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CONTACT ZONES. STUDIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN FILM AND LITERATURE.

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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

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Posthumanism (Eszter Vidosa), 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 Patrubány, 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*, Patrubányi 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, translingual practices etc. Hungarian films and film industry came into focus through Zsolt Győri'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

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

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**Closing the Project: Processes, Experiences, Plans
Q and A Dialogue of the Members of the Contact Zones Research Group[1]**

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Q:

The last phase of a project is also the time for reflection, for discussing goals and results. Our research, initiated four years ago, was designed to focus on contact zones and interconnections. As an intercultural (Romanian-Hungarian) and interdisciplinary enterprise (bringing together literature, cinema, visual culture) it also wished to move between various discursive fields. The dichotomy of Eastern and Western Europe was one of our points of departure – the presupposition of clashing or diverging theories. How do you see this dichotomous relationship now? By theorizing Eastern European experience – or: by 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 the describe our cultural and professional positions?

When participating in a joint research, our differences inspire deeper self-reflection. How did our professional communality develop and how did our community function? What obstacles and perspectives became visible during the four years of our interaction?

Our societies currently undergo fundamental changes, therefore it is necessary to discuss the relationship between academia and society, between professional activity and societal activism. In the era of the new nationalisms, how do you see the role and the agency of academics?

A:

Balázs Varga

Beyond Contact Zones and Comfort Zones

There are projects that take place at the best point and at the best times. Our research project is (actually, I do not consider it as completed or something that has come to an end) certainly one of these. Not merely because the academic discussion of Eastern European cinema and literary cultures gained new impulse in the 2010s, and the work of our research team could critically and relevantly connect to these scholarly discussions. But primarily because – in the context of and because of the political crises and storms of recent years through the migratory crisis to the issues of new illiberal democracies – we were not only faced with the theoretical problems of the contact zones, but we also had to face the question where the limits of our own comfort zones are. The question, then, is whether we can leave our own zone, what do we think of other (contact/conflict/comfort) zones, how do we recognize and undertake conflicts?

For me, the answer is the simplest: open communication. Talk. Debate. Discussing views and opinions. Finding our blind spots. And the method is teamwork. Shared, common, joint and public thinking. So for me, the most memorable and significant moments of the project were those meetings and discussions (be it at a conference or in a group meeting) when we examined, reviewed or explained a topic in details. Academic work and public activity is not an individual exercise. That is my first and foremost 'lesson'.

As for the more 'academic' aspects of the research project, I think that it is not possible to overestimate the importance of examining shifting trajectories, changing/switching/altering theoretical frameworks – moving beyond binary oppositions, blurring rigid boundaries, navigating in the 'Eastern European third space'. Indeed, one of the most important challenges of the research is how to find concepts that can be relevant, flexible and sensitively used in a wide variety of contexts and cultures.

Moving beyond comfort zones can also mean that we are looking beyond the canon (be it the 'canon' of our research group), and we are also attempting to include works into the scope of research that we would not have thought about before. At the outset, our research project focused on the field of arthouse (auteur) films and canonized literary works in a clear, yet exclusive way. However, over the course of the research, a question has been raised more and more excitedly: what about the films beyond our comfort zones? What can we do with popular/mainstream films? Do we (b)other about films which might seem like the 'other' of our region's arthouse cinema culture? Where is the contact zone between the different registers of

cinema culture?

Teri Szűcs

Non-national Contact Zones and Solidarity

The interdisciplinary and international nature of our joint research was really refreshing, and I firmly believe that within Hungarian academia, humanities need to be invigorated with such an approach. I need to correct my choice of words already: instead of inter-national focus, we worked on the basis of non-national contact zone-oriented approaches, which is a far more fruitful attitude than any academic stance still based on nationalism.

I truly valued the discussion-focused sessions of our group. The interactions among the colleagues taught me a lot. One outcome of such joint learning for me is that it is important to position myself as an Eastern-European researcher, but the content of my position is strictly situational. We indeed have 'Eastern European knowledge' to share.

Our small community underwent a slight change from a cloud of isolated professional individuals to a kind of communality. But it did not mean that a real sense of belonging together emerged in the research group. The affiliated, embedded members did not pay any interest to the conditions of those who live and work precariously – in spite of the efforts of the founder of the research group, who wanted to base the joint work on communality and solidarity.

I think now is the time finally for Hungarian academia to embrace solidarity, when our government is about to sign the order of our execution.

Eszter Vidosa

Scholars, Academics in the Age of Technology

Agency of academics is going through a significant change not just in terms of the necessity to discuss relations between academia and society, but also in terms of discovering new modes and ways for inventing and applying new discourses that could help us talk about these relations in a new age of communication, informatics and technology. First of all, in the era of fake news and the communicational boom academics have to adapt constantly so they can strengthen their

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position on all these new virtual platforms of communication. With our body extensions, devices and the way of handling information in general, we are becoming posthuman, if we already haven't. These major changes make whole societies face new challenges: in order to obtain the required discursive frame that enables academics to fit into a new social environment, they have to reconsider the assertions of Katherine N. Hayles, who attempts to define the meaning, the goals and the main aspects of posthumanism: in her text, *How We Became Posthuman* she argues that it is inevitable to connect science with humanities and to recognize interrelations between different kinds of cultural productions, specifically literature and science. Nowadays, this could also mean that academics have to be more up-to-date when it comes to tendencies of virtual reality, social media, technology and maybe even cybernetics too, so they could acquire a voice which they can unfold various theories and assertions with, in order to find a much more alert and responsive audience and to plan greater goals overall. In other words, academics have to be much more multidimensional to maintain their agency in professional activity and societal activism at the same time. If we only take a look at the current tendencies of cultural and literary theory, it is indisputable, that transhumanist, posthumanist, post-anthropocentrist, nonhumanist etc. tendencies and movements begin to rewrite the whole scene of actual products of contemporary literature. We simply cannot turn our backs on the new tools, new media and ways of discourse, for they are affecting and transforming each other – from the picture of the body imagined as a machine in contemporary poetry to the realisation that ludology and video game studies effects narratives of motion pictures or novels more than ever. The new era of nationalisms is just as much the result of information technology and the virtual-technological boom than it is its antipode. We can stabilize our agency, be equipped readers of all the new cultural products, and all types of social changes (and it is highly needed for us to be so), only if we are able to keep up with the recent developments and achievements of the age of technology, fuelled heavily by posthumanist desires and fantasies.

András Hlavacska

From *Dracula* to *The Whiskey Bandit*

Four years ago I joined to the project with my Dracula-research. Although at the beginning my main interest was the metaphors of Stoker's novel, during these years many spatial theories

influenced my research, so in the followings I'd like to shortly summarise the most significant of them, to show how my basic ideas changed in this period.

At the first glance Hungarian readers probably interpret Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as the bluntest manifestation of the Western gaze: a novel which fails to give a so-called authentic representation of the Eastern European region, because its author only has second-hand information of Transylvania. And probably this attitude is one of the reasons why so many Hungarian-language papers associated with Dracula are obsessed with the historical and ethnographic background of the myth. While on the one hand these papers certainly show how superficial Stoker's knowledge was, on the other hand they usually fail to draw attention to the importance of the regional and cultural representations of the novel. The English-language papers seem different: instead of focusing on the question "How authentic is the historical, geographical and cultural background of the novel?" they rather try to answer to following one: "What does the novel tell about us? How does it represent the cultural, political, ideological, etc. situations of the fin de siècle and of our present?". (Of course, it does not mean that they are totally ignoring how the novel's historical, geographical, cultural representations live on nowadays. See for example: Jason Dittmer, *Why Do Vampires Come from Eastern Europe?*). Here, among many articles which try to answer these questions I'd like to mention Stephen D. Arata's article, because it accurately analyses the anxiety of reversed colonisation, the fear that the colonisers become colonised. And the imperialist guilt, because *Dracula* "provides an opportunity to atone for imperial sins, since reverse colonization is often represented as deserved punishment". It is worth noting – as Arata emphasises – that in the 1890s *Dracula* is only one among many novels and short stories that represent this fear. And we could add, that this idea was not only popular in the 1890s, but we can find it in earlier gothic novels, for example in Mary Shelley *Frankenstein* where the doctor destroys the female monster, because he fears that "the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror." But it is more important to see, that this fear lives on in our days. that the fear of the annihilation of the human species, our civilization, our culture is not the past but our present, and it manifests in novels, movies and series, as well as in political discourses.

To this idea the film analyses written by the project-fellows during the last four years give a

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wider scope. Here I'd just like to mention the last Q and A of the Contact Zones online journal, where many answers focused on Nimród Antal's *The Whiskey Bandit* – a movie which is important for two reasons from the perspective of the reversed colonization. First, because in the movie the protagonist – coming from Transylvania – cannot adapt himself to the society of Budapest, and therefore he becomes a grotesque reflection of it. And secondly, because in the movie many characters associated with Budapest repeat the *Dracula*'s distinction between the West and the East – with the difference, that now Budapest becomes the West.

Bence Kránicz

Academia and Eastern Europe: Learning to Fit In

As a note of farewell to this project I would rather reflect on it on a personal level. I started to participate as an MA student and now, at the closing stage, I am at the midpoint of my PhD research. For me, Contact Zones was the first glimpse into academic work beside a student's tasks and effectively proved to me that there is an environment here for free thinking and a shared love of interpreting art and our societies.

During these years I also learned that the way I perceive the world, how I regard art and what I look for in work is far away from all that is currently politically encouraged in the society I live in. I was glad that our project was an international one: in many cases, the cultural and even moral condition of Romania gave me reason for hope and to feel ashamed of the politics of my country. I contributed less to this project than I would have liked to – the reason for this is that I constantly juggle more work than I should, because I feel that in the future there might be less and less opportunities to do what I'm interested in.

These last few years often made me think of being an Eastern European as a constant challenge, and our project provided the most reliable theoretical background to this reasoning. Naturally, I also met some very smart people who are still passionate about their work despite all the circumstances that influence their home institutions negatively. Apart from my occasional contribution, it was good and rewarding to know how this project has developed and follow it to its finish.

Zsolt Győri

Project Closing Remarks

During the four years of the project the fundamental questions posed initially are no less relevant now. Eastern Europe does suffer from considerable economic and social deficit as the strengthening of protectionism and populism in Hungary, amongst others, suggests. The official Hungarian reaction to the migrant crisis did not only turn a back on the European humanist heritage but embraced the worst aspects of insularity and nationalism in the name of a freedom fight against the imaginary ghost of global liberalism. Enjoying the political and moral support of the majority of people, the ideological engineers of the so called illiberal democracy have declared a war on grassroot civic initiatives and academic disciplines that have long made their task to address and study exclusionary social practices and stereotypes. The vilification of these presumably Western liberal knowledges of problematizing uneven distributions of power and mechanisms of marginalization is all the more short-sighted since these could easily be adapted to the study of Eastern Europe's subaltern position.

Researchers invited to participate in the project shared the conviction that their Eastern European position was a benefit in exploring questions of local knowledges. This position was itself situated in a symbolic contact zone, in more than one sense of the word. On the one hand, our approach was strongly interdisciplinary in nature, synthetizing numerous branches of film and literary studies, history and cultural history, cultural studies and its many subfields, sociology, anthropology and political science. On the other hand, scholarly inquiries tested, refined, and expanded the findings of Western academia in the local context and also aimed to open up these local contexts to the external gaze.

The initial hypothesis of the project was that literature, cinema and the visual arts discover and describe spaces of intercultural translation, or contact zones as we termed these. Contact zones are not invented but real sites of translation, adaptation, transculturation, but also of negotiation, contest, and critical reflection. Research has acknowledged that creators of literature and screen products are relentless problem-seekers, who rarely pose as educators of the masses, rather they provide social diagnoses which are worthy of serious consideration. While approaching these diagnoses we hope to have clarified the ways they propose and manage meanings, dwell upon collective experiences, imaginations and traumas, involve recipients in a shared responsibility

towards social dialogue, formulate insights and put forth visions. Our task as scholars has been to explore creative practices in a theoretical space and to reinvent this theoretical space in the light of such practices.

The study of contact zones between and within cultures, nations, people, sexes, generations and ethnic groups, just as much as between art forms, disciplines and tenets of theory is always an unfinished project. Results, for the most part, are inconclusive, answers carry the seeds of new queries. Requesting the opposite is denying the dynamics of scientific scrutiny, or simply saying that societies have ceased to change. Well, they haven't. Demanding artists and scholars to not offer the insights and ask the questions that social and scientific transformation allows for is a false demand and a challenge to their hard-won autonomy. Change is everywhere and also affects the agency of academics. We have to continue with the task of locating and theorizing social phenomena, tendencies and conflicts and involve, probably more efficiently, the general public in the debates of societal challenges and everyday experiences.

Mónika Dánél
Intersections and Inner Institutions

Our research project was rooted in the concept of the interchange of mediums and disciplines, that of national cultures and institutions. Most importantly, it was born out of the trust in the Romanian and Hungarian researchers' networking and interaction, the fluent exchange of ideas and experience, and the transfer of knowledge.

An important part of the process was to create 'contact zones' with the help of conferences (see: http://contactzones.elte.hu/archives/1880) and workshops together with our partners from Romania (see: http://contactzones.elte.hu/archives/824), seminars held with invited researchers (see: http://contactzones.elte.hu/archives/category/esemenyek), as well as meetings organized for the project's participants.

