Developments in Eastern European Cinemas since 1989

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the ways in which Eastern European cinema has become Europeanized. It looks at how the idea of Eastern Europe and its cinema has been shaped vis-à-vis the West, and redefined after the collapse of communism. Contrary to the received wisdom that a new paradigm emerged in 1989, this chapter argues that it is only since 2000 that Eastern European cinema has enjoyed recognition after the near collapse of its film industries in the 1990s. In the three case studies of the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr, Eastern European female directors and the Romanian New Wave, the chapter analyses the emergence in Eastern Europe of a new complex model of film production aligned with its larger European counterpart. This producer-driven model is based on three further aspects: the national film institutes, international co-productions and participation in film festivals.

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Introduction

At the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, Romania could boast the third largest number of films shown, after only the U.S.A. and France. Out of its six entries, *Bacalaureat* (Romania/France/Belgium, *Graduation*, 2016) won its director Cristian Mungiu the Best Director Award, while *Câini* (Romania/France/Bulgaria/Qatar, *Dogs,* 2016) by Bogdan Mirică won the FIPRESCI Award (Zeitchik 2016). The 2016 Cannes story is only the latest in a series of successes for Romanian films over the past decade since Cătălin Mitulescu won the Palme d'Or for his short film *Traffic* (Romania) in 2004. In the subsequent four years, for example, – between 2005 and 2009 – the five main prizes at the Cannes Film Festival went to Romanian films, solidifying their claim to be the next European movement – The Romanian New Wave (hereafter: RNW) as critics have termed it – after von Trier and Vinterberg's *Dogme 95*.

The success of Eastern European films at the arguably most prestigious European film festival is significant given that as recently as 2000 not a single film was produced in Romania (Uricaru 2012: 427). The crisis of film production was endemic in the region in the 1990s following the break up of the Soviet Bloc, which freed a number of states from Soviet domination but left them economically, politically and socially lagging behind the rest of Europe, and the film industry was no exception (Wood and Iordanova 2000; Iordanova 2002; Imre 2005). The lack of funding in the 1990s which followed the transformation from the communist state-owned system to the producer-

driven free market drove Eastern European cinema near to collapse. It is the accelerated re-structuring of their financing model throughout the 1990s into an interface between national and transnational enterprise, however, which led to the Europeanization of Eastern European films. At the time of writing, Eastern European films are sponsored by a host of European production companies, as in the case, for example, of the Paris-based Why Not Productions, which has recently produced both the award-winning *Graduation* and *Dupa dealuri* (Romania/France/Belgium, *Beyond the Hills*, Cristian Mungiu, 2013), but also such European art-house hits as *De rouille et d'os* (France/Belgium, *Rust and Bone,* Jacques Audiard, 2012) and *I, Daniel Blake* (UK/France/Belgium, Ken Loach, 2015). Nevertheless, the role of the national institutes has also been central in enabling the success of Eastern European films. Indeed, the Romanian Law of Cinematography introduced in 1999 (analyzed below) was so successful that Poland introduced its own Act on Cinematography and created the Polish Film Institute in 2005, which led to the international success of such Polish films as *W imię…* (Poland, *In the Name of*, Małgorzata Szumowska, 2013), *Ida* (Poland/Denmark/France/UK, Paweł Pawlikowski, 2013) and *Zjednoczone stany miłości* (Poland/Sweden, *United States of Love*, Tomasz Wasilewski, 2016). Identifying directorial talent through national funding, fostering films' transnational universal themes aimed at international art-house audiences and international forms of distribution, including film festivals' visibility and international funding, and authorial freedom as a function of directors' own private production companies are all emblematic of the Romanian New Wave's success, and underpin a transformative financing model across Eastern Europe.

