

When East Meets West **Hajnal Király**

Three years ago our research project started from the assumption that the critical approach to contemporary Eastern European literature and film dedicates little attention to the contact zones of local socio-cultural phenomena and leading concepts of Western criticism. As stated in the project description, our aim was and still is to contribute to filling this gap by testing the applicability of Western cultural concepts to Eastern visual and literary representations, reveal the areas of cross-fertilisation or eventual resistance. This meta-critical approach thrives in a contact zone of cultural discourses shaped by ever changing perspectives and the gaze of the colonised staring back at the coloniser. This issue of the project journal reinforces, once again, this critical approach with a set of new research: an article on the work of contemporary Hungarian writer *Ádám Bodor* which adds a *couleur locale* to the concept of heterotopia, an article comparing the figurative role of the sanatorium in contemporary Western and Eastern European cinemas, and finally the intriguing correlation between the figure of Dracula, the most important Romanian cultural trademark at the moment, and the use of media in contemporary Western Dracula films. In addition to these, a Q and A block is dedicated to the significance in an Eastern European context of an increasing number of films in the genre of crime fiction, a genre consecrated in the Western mainstream cinema. . The conference report and the book review are also in line with the topics debated in the articles: the former presents the international conference organised recently by our research team, and the subject of the latter is an essay collection on cultural approaches to contemporary Eastern European cinema, edited by an Eastern European scholar and published recently.

As the editor of the Q and A block argues, in an Eastern Europe continuously affected by socio-political changes crime fiction could become more important than before in the articulation of social imagination, facing post-socialist transformation, inequality, social tensions and frustration, and also in coming to terms with the region's socialist past. Accordingly, the individual short contributions are answering questions like: How do these films and series describe and interpret the post-socialist transformation of Eastern European societies? What do we think about their heroes? What moral standards and norms do they represent? To what extent do they follow the global genre patterns – and what are their local specificities?

In the same vein of cultural comparison focusing on the figurative aspects of the sanatorium narrative in both Western and Eastern context, Eszter Ureczky's article, after describing the socio-medical and psychological characteristics of the contemporary first world culture of wellness and healthism, brings cinematic examples of the births of the wellness guest and the care home inmate in an increasingly medicalised, somatised and normalised world. She is also preoccupied with a biopolitical trajectory of care, outlining the emergence of 21st-century notions of health and precarious embodiment in Western and Eastern European cultural scenarios. A similar cultural cross-fertilisation is at the centre of András Hlavacska's article discovering a paradoxical representation of the relationship between the vampire and media in contemporary vampire films. As he argues, these films depict on the one hand vampires as atavistic, primitive creatures who can hardly use modern media (which are effective weapons in the hands of the vampire hunters), while on the other hand they show the vampire-like face of these media.

Finally, Lilla Gregor's article on *Ádám Bodor's* oeuvre, providing a much debated allegory of an Eastern European, post-communist cultural-social-political zone of in-betweenness, is dealing with the recurring narrative and figurative details of Bodor's novels. As she argues, "the reiteration of textual segments as well as of topical elements and the hybridisation of linguistic, ethnical and biological categories altogether lead to a not normative logical system." The Zone that appears in the novels under analysis cannot be fully described with Foucault's concepts of other spaces. Therefore, to understand the irregularity of the zone's temporal and logical structure, the analysis uses the concept of "atonal systems," introduced by an "insider," Hungarian writer Miklós Mészöly.