Many of the ideas, for example the idea of the Q and A writing-mode, were formulated by Teri Szűcs in one of these project events. Many individual and common aims were realised, a great number of individual contributions – articles, book chapters – (see: http://contactzones.elte.hu/cikkek), books (see: http://contactzones.elte.hu/konyvek) were

published. We edited six issues of Contact Zones (see: http://contactzones.elte.hu/journal) and a special *Metropolis* issue on contemporary Romanian films (see: http://epa.oszk.hu/03300/03349/00002/pdf/). The publication of two co-edited books (one in Hungarian and one in English) is in progress.

We contacted students and cooperated with doctoral students. Our project can be considered new in the sense that most of the project members were from the same generation, but from four different universities (Eötvös Loránd University, University of Debrecen, University of Szeged, Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design). The main question was how a research group can function without authority (in both the positive and the negative sense of the word) in a society with hierarchical traditions.

The non-hierarchical structure – I hope – created more space for open interactions. However, sometimes it was not easy to achieve the aims we had set out in the project description. I was socialised in a hierarchy and I detest it. Therefore, it was a great learning process for me to understand that coordinating a project does not automatically and necessarily have to make use of hierarchical structuring. What is essential is clear and precise operations.

It is also important to note that the institutional frames (such as that of a university) are more or less internalised. Therefore, it takes more time and reflection to open these invisible borders in a cooperative situation in which an obvious authority is absent. In our project, we explored (post)communist research fields and, perhaps, we could and should have reflected more critically on how deeply our ways of thinking and our practices were shaped by those traditions and therefore how we "struggled" with non-hierarchical structures.

The tradition of individualism is greatly embedded and incorporated in our scientific self-understanding. Therefore, we were searching for ways of how individual goal orientedness can be compatible with cooperation and with the sharing of ideas.

The most elementary cause of this "struggle" is not the individual; it is rooted in an Easter-European phenomenon. Every young researcher is overloaded/overburdened, and leisure time is also research time. In this very precious and expensive time, cooperation – without the benefits of the "authority" – can only come after the individual goals have been achieved.

Our project was also exceptional from the point of view of gender equality (see: http://contactzones.elte.hu/researchers). The fact that the project was coordinated and led by two female researchers (Hajnal Király and myself) also meant in our Eastern-European reality

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that we managed the administration too. (Which and also the hierarchical structure of course is not just an Eastern-European specificity...)

The aim of our research project was to show a different perspective – the perspective of the inner Eastern self toward the narratives of the "Western Gaze" in contemporary Eastern European literature, film and society. It is essential to be more reflective of the inherent eastern/western opposition and to rethink it from the perspective of scientific self-colonialization too. Nevertheless, there is a more disquieting phenomenon of Hungarian contemporary propaganda's language and the way it uses elements (concepts) of (post)colonial discourse. In one of the contemporary Hungarian discourses regarding artistic canons, the conservative values are defined as "colonized" by "liberal" aesthetics and intellectuals and the nationalistic propaganda's diction defines itself as "de-colonizing" discourse. If scientific concepts are re-appropriated in a very contradictory way, how can we use those very same concepts in our scientific discourse?

Personally, I made very precious Romanian contacts, I got to know new colleagues and I strengthened my relationship with essential Hungarian colleagues. It was a unique experience and a great opportunity where, individually and as a group, we had the chance to re-frame our traditions, social connections as well as our "inner institutions".

Dear Project Members, thank you for your work and for this four-year-long process and experience!

Contextualisation as a Methodological Possibility[2]
The Case of a History of Hungarian Literature in Romanian

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Abstract: The preparations for a history of Hungarian literature written in Romanian pose a set of methodological problems and questions which refer partly to the methodology and practice of literary history, and partly to various phenomena of Romanian and Hungarian literary media. The paper analyses first the international practice of literary historiography and its influence on the Hungarian discourse, moving on to the experiences of Hungarian literary history in this respect. Next, it examines some of the features of Romanian literary history, possibly relevant from the perspective of a history of Hungarian literature in Romanian under preparation. Finally, it discusses literary tendencies and problems of translation which are unavoidably present in the planning of such a work.

Keywords: literary historiography, theoretical methodology, Romanian literature, cultural transfers

The endeavour of writing the history(ies) of Hungarian literature in Romanian entails at least three aspects which also concern the methodology of literary historiography that need to be addressed. As a first aspect, I must mention the narrative of the literary history in progress, which cannot be avoided regardless of the language of the work – Hungarian, Romanian or other. As a second aspect, I must also mention 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. One of these is the tradition of the history of Hungarian literature written in Romanian, a tradition that can highlight how a different culture, in this case Romanian, approached Hungarian literature and its history. A third aspect would be the localisation of the texts of Hungarian literature within the context of Romanian literature, justified by the introduction of Hungarian literature into another culture.

All three aspects pertain in the first place to the methodological possibility of the intention

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formulated above, but before we move on to it, it is worth looking at the purpose or intention of a Hungarian literary history in Romanian, and the target audience of such an endeavour.

The presentation of any national literature in a different language may have intentions other than the obvious and undisputed intention of making it known. Approaching it from Itamar Even-Zohar's theory of multiple literary systems (Even-Zohar 1990a, 9–26), or system theory in general, the problem of centre–periphery pops up immediately, as an attempt to settle the mutual relationship of the source and target culture within a multiple system. When the summarising works on Hungarian literature appear in English, German or French, they reveal a sort of hierarchical relationship between the source and target culture, seen from the idea of "world literature". The very intent to make accessible the history of Hungarian literature in an international language posits in fact this very literature at a lower level in the hierarchy of literatures. This is what Even-Zohar claims as well when stating that „Since peripheral literatures in the Western Hemisphere tend more often than not to be identical with the literatures of smaller nations, as unpalatable as this idea may seem to us, we have no choice but to admit that within a group of relatable national literatures, such as the literatures of Europe, hierarchical relations have been established since the very beginnings of these literatures. Within this (macro-) polysystem some literatures have taken peripheral positions, which is only to say that they were often modelled to a large extent upon an exterior literature." (Even-Zohar 1990b, 48) Taking into account the phenomena of other historiographies of European literatures, it may not be irresponsible to state that if that particular literature is presented in English, it may indicate its higher position in a dominant target culture. This statement is also proved by the fact that the need to publish English summaries exists even in French or German literary historiography. (Hollier 1989; Wellbery 2004)

In contrast, or in addition, when I examine the possibilities and intentions of a Hungarian literary history written in Romanian, I am more interested – from an imagined idea of world literature – in the literary representations of peripheric parallels or differences, cultural overlaps, literatures bordering on each other, similar social and/or regional phenomena, etc. as starting points. However, before turning to the three aspects mentioned in the introduction, I think it is worthwhile to ask how we position the medium of the source and target culture, because the solution of the composition and narrative structure of certain perspectives or approaches should be made after the implicit or explicit answering of these questions.

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Mihály Szegedy-Maszák drew attention already in a 2004 study that "One of the main weaknesses of Hungarian literary historiography is that we do not take a close enough look at the theoretical foundation of international literary trends. It even happens that some work of Hungarian literary historiography only makes reference to an international trend as a pretext, while actually continuing some long-standing Hungarian tradition." (Szegedy-Maszák 2004, 220–221) The first aspect mentioned in the introduction can be deduced from this remark as well. One of the most influential literary histories of the past three decades is probably the more-than-one-thousand-pages-long *A New History of French Literature* edited by Denis Hollier, first published in English in 1989, then five years later in French. The book breaks with the traditions of literary historiography in several respects. As Hollier formulated it in the preface to the 1989 English-language edition, the starting point is aleatory, it may be the date of publication of a book, the death of an author, or the premiere of a play, and the analysis of a work, a phenomenon, a genre, or an institution happens by moving backward or forward in time from this date. Hollier also emphasises that none of the texts in the book present the entire life work of any author. (Hollier 1989, xix–xx) Hollier's literary history is dominated by division and different, unconnected, simultaneous stories, and the history of Hungarian literature cannot disregard their history of effect. A German undertaking, coordinated by David E. Wellbery, also comes as an effect of Hollier's scientific historically important work from 2004. This book follows similar principles and narrative structure in writing the history of German literature, and "its formal arrangement and selection of contents are motivated by a consideration of the conditions that spawned literary history as both an intellectual inquiry and a literary genre. Such self-scrutiny is especially appropriate to a volume that portrays German literary and intellectual traditions, since the historical treatment of literature is itself arguably a German discovery." (Wellbery 2004, xviii) In the preface, Wellbery refers back to Hippolyte Taine's history of English literature from 1864, especially the part on German literary historiography, and later in the introduction mentions how important and inevitable Hollier's work is.

In addition to Hollier's 1989 work, and since I used the history of French literature as an example, one should mention the book entitled *French global, A new approach to literary history* (McDonald–Suleiman 2011), published in 2011, which looks back at Hollier's text from 20 years' distance. The volume considers the linguistically identical, but territorially divided nature of French literature, and stresses first of all the relationship of various discourses. "In

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this book, rather then focus on the nation and on a model of literary space as an arena of struggle for domination – or even for Enlightenment ideals of freedom – we have chosen to emphazise points of contact and multiple kinds of dialogue that found and inform literary space including history, philosophy, politics, religion, and geography; these are not external to literature but integral to its conception and history […]". (McDonald–Suleiman 2011, xix) The rereading of the past is treated in the book *French global* also as a reading of the present, marked by the chapter titles as well: *Spaces*, *Mobilities*, *Multiplicities*. This also signals a shift from Hollier's chronological literary history: the stress falls primarily on structural connections, the comparison or transcendability of spaces and systems.

Besides the comparison of spaces and systems, and the two French literary histories, it is worth mentioning briefly Galin Tihanov's claims on literary historiography. One of these refers to the fact that the nation state, which was an important trigger of the birth of national literary histories, is declining, and he states, related to the new Oxford English literary history, that it is „[…] seeking to transpose – without canceling – the largely exhausted national narrative into the (questionable) tonality of multicultural globalism." (Tihanov 2008, 67–68) Another of his claims, in response to the issues and tendencies raised by media theory, states that, because of the medial transformations, „the result is an archive of semantically dynamic deposits, which can be added to or subtracted from at liberty at any time. The author/reader boundary is totally erased, and so are the foundations of reception theory and traditional literary history." (Tihanov 2008, 69)

Taking into account the French literary histories following Hollier's or Tihanov's claims, and their concepts on literary history narratives, it may lead one to ask what would be the most appropriate system or structure to write the history of Hungarian literature in Romanian. This question has taken us to the first part of the second aspect mentioned above. In addition to international connections, we must also not forget that a prospective Romanian-language history of Hungarian literature cannot disregard the tradition of Hungarian literary historiography. The academic and scholarly media and forms of the mediation of Hungarian literature are closely linked to how the Hungarian literature is perceived in a Hungarian cultural context.

Therefore in addition to reflecting on and using international tendencies as means of contextualisation, one should focus also on those histories of literature which in the past thirty

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years have significantly defined our thinking on Hungarian literary historiography. We are talking mainly about four texts: *A magyar irodalom története 1945–1991* [The history of Hungarian literature 1945–1991) (Kulcsár Szabó 1993), *A magyar irodalom történetei* [Histories of Hungarian literature] (Szegedy-Maszák–Veres 2007) *Magyar irodalom* [Hungarian literature] (Gintli 2010) and *Geschichte der ungarischen Literatur*. (Kulcsár Szabó 2013). These four literary histories complete the first aspect from two points of view. First, these are the reference points for a future history of Hungarian literature in Romanian, and by the way they relate to each other and to the international trends, they also illustrate how the above mentioned cultural and academic medium relates to Hungarian literature. On their basis, it can be stated that the time of single-author literary histories has passed, as, except for the 1993 volume, the rest are all the works of several authors, or rather a collective of authors, therefore they cannot, and more importantly, they would not represent one single approach, point of view or theoretical trend. The 1993 volume proposes to rewrite the previous academic literary history (Sőtér 1962–1964), primarily regarding the period after 1945, following a different, less ideological, and mostly poetical approach. Szegedy-Maszák's 2007 literary history started from the methodology of Hollier's French literary history, but diverted from it as well in certain cases: "The chapters here are usually longer, so the work is less fragmented than the French literary history in question. We also diverted from the concept of the volume that inspired us when establishing the criteria of selection. […] We also wished to discuss works less known or disputable, or such that had been considered problematic and neglected before, but we also wished to be autonomous in that we did not limit our interests to the so-called elite literature alone. On the one hand, we extended the range of phenomena discussed to various fields of culture – to the other arts, psychology, history, etc. -, while on the other hand, instead of a synthesis of many phenomena, we favoured a detailed analysis of individual works." (Szegedy-Maszák 2007, 12–13) It is apparent that the methodology of Szegedy-Maszák's literary history moves away from its reference point towards interdisciplinarity, while the editor also formulates in the preface that the time of great narratives has passed, and as a result, "we should regard neither the period, nor the individual life work as an organising principle, and present Hungarian literature as a fragmented heritage." (Szegedy-Maszák 2007, 16) An even more important assertion of the preface is, however, that "While it is possible to claim that the Hungarian literature has a prominent place in world heritage, one should still consider the

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possibility that the national approach to literatures is a historical phenomenon, which not only had a definite beginning, but we should also prepare for its possible end. The target is obviously to include some of the products of Hungarian literature into European and world heritage, which is only possible if the structure of this heritage also changes." (Szegedy-Maszák 2007, 16) This is precisely the target that I have discussed earlier, in connection with the above remark, that questions the legitimacy of archiving literature in national literary histories.