The example of Romania, on the one hand, illustrates how the break-up of the Soviet Bloc led to the increased diversification, localism and enhanced significance of

national cinemas in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, it shows how the return to the national is countered by the creation of pan-European, post-national or indeed worldwide configurations fuelled by globalization, the advancement of the neoliberal market economy, the expansion of new social media, and increased migration (Imre 2012: 2). In securing a place in the canon of (Western) European film movements, along with such well-established 'moments' in national cinemas as German Expressionism, Italian Neo-Realism and the French New Wave, the Romanian New Wave has put Eastern European cinema on the Film Studies map of European cinema from which it has too often been erased. The RNW thereby redraws the cultural map of Europe by moving the border eastwards, and questions the established axiology of the concepts of (Western) European and Eastern European cinema, where 'European' has more often than not stood for certain privileged countries such as France, Germany or Italy (although the exact countries of European cinema can be difficult to establish without risking a debate). Given Eastern Europe and Eastern European cinema's entrenched real and perceived marginalization, as a result of political isolation behind the Iron Curtain and their geographical location on the periphery of what has traditionally been regarded as Europe, the fact that Eastern European cinema is starting to achieve the same kind of recognition and inclusion as more westerly-located countries points to its increasing Europeanization.

There is consequently a great need to reassess the position of Eastern European cinema. While its marginal and subordinate position has often been acknowledged in academic writing (Wood and Iordanova 2000; Iordanova 2003; Hames 2004; Imre 2005 and 2012; Hames and Portuges 2013), including from a postcolonial perspective (Mazierska, Kristensen and Näripea 2013), a study of the ways in which Eastern European cinema has joined the European mainstream is long overdue. In order to

redress this imbalance, one goal of this chapter is to argue that since around 2000 Eastern European cinema has become subject to accelerated processes of transnationalisation. Contrary to the received wisdom that the year 1989 was the watershed for the emergence of a new paradigm, this chapter proposes that the financial collapse of the Romanian film industry in 2000 and its subsequent industry developments that led to the rise of The Romanian New Wave after the year 2000 can be used as a lens for understanding the changes in Eastern European cinema more generally. A second more complex goal is to assert that there remains a discrepancy between reality and perception as both within and outside Eastern Europe and its cinema are still viewed and treated as marginal and subordinate.

This chapter will therefore look first at how historical and political events and European thought have shaped the idea of Eastern Europe and the concept of Eastern European cinema vis-à-vis the West, and the way the collapse of communism in 1989 and recent extension of the European Union have redefined the geographical reality of Eastern Europe and its cinemas, but not necessarily how they are perceived. Using a postcolonial theory with an emphasis on production studies, the chapter then looks at continuity and change in Eastern European cinema across a trio of case studies that link pre-1989 isolation and marginalization with current transnationalism. The section on the cinema of Béla Tarr analyses how a new industry mode of co-production has given Tarr transnational opportunities and consequently facilitated a change of style of his films; the section on Eastern European female directors and actresses assesses how the transnational work market has given real opportunities to this group, who nevertheless remain discriminated against in terms of representation on screen. The final section advances a definition of the Romanian New Wave as a European

movement, which has not been previously done in a systematic way, and brings the Europeanization and transnationalism of Eastern European cinema together.

Across the three case studies, this chapter argues that the main impetus for the new direction of Eastern European films comes from changes in the mode of production, which had a profound impact, not only on the levels of yearly film production but also on the aesthetic and thematic preoccupations of films, and, most significantly, on access to foreign markets and distribution channels, following international co-financing and screening at film festivals.

