# INTRODUCTION

# BROKEN MOBILITIES IN CONTEMPORARY EASTERN EUROPEAN CINEMAS

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Writing about mobility and connectivity amidst the Covid-19 pandemic is challenging. With billions in lockdown and international travel essentially non-existent, people all around the world need to adapt to the experience of isolation while also coping with mounting fears of unemployment, financial instability, suspended social contacts and boredom. Hamlet's painful comment about time being out of joint has once again become menacingly relevant as global outlooks and local regulations change literally on a daily basis and what has been generally perceived as the accustomed state of things seems shattered. The present situation, sometimes termed as the Great Lockdown (Gopinath 2020), is perceived as miserable because mobility lies at the root of modern life(styles), it is a basic human freedom for some while a basic necessity for others (e.g. commuters, guest and seasonal workers and those employed by industries who are compelled to travel). Constraints on movement are understood as limits on social liberties and progress or survival depending on whether one comes from the First or the Third World. As Tim Cresswell has noted "there seems little doubt that mobility is one of the major resources of 21st-century life and that it is the differential distribution of this resource that produces some of the starkest differences today" (2010, 22). Yet, exactly because mobility is a resource that produces and distributes power relations while also being produced by them, the loss of control over mobility threatens to reshuffle or downright undermine the existing order that is nothing less than the global geopolitical order. Bodies might be deemed to immobility but minds are not which offers a space for reflection on personal and other matters. The present situation creates ideal conditions for the fermentation of thought, in fact we believe intellectuals will be kept on the move by trying to assess and comprehend the political, social, cultural, economic, technological, ecological and psychological impact of immobility.

Although quarantines, lockdowns and social distancing serve the single aim of limiting contact between people, it has been put into practice with varying levels of effectiveness in different parts of the world. News outlets praised Eastern European countries for their low infection and death rates and called their response to the situation exemplary. Amongst the many reasons why poorer, Eastern European countries could outperform richer Western ones in almost all areas of statistics, experts list the mistrust of populations towards their country's healthcare system (Walker–Smith 2020) and a greater admission to conformism. As Petr Pavel, a Czech official responsible for designing the country's containment strategy explained, "people in the former communist East are more accepting of inconvenience and more tolerant of state-mandated restrictions" (Pancevski–Hinshaw 2020). These explanations point to the enduring influence of the state socialist heritage on people's mentalities, a problem area that serves as one of the main focal points of this volume.

Eastern Europe does not only make headlines as positive examples of wrestling the pandemic. In the UK, as elsewhere in the Continent, reports about critical labour shortage in agriculture abound. With existing travel restrictions, seasonal farm workers from Romania, Bulgaria and Poland cannot carry out the essential harvesting tasks they have been attending to for over a decade, an activity which put fresh vegetables on the dinner tables of households in affluent societies. As this scenario also proves, Western citizens are reliant on Eastern Europeans and vice versa, while both groups are dependent on mobility that allows for the free movement of labour within the EU. Since 2004, when Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and the Baltic states joined the EU and 2007, the year Bulgaria and Romania was admitted, economic migration has transformed whole economic sectors in Europe. As large numbers of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labourers headed towards old member states, multinational companies began to invest in the region and so did the EU through Cohesion and Structural Funds under the convergence objective. As the terms cohesion and convergence suggest, these policies, on the one hand, recognised regional inequalities and, on the other hand, hoped to redress these by promoting territorial cooperation, increased competitiveness and efficiency. Both enhanced mobility and the framework of financial support make European citizens aware of the West–East divide and the multiple cultural binaries and stereotypes associated with it. Some use this knowledge in the "Old Europe" for self-justifying prejudice and provincialism as the Brexit referendum has shown, while others use it as a licence to lecture poorer European neighbours on core European values. On the other end, there is mounting criticism in the "New Europe" targeting

bureaucratic political institutions, outdated liberal ideologies, wasteful Western societies and their colonial attitudes towards Eastern Europeans. Mobility and connectivity that made a truly closer community possible in Europe has also laid down its own borders, frontiers and obstructions. When everything halts, like now, these frictions remain, in fact, they are likely to deepen with renewed fears of the EU breaking up, of the global trade war to reignite, and of increasing social fracture as a result of growing tensions between people employed by the real economy and the teleworking elite. In order to understand mobility, we also have to understand its stoppages, regulatory mechanisms and broken lines, but also the various discursive frameworks within which connections between Western and Eastern Europe (partners, neighbours, adversaries) are conceptualised.