Gintli's 2010 literary history chooses the history of poetic forms as the guiding principle of his narrative, claiming that the authors of the book had to choose "from among the possible points of view of the narrative, with the clear insight that their aim is to narrate not *the* history of Hungarian literature, but *one* possible history of it". (Gintli 2010, 17). Apparently, compared to Szegedy-Maszák's work, this literary history is a return to the idea of one single narrative and a clear point of view, while it also emphasises that the authors wanted to tell not *the*, but *a* narrative.

As a fourth text, one should mention the history of Hungarian literature edited by Ernő Kulcsár Szabó, published in German, *Geschichte der ungarischen Literatur*, in 2013. This work, published at De Gruyter, chooses as its narrative guideline the historically-effected approach to historical-poetical changes in the analysis of literary writing and communication. It also includes two further aspects: the changes of literary language and of the forms of historical-cultural techniques that make literature accessible to us depending on the mediation techniques available at certain times. In this approach, the medial possibilities and conditions of literature and their changes are also treated as the aspects of a literary history. The editor mentions in the preface the snapshot-like organisation and compilation techniques of Hollier's literary history, adding that it also cannot avoid the problem of historically-effected situatedness (distancing himself also from Szegedy-Maszák's literary history), and runs into the dead end of historical or historicising analyses. (Kulcsár Szabó 2013, XIII–XIV)

These four histories of Hungarian literature signal the Hungarian scholarship's relations to literary history, and the reflections thereupon may also be informed by the national or international tendencies or issues that guide the writing of a literary history. The transition to the second aspect could be the interest in Romanian literary historiography, primarily in what could be termed as a dual formal nature of the historical approach to Romanian literature. In addition to traditional, narrative literary histories, one may emphasise the dictionary- or lexicon-

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like endeavours, based on a canonised list, which are less frequent in Hungarian literary historical tradition. However, it cannot be overlooked, as precisely the contextualisation of Hungarian literary history may also imply a similar formal approach; let me mention for example the multi-volume *Dicționar general al literaturii române* (Simion 2004–2016)*,* or the *Dicționarul Biografic al Literaturii Române*, edited by Aurel Sasu (Sasu 2006). In addition, it must also be mentioned that, while in the 1990s and later on the time of single-authored Hungarian literary histories has passed, this form has still remained prevalent in the Romanian discourse: Nicolae Manolescu's literary history published in 2008 is the latest such undertaking. In the preface of the several-hundred pages long work, Manolescu makes reference to Hans-Robert Jauss's reception theory, René Wellek's dilemmas about historiography, and, in connection with Fernand Braudel, the French *Annales*-school, mostly these schools' ideas on historicity and synchronicity. (Manolescu 2008, 9–13). Besides looking at the twentieth-century history of Romanian literary historiography, he emphasises the work of George Călinescu published in 1941, and it is probably not mistaken to say that this work is one of the most important reference points for Manolescu. The stress on tradition and the unavoidability of standing-in-tradition are primary concerns of Manolescu's 2008 work, and this is not only valid in terms of references to Călinescu's work, but also regarding his concept and interpretation of literature. At the same time, with reference to Maurits Cornelis Escher's lithograph on the book cover (two hands drawing each other), Manolescu reflects on the problematic nature of single-authored literary histories, and although, unlike the Hungarian practice, he does not think that a multi-author system is the solution, he still wants to solve the dilemma by the theoretical need for (re)assessment and (re)interpretation.[3]

It is precisely the metaphor of the two writing hands in reference to interpretation that creates the possibility to contextualise the multiple authorship of Hungarian literary history within the Romanian discourse, as this interpretation is made by a highly canonised, prominent figure of this discourse.

Also as part of the second aspect, I wish to emphasise the Romanian works on Hungarian literature published in the past. There are in fact four such works to speak about: Ion Chinezu,

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[3] Cf. "This is the second acceptable meaning that we can render to critical history written by two hands: it bears a permenant (re)assessment and (re)interpretation of each text and literature as a whole, as an infinite interglossing. Through this prism, our entire culture is a series of subjects with variations." (Manolescu 2008, 13).

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Aspecte din literatura maghiară ardeleană [Aspects of Hungarian literature from Transylvania] (Chinezu 1930), Nicolae Balotă, *Scriitori maghiari din România* [Hungarian writers from Romania] (Balotă 1981), Gavril Scridon, *Istoria literaturii maghiare din România 1918–1989* [The history of Hungarian literature from Romania, 1918–1989] (Scridon 1996), and Szabolcs Szonda, *Literatura maghiară din România. Aspecte cronologice și noțiune de bază* [Hungarian literature from Romania. Chronological aspects and fundamental concepts] (Szonda 2008). All four works, as the titles show, were meant to present the Hungarian literature from Romania.[4] This is not the place to present these books in detail, but it is worth mentioning that Scridon's work, and partly also Balotă's and Szonda's works (the latter most reflectedly and consciously) build upon the characteristic discourse of Hungarian literary historiography from Romania, its stresses and periods. We could also say that these works of literary history also read and interpret the Hungarian literary historiography from Romania, thus form an important part of its Romanian reception. It should still be said about Balotă that in his book periodisation has no relevance: the first part is entitled *Galeria scriitorilor* [The gallery of writers], the second is *Confluențe literare și artistice româno-maghiare* [Romanian-Hungarian literary and artistic relations]. The second part presents musical and art connections, while the first part contains portraits of writers and analyses of some of their works; this rendering seems to apply the lexicon-like arrangement prevalent in Romanian literary historiography. As shown by these volumes, the histories of Hungarian literature in Romanian refer first of all to the Hungarian literature from Romania, creating and enforcing the hyophesis that between the Hungarian and Romanian literature there is another entity, the much debated Hungarian literature from Transylvania/Romania. This is important because a Hungarian literary history written in Romanian must also reflect on its preliminaries to a certain extent, and these volumes can be regarded as a sort of tradition. So can also the attempts in the early 2000s in Romanian literary history which treated the Hungarian literature from Romania most often as a foreign element within the corpus of Romanian literature (Vincze 2008, 144–145), as for example Marian Popa's monumental 2001 book, *Istoria literaturii române de azi pe mâine* [The history of

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[4] Hungarian literature from Romania means in Hungarian literary history the literature written on the territory of Romania in Hungarian from the early 20th century until today. Similarly, especially before 1990, the histories of Hungarian literature distinguished between Hungarian literature from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia or Ukraine, which all had their own institutions (magazines, publishers, etc.), just like in Romania. A similar phenomenon in an international context is the German literature in Prague, or German literatures in South-Eastern Europe (e.g. Saxon literature from Transylvania, German literature from Romania).

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Romanian literature today and tomorrow] (Popa 2001).

In this sense the Romanian reception of the Hungarian literature from Romania can be regarded as an aspect that is strongly context-related, and allows for the thematisation of various phenomena. One of these is the territorial interpretation which is also present in Romanian literary historiography, such as, for example, Mihai Cimpoi's *O istorie deschisă a literaturii române din Basarabia* [An open history of the Romanian literature from Bessarabia] on the history of Romanian literature from Bessarabia. In the preface, the author highlights the aspects of langauge, regionalism and closedness in connection with the Romanian literature written in a Russian linguistic and cultural context, and – similarly to some Hungarian interpretive attempts – also thematises the relationship of Romanian and Bessarabian Romanian literatures. (Cimpoi 1996, 13–14). These ideas are revisited later, in 2010, by Ana Bantoş, who looks at the preliminaries of Cimpoi's work, namely the literary histories that build on territoriality (Bantoş 2010, 12–13), but in the last chapter of her volume, she moves on to a multicultural literary space, starting from the problem of identity which had an important role also in Cimpoi's text. (Bantoş 2010, 247–271). Besides Cimpoi and others, it is Bantoș's work which, in my opinion, may provide the context to present the function of Hungarian literatures outside Hungary in a Hungarian literary history in Romanian.

Finally, as a third aspect, I shall speak about literature, and within it translations, as well as about a feature of the Hungarian reception of Romanian literature which may also be working the other way around. Hungarian literature in Romanian translation can be a reference point too, and let us not forget the prefaces and introductions written to these translations which often have a literary historical value. In addition, it is important that the existence of translations can often make quotations and references possible, as the discussed text can be included in the analysis in Romanian. An example for this is the recent Romanian translation of Bálint Balassi's Célia-cycle (Balassi 2016), where the preface and the afterword of the bilingual volume (Dumitru 2016, 11–14, 67–79) does not simply speak about the translation, but contextualises Balassi's poetry within world literature, primarily Renaissance poetry.

I would like to give three examples for the contextualisation of Hungarian literature within Romanian literature. The first example is the anthology of contemporary Romanian literature entitled *Dilingó*, which presents the Romanian literature of the 1980s generation (Podoabă–Şef 2008). Péter Esterházy, writer of the preface, connects the texts to the phenomenon in

Hungarian literature known as the prose turn, which balances to a certain extent the strangeness of the Romanian texts. Esterházy says: "It's as if something happened in the Romanian prose in the eighties similar to what happened here somewhat earlier; we can say: a new way of reading or using tradition, or rather traditions have emerged; or we can say: new questions about the relationship of text and reality have emerged." (Esterházy 2008, 7–8) Esterházy gives a lot of context here, which makes the "eighties'" generation familiar, giving a solid point of reference and framework for reading the texts in the anthology. In addition, the writer of the afterword, Virgil Podoabă, highlighting similar characteristics, also mentions that this generation emerged as a group, and this phenomenon is again not unknown to us, so this would also be a contextual reference point (Podoabă 2008). If we reverse this logic, then the phenomenon of prose turn can be linked to the text perception of the generation of the eighties, which offers a context for a tendency, an important change of Hungarian literature, bringin it closer to Romanian literature, to the Romanian reader.

As a second example, I mention the case of Ádám Bodor's novel *Sinistra körzet* and Ștefan Bănulescu's *Cartea milionarului*, which was introduced into Hungarian literature as the prefiguration, or indeed preliminary of the *Sinistra körzet*, whose possible direct influence cannot be excluded either. Well, in case of Bodor's novel, it can also work in a reverse way, and texts with a strong emphasis on space can also be put in context with the help of Bănulescu's volume, as pointed out by Éva Bányai's study on the similarities of the two novels. (Bányai 2015). She also highlights that the interplay of fictive and referential spaces is not unknown in either of the two texts, therefore it is natural to read them side by side.

Finally, as a third example, let me mention the texts of Filip Florian, Florin Lăzărescu, Bogdan Suceava, Ioan Groşan, Lucian Dan Teodorovici, Radu Pavel Gheo, who, in addition to continuing the prose of the eighties' generation, offer a highly problematised relation to the recent past and the ways to deal with it, while also inquring about the medial conditions of the access to the past. This is again a possibility to find connections between authors or subjects, making them familiar, and the context given this way presents the Hungarian literature and its history as a corpus which is neither strange nor unfamiliar.

The three aspects discussed above open up the way for locating Hungarian literature in the context of Romanian literature. I think that the overview and analysis of the system of Romanian literature and the interpretive strategies and concepts apparent in its literary

historiography is paramount, and it cannot be avoided also when preparing a history of Hungarian literature written in Romanian. This is also helpful to create not simply a Hungarian literary history written in Romanian, but a work that, given its points of reference and possibilities of contextualisation, has every chance to become more than merely a work of literary history. It may have consequences regarding the practices and methodology of literary historiography of the wider region – meaning Eastern Europe – while also allowing for the identification of parallel creative or poetical tendencies serving as important experience for the interpretation of both Romanian and Hungarian literature.

Translated from the Hungarian by Emese Czintos

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Landscape after Revolution

Contemporary Cinematic Narratives of the Romanian and Hungarian Revolutions[5]

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Abstract: There have been several political movements and protests in Central and Eastern Europe since the Second World War, but only Hungary and Romania had their own modern revolutions. Although the two events had very different outcomes, both have been retold several times in cinematic stories. 2006 was the year with the highest number of such films produced. After sketching up this landscape of movies about anti-communist uprisings in both countries, I select two of them, one from each country: *Children of Glory* by Kriszta Goda from Hungary and *The Paper Will Be Blue* by Radu Muntean from Romania. I will 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. As such, the act of representing history has very different results in the two films.

Keywords: art cinema, Bordwellian narratology, Hollywood narrative, Eastern European history, New Hungarian Cinema, Romanian New Wave

The Prague Spring and the Solidarity movement in Poland were indeed important political events with long term effects on society, but in the Central and Eastern European region only Hungary and Romania had their own national, anti-communist revolutions. These were significant events in the history of both countries, with massive rallies, involvement of the military, street fights, changes in government and, sadly, many human casualties. But while the Hungarian uprising against the Stalinist terror in 1956 was crushed by the invading soviet army, and Hungary remained a member of the Eastern Bloc, in the Romanian Revolution of 1989 the national army sided with the protesters, the dictator was given a trial and executed, and the country took the path of democratization, with the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc disintegrating in the background. The significant Connertonian criteria of revolution (Connerton, 1989, 7), regicide, was fulfilled in Romania by the execution of the dictator

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Ceaușescu and his wife, while in Hungary, after the defeat of the revolution, those executed were the members of the revolutionary government.