The Idea of Eastern Europe

The notion of "Eastern Europe" is by no means straightforward. As Larry Wolff (1994) argues in his seminal book, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, it dates from the Enlightenment when Western intellectuals, travellers, and writers created a discourse about the eastern half of the continent in a manner similar to that of the Orient analyzed by Edward Said. Consolidated over centuries, this mental map was "a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, Europe but not Europe" (Wolff 1994: 7). These ambiguities became more complex after the Second World War when most of the countries identified as Eastern European formed the Eastern Bloc controlled by the Soviet Union. First, after 1961, the former Yugoslavia's affiliation with the Non-Aligned Movement provided relative independence from the Soviets. Then, terms such as "East Central Europe" and "Central Europe" were proposed which excluded the region made up of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary as historically and culturally

distinct from the rest of the Eastern Bloc, especially from the Balkan countries (Iordanova 2003; Hames 2004). With the realignments of 1989 and the break-up of Yugoslavia, the geopolitical borders between the West and East of Europe changed radically, well-exemplified by the disappearance of East Germany into Germany. In joining NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004, Poland, along with Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, nominally shifted to 'Europe'. By contrast, the Balkan countries, especially those that were part of former Yugoslavia, were relegated even more prominently to the European frontiers.

Given the ongoing political shifts of borders and membership of supranational entities such as the European Union and NATO, it is not easy to pinpoint the exact dividing line between Western and Eastern Europe today. Depending on how it is defined, Eastern Europe may now encompass as many as twenty or as few as four countries. Where the lines are drawn clearly has implications for how we study Eastern European cinema (Coates 2000; Hames 2004; Iordanova 2003 and 2005; Imre 2012). Nevertheless, notwithstanding ongoing fluctuations of the notion of Eastern Europe, it is still firmly present in contemporary socio-political and cultural discourse. Although it disconcertingly echoes Western colonial hegemony, is associated with period of Soviet oppression, and operates within geopolitical processes of exclusion and inclusion, the category of Eastern Europe still identifies a distinct region within Europe which has a shared history and culture, including cinema.

The Eastern European Mode of Production in the 1990s: From State-Subsidized to a Producer-Driven Film Production System

Commentators agree that the major change exerting a profound impact on the cinemas of the region in the 1990s was a move away from state subsidized and unit-based studio film production to a free market dominated by producers; this contributed to a significant drop in film production across the region (Wood and Iordanova 2000; Iordanova 2003). The move to a capitalist economy and revenues-based approach left some directors unable to re-adjust from their high-status as auteurs and national prophets, whose function was not just to entertain but to offer a direct intervention into historical reality. Others embraced opportunities to obtain international funding. The gap produced by the withdrawal of state funds was filled in the 1990s by pan-European funding bodies such as Eurimages (the Council of Europe's Fund), MEDIA (the European Community Programme), bilateral agreements between countries (especially with France), and a French programme aimed specifically at Eastern Europe: Fonds ECO (Fonds d'aide aux co-productions avec les Pays d'Europe Centrale et Orientale).

These funds had two immediate effects on Eastern European cinema. Firstly, they facilitated integration and ensured the visibility of Eastern European auteurs, and secondly, they aligned Eastern European cinema with the global trend of free movement of creative personnel across borders (Jäckel 1998; Iordanova 2002). The ECO contributed to the making of sixty-five feature films between 1990 and 1997, furthering the careers of such established auteurs as the Romanian Lucian Pintilie (*Le Chêne*, France/Romania, *The Oak*, 1992), the Russian Vitali Kanievsky (*Samostoiatelnaia Jizn*, UK/Russia/France, *An Independent Life*, 1992) or Lithuania's Sharunas Bartas (Portugal/France/Germany/Lithuania, *Few of Us*, 1996) (Jäckel 2003: 63). The ECO fund ended in 1996, mainly because several Eastern European film industries were showing signs of recovery (Jäckel 2003: 63). In other respects

too Eastern European cinema began to show signs of Europeanization from the end of the 1990s or around 2000 as I shall argue.

However, there is a potentially problematic aspect of European international funds, and their influence on the persistence of authorship in Eastern European cinema. Specifically, the changes in the Eurimages schemes towards the end of the 1990s started to focus more on the commercial potential of the project and took into account the previous success-track of the director in allocating the funds, which favoured "established 'auteurs'" and created "an emerging class of internationally renowned […] bankable 'auteurs'" from Eastern Europe (2002: 520). Béla Tarr is a good case in point.