# The Region and Cinemas in Focus

The region discussed in this volume corresponds to the Visegrad Group (V4) and Romania. With Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary as member countries, the V4 was called into being in 1991 after the fall of state socialism as a regional initiative to promote political, economic and cultural cooperation. Having similar historical experiences, cultural traditions, access to natural resources, export-driven economies, the alliance coordinated European integration efforts and after their accession to the EU continued to plan and implement shared projects. Romania, one of the Eastern frontiers of Europe, has a history, education system, political and economic makeup comparable with that of the Visegrad Group, furthermore it also shares the V4's demographic challenges such as high emigration, ageing society and low fertility rates.

The film cultures of the countries in the focus of this volume also characterise by a thematic and stylistic homogeneity. As Dina Iordanova asserts, "the regional framework allows us to reveal leading stylistic or narrative trends and other general aspects […] by looking regionally we see trends that otherwise remain neglected" (2003, 12). She argues that the study of the cinemas of Eastern Europe in regional terms comes natural due to "the symbiotic and synergic phenomenon of East Central European intelligentsia and their struggle to establish the idea of Central Europe as a shared cultural space" (Iordanova 2003, 12). Having acknowledged the proximity of national cultures in the region, Iordonova traces shared features of the industrial, thematic, of stylistic and geopolitical kind. Although most of the arguments in *Cinema of the Other Europe: The Industry and Artistry of East Central European Film* (Iordanova 2003) regard the Soviet period, the regional framework is valid to the post-communist filmmaking also.

Having abandoned the authoritarian practices of managing culture and embraced neoliberal economic principles, Eastern European film industries saw a sharp decline in state support, leaving filmmakers wrestle over scarce financial resources. It was often the elder, internationally acclaimed directors whom the new system of state grants favoured, leaving upcoming generations to find creative ways to complete film projects, (international coproduction, commercial television, EU funding, and more recently crowd funding) or simply leave the profession. Competitiveness has equally affected material resources and properties of a once burgeoning industry. As Iordanova contends,

> the film industry saw previous state assets sold off to new, usually foreign, owners, who swiftly turned the region into a cut-price production playground. The 'film factory,' previously run by state apparatchiks, now turned into a bargain-basement service economy offering skilled personnel and amenities to international runaway film businesses. (Iordanova 2012, xvi)

Also the predominance of art cinema over popular cinema was a shared heritage hardly contested either by funding juries or the critical establishment. In post-communist cinema critical appraisal and commercial success hardly ever converged, resulting in unbalanced film cultures. For many aspiring talents from the region, festival participation was more precious a goal than box office appeal. While this attitude, as the case of New Romanian Cinema testifies, resulted in some truly outstanding films, it also brought about a large number of mediocre art films.

Romania is also the only country in the region where the communist regime was overthrown by a short but violent popular revolt. Unlike the velvet revolutions in other EE countries, Romanian events seemed to be a televisual revolution "produced" by the bare forces of history. Not unlike live broadcasts of the Berlin Wall being ripped apart (as an allegory of moving beyond the era of the Iron Curtain), this intense audiovisual event and "improvised communal happening" exploded into living rooms around the globe, giving irrefutable proof of the irreversible awakening of Eastern Europe. Cinemas of the region, as the chapters of the first section elaborate, keep returning to this quasi-mythical "year zero," but without the initial euphoria and optimism. As of today, much of the antagonisms and social frustration that characterises the region can be traced back to the ambiguities of these revolutionary times perceived, on the one hand, as ephemeral moments of bliss and, on the other hand, a breeding ground for primary urges to accumulate power and wealth.