In 1989 the communist regime in Hungary was replaced with a democratic government and this opened the doors for the much delayed representation of these tragic events.

Self-evidently, the cinematic representation in both countries has since been subject to many critical interpretations. As Romanian film scholar Doru Pop contends, an important characteristic of the European Cinema is "a thematic development focused on national self-image, centered on recovering recent memory and providing a historical recording or recounting of contemporary historical events" (Pop 2010, 27). This is true for both Romanian and Hungarian cinema, which are "products of – and reflections – of the same 'trauma culture,' in the sense that many of their protagonists face crises or traumas, or are on the way to processing traumas experienced in the recent communist past." (Pieldner 2016, 89)

Andrea Virginás goes further and points to "a generational resemblance and a common sensitivity" in the working and creating methods of Romanian and Hungarian filmmakers, especially those who started to make films after 1989 (Virginás 2011, 132).

Such statements might make us think that the cinematic process of reinventing history works in similar ways in Hungarian and Romanian films, especially when the films are made by members of the Young Hungarian Cinema[6] and the Romanian New Wave[7].

In this article, after an overview of Hungarian and Romanian films addressing the two national revolutions, I will apply some classical assumptions presented in David Bordwell's seminal article *The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice* (Bordwell 1979), later developed further in his book *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Bordwell 1985, 2005). I will examine how the narrative structure, the characters, the time and space construction, and the cinematic representation can be expressive of the ways in which these films represent history.

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[6] Young Hungarian Cinema or Post-millennial Hungarian Cinema, since the directors belonging to this wave, such as Szabolcs Hajdu, Ágnes Kocsis, Kornél Mundruczó, Ferenc Török, and György Pálfi, started to make films after the millennium. Many of their films, such as *Moscow Square* (2001) by Török, *Taxidermia* (2006) by Pálfi or *White Palms* (2006) by Hajdu, discuss problems connected to historical memory and post-socialist identity.

[7] The Romanian New Wave is a realist and often minimalist wave in post-millennial Romanian Cinema ignited by Cristi Puiu's *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu* in 2004, awarded with *Un Certain Regard* at the Cannes Film Festival. Significant films followed by directors such as Jude, Mungiu, Muntean, Netzer, and Porumboiu cumulating more than a dozen prizes from Cannes, Berlin and other major festivals. The wave continues even now, the last film being Adina Pintilie's *Touch Me Not* (2018) awarded with the Golden Bear in Berlin.

Hungary: From forbidden fairytales to teenage traumas

In the first decade after the 1956 revolution – which at the time was officially called a counter-revolution by communist propaganda – films which could be considered even slightly anti-regime were banned (cf. Roman 2013). The extent of the paranoid censorship is shown by the fact that even Tamás Banovich's *The Sneezed Empire (Eltüsszentett birodalom,* 1956), an allegoric fairytale about a tyrannical king, was forbidden.

Decades later, still under the communist regime, the Hungarian revolution remained a prohibited topic of any screenplay. Exceptions were made for the use of the revolution as a historical setting for personal and family dramas, such as in *Daniel Takes a Train* (*Szerencsés Dániel,* 1983) by Pál Sándor, *Whooping Cough* (*Szamárköhögés,* 1987), a tragicomedy by Péter Gárdos, and Géza Bereményi's *The Midas Touch* (*Eldorádó,* 1988).

Fifteen years after the fall of communism in 1989, the special government film grants for the fiftieth anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution in 2006 finally offered a special occasion for filmmakers to show, without restraints, their cinematic re-invention of this significant slice of national history. The first was Márta Mészáros, a doyen of Hungarian filmmaking and a survivor of the revolution, who retold the tragic story of Imre Nagy, the revolutionary prime-minister of Hungary, in her film *The Unburied Man* (*A temetetlen halott*, 2004).

[Fig.1.] Children and teenagers during the revolution. *Boys from Budakeszi*

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Other directors who lived through the events, although very young at the time, represented stories of children and teenagers during and after the revolution. Their films include *Mansfeld* (*Mansfeld*, 2006) by Andor Szilágyi, *Boys from Budakeszi (Budakeszi srácok*, 2006) by Pál Erdőss, and *The Sun Street Boys* (*Nap utcai fiúk*, 2007) by György Szomjas. Gábor Koltai's *Colossal Sensation* (*Világszám*, 2004) again, uses the revolution merely as a pretext, this time for a comedy. Finally, there were a few younger filmmakers in their thirties or even twenties who had a different take on the Hungarian Revolution. Attila Vidnyánszky's *Liberté 56* (2007) and Kriszta Goda's *Children of Glory* (*Szabadság, szerelem,* 2006) both plant a love story in the midst of the events, on the fiercest days of the Hungarian Revolution.

Romania: From biased B-films to the Trilogy of Revolution

Romania needed less than two years for the first features about the 1989 revolution to be produced. Unlike *Bathunting* (*Vânătoare de lilieci*, 1991) directed by Daniel Bărbulescu, which is no more than an "incoherent subgenre detective movie" (Caranfil 2013, 17), *Red Rats* (*Şobolanii roşii*, 1991) by Florin Codre achieves an "objectivity filtered through personal experience and sensitivity" (Azap 2012), spotlighting the problem of those who served and benefitted from the old communist regime, and who subsequently grabbed power and success in the young and fragile Romanian democracy.

Red Rats signals the start of a long line of movies, continued by Nicolae Mărgineanu's *Look Ahead in Anger* (*Priveşte înainte cu mânie*, 1993), Stere Gulea's *Hunting Fox* (*Vulpe vânător*, 1993) and *State of Things* (*Stare de fapt*, 1995), and Marius Theodor Barna's *Timişoara Syndrome – Manipulation* (*Sindromul Timişoara – Manipularea*, 2004) and *Report on the State of the Nation* (*Raport despre starea naţiunii*, 2004). All emphasised the deep delusion of Romanian post-revolution society, when ordinary people realised that the agents of the former communist secret police, the "Securitate," had not lost their power after the revolution, but instead were thriving and remained influential, not just overshadowing, but frequently continuing to ruin the lives of their former victims. Călin Căliman went even further when affirming in connection with *Look Ahead in Anger* that "honest people had little chance to survive in the Romanian society [of transition]" (Căliman 2011, 579). These movies often slip into the pitfall of a rudimentary and retrospective anti-communist attitude (Gorso, 2017, 5),

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very understandable from a socio-historical point of view – the personal involvement of the filmmakers as victims of the regime – but one that unfortunately can lead to a biased narrative. Just like Gulea, Sergiu Nicolaescu, the most prolific of Romanian filmmakers during the communist era and well known for his adventure and crime genre movies, directed two movies about the Romanian revolution. First, he wrote and directed *Point zero* (*Punctul zero*, 1996), a crime-detective movie set in the days of the Romanian revolution, using a largely English language dialogue in order to target the US audience (Fulger 2014). Nine years later, he co-wrote and directed *"15"* (2005), a drama retelling the fate of a sailor killed in Timişoara on the first night of the anti-communist demonstrations.

[Fig.2.] The cruelest atrocities of the Romanian revolution. *"15"*

"15" revisits the main plot motif of *State of Things*, one of the cruelest atrocities and unsolved crimes of the Romanian revolution: the execution of wounded and hospitalised revolutionaries by agents of the Securitate. While Nicolaescu's first movie is mostly an imitation of Hollywood B-series action movies, the second has notes of nostalgia and melancholia, and an altogether more Eastern-European style of cinematic storytelling. A decade later, in the same year, 2006, when most of the films on the Hungarian revolution were released, the so called *Trilogy of Revolution* premiered across Romanian cinemas. The three movies, *The Way I Spent the End of the World* (*Cum mi-am petrecut sfârşitul lumii,* 2006), the directorial debut of Cătălin Mitulescu; *12:08 East of Bucharest* (*A fost sau n-a fost*, 2006), the first feature film of Corneliu Porumboiu; and the second feature of Radu Muntean, *The Paper Will Be Blue* (*Hârtia va fi*

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albastră, 2006) hit the screen in the same year within a period of six weeks and were directed by members of the Romanian New Wave. But as Constantin Pârvulescu mentions, "…as we move away from 1989 and investigate it more impassively … the relevance of these three feature films increases, and the interpretation given by them of the 22nd (TN: 22nd of December, 1989) increases in its pertinence. This, first of all, is by virtue of their immunity to the anticommunism virus. Free of this disease, the stories of their films are quieter and less prone to accusations" (Pârvulescu, 2013).

Thus, while in Romania the cinematic representation of the revolution started almost immediately, in Hungary filmmakers had to wait for decades until they could start discussing openly in their films the trauma of the crushed revolution. In Romania, after a few films in the nineties which were very emotional, delusional and fervently anti-communist, more balanced and pertinent films followed with the Trilogy of Revolution. But in Hungary an unconstrained cinematic reflection on the trauma started only around the fiftieth anniversary of the uprising.

Not identical twins: Children of Glory and The Paper Will Be Blue

As demonstrated above, there is an abundance of films to choose from when it comes to comparing Hungarian and Romanian movies representing the specific chapters of a national history. So, why choose these two films over the others?

To avoid those movies which were either produced under communist censorship, such as the Hungarian films made between 1957 and 1989, or those with a biased anticommunist attitude, which is the case of many Romanian movies made between 1990 and 2000, I confined myself to the rich output of the year 2006 and chose the most relevant movies from both countries. The term *relevant* here may require some explanation. While in Romania, *The Paper Will Be Blue* with its six international prizes and thirteen nominations is clearly the film with the largest international impact and recognition, there is no such standout film in the case of the Hungarian movies. But *Children of Glory*, although having only one international prize, was a widely circulated, internationally premiered movie, and garnered the biggest domestic and international box office from this thematic group (Varga 2007).

Though it is not a necessary criterion, what makes the comparative process even more interesting is the fact that the directors of *Children of Glory* and *The Paper Will Be Blue* are

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both members of Generation X[8], both falling within the criteria mentioned by Virginás above, starting to make films after 1989. Besides this, both directors were at the beginning of their careers with both titles being their second feature films.

Apart from these external similarities, there are many resemblances on the narrative level of the two films. Both movies are based on the historic facts of the Hungarian and Romanian revolutions. *Children of Glory* is built around the main stages of the revolutionary events in Hungary, while *The Paper Will Be Blue* focuses on the night of December 22 and tells the story of the accidental massacre of a militia unit.

Both films basically tell the story of two young men, friends, who drift into the turmoil of the revolution. In *Children of Glory* Karcsi and Tibi are members of the Hungarian water polo team. They spend their evenings flirting with Viki, a leader of the student movement and, because of her, flirting also with the idea of joining the revolution, while during the day they train for the Melbourne Olympics. Costi and Dragoş in *The Paper Will Be Blue* are soldiers in the Romanian Militia. They and their unit are ordered to patrol the streets of Bucharest with their ABI[9] on the night of the Romanian revolution.

[Fig.3.] Flirting with revolution and Viki. *Children of Glory*

In both movies, the friends face life changing decisions: shall they join the revolution and abandon their athletic training or military patrolling, or shall they close their eyes to the fight for national freedom evolving around them and stick to their appointed tasks? More precisely,

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[8] Generation X or Generation MTV is the demographic cohort following the baby boomers, with birth years ranging approximately from 1961 to 1980. In communist Romania Generation X appeared with some delay, but it is still true that the Music Television network had a significant impact on their audio-visual maturation.

[9] Romanian abbreviation for armoured squad car

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what is one's duty in a time of revolution? The two protagonists, Karcsi and Tibi in *Children of Glory,* respectively Costi and Dragoş in *The Paper Will Be Blue,* choose opposite paths and try to convince their friend about the rightness or justness of their own decision and the wrongness or dangers of the other.

In both movies, there is an important third person. In *Children of Glory* this is Viki, the student girl with a symbolic name (Viki, short for Viktória=Victory). She challenges Karcsi, testing his courage, drawing him into the revolutionary events, so that for Karcsi, flirting with revolution and flirting with Viki are mirroring each other.

In the case of *The Paper Will Be Blue*, Lieutenant Neagu is the character who has the biggest influence on the two soldiers, but in the opposite direction. He tries to keep them in their platoon, attempts to keep them safe, away from the turmoil at the TV station and other sites of violence in the city.

Birth of two screenplays

While we can find several similarities on the level of story elements, we should examine the origins of each movie. In the case of *Children of Glory*, producer Andrew Vajna was the catalyst person, who ignited the creative process. The successful Hollywood producer, who left Hungary as a child with his parents after the revolution in the winter of 1956, first co-produced a documentary called *Freedom's Fury*, about the events on which *The Children of Glory* is based. He then hired another Hollywood professional of Hungarian origin, screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, to sketch the treatment for a drama about the revolution, and Eszterhas added the love story line to the historical drama. Then, three other screenwriters from Hungary, Éva Gárdos, Géza Bereményi and Réka Divinyi, were commissioned to produce the final screenplay. From a statement in the official press release by Réka Divinyi, it is obvious that Vajna had a very close control over the screenwriting process: "I have never met a producer who knew so strongly what he wanted. Andy and Kriszta (the director) made me rewrite the dialogues until they were both satisfied. I have never rewritten anything as many times as this (2006)."