The Persistence of Auteurism: Béla Tarr's Cinematic Journeys

Although for more than forty years Eastern European cinema developed under the strict control of communist states, a framework of national and auteur cinema shaped production throughout this time. After 1989 these auteurist and national tendencies became even more pronounced due to the disappearance of state control.

Béla Tarr is one of the most notable contemporary Eastern European film auteurs. In his monograph on the Hungarian filmmaker, András Bálint Kovács highlights the consistency of themes, characters and style throughout his career (2013: 1). However, while formal discipline and aesthetic minimalism characterize his whole oeuvre, his approach to the cinematic image and its relationship to reality has undergone an evolution as a result of international funding. His films from the late 1970s and 1980s, such as *Családi Tűzfészek* (Hungary, *Family Nest*, 1977), *Szabadgyalog* (Hungary,

The Outsider, 1980), *Panelkapscsolat* (Hungary, *The Prefab People*, 1982) and *Őszi Almanach* (Hungary, *Almanac of the Fall*, 1984), depict the oppressive socio-political situation of Hungary in the era of late communism by means of specific cinematic strategies such as the predominance of close-ups and long takes. In his films from the late 1980s and early 1990s, such as *Kärhozat* (Hungary, *Damnation*, 1987) and *Sátántangó* (Hungary/Germany/Switzerland, *Satantango*, 1994), Tarr evokes the crisis and stagnation of late communism and the early post-communist period. He approaches his subject through a specific historical situation, yet simultaneously transforms it into a universal myth. Both films use monochrome photography, painterly compositions, and minimalistic mise-en-scène to diminish scenic realism and replace it with visual abstraction. This aesthetic is maintained in Tarr's last three films made in the 2000s, *Werckmeister Harmóniák* (Hungary/Italy/Germany/France, *Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2000), *A Londoni Férfi* (Hungary/Germany/France, *The Man from London*, 2007) and *A Torinói Ló* (Hungary/France/Germany/Switzerland/USA, *The Turin Horse*, 2011), which he announced would be his last film.

Kovács considers the aesthetic evolution of Tarr's oeuvre to be a maturation of his style. However, this approach diminishes the significance of a thematic shift in his work, specifically, a gradual withdrawal from the topical and a turn towards the perennial. These thematic changes occurred precisely at a time when the Hungarian director was searching for new production opportunities, and reflect a more transnational sensibility. Tarr made his debut in the Balázs Béla Studio, a small filmmaking unit named after Eastern Europe's most famous film theorist that emerged in 1958 as a spontaneous initiative on the part of film students and young filmmakers, and which was later modestly supported by state funding. His subsequent projects,

consisting of short films, TV plays, and feature films, received finance from the state film school, Hungarian television, Társulás studio (a film unit organized by another group of Hungarian filmmakers), and Mafilm, the biggest film production company in Hungary. Finally, for *Damnation* he secured finance from several sources not directly involved in film production. As Kovács emphasizes, that film was the first Hungarian full-length feature produced outside of the state regulated film industry (Kovács 2013: 10).

As his first independent production, *Damnation* offered Tarr much more artistic freedom and control, which resulted in substantial aesthetic refinement, and, consequently, led to his first international film-festival success. *Damnation* introduced three main novelties to Tarr's work: poetic dialogue, a setting that consisted of realistic components, mutually arranged in such a way as to create a "non-existent and completely set-like world," and, finally, complex camera movement coordinated with the composition (Kovács 2008:14). Following this, Tarr managed to secure foreign finance (including from Eurimages) for his next project, *Satantango*, a seven-and-a-half hour film that marked the beginning of a transnational stage in his career. From that point on, all Tarr's films received support from various European sources, were distributed internationally, and achieved considerable success at film festivals.