Mónika Dánél's chapter in the volume *Multiple Revolutions. Remediating and Re-enacting the Romanian Events of 1989* explores strategies of cinematic remediation and re-enactment of traumatic events in the wake of the demise of the Ceaușescu regime. In countries with a more peaceful transition, like Slovakia, the memory of the Velvet Revolution plays an equally important role in national self-definition. Jana Dudková's and Katarina Misiková's chapters about the transitional period remind us how different the maiden years of democracy look when observed from the epicentre of events and when addressed through retrospection. While the television films of the early 1990s were prophetic in ascribing to the young generation the agency of revolutionary change, films produced for cinema, more specifically the political film as a genre, paints a rather critical or even cynical picture. This cynicism, shared by both intellectuals and the general public around the region, was fuelled by the perception that democratic political institutions and the universal empowerment they were supposed to achieve were corrupted by the power elite. The presumed benefits of representative democracy including the public control of elected bodies and individuals, the freedom of speech and the right to express opinion freely, that is the mobile framework of sharing responsibility between the state and the individual were gradually broken as bureaucratic red tape, political scapegoating, hate speech and the rise of populism undermined political consensus and erected barricades between citizens. As film industries entered the new millennium, cinematic mediations of history broadened and would include the recent past, both the banal and the extraordinary episodes of life under state socialism. This shift is most visible in Polish cinema where besides traumatic narratives of WWII and the Holocaust, a number of very popular films set in Soviet era were made. In addition to shifting time frames, the inclination of genre cinema to forge a dialogue with the social universe became another shared regional feature. Elżbieta Durys' chapter *Cop Cinema and the Cinema of National Remembrance: The Case of* I'm a Killer *by Maciej Pieprzyca* arrives to this conclusion in the context of the detective film, while Hajnal Király's and Zsolt Győri's contributions make similar claims for male melodrama and noir western. The New Romanian Cinema is again relevant, since its thematic concern with common people, strained social relations and moral dilemmas has clearly influenced other film cultures, most notably Hungarian cinema. Apart from family melodramas, biopics, comedies, road movies, and crime cinema, it has creatively combined generic attributes with social reflection and served as a flexible trans-regional frame to address topics related to gender, ethnicity, immigration, old age and sexual orientation, to name just a few. These topics are tackled in the comparative analyses of contemporary Romanian films representing "border events," the effect of immigration on family relations discussed extensively in Katalin Sándor's chapter, as well as mobility between the city and the countryside on the one hand, and different districts of metropolises on the other. As Fanni Feldmann's chapter argues with regard to Hungary and the Romanian capital Bucharest, such mobility figuratively superimposes geographical, social, cultural and sexual transgressions. Westbound mobility as a possible trigger of national identity and immobility as its possible antidote is discussed by Michael Gott in the context of the New Czech Cinema, as well as in Hungarian films in which geographical, social and cultural border crossings between the East and the West are multiplied by and reflected in exchanges between different media (analysed in chapters by Edit Zsadányi, Ștefan Firică and András Hlavacska).

## Research and Theoretical Background

Mobility, meaning the "ability to move freely," – in geographic, economic or social terms – has a distinguished meaning for Eastern European societies, kept "immobile" almost for half a century by a mostly invisible, but no less effective and tantalising Iron Curtain. The fall of the Berlin Wall, another symbol of this long lasting captivity, has ritually set free long repressed desires, marking the beginning of often uncontrollable transnational migrations with significant impact on Eastern European societies, the radical transformation of family structures, as well as of social, economic and gender roles. In this process of "re-entering" Europe the cinemas of the countries of the former Eastern Bloc played a significant role, with their effort to bridge the gap between a West-European lack of knowledge and curiosity and an Eastern European post-socialist reality, as well as a desire to be re-discovered and accepted by the European community. This effort has been honoured with numerous prizes at prestigious festivals – especially in the case of Romanian, Hungarian and Polish cinemas – and resulted in an increasing number of monographs, collections of essays from Western authors and publishers celebrating, among others, "the unexpected miracle" of the Romanian New Cinema (see Nasta 2013). Many of these authors are themselves subjects of the same mobility thematised by the films they analyse, insider-outsiders settled in Western Europe or the US, reflecting on cinematic expressions of socio-political processes from a position of cultural in-betweenness.[2] A third perspective is represented by a generation of local film theorists and critics who beginning with the first decade of the new millennium have been active in researching the new formations of their national