Vajna's very personal involvement becomes even clearer when we read the dedication at the beginning of the film, which is repeated before the end credits: "This film is dedicated to the loving memory of Clara and George Vajna, who made all this possible."

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Vajna made a personal tribute film to the revolution and to his own parents, in Hungary, but in a Hollywood style. He found someone to write the treatment for him, and the screenwriters, who, under his close supervision, shaped the final screenplay. And only then did he bring in the director, Kriszta Goda. Goda was a Hungarian director, but was also an alumna of NFTS London and the film department of UCLA, Los Angeles, known at that time for her only feature-length light romantic comedy, *Just Sex and Nothing Else* (*Csak szex és más semmi*, 2005), and some TV productions.

Though *The Paper Will Be Blue* has three screenwriters as well, the process of writing was more of a collaborative effort led by the film director, Radu Muntean, with the participation of novelist and screenwriter Răzvan Rădulescu and screenwriter Alexandru Baciu. Besides the historical facts, Muntean also drew on his personal memories from his time as a soldier in Bacau during the Romanian revolution. As he reminisced for the newspaper *Romania Libera*, he had been permanently on duty and alert for more than a week, waiting for the so-called terrorists to pounce. (Blaga 2006)

Examining the creative processes, we can already identify two distinct models: one that is representative of Hollywood filmmaking, where the producer is the starting point and the delegator of tasks, and another, a more cooperative creative method, with the director in the center, usual for art cinema screenwriting, in cases where the director is not the sole creator of the script.

Ways of re-configuring history

1. History and handrails. Strict causality versus verism

Bordwell mentions strict causality as one of the hallmarks of Hollywoodian narrative structures, while "art cinema motivates its narratives by two principles: realism and authorial expressivity." (Bordwell, 1979, 718). Pop, when referring to the grammar of the New Romanian Cinema explains that one of the key characteristics of these productions is "the preference for verism, the closeness of cinema to realism, that is, the importing of documentary style filming." (Pop 2010, 32) How are these characteristics reflected in the two movies under discussion?

Children of Glory could be easily used as a teaching aid in any history class about the Hungarian revolution, since it is constructed from scenes in strict chronological order, thoroughly

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respecting the cause-effect logic. The opening polo match scene, in which the Hungarians are defeated due to the violent Soviet team and a biased judge in Moscow, not only adumbrates the hopeless but heroic fight of a small nation against oppression, but also lays down the causes of the general dissatisfaction of the Hungarian people which lead to the upcoming revolt. This is further strengthened by the scene in which Karcsi is abducted and interrogated by "Feri bácsi", the ÁVO[10] agent on his return to Hungary. The narration first presents all the causes which led to the revolutionary explosion, then all the significant stages of the revolution, from the spontaneous student rallies in Budapest to the siege of the Radio Center, from urban guerilla warfare and several changes of government to the departure of Soviet tanks from Hungary, and finally their return under cover of night to crush the revolution. During the whole film, through radio news, loudspeakers, posters or characters occasionally announcing events as they unfold, the audience is constantly and continuously informed; they are offered handrails in order to follow the timeline of the revolution.

By contrast, *The Paper Will Be Blue* is pervaded by the huge confusion so specific to the chaos of the days of the Romanian revolution. Who is shooting whom and why? Who is the enemy? What orders are to be followed? And what is the current password? A wrong answer to that final question costs the life of the protagonists. While the Hungarian movie has a conventional linear narrative, the Romanian film has a circular one, beginning at the end and then telling the story in a linear fashion until reaching the chronological closing scene, which has already been seen at the beginning. Using this single, but very significant flash-forward in the opening scene, is a risky directorial decision, as Daniel Goace mentions in his review (Goace 2006), because if one misses the first scene, he will not see the tragic ending of the fabula. But it is also a bold and wise decision, through which the film resembles a Greek tragedy. The viewer knows from the first moment that every member of the patrol will die. And he will wonder what they could have done differently in order to avoid the tragedy. As in any classical tragedy, they could not have done anything differently. The alternate journeys of the rebel Costi and the compliant Dragoș converge to the same fateful end, independently of their decisions along the way. And no matter how hard Lieutenant Neagu tries to avoid the hotspots of the revolution in Bucharest in order to protect members of his squad, whom he repeatedly calls "my children," we know from the opening scene that his effort is utterly futile.

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[10] Acronym for *Államvédelmi Hatóság*, the Hungarian Secret Police between 1945 and the end of 1956

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[Fig.4.] No way to avoid the tragedy. The opening scene of *The Paper Will Be Blue*

According to Bordwell, "the flash-forward is unthinkable in the classical narrative cinema, which seeks to retard the ending" (Bordwell, 1985, 210). By exposing the finale in the first scene – in sharp contrast with *Children of Glory* – the creators of the Romanian film relieve the spectator from any pressure to guess the end of the fabula, and encourage a more meditative approach and immersion in the dramatic and ironic documentarism of the movie.

2. Goal-oriented versus disoriented characters

While classical narration uses psychologically defined, goal-oriented characters, art cinema narration uses "realistic" – that is psychologically complex – characters (Bordwell, 1979, 153). Starting with the antagonists, in *Children of Glory* they are either ruthless villains like the secret police agent "Feri bácsi," or faceless mercenaries (no matter whether Soviet soldiers or Hungarian ÁVO agents) whose only goal is to trample the revolutionaries.

Viki's motivation is the clearest from the first moment and it does not change during the movie. Her parents were killed by ÁVO agents, so she fights against them, and all her decisions are subordinated to this freedom fight.

Tibi, Karcsi's closest friend, plays the character of the opportunist type who breaks under pressure. He cooperates with the ÁVO and reports on Karcsi, but he sincerely hopes that this way he can help him and pull him back on the "right track". His only motivation throughout is survival, something he even admits explicitly in the form of a personal philosophy, when trying to convince Karcsi to return to the team. However, Karcsi hesitates between joining the

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revolution for the sake of Viki, risking his place in the water polo team heading to the Melbourne Olympics and possibly bringing trouble upon his family in the form of repercussions, and following his dream as a professional polo player. The decisive point comes when he witnesses the murder of his friend from the university in the shooting at the headquarters of the Hungarian Radio. Later he joins the students and fights alongside Viki, but no longer merely because of Viki. Now he is fighting for the cause of the revolution, until "the Ruskis," aka the Soviet army, leave his country – at least it seems so. He is the typical developing hero, so familiar from the classical Hollywood narrative, who gradually becomes conscious of his calling. In a way *Children of Glory* is also a kind of coming of age movie, where adulthood equals true patriotism versus adolescent egocentrism.

While in the Hungarian movie all the characters are psychologically driven and goal oriented, this is not the case in *The Paper Will Be Blue*. The characters of Muntean's movie are all carried along by events, and we are shown their different reactions, not actions. We could call them all reactionist, not in the political but in the narrative sense of the word. Though Costi takes the initiative to go and fight at the Television Building, this is more an instant reaction to the emergence of a group of revolutionaries than a goal-oriented decision. Dragoş follows the orders of Lieutenant Neagu, flirts during a routine check with a pretty woman whom he will never see again, becomes angry when Costi leaves, and smokes when allowed. Muntean's movie exemplifies the Bordwellian idea of the art cinema as being less concerned with action then reaction, with characters who frequently act for inconsistent reasons. (Bordwell, 1979, 718)

Screenwriting lecturer Robert McKee argues that true character is always revealed under pressure. "How the person chooses to act under pressure is who he is – the greater the pressure the truer and deeper the choice to character." (McKee 1997, 375). This is true for both movies, where the biggest pressure comes from the huge social force at work, namely the revolution itself. In the Hungarian movie this force helps in crystallizing the morality of its romantic characters, making it possible for them to make life and death choices, like saving their own life (Tibi), winning a match for their country (Karcsi), or even martyrdom (Viki). In the Romanian film, this social force is rather infringing on them, and reduces their choices to almost zero. They can choose on which street they want to drive their ABI, but they do not have the real chance to make life-changing decisions.

3. Narrative construction of time and space

The timespan of *Children of Glory* encompasses months of historical events, from which the relevant episodes for the story are extracted. *The Paper Will Be Blue* does not expand beyond the events of one night, maybe from midnight till dawn, so the film's syuzhet time does not exceed five or six hours. "Most of the films that belong to the new generation of directors take place during one day and one night," writes Pop, and this is perfectly true for this movie. This technique makes possible a much higher degree of unity in time and space, which is a constant interest for the Romanian New Wave directors (Pop 2010, 36). This is valid also for the space construction of the film. Muntean's film has three main locations: the interior of the ABI vehicle, the Television Building and Costi's parents' house. The Hungarian movie uses dozens of locations, not just in Budapest but also in rural Hungary, as well as scenes in Moscow, Prague and Melbourne. *Children of Glory*'s expansive and comprehensive time and space management is in sharp contrast with *The Paper Will Be Blue*'s reductive economy.

While in the case of the former movie the goal of narration is to represent as clearly as possible the cause-effect chain without altering too much the historical facts, the latter movie stresses a documentary factuality. We hear long conversations about the quality of Kent cigarettes produced in Serbia versus those made in Germany, or about popular disco hits. We witness a dinner in Costi's parents' house with Lieutenant Neagu and Dragos, while waiting for the return of Costi, and we overhear conversations between officers and soldiers and their superiors or their loved ones to reassure them. But besides the role of verisimilitude so specific to art cinema, these "temps morts," which first appear to be only continuous chit-chat, have another important role in the film; namely, to sketch a society in a complete state of confusion. In this full-fledged chaos Costi's internist MD father is believed to work for the Ministry of the Interior, a Roma revolutionary is mistaken for an Arab terrorist, and conspiracy theories about the Ceaușescus fleeing in a Dacia having his birth date as registration number are easily believed. In this context the sentence spoken by a weird middle-aged revolutionary man, who curiously gives orders to soldiers who are shooting at other soldiers without knowing − "we give you a *fair* trial, then we execute you!" − seems entirely normal.

4. Cinematic representation: filming, editing and use of music

The way in which the creators of each film use cinematography, editing and sound design also betrays the kind of cinema tradition they aim to identify with.

Children of Glory uses a wide array of shots from close ups to extra-long shots enhanced with CGI imagery when showing the siege of Budapest, with several camera angles and movements (dolly and pedestal with predilection) mixed with hand held camera images when showing close combat scenes. The movie is dense with graphic images of explosions (sometimes in slow-motion), human bodies being pierced by bullets, and spattering blood, all to create a strong emotional impact on the spectator.

The pace of editing is varied from medium in love scenes, to very fast in the action scenes. Crosscutting and montage sequences are also used in the manner of classical narrative cinema.

The Paper Will Be Blue uses only a relatively static hand held camera with medium, medium long and a few long shots, medium long shots being the most prevalent. Several minute long single shot scenes strengthen the verism of the movie and the continuity of time and space. There is a complete lack of graphic violence. Gun fire is unpredictable and very loud, while killing is fast, accidental and does not spare the protagonists as it does in *Children of Glory*, where they survive several intense gunfight situations with no or little injury.

The Hungarian movie uses several non-diegetic mood music elements, ranging from motifs of the Hungarian anthem and other popular marches played on string and brass to Soviet-Russian army songs. The Romanian film uses only diegetic music (with the exception of the closing credits) coming from a jammed Bulgarian radio station, and recognised by the soldiers as the popular Brazilian hit *Lambada* from the band Kaoma and released in the year of the Romanian revolution.

Both films use some documentary footage from their respective revolutions. In *Children of Glory* the American Movietone newsreel called *Hungary's Agony* is non-diegetically inserted in the film's narration, with cross-dissolve from and then back to the fight scenes. However, in *The Paper Will Be Blue* the only scene from the first broadcast of the Free Romanian Television is seen on a real TV set in an army crisis cell room located in the besieged National Television Building; the sign on the door ironically reads "Scenography", a strong reference to the idea that several events of the Romanian revolution were staged by political actors behind the scene.

5. Genres and sentiments

Children of Glory is situated clearly within the boundaries of two well defined classical film genres, namely the *action movie,* mostly rejected by the European rooted art cinema (Pop 2010) and the *melodrama.*

The Paper Will Be Blue can be called mainly a realist and minimalist *drama*, similar to the majority of the films belonging the New Romanian Cinema. Though Gorzo calles it "an intelligent and ultra-controlled action movie" (Gorzo, 2006, translation by me, BZ), the accent here falls on the adjectives emphasizing the differences from the mainstream films of the action genre.

The Hungarian film tries to stir strong national sentiments, not only by presenting its protagonists as romantic heroes of a lost, but noble cause, who can only retaliate for their crushed revolution in the field of sport, but also by using some strong visual symbols, like the falling and breaking of the red star (the symbol of communism) on the ground floor of the university at the beginning of the movie, or the stereotypical smashing of the Hungarian flag by a Soviet tank toward the end of the film.

The Romanian film is far from stirring any national sentiment. Costi, who in a certain moment is overcome by a revolutionary fervor, is presented in an ironical manner and later has to pay heavily for his pathetic sentiment. *The Paper Will Be Blue* is more like a verist ballade or a lament for a revolution, where the cause might be noble, but has somehow become lost under the mountains of miscommunication, misunderstanding and mistrust, a total confusion which leads to a fateful end.

