several occasions the project members have debated the discourses related to mobility: for example, at the first workshop of the project (2015, Szeged), Kornélia Faragó gave a presentation about the migrant-perspectives and borderline identities (*Migráns perspektívák, határszobjektumok*); and also at the *Contact Zones. Transnational Encounters, Dialogues and Self-Representation in Contemporary Eastern European Literature, Cinema and Visual Cultures* conference (28-30 September 2017), where several panels focused on the referred topics, such as *Migrating (Eastern) Europe* and *Discursive Borderlands*.

The *Border Crossing International Conference* hosted by The Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania at Miercurea Ciuc, Romania on 20-21 April, 2018 fitted perfectly our research interests, complementing it with new perspectives and approaches. The main organiser of the event was the Intercultural Confluences Research Centre of the Department of Humanities, Faculty of Economics, Socio-Human Sciences and Engineering, Miercurea Ciuc, of the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania. The language of the conference was English, and during the two days 65 presentations were given (including 17 virtual ones).

As the organiser emphasised in the call for papers, “In the past decades, along various processes of globalization, cross-cultural communication and transnational mobility, the dynamics of border constitution and dissolution has emerged as a socio-cultural phenomenon attracting increasing attention in diverse scientific domains.” As a manifestation of this statement, the presentations covered a wide spectrum of topics concentrated on the following main areas: the changing meanings and functions of borders, redefining boundaries; material, symbolic and

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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, translingual practices etc. To these complex and divergent topics diverse disciplinary perspectives and methodology were linked (Literary History, Literary Theory, Cultural Studies, Translation Studies, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Text Linguistics, Cross-Linguistic Analysis, and Film and Media Studies). Although during the two days the literary historical and theoretical, linguistic and film theoretical approaches were dominant, we could also find many interdisciplinary presentations (in the case of some presentations of history and theory of literature).

On the first day Csilla Bartha, Associate Professor from the University of Debrecen, Hungary (Institute of English and American Studies) gave the plenary lecture, titled: *Crossing Borders in Irish Drama and Theatre*. Analysing a wide range of twentieth century and contemporary plays, Csilla Bartha drew attention to the different border-zones and border crossing acts of theatre (from theatre as an art of transformation, through the theatrical representation of borderlines – such as waiting rooms – to the incorporation of other art forms within theatre). While Prof. Bartha pointed out the possibilities of theatre in this context, focusing on plays such as *Stones In His Pockets* she also emphasised the difficulties of border crossings.

The second plenary lecture was delivered by Mihaela Ursa, Associate Professor at the Babes–Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania (Faculty of Letters, Department of Comparative Literature). Her lecture (*Displacing Borders in Herta Müller's Prose*) analysed three main fields (language, memory and identity) in the Nobel Prize winner writer's prose from the perspective of in-between cultures and places, demarcation, limit etc. Instead of listing the different levels and elements of Müller's prose, which Prof. Ursa discussed in detail, I would like to mention her last topic, the animal metaphors as significant border-zones (a blurring place, a place of transformation, where the human and the animalistic meet).

The panel presentations also provided a wide range of transdisciplinary approaches to the cultural act of border crossing: *Border, Environment, Neighborhood* delivered by István Berszán (Babes-Bolyai University), "*This undiscovered country*" in *Mairtin O Cadhain's Cre na Cille [The Dirty Dust]* and *George Saunders' In the Bardo* delivered by Donald E. Morse (University of Debrecen), *The Frost in Faulkner: Walls and Borders of Modern Metaphor* delivered by Anca Peiu (University of Bucharest); examples for linguistic presentations:

Proverbs as a Means of Crossing Cultural Borders delivered by Elena Buja (Transilvania University of Braşov), *Romanian Dative Configurations* delivered by Tania Zamfir (University of Bucharest), *The Boundaries of Discourse Marking* delivered by Péter Furkó (Károli Gáspár University); examples for film theoretical approaches *Theatricality beyond Media Boundaries in Szabolcs Hajdu's It's Not the Time of My Life* delivered by Katalin Sándor (Babeş–Bolyai University), *Passport to Nowhere. Transit Zones, Non-Places, Heterotopias in post-1989 Hungarian Films* delivered by Gábor Gelencsér (Eötvös Loránd University), *In-Between the Medial and the Political. Jafar Panahi's (Non-)Cinema* delivered by Judit Pieldner (Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania); interdisciplinary presentations: *Reaching beyond Borders: Esotericism as Transnational Language and Identity* delivered by Constantina Raveca Buleu (Romanian Academy), *Landscape as Identity Metaphor. An Overview of Romanian Intellectual Discourse in Interwar Transylvania* delivered by Valentin Trifescu (Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania).

The conference represented another milestone for our project, where the project members could broaden their theoretical knowledge about various discourses on borders, border crossings, including transit zones, non-places and heterotopias. It also provided a great opportunity to bring into dialogue scholars from different cultural and theoretical backgrounds, in a shared effort to apply the universal or Western European concepts on specific, local cultural phenomena. The dialogue continues next year, in another conference with a similar topic (*Spaces In Between*), between 26–27 April 2019, organised by the same Intercultural Confluences Research Centre of the Department of Humanities, Faculty of Economics, Socio-Human Sciences and Engineering, Miercurea Ciuc, Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania.

For the full programme of the conference see:

http://csik.sapientia.ro/data/Border%20Crossings_Book%20of%20Abstracts.pdf

The call for the conference *Spaces In Between*, 26–27 April, 2019.
<http://csik.sapientia.ro/en/news/koztes-terek/spatii-intermediare/spaces-in-between-international-conference-2019>