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[2] See, for example the essay collection edited by Michael Gott and Todd Herzog (2015), the books edited by Anikó Imre, a film scholar of Hungarian origin settled in the US (2005, 2012), as well as the volumes edited by Ewa Mazierska, Matilda Mroz, Elzbieta Ostrowska (2016), or Cristina Stojanova (2019).

cinemas and publishing extensively with both prestigious international and national publishers.[3] Additionally, film scholars of the former Eastern Bloc have started collaborations materialising in organisation of conferences, participations in conferences with shared panels, as well as international research projects, resulting in monographs and collections of essays.

The immediate background of the present volume is an international, Hungarian-Romanian research project, funded by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Romanian Ministry of Education, respectively, titled *Space-ing Otherness. Cultural Images of Space, Contact Zones in Contemporary Hungarian and Romanian Film and Literature* (OTKA NN 112700, 2014–2018) and *Figurations of Intermediality in Eastern European and Russian Cinema* (2013–2017). Additionally, the international Contact Zones conference, the main event in the closing phase of the project, provided another context for a dialogue between American, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian and Slovakian film scholars and resulted in valuable contributions to this volume. As the titles of the projects and the conference suggest, the main purpose of these meetings and collaborations was the creation of a "discursive contact zone" of the various forms of mobility performed by the post-socialist subjectivity, as represented in Eastern European cinemas.

The plural in the title thus refers to the social, cultural and geographical variety of mobility, their repetitive nature, as represented in cinema and experienced by their creators, spectators and theorists. In addition, it also stands for the mobility of "travelling" concepts and theories. One of the core assumptions of both the international research project and the conference was that consecrated Western theories and concepts of space meet some "resistance" when applied to contemporary Eastern European films, a resistance that can greatly contribute to the nuancing of existing discourses. The most often referred concept of the volume is probably that of "heterotopia," from Foucault's sketchy but very influential 1984 essay, *Of Other Spaces*. It is probably the sketchiness of this critical concept that allows it to be used flexibly while adapted to a variety of cultural spaces and places in the Eastern European context be them national, ethnic, sexual, liminal or "in-between." In the films analysed in this volume, Eastern Europe itself appears as a heterotopia, a space often situated outside the core scenes of community interaction, yet reflecting on them critically. As the films and their analyses demonstrate, crisis and deviancy heterotopias are often interchangeable, and also inseparable in the mobility narratives of the Eastern European subjectivity, moving between spaces "in-between," institutions that fail to represent their case. A similar revision of exiting Western discourse presents itself when Marc Augé's concept of "non-place" (2009) is applied to Eastern European mobility practices: although they exist in post-socialist societies, the contractual relationship they imply is not accessible for most of their citizens. On the other hand, while originally employed to diasporic cinemas, Hamid Naficy's term "accented cinema" appears as an all-pervasive metaphor of Eastern European cinemas under analysis, describing accurately its main topics, stylistic trends, production modes, all conceived of as "languages" of an assumed and well negotiated otherness (Naficy 2001). Post-colonial concepts of the "subaltern" (Spivak 1994) and "the other," first consecrated by Homi Bhabha (1994) are also reiterated in chapters of the volume, with emphasis on "the self as the other" in both ethnic and sexual terms, and with special focus on the phenomenon of "self-othering" as a conscious choice of the directors to represent East-Europeanness as expected by its Western counterpart (Elsaesser 2005). This and reverse colonisation by migration is thematised by the Dracula myth and its continuous adaptations on both sides of Europe and the US (Arata 1990, Gelder 2001). But ironically, as many of the films discussed here testify, the main scenes of this intensely perceived Eastern European otherness are not those Western European countries where former Soviet Block citizens seek work and live temporarily, but their native countries, which, nevertheless, can only be a home ridden with conflicts and crises (Elsaesser 1990, Rodowick 1990). Generational and gendered conflicts escalating in small communities and claustrophobic family relationships attract and are tested against classic melodrama theories and gender theories (Gledhill, Elsaesser and Rodowick, 1990).