Gorzo actually compares the film to the very first film of the Romanian New Wave, *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu (2005)*, by Cristi Puiu: "In both films there is a pair of eyes which can see with cold lucidity through the flames of the moment, and a couple of hypersensitive ears for the catastrophic comedy of verbal emissions and interactions, which humanity self-flatteringly calls 'expression' or 'communication'." (Gorzo, 2006 translation by me, BZ)

Conclusion

Despite the many similarities specified at the beginning, if we thoroughly analyze the characters and the narrative and cinematic elements, we can see two distinct movies, belonging to very different cinema traditions. *The Paper Will Be Blue* is perfectly consistent with the art cinema tradition "where the Romanian New Wave perceive themselves as belonging" (Pop 2010, 29).

Children of Glory definitely speaks the language of the classical Hollywood narration, at least partly due to the strong influence of its Hollywood-educated producer, and does not blend into the landscape of Young Hungarian Cinema, which operates mainly within the boundaries of art cinema as defined by Bordwell, instead deliberately follows the rules and many times even the clichés of Hollywood.

But the difference between the two distinct strategies of representation cannot be explained entirely with personal reasons and the filmmaking traditions with which the creators identify themselves. The fact that the majority of the Hungarian films about the revolution could be produced only decades after the event took place, while in Romania they appear closely following the events, also suggests that the filmmakers in the two countries are at different stages of processing the trauma. It might need a few more years, maybe decades, until films with those more lucid eyes and hypersensitive ears will reflect on the 1956 uprising in Hungary.

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Tales of Necessities and Narrowness
Closed Spaces and Crisis Heterotopias in *Everybody in our family* (Radu Jude, 2012)

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Abstract: Radu Jude's complex and versatile filmography seems to follow genre characteristics with a deep inclination towards topics like social and identity crisis, personal relationships questioned, dissonant conversations. The director's approach and way of presenting the many nuances of post-communist urban existence slightly differs from the realism and immediacy that characterise the New Romanian Cinema. I propose to analyze his film, *Everybody in our family* (2012) looking at the way he combines melodrama elements with auteur style adapted to the very specific geographical and social aspects of a post-communist Eastern European setting. I will also argue how the chosen cinematographic style accentuates the subject and contributes visually to transform the movie itself in a crisis heterotopy, how closed spaces become figurative of failed connections and domestic crisis. I will also reflect on the deep understanding and empathy of the director, who instead of judging, ridiculing or over-dramatizing his subject and characters, shows a deep connection to the issue and chooses to be a part of this reality, to be present in these closed spaces and dead-end situations, no matter how hopeless and grotesque they become.

Keywords: New Romanian film, melodrama, heterotopia, domestic crisis, realism

Introduction: The "intense realism" of the new Romanian film

With the downfall of the communist regime, something got definitely disconnected in Eastern Europe, something beyond politics, in the private life of individuals too. As if the loosening from the restrictions of the regime did not bring the many polarities closer, but only accentuated the contrast between East and West, old and new, modern and conservative, as well as the differences between generations and cultures.

By the time Radu Jude's 2012 film was finished, the filmmakers of the Romanian New Weave had become a household notion in international cinematography, harshly shaping the landscape of narrative and representation with their unique themes and cruelly realist style. The fall of the regime, but also the impact it had on different aspects of life, different levels of society become the main point of interest for this young generation of authors, who somehow try to define their ways in the in-betweenness of the historical and cultural changes. Disconnected largely from the generations before, who belonged to the socialist regime, even if it wasn't a political connection or involvement, somehow they became fatherless, orphaned by the changing

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political climate and the invasion of the West, in every aspect. What is peculiar about these filmmakers of the *Romanian New Wave* is that they got close to their stories, talking about the people behind the big machinery of a system, I would say with tremendous humanism and empathy, an understanding for the humans that lived/survived the many shades of a half-century long oppression. They all tell the tales of the humans who did not have a voice or a face for decades, being only the spectators and passive subjects of their life dictated by authority. As Bergan points out, "although several of the new Romanian films can be taken as metaphors of Romanian society, they are, at the same time, almost documentary-like observations of it - disturbing works of intense realism, with an underlining vein of black humor" (Bergan 2008). Choosing to relate about unseen and unheard stories of the socialist era, under the radar activities that people were forced to do to eschew the dehumanizing decisions that the Party made in their lives, – in a somber and heart-wrenching tone in *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 days* (*4 luni, 3 săptămâni şi 2 zile,* Cristian Mungiu, 2006,) or in a humorous, parodistic tale-telling tone, that highlighted somehow the flaws and ridiculed the system, like in *Tales from the Golden Age* (*Povestiri din Epoca de Aur,* Cristian Mungiu, 2009)*, 12:08 East of Bucharest (A fost sau n-a fost,* Corneliu Porumboiu, 2006)*,* or presenting generational conflicts, over-protecting, or unacceptable parents, like in *Child's Pose* (*Poziţia copilului*, Călin Peter Netzer, 2013) and *The Happiest Girl in the World* (*Cea mai fericită fată din lume,* Radu Jude, 2009) –, characters are generally caught somewhere on borderlines between East-West, capitalism-socialism, dealing with identity crisis, be that gender, age, vocation, belonging, bonding. Their life is full of unanswered questions and displaced, defocused situations. And somehow all conflicts they have to deal with seem to be way above their maturity level, knowledge, means and possibilities.

Not only did they provide a defined thematic parameter but they encouraged a conscious use of style as meaning. The cinematographic style of these movies is as much remarkable as their stories are unprecedented. Opposed to the classic filmography of the past: sticking to hand held cameras, minimalist décor and color-board, plots that develop in one single day, or one single space, the imagery defined an austere, realist, often minimalist style, a prominently black humor and a quasi-documentary style.

Tales of claustrophobia and fury

Thomas Elsaesser in his essay on family melodramas quotes Douglas Sirk saying that in these films the focus in is on "the inner violence, the energy of the characters which is all inside them and can't break through" (Elsaesser 1987, 43). Periods of intense social and ideological crisis tend to bring out themes of "suffering and victimization", where "the moral/moralistic pattern which furnishes the primary content … is overlaid not only with a proliferation of 'realistic' homely detail, but also 'parodied'" (Elsaesser 45). In a way they manage to present all the characters convincingly as victims. Melodrama is highly defined by its structure, visuality and sound, much more than narrative and action. Sound, as Elsaesser states "acts first of all to give the illusion of depth to the moving image, and by helping to create the third dimension of the spectacle, dialogue becomes a scenic element, along with more directly visual means of the mise en scene." (Elsaesser 48) The restricted scope for external action is determined by the subject, and is necessary because in melodramas the important changes happen on the inside.

Radu Jude is a director who remained internationally unknown, somehow flying under the radar for years, maybe because of his original and quite out of ordinary approach to subjects and style. I see him having a different view of content than his fellow film makers of the new Romanian cinema: with a deeper understanding and attention to relationships, his characters, their motivations, and a deep empathy towards them. His focus is not so much on the particular aspects of life under communism and the specific characters this era had produced, but on the generation and years after its fall. Dealing with everyday life and the challenges dysfunctional relationships bring, his characters are presented with great humanism and a lot less irony than many movies have got us used to. Also his cinematographic style is a bit further from documentary and closer to a highly conceptual constructed camera use, where the way of telling the story is a reflection of the story itself.

Everybody in Our Family tells the story of Marius, a divorced dental technician living on the perimeters of Bucharest, who plans on taking his little girl, Sofia on a three day vacation to the seaside. When Marius arrives at his ex-wife's house, he is told that she is ill. He doesn't believe it and insists that she go with him on the trip and the soon erupting quarrel will slowly but surely reveal the hidden frustrations and critical domestic crisis.

In this accomplished auteur movie Jude implements the fundamental paradigms and characteristics of the classic family melodrama – focus on the inner struggle, great attention on

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setting and detail, a repressed, tense energy that surfaces – in a very different social and geographical climate, that of the Eastern European harsh reality of big city life and estranged, damaged relationships, struggling on the borderline between old and new, East and West, capitalism and socialism, modern and Balkan. This movie highly lacks action, and the plot builds up in a circular, rotating spiral of non-achievements and the fatal intersection of space and time. Compressed in one single day, or rather in one single morning, the pressure of limited time takes its toll on the characters' psychology as much as the spatial limitations of the claustrophobic homes do so.

Just like in all well delivering melodramas, orality becomes the main way problems are solved. Or better said: addressed, since solutions don't really occur as much as the protagonists struggle for them. Regardless of the effort to construct a web of relationships and universe that is familiar, they discover that this world has become "uninhabitable because it is both frighteningly suffocating and intolerably lonely" (Elsaesser 54). Incapable of action, they somehow try constantly to talk their way out of the conflict zone. It is not so much an impossibility for action, nor is it a choice, much rather an incapability. They verbalise the problems and their disagreement, yet fail to take any action that would/could result in a more favorable outcome. They are somehow bound in their sorrow, misfortune, failure, and besides being sad/agitated/angry they just let off steam by verbally fighting. Marius, at the point where he runs out of more or less rational and more or less appropriate arguments, takes the way of action, but in a very wrong and displaced, childish way. A way that is certainly doomed, and will drive him even further from his intention, to what Elsaesser calls in his discussion of classic melodramas an "evidently catastrophic collision of counter-running sentiments" (Elsaesser 60).

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[Fig.1.]. Marius desperately trying to solve the domestic conflicts

In his vast, conceptual work on movies of contemporary Romanian cinema, *Hesitant Histories on the Romanian Screen* (2017)*,* László Strausz sees this as a failure of the protagonist's masculinity. I rather see it as a failure of his adulthood. And not because he is infantile, much rather because of the situation he is forced into. Strausz states that many movies build around "leading male characters who experience an identity crisis manifested in their relationships with other family members," "Under the paternal leadership of the regime, the identity of the male leader of the household is questioned: the parent-state performs and takes over the role of the paterfamilias" – (Strausz 2017, 217) I rather see this as a crisis in their relationship, not neccessarily of their identity and above all not a crisis of his masculinity – whatever that means. His identity remains the same, his possibilities are the ones that diminish.

Of course, his childish and abusive behavior cannot and must not be absolved with this argument, but certainly the circumstances and the people in his complicated relationship web have a great fault in placing him in this rancid, desperate string of events, just as much as he does. It is not an impotence of his masculinity, but just of a certain type of masculinity, the aggressive and dominant paternal way that was a signature for the generations before, and also the way the communist regime exercised its power. And we salute the failure of the paternal, controlling, abusive ways. Marius does not want to assume this role, it is just not the way "modern families" deal with issues. While this movie certainly tries to deal largely with emotional and moral identity, it also registers, and does so with great empathy too, the failure of the protagonist to act in a way that could grant him success and realization in the aspects that matter to him and aspects that validate his entry to a "good life," one that would allow him to

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assume the identity of this new and self-assured growing-up/adulthood. The world and the possibilities are closed, the characters fail to have any kind of influence on the environment, emotionally or socially, this "progressive self-immolation" leads to resignation and, as Elsaesser points out about melodrama characters, "they emerge as lesser human beings for having become wise and acquiescent to the ways of the world." (Elsaesser 55)   Marius,   the protagonist of the film and an orthodontist technician, wakes up in a suffocating, crowded studio apartment in the peripheries of Bucharest. Although it's only early morning, it seems impossible to breathe, the air is already steaming hot and noisy, the agitation of the big city flows in through the open windows like the heat weave. As he twirls around the tiny space, trying to pack and get on the road, we only feel uncomfortable by his closeness and fast movement, but as the plot slowly develops we realise that it is not only his living space that is unbearably tight and frustrating, but his life itself is a well-managed crisis, that is restrained from exploding with great effort.

In the first round, the situation is just unpleasant: summer, panel, heat, and hesitations from early morning. But for now there is no tragedy, no life-death matter. However, the private drama, the family crisis is becoming acute to the extent that it exasperates the walls of the panels and the limits of human tolerance. The spaces in which he moves, in the same way as his life situations, are hopeless, overwhelming, and close in like jail bars on all outbursts of intent to escape. No rooms with a view are available in this film.

The mess is only partially intimate, most of it is chaos. There is no order and transparency, the characters move around the objects of their space as well as the remains of their past. Like narratives of pressure condensed in the objects of everyday life, all are meant to build up tension and deliver one more revealing aspect of the character's well contoured profile. Every step must avoid something; it must be a strategic maneuver, a movement that is not driven by intent and élan, but by necessity and tactics. It sets of, gets lost, reroutes. Two steps ahead, one step back. One step ahead, one on spot.

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[Fig.2.]. Chaos and mess, as the visual elements for building up domestic crisis

Yet, in this first scene the situation seems under control: the alarm clock works, the luggage will be ready, all packed for the trip. Although we are choppy and stalled in a claustrophobic studio, the long settings and the motionlessness of the fixed camera counterbalance the closeness of the space and Marius's agitation in it. There is no crisis yet, there is still hope and a journey follows. Check: clothes, books, child seat for bicycles, a giant toy octopus with all eight arms, backpack, some plaster dental prints. Marius is not necessarily an anti-hero in the overture, although he is certainly vulnerable in the Bucharest traffic, being on a bike, accompanied by a giant, stuffed octopus. But he is still in the saddle. The film is moving forward slowly, with the calm and cool of a resonator who sees everything, is present everywhere but never interferes. The clashes and ruptures of the laid out fabric of the story are still well tucked under the sunny scenery. Like a bon-vivant character in a *nouvelle vague* film set in Paris, Marius rides his bike oblivious to the chaos that the events turn into. None of the hysteria bubbles to the surface just yet, we are below boiling point.