The originality of our collection of essays is conferred primarily by its complex comparative approach involving medium-specific representations (literature, film and other media), cinematic national and regional traditions/paradigms. Our aim is to theorise the contact zone along Western discourses and concepts which are still underrepresented in the study of Eastern European socio-cultural phenomena and the communist–post-communist transition. Drawing on individual and group research projects from five countries (four from the former Eastern Bloc and one from the United States), the volume overviews representational trends and thematic intersections through socially and culturally sensitive readings by two generations of Eastern European critics. Just like most of the authors analysed in the volume, some of our authors were socialised under communism and reached young adulthood after the fall of regime. Their critical insights are well complemented with those of the representatives of a post-Berlin Wall generation more sensitive to actual, global social phenomena. With chapters on contemporary Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian and Slovakian cinemas, receiving prizes and attention at prestigious

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[3] This approach is represented, for example, by monographs and collective volumes: Andrea Virginás's edited essay collection on cultural approaches of these cinemas (2016), the monographs of László Strausz (2017) and György Kalmár (2017) on the New Romanian Cinema and formations of masculinity in Hungarian films, or Anna Bátori's comparative study of Hungarian and Romanian Cinemas (2018).

international competitions and festivals, and films that despite their significance to national film cultures have not been discussed in English language scholarship, we believe this volume conquers uncharted territories.


# The Structure of the Volume


The volume comprises four thematic sections, three chapters each, organised along various forms of mobility and border crossing facilitated by an enlarged Europe and perpetual identity quest, also prompting a comparison between Western and Eastern discourses of Otherness. The shared topic of the three chapters of the first section entitled *Screening the Regime Changes* is the cultural and individual memory work on the 1989 revolutions in Romania and Slovakia, as well as the subsequent political events, as represented by a variety of television and film genres, including documentary films, docu-fictions, arthouse movies, TV-series and popular film genres.

As the many in-depth analyses of both Romanian and international productions in Mónika Dánél's chapter *Multiple Revolutions. Remediating and Re-enacting the Romanian Events of 1989* suggest, in the case of Romania the traumatic event of the regime change called for a repeated re-enactment (and re-mediation) as a strategy of (self)understanding and sublimation. As Dánél argues, these films demonstrate how traumatic body memory, reflected in the disorientation or disinformation caused by the technical conditions, the circulation or lack of images, the alternating silences and chanting on the street make the past events incomprehensible and medially dissonant also for the spectator. Focusing on the representation in TV-films of a much less traumatic Velvet Revolution and its aftermath, Jana Dudková in her *Betrayed Socialism? Images of Youth, Revolution and Conformism in Slovak Television Productions of the Early 1990s* applies an entirely new approach to the Slovakian post-revolutionary period. Relying on of James Krapfl´s analysis of the public discourse during the Velvet Revolution, as she explores rare examples of romantic narratives with political overtones in TV-films (entirely missing within the frame of cinema), their possible links to the idea of democratisation of socialism, as well as the role of the trope of the "Youth" in them. Katarina Misiková's chapter *Engaging with the Past. Poetics and Pragmatics of Representing the Political Situation of the 1990s in Slovak Cinema* complements the account of the representations of post-revolutionary events in Slovakia by analyzing and comparing "political" films from the years 1990 with those of the recent years. As she argues, distance from historical events of the 1990s brought a significant change in genres, poetics and pragmatics of films: while the 1990s were dominated by approaches of auteur art cinema, contemporary films are characterised by conventions of popular genres, ensuring a broader social reception and discourse on the subjects in question.

The second section titled *Changing Masculinities* focuses on Eastern European adaptations of global (traditionally Western) popular genres such as the melodrama, the western/gangster movie and the cop movie and explores how they present the challenges facing post-communist gender roles, with emphasis on the crisis of masculinity. As the authors of its chapters contend, this crisis is regularly portrayed as a transgenerational confrontation with the haunting spirit of dead or missing fathers or grandfathers.

Hajnal Király in her *The Text of Muteness in Contemporary Hungarian and Romanian Family (Melo)Dramas* stresses the prominence of male melodramas in the two cinemas and the relevance of displacement as a melodramatic tool substituting accurate transgenerational communication. By a comparative analysis of two representative melodramas (by Hungarian Szabolcs Hajdu and Romanian Cristi Puiu), she aims to illuminate how metanarrative, narrative and figurative displacement of unspeakable emotions in these films gradually gives way to the final (dramatic) confession of the male protagonist, breaking the curse of patriarchal secrets and taboos. In the same vein of comparative analysis, Zsolt Győri's chapter *Ruralising Masculinities and Masculinising the Rural in Márk Kostyál's* Coyote *and Bogdan Mirică's* Dogs focuses on a Romanian and a Hungarian film representing the topic of the burdening heritage of an obsolete model of masculinity. Portraying a movement from the civilised city to a lawless rural territory, these films, reusing certain elements of the neo-western genre, call for the exploration of the relationships between rural sociocultural spaces and masculinity. The third chapter of this section by Elżbieta Durys, titled *Cop Cinema and the Cinema of National Remembrance: The case of* I'm a Killer *by Maciej Pieprzyca* analyses the masculinity-genre correlation in the context of contemporary Polish cinema. By establishing a relationship between the local, Polish critical category of Cinema of the National Remembrance and the American cop cinema, through the case study of Pieprzyca's film, she proposes to reconstruct the myth of symbolic castration of Polish men by communist system.

The three chapters of the section titled *Moving In-Between* share a focus on the representations of "in-betweenness" as a par excellence Eastern European condition in three cinemas of the former Eastern Bloc (that of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania), defined through recurrent topics of mobility and immobility, internal and external border crossings, the Foucauldian notion of heterotopia, as well as a (sexually and ethnically) transgressive identity quest. Michael Gott in his *Ambivalent Mobility in "New Czech Cinema"* discovers in the New Czech Cinema a trend to represent the nation as a liminal space between Western and Eastern Europe through the tropes of mobility and immobility. As he argues in his analyses of five representative films, eastbound,

westbound and internal travel and other symbols of mobility become expressions of the Czech's continuing "otherness" vis-à-vis "Western" Europe, while reflecting, on a more general level, on the new dynamics of space, whether local, national, transnational, or European. Katalin Sándor's *Uncrossed Borders and Border Events in First of All, Felicia (2009) and* Oli's Wedding *(2009)* explores the topic of border crossing in the context of the New Romanian Cinema, analyzing two films that focus on small-scale social interactions affected by broader socio-economic and political processes such as migration, human trafficking and border politics. The main point of her argumentation concerns the more blurred, porous aspect of cultural, linguistic and institutional contact zones, foregrounding spatial and identity practices that may question the power mechanisms of border-formation and the territorial understanding of space and identity. The last chapter of this section explores the topics of in-betweenness/contact zones and border crossing from the perspective of theories of queer and ethnic identities and their unfavorable public perception. Fanni Feldmann, in her *Minorities in Love. Intersections of Space, Sexuality and Ethnicity in* Village Romance *and* Soldiers. Story from Ferentari, showcases another comparative approach, this time between a Hungarian and a Romanian film, both focusing on the intersections of spatial, sexual and ethnic marginality. As Feldmann argues, in the two documentaries the narrative framework of forbidden, doomed love is used as a reflection on heteronormative societies' attitudes towards same-sex relationships complemented by ethnic transgression, which points out the socio-cultural environment's homophobia and racism. The in-depth analyses primarily concern the marginal places where these unlikely encounters take place, and introduces the concept of the "ethnoqueer," a critical term which accentuates shared experiences of sexual and ethnic otherness.