On the inside, looking out

As we move forward from place to place, the space is getting narrower, tense, warmer and more and more conflict follows, in a domino effect way. The mobility of the protagonist – which has a key meaning, as it allows him distancing in both space and time from the role and the situation he is forced into – becomes increasingly restricted, senseless and bound nowhere. The film uses an interesting contrast game between the use of internal and external spaces, in order to build up the structure of tension. The inner spaces are small, seemingly closed regardless of the open,

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ventilated windows, choked with frustration: full of objects of life that fill every shelf, tossed around every corner, taking up every space. The outside, the public space is one of a crowded, agitated streets of a big city, but very clearly not a western one, but a cramped up and noisy Balkan atmosphere.

Although at a cost of a few rounds of near-stroke stand-offs, Marius manages to leave his parents' flat and even gets a tool to make it easier to get the job done: he borrows his father's car and escapes followed by the avalanche of curses and grievances, but ultimately gets rid of the situation, the flood of reproach of his father and the apartment blocks hovering around him. Although the crisis situation between generations is a given, as in many films of the New Romanian Cinema, here it is not of central importance. Yes, the relationship and communication towards the elderly generation, accustomed to the communist regime and socialist ways, is permanently damaged, but here it is merely of secondary importance, it is just a step in the direction of the big showdown. Stela Popescu and Alexandru Arșinel, who play the protagonist's parents and are well known actors and TV stars in the country, give a stellar performance, making these pajama and slipper clad, make-up free characters memorable and very revealing. Although Marius is almost thrown down the stairs by the mahala[11]-style family argument, he goes on undisturbed, because this team is still on his side, cheering on him.

But as soon as the story approaches to his ex-wife's home, things seems to take an irremediable turn towards chaos, which eradicates intent with the technique of tiny steps and small cuts. A vivisection that clears up all possible escape routes and invalidates all illusions of Marius regarding himself and that he was trying so hard to keep up: the peaceful human, decent man, the good father, the good citizen that he was so attached to.

In this movie, the so quintessential motifs of Eastern European movies, movement and crisis situations are presented and built up with the sensitivity of a master-psychologist: there is no spectacular action or world-changing game, but the crisis is unstoppably escalating so inevitably that Éris herself could not have done it better. As Elsaesser states,

> the discrepancy of seeming and being, of intention and result, registers as a perplexing frustration, and an ever-increasing gap opens between the emotions and the reality they seek to reach. What strikes one as the true pathos is the very mediocrity of the human beings involved, putting such high demands upon themselves trying to live up to an

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[11] Mahala is a Balkan word for neighborhood or quarter on the peripheries of urban settlements.

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exalted vision of man, but instead living out the impossible contradictions that have turned the American dream into its proverbial nightmare. It makes the best American melodramas of the 50s not only critical social documents but genuine tragedies, despite, or rather because of the 'happy ending': they record some of the agonies that have accompanied the demise of the 'affirmative culture'. (Elsaesser 67-68)

And the protagonist, despite all his efforts to avoid sinking, gets snatched by the whirling of the vortex and is nullified in his freedom and choices. Locked up, literally, in a prison with no walls, from where he can only shout and curse his way out, his angry rant being the only tools of making himself visible, existent.

Using frames as narrative defocalisation

It seems as if the downfall of walls, confined spaces and physical delimitations of the communist regime was in vain, the catharsis failed against all efforts to make it happen. Confinement can be anywhere: constraint and strict timetables, limitations of schedule, small spaces, and bad relationships will give the human soul unnoticed damaging and hopeless subversion that is more harmful, as it is an invisible, silent erosion, than the political system. As Elsaesser argues, "Melodrama is iconographically fixed by the claustrophobic atmosphere of the bourgeois home and/or the small town setting, its emotional pattern is that of panic and latent hysteria, reinforced stylistically by a complex handling of space in interiors … to the point where the world seems totally predetermined and pervaded by 'meaning' and interpretable signs.'' (Elsaesser 62)

Access to spaces already is a problem, and from this point on, doors will have an important role as gateways of possibilities. There are plenty of doors in this house, like in a nightmare from a Hitchcock movie, like the castle of Bluebeard, and as it happens in this archetypal story, they are all locked and they all hide something. A new space for the crisis, a new shade of conflict, the direction being: in and down. One has to ring, knock, identify oneself, repeated several times. Getting in and out is not a simple step that one always does in everyday life as an unnoticed automation. But once a door is locked it becomes a marked event, a crisis, a polarization between inside and out. But there is trouble here, and the cumbersome, difficult advancement also indicates that here the order is broken at all levels. Calmness and smiles are neither peace nor consensus. They are a fragile glaze, a fable, a compulsive game that breaks down human relationships and the basic values of civic existence: respect, family, love,

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harmony and well-being. As Foucault states, "the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory…or to get in one must have certain permissions and make certain gestures always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable." (Foucault 1986, 26)

Opening each door is a situation to be solved, a task, a challenge and a crisis situation at the final stage. Marius enters his ex-wife's apartment, which, though more spacious than the previous spaces and, in principle, in the past, was his own and well-known terrain, now becomes a crisis heterotopy. There is no entry for our hero, not for financial reasons, but because the contract guaranteeing entry was dissolved: he is divorced, and kicked out from his marriage, his home, his life, his fatherhood, the whole order and is declared persona non grata, against his will.

The home he once belonged to becomes a morphed space of vast failure specter: instead of bringing the place where safety, familiarity, reassurance and happiness dwell, it becomes the exact opposite of all these conditions of a decent life. Marius, once he lost access to call this place a home, loses all the emotional connections to it too, and we can watch the marital home being turned into nut-house, the locale of crisis of the family. A crisis heterotopy is a delimited space that exists in the real/non-critic life, but is enclosed not only in space but also time and it is meant to house individuals who are in a situation of crisis. Modern day heterotopias are also conditioned spaces, with limited access, and one must have entry granted by some form of token. It is very important that they are never owned by their inhabitants, their stay almost always being closely connected to time and time limitations. Prisons, hospitals, police offices, asylums are evident examples to these "other spaces" that are not able to produce good experiences or memories worth keeping, they manifest some form of restraint, are closed and therefore tense with pressure. Exactly what his former home has become to our protagonist. Marius does not want to be here either: he just wants to take his daughter with him, for two days of vacation by the sea. But all his efforts to be well groomed and accepted, to be granted entry are in vain: although he comes with a smile, a white shirt and gifts, as the etiquette demands him to do, acting exemplarily, no is the answer to all his questions and movements. There are not even this many no-s in the whole world and in line with the outing of all his plans he becomes more and more lost and his reactions are those of necessity and escape of a cornered animal.

The house itself is an uncanny labyrinth system full of traps. And the life situation as well. Marius does not want anything except to bring out the most from the humiliating, even worse situation than Sunday's fatherhood: to not be forgotten, thrown out of his child's life and love. But life follows, like an attentive and diligent saboteur, and overwrites his intentions. On this obstacle course he has to finish, the problems to overcome and be solved are growing, always with a circle narrower, one degree warmer, with a shade more hopeless. Marius is greeted with the news that his ex-wife is not at home, his daughter, Sophie is ill, she cannot go to him, she sleeps, is not visible, his ex-wife does not answer the phone, his ex-mother-in-law's kindness is useless, she is rather a kind of moving toy than an adult (portrayed by Tamara Buciuceanu-Botez's wonderful acting).

The many doors in the house and in the film constantly open and close, but mostly close. For a moment Marius seems to be able to get out when he knocks out his ex-wife's current partner with the door, but his small daughter, scared of the circus, runs back inside. And with Otilia, his ex-wife coming home, the intense emotions and anger held civilised so far with great effort, wash over the space and storyline as an inevitable tsunami wave. The characters engage in a ludicrous word fight, twitch and rotating hysteria, which puts to shame a New Year's Eve cabaret in ecstatic and the very uncomfortable couple of Liz Taylor-Richard Burton from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966) in hurting each other in an elaborate way.

In line with the main character of the melodrama, that somehow manipulates tension and displacement to emphasise pathos and irony, the movie intentionally leaves the grotesque and drama next to each other. With the constant banging and ringing of the police, Marius cannot win a battle: to take the child, to exercise his rights or to go away with intact self-esteem. In fact, he can't leave in any way. He ties up Aurel (Gabriel Spahiu) and Otilia (Mihaela Sîrbu) not because they pose a threat, but to create a somewhat identical vulnerability, to level up the uncomfortable, speechless state in which he was pushed and bound in.

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[Fig.3.]. Lack of consensus and forms of restraint as effects of alienation

But like any attempt to act tough, this one also turns out somehow absurdly funny, as there is no way out, they are upstairs, the police is in the doorway, the report has been made, and although the two opponents are immobilised, he does not win this battle.

Though the film remains in the frames and styles of realistic depiction, it still has important added content, and apparently conceptualises and formalises certain objects, figures, and replicas.

The attention given to all the details and elements of décor, costumes, location arrangement and placing of the objects seems to pay well off, because they all prove to help build the structure of this intense family melodrama as well as compress tension and character depiction amazingly well. The setting is built with millions of objects, pictures, kitsch, and also costumes are chosen in a way that would allow the actors them to create memorable characters even in very small roles. As Elsaesser states,

> the banality of the objects combined with the repressed anxieties and emotions force a contrast that makes the scene almost epitomise the relation of decor to character in melodrama: the more the setting fills with objects to which the plot gives symbolic significance, the more the characters are enclosed in seemingly ineluctable situations. Pressure is generated by things crowding in on them and life becomes increasingly complicated because cluttered with obstacles and objects that invade their personalities, take them over, stand for them, become more real than the human relations or emotions they were intended to symbolize. (Elsaesser 62)

As in the 17th century Dutch painters' pictures, interlocking room interiors and intimate details are opening in front of us, and we become part of the plot, as keyhole peepers and

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eavesdroppers. The many openings lead the viewer's gaze through a series of thresholds and spaces and also "stage a plunge through…an entrance to a deep interior." (Pethő 2016, 45) The film often emphasises the act of looking in and out, Marius himself is constantly looking out on the windows, longing for the outside, panning, spying, searching.

[Fig.4.]. Forms of delimited spaces to emphasise the lack of connection

Windows and doors being the markers of borderline, the things that separate two different spaces, inside and outside, private and public, the people placed next to them are themselves in some way and aspect of their identity or life in a "liminal" situation" (Pethő 46). Still, the many small details and the interconnected spaces do not shape a space and sense of intimacy and family nest, but one of chaos and dizziness, because there is the lack of cohesive power, the love that makes the house a home. The rooms are all fragmented, space is divided by all kinds of frames, the image is not whole, there are missing pieces, like in a jigsaw puzzle. The play with "framing and de-framing, upon the visible and the invisible" allows to peep through windows, but the inner walls are "impenetrable to the gaze" (Pethő 50) and the objects of everyday life function as limitations, "occluding the view."

The separation of spaces, of what is in the frame and off-frame is emphasised with the characters' interaction with the inhabitants of the space not visible on frame/to the viewer. They interact, talk trough doors, interphones, phones, walls, doors, they constantly relate to a presence that is not physically present but constitutes a source of conflict. It is a good way to underline the estranged relationships of the protagonist, of domestic alienation. It is never a face to face discussion, people even if they eventually get in the same place, they instantly ignite

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an argument that leaves one of them offended and abandoned. Their familial interactions are constantly interrupted by some external factor: the police, the funeral, the car claxons, the TV, the phone. Connection between people fails to come into being.

Space and subject together determine the position of the camera: the camera and the viewer become a part of the action. We cannot escape the drama, just like Marius, we cannot go outside, it is locked in the crisis and the viewer also. It is not only the signature imagery of the contemporary Romanian film but plays an important part in building up the tension. At the same time, it is a masterpiece of the cinematographer: we follow the running of the actors in this cave system with a handheld camera, and thanks to the continuous movement and the long takes, we as viewers have no options either, no escape, no comfortable distance, we have to stay in the center of the fire with the characters.

The position of the viewer is that of an observer who shares the domestic space with the feuding family members. The medium shots place us in the close proximity of the characters, and the bewildered pans and tilts of the handheld frame establish the viewer's observation of the heated conversations by curiously exploring gestures and reactions, as if inquiring about the outcome of the events. The heat is almost suffocating the viewer and we stumble across spaces trying to figure out which is the right door that could finally lead out from the chaotic circus, not constantly deeper and deeper down on the spiral stairs, to an emotional rock bottom with a basement. The film's important feature is that it creates a point of view that does not get involved, stays outside, but still affects us deeply. It is out of the action, it does not interfere, but follows its characters wherever the story takes them, to the deepest level, in every space and in every debate. And perhaps this is the most empathic behavior that man can apply in a crisis situation: non-flogging, no-judgment, presence that also ensures the warring without words: you are not alone. Radu Jude is the master of this selfless, deeply human and discreet empathy: he is not cheering but neither condemns. He does not offer a solution to his protagonist, but neither does he leave the site of his characters in the chaos of border zones.