The last section *Intermedial and Intercultural Encounters* complements the topics of post-socialist geographic, social, political, sexual and ethnic mobility explored in the previous chapters with that of mobility and the interchange between media, be them film adaptations of intercultural "migrating" concepts and motifs, or multiple remediations of personal experiences of the migrating Eastern European subject.

Edit Zsadányi in her chapter *Voicing the Subaltern in László Krasznahorkai's* Satantango *and Its Film Adaptation by Béla Tarr* applies the concept of the post-colonial subaltern coined by Gayatri C. Spivak, in the analysis of issues of marginalisation and dictatorship in *Satantango* (both the novel and the film). Sharing Spivak's claim that (even Western, democratic) political representation cannot guarantee that all citizens will be heard, she provides multiple examples from the novel and the film, modeling the difficulty of understanding the fragmented speech of the subaltern (the character) by the reader and the spectator. András Hlavacska in his *Dracula Goes to the West. Vampires, Regionality and Technology in Contemporary Cinema* brings Eastern-European and Western cinematic examples of figurative remediations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and proposes to open up geopolitical and media-theoretical layers of signification. As he argues, Márk Bodzsár's *Comrade Drakulich* (2019), adapts the vampire story to the Hungarian socialist regime and its "bloodsucker" socio-political mechanisms that continue in the post-socialist period adapting capitalist forms of production and exploitation. The Western example, *Shadow of the Vampire* (E. Elias Mehrige, 2000), reiterates similar connections between the Dracula-narrative and technology (as capitalist modes of production and consumption). According to Hlavacska, while these films depict vampires as atavistic, primitive (Eastern European) creatures who can hardly use modern media, they also render legible (on a narrative or meta-narrative level) the vampire-like (or vampirised) face of the medium of film itself. Ștefan Firică's *Adapting In-Betweenness: Transpositions of Aglaja Veteranyi's Literature in Theatre, Music and Film,* through the case of multilingual writer Aglaja Veteranyi explores the intermedial construction of the migrant identity. As Firică argues, Veteranyi's writings – merging fiction, autobiography and poetry – have been adapted to film, theatre and music in various languages, showcasing discursive encounters specific for today's societies: individual vs. authority, migrant vs. native, citizen vs. non-citizen, "West" vs. "East," male vs. female. The chapter looks into some of the literary, theatrical, musical and cinematic strategies – with special focus on Hungarian Krisztina Goda's adaptation *Aglaya (Aglaja,* 2012) – that turn Aglaja Veteranyi into an icon of transgressive art and identity. As in the case of the two previous chapters, intermediality and remediation are regarded as figures of transcultural mobility and perpetual identity quest.

Through their numerous in-depth and comparative, transcultural analyses all these chapters ensure an accurate and topical cinematic image of post-89 Eastern European societies, in which all-pervasive mobility, so promising in the first decade after the regime changes, has turned in the post-millennial years into a reckless quest of identity of a generation socialised in the communist era. While trying to move on without this burdening heritage, most of the authors of this volume appear to have integrated the experiences of the communist "lockdown" and transformed it into a creative force under the Great Lockdown of 2020: while not claiming to cover all existing aspects of mobility (mass migration could be the topic of another book), this very volume finalised in the Spring of 2020 is a proof of an existing, ongoing dialogue between film scholars of the Visegrad countries and Romania and an important contribution to the (self)understanding of these nations and cinemas.

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