The film has no final solution. The ending is just as grotesque, somewhere near the boundaries of comedy and tragedy as the rest of it: Marius locks up everyone in a space and then escapes, that is, he jumps, scared to death, in a hideous inner courtyard filled with debris, without exit, surrounded by firewalls, sky high stone walls defining the escape route. When he finally makes it to the streets, bruised, bloody and tormented, he is bandaged up in a pharmacy, he takes off

his white shirt, the white banner of peace that he took for the sake of formality at the beginning of the day, throws it into the trashcan, replaces his magic-stick "electronical Zigarette" he asks for a "real" cig from the pharmacy security guard who cries out with the proper irony of the film's biblical closing phrase: "Lazarus, get up and walk!", and this irony is exactly the element needed, "to underscore the main action and at the same time 'ease' the melodramatic impact by providing a parallelism" (Elsaesser 45).

Retrieving movement and mobility is, however, an optimistic closure, a bright solution to the problem, which has been dancing on the borderline through the entire movie and puts on a comic finale. Although senseless, although grotesque, disintegrated and out of sight, Marius, just like any person in crisis, does not become ridiculous, but in some ways will be a marker of survival and faith in change. And this is life as compared to frozen immobility.

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Industry Statistics, Market Forces, Filmmaking Trends: An "Institutional Turn" in Hungarian Film Studies?[12]

Cinematic Regime Changes. (Varga Balázs. *Filmrendszerváltások*. Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2016. ISBN 978-963-414-134-1. 209 p.)

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Comprehensive studies of national cinemas have long relied on statistical data to historically contextualise their topic and give a concrete footing to later arguments about overarching historical trajectories, the transformation of the cinematic canon and the analyses of individual films. While there is an agreement among scholars that institutional questions of film culture are essential, these are usually considered as secondary to aesthetic, textual and cultural interpretations, regarded as a dry bone in comparison to the juicy bits films (and the heated debates they inspire) represent. Dedicating a book-length study to the dry bone does not appear to be the path to general acceptance and success. *Filmrendszerváltások* [*Cinematic Regime Changes*] might just prove this assertion false.

Long in the making, Balázs Varga's monograph on the changing institutional context of post-communist Hungarian film culture fills, as already suggested, a considerable gap in scholarship dominated by textual analysis, stylistic explorations, cultural studies approaches and studies dedicated to questions of adaptation. As an organiser of film clubs and film festivals, as a member of juries and curator of film-related organizations, but also as a researcher, editor and educator, Varga's person has long stood as a link between the pragmatics of the industry and the theory-minded academic reception of cinema. His versatile experience both finds expression in and legitimises the book, which by itself has the potential to initiate a kind of "institutional turn" in Hungarian film studies.

The book presents the findings of a decade long research in two parts, with the period 1990 to 2010 in the focus of both. The historical overview is introduced by an informed outline of

European systems of film finance and the effects of globalization in this area, reaching the conclusion that, although Hungarian cinema closely resembles other European national cinemas in its variety, its great deficit is its isolation, its lack of international visibility. The first part is a methodical overview of film finance, its institutional and legal background. The narrative begins with late state-socialist developments when the state monopoly of film culture with a centralised and hierarchically arranged institutional background spearheaded by MAFILM gave over to The Motion Picture Public Foundation of Hungary (in Hungarian Magyar Mozgókép Alapítvány – MMA). This public body managed by a board of trustees oversaw the whole of Hungarian film culture, including the finance, production and distribution of feature films, documentaries, popular-scientific films and animations, while it also distributed funding for film education, research and publishing. In Varga's assertion the two-decade long history of MMA is the key to understanding the pre- and post-millennial challenges of Hungarian cinema. Without the aim to reproduce in fine detail these challenges, as the author does, let me just point out two problem areas.

For one, MMA itself was a result of a consensus about the desperate need for the state's financial involvement in Hungarian film culture. Despite its administrative independence, MMA's financial attachment to consecutive governments foreshadowed long and painful negotiations between the industry and state bureaucrats. The other problem area regarded the distribution of the annual budget of approx. 1 billion HUF which created a generational conflict between established and upcoming film-makers. As Varga contends, "the transformation of the system benefited feature films, more specifically the interests of the state-socialist studio system, its employees and directors" (37). The predominance of the system of slate funding until the mid-1990s made it very difficult to secure finance for individual projects, more so since neither public nor commercial television participated actively in co-financing film projects.

The 2000s brought important changes for an underfunded film industry eager, on the one hand, to protect its autonomy from political influences and, on the other hand, to maintain a balance of power between the older and the younger film-makers. The passing of the cinematographic act in late-2003 was welcomed by the industry as it promised the long-awaited consolidation of film finance. Varga emphasises the comprehensiveness of the law which reinstated the central position of MMA in film culture, increased the amount of direct funding, introduced indirect

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ones in the form of tax reliefs and investment incentives, promised infrastructural modernisation, established the Hungarian National Film Archive as an archival and research centre and subjected important production facilities under the supervision of MMA. At the same time, he notes that the reform measures introduced by the law already carried the seeds of crisis which later brought the whole system to its knees. Although the period between 2004 and 2011 provided an annual budget of 5 to 7 billion HUF for the industry, "there were huge differences between promised, planned and transferred state support" (49) which resulted in the MMK supporting more films than their actual budget would allow. The practice of support through the expression of intent became standard, according to which production companies were required to pre-finance film projects through expensive bank loans, and would often receive the awarded funding only in the following financial year. MMK's worsening liquidity problems and mounting interest rates meant that by 2011 the liability of the public fund was higher than its annual budget. With the sustainability of the system seriously undermined, the newly elected Government of National Cooperation (the Second Orbán Government) terminated MMK on grounds of irresponsible management. Whether this decision was made exclusively on economic grounds or had political motives is still passionately debated. Varga's position is that of neutral objectivity, although he does clarify that the management of MMK was falsely accused of fraud and it was the shortage of liquidity that led the public fund to adopt risky practices. As a more general conclusion Varga contends that "the 20 year long existence of MMA/MMK was founded on an enormous paradox: according to its statement of mission, it was called into being as an apolitical, professional and self-governing organization, its downfall was however the result of its inability to stay independent of politics" (56).

The new right-wing government initiated the Hungarian National Film Fund (Magyar Nemzeti Filmalap) as the central support institution of feature cinema, while documentaries, short features and animated films were supported through the Hungarian Media Patronage program. Adopting the British model, state support was generated through lottery ticket revenues which promised constant and reliable funding for 8-10 feature films and a few feature documentaries and animated features every year. Whereas Varga identified the inability to reach consensus as the main deficit of the previous system, he does not remain blind to the controversies of the present one, namely "the breakdown of film production for two years, the dismantling of the previous professional unity, the radical decline in the negotiating power of the filmmaking

profession and the disempowerment of Hungarian film culture and its representatives" (67). Although one might miss a more detailed exploration of the critical voices targeting the present system, especially the controversial figure of Andrew Vajna and his much debated appointment of Government Commissioner for cinema, there is much truth to Varga's assertion that neither paradigms of film finance are naturally good or bad. Although *Filmrendszerváltások* analyses consecutive attempts to reform the financial support system of the film industry, it never claims that under-founding is the key reason for its problems.

Varga's approach differentiates between the institutional-legal segments of film finance and its creative processes, including production, coproduction and service work provided for runaway productions, distribution and festival participation, but also the emergence of popular cinema and a new generation of film-makers in the early 2000s. The dynamic interaction between elements of these creative activities is historicised and addressed by the second part of the book. One might wonder if the chosen structure is efficient enough as it practically means overviewing the period between 1990 and 2010 twice and poses the risk of self-repetition. Varga successfully avoids the pitfall of overlapping argumentation and the second part reads as an elaboration of the first with a shift in focus from the context of the film industry to that of film culture. Let me give an example. Film finance in the early 1990s – as the first part argues – was dominated by large studios and left little room for individual projects. In the second part we learn that although this situation favoured established auteurs with considerable know-how and social capital, audience turned away from art cinema and demanded fresh voices and popular films, which demand gave rise to new production companies that served as incubators for young talents and low budget filmmaking. As such, Varga identifies the most important trend of the decade as the weakening of the positions of mainstream authors in Hungarian cinema.

The formation of heterogeneous film culture, in which the mainstream auteurs (Márta Mészáros, István Szabó, Károly Makk, Lívia Gyarmathy, Sándor Sára) existed alongside the new auteurs of the post-millennial generation (Ferenc Török, György Pálfi, Szabolcs Hajdu, Kornél Mundruczó), director-turned actors (Róbert Koltai, András Kern), marginalised auteurs (Béla Tarr, András Jeles), radical auteurs (Zsombor Dyga, Benedek Fliegauf, István Szaladják), and non-professional auteurs (András Szőke, Péter Reich), is described as the most important development of the 2000s. The overrepresentation of auteurs is eye-catching in this list but not

surprising given the predominance of artist-directors in the national cinematic canon. This situation is nevertheless changing with the expansion of popular cinema. The polarization of the national film canon along the lines of either inward or outward orientation points to the lack of midcult films with international distribution. Varga identifies this as a deficit and contrasts it with the situation in Czech and – to a smaller extent – Polish cinema, two film industries Hungarian companies have to compete with for well-paying Hollywood runaway productions. While both the know-how of Hungarian professionals and the country's production infrastructure (Korda Studio, Origo Film Group, Stern Studio) have improved considerably in the past decade, the international visibility of Hungarian prestige films is an unresolved problem. The fact that pan-European coproduction has only benefited auteurs (Tarr, Mundruczó, Fliegauf) and the lack of Eastern-European production agreements are mentioned as main reasons for the weak market share of midcult cinema.

The polarization of Hungarian film culture is thoroughly discussed from the point of view of popular cinema dominated, according to the author, by comedies exploiting classic cabaret, post-communist nostalgia and retro. Apart from comedies, the generic spectrum remained narrow throughout the 2000s with historical and heritage films being the only exceptions. With its high production values and associated cultural prestige, historical cinema is able to mobilise domestic audiences who otherwise do not favour Hollywood productions. Quoting different industry figures, Varga convincingly argues that blockbusters (coming from either of the previously mentioned genres) or their lack radically alter the statistical success of Hungarian cinema. In my view, the recognition that the lack of middle-brow films is a great deficit to Hungarian cinema should be given great attention by future researchers of the field.

The contrast between the small output in the segment of popular/genre cinema and the high number of art films aiming at niche audience might be identified as the main problem with Hungarian cinema, namely that it is a state subsidised yet largely invisible elitist film culture. Varga does not suggest so, not only because his methodology is free of judgemental deductions but also because there is not enough evidence to prove that. When discussing the question of visibility (102-110), he openly admits that the lack of empirical data and research into the online spreading of Hungarian films (mainly through illegal file sharing) seriously undermines our understanding of how many people see what films. Audience study is certainly a blind spot of Hungarian film scholarship; illuminating it would certainly allow us to learn about the general

public's reception and perception of national film culture. Varga's objective criteria to study processes of canonisation – domestic popularity, opportunity to make enough films and build an oeuvre, international critical acclaim (144) – join local and global contexts and define success at their cross section. Unfortunately there are hardly any directors active in the period overviewed who qualify for these criteria. Varga mentions Jancsó, Szabó, Tarr of the elder generation and Mundruczó, Fliegauf, Hajdu and Pálfi from the post-millennial generation as prospective candidates even though none of their films are included in the list of the top 50 Hungarian box office hits. For this reason their domestic popularity is questionable. Especially members of the latter group participate regularly at international festivals, win prestigious prizes and are incited to join European pitching programmes, but their films find little appeal among general audiences. Varga's conclusive speculation claiming that "contemporary Hungarian cinema is not really at home in Hungary" (178) again points to the grave need for midcult cinema: films with local themes that local audiences identify as familiar and relevant to their everyday experience. Films that find a balance between inward-orientation and outward-orientation. Varga calls for a third way, a third space of Hungarian film culture. At present, he insightfully 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" (179-180). It might have been useful to elaborate on and develop this argument through film analyses and show how these mirages are supported by the irreconcilable dichotomy of westward aspiration and self-Orientalization in the minds of audiences and in society at large.

Varga's book is a "whistleblower" in the critical reception of Hungarian cinema, in that it raises awareness of the potentials of empirical inquiries not fully explored by film scholars. Its outspoken objective is to identify and trace trends and tendencies through the interpretation of hard data. As such, it both acknowledges the usefulness of quantitative research in the humanities and initiates a dialogue between them.

Filmrendszerváltások is an easily accessible resource for scholars, executives and decision-makers of the film industry, and cultural intermediaries working in this field. Researchers of post-communist Hungarian cinema and of the Eastern-European cinematic infrastructure will find it an essential reading while students of cinema with an interest in film finance, production, distribution and festival participation are likely to benefit from its highly informative and clear

logic of argumentation. Due to its scope, approach and depth, it would be vital to have the book translated into English and made available for an international readership.

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Border Crossing International Conference
Csíkszereda / Miercurea Ciuc, 20–21 April 2018[13]

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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, határszubjektumok)*; 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:

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Proverbs as a Means of Crossing Cultural Borders delivered by Elena Buja (Transilvania University of Brașov), *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 (Babeș–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