While making *Satantango* and two later films, Tarr continued to work with his previous team, of whom Agnes Hranitzky was the most significant member. The cast were Hungarians who spoke their dialogue in the native language, and the local alcoholic drink, Palinka, played an important role, not merely as a simple realist scenic prop, but also as a metaphor for an existential crisis. Ultimately, in *Satantango* the vernacular becomes fragmented and de-contextualized, a directorial choice which

moves it from the realm of the national into the transnational. The latter manifests itself either as a mosaic of vernacular cultures or as images of a humanity abstracted from their socio-political and cultural determinants.

The Turin Horse represents Tarr's final point in this trajectory. It features characters who are passive and who barely interact with socio-cultural reality and focuses on mundane and everyday rituals such as clothing, eating and cleaning, which are repeatedly shown in their real-time duration. Furthermore, the characters speak minimally and their dialogue does not propel the narrative. The visual, stripped of any local references, subordinates the verbal. Instead, *The Turin Horse* utilizes intertextual references to Western art, for example paintings by Mantegna, Georges de La Tour, and Vincent van Gogh, as if attempting to reestablish a symbolic link between Eastern and Western European cultures (see Pethő 2016, Quandt 2012). Likewise, the film's prologue, which recalls Friedrich Nietzsche's traumatic witnessing of a carthorse being whipped on the streets of Turin, inscribes the film firmly within the European philosophical tradition.

Tarr's late films de-emphasize geopolitical localities and replace these with non-places, as proposed by the French anthropologist Marc Augé (1995), or the Deleuzian "any-space-whatever" (Deleuze 1989). This gradually changing use of space again marks a trajectory from the national to the transnational. His early works feature the claustrophobic spaces of typical communist housing projects, spaces which satisfy Augé's description of "places" being "relational, historical and concerned with identity" (1995: 77). In Tarr's films from the 2000s, by contrast, "non-places" predominate. Although Augé links these "non-places" with sites of global commerce, whereas Tarr's films are set exclusively in non-modern localities, neither evokes

concrete or discrete identities. Ultimately, these films conjure the melancholic non-places of post-communism where endless repetition of everyday activities and gestures are withdrawn from both larger historical narratives and a recognizable geopolitical order. Transnationalism in Tarr's films is more about being "nowhere" than "everywhere." The fact that post-Wall Europe is a borderless space of free movement remains redundant for those who are both unable and unwilling to move anywhere.

Tarr's films from the 2000s transgress the limits of national Hungarian and Eastern European cinema, not only by means of specific textual strategies but also in terms of their mode of exhibition and distribution. As already mentioned, since *Damnation* his films have circulated in the film festival circuits, gaining significant attention from the international art-house film audience. His success in these circles is perhaps because his films epitomize all the basic characteristics of a specific sub-genre of festival films: 'seriousness/minimalism in vision and sound; their open and demanding narrative structures; their intertextuality (…) and, finally, their subject matter, including controversy as well as freedom' (Wong 2011: 68). Tarr's films have successfully participated in the European Film Festival network that provides space for the circulation of European art cinema. Unlike in the late 1950s and early 1960s, European art cinema does not function within the framework of national cinemas, but emerges as a transnational phenomenon. Tarr's artistic trajectory while not unique was until the end of the 1990s mostly open to well-established auteurs such as István Szabó or Krzysztof Kieślowski. From around 2000 it is followed by a younger generation of filmmakers such as Ukrainian Myroslav Slaboshpytskyi *Plemya* (Ukraine/Netherlands, *The Tribe,* 2014), Hungarian László Nemes *Saul fia* (Hungary, *Son of Saul,* 2015) or Pole Paweł Pawlikowski, and a number of female directors

looked at below.

Migrant Eastern European Women Behind and in Front of the Camera

New models of international financing and transnational mobility have created opportunities for Eastern European female personnel, actresses and directors, but they have not dismantled the Western representational regime, which still perceptually assigns Eastern Europe and especially Eastern European women a subordinate position. The postcolonial framework clearly highlights the binary power structure in representation, where the West still defines the East; however, it is countered by the global processes of mobility and the fragmentation of financing, which enable Eastern European female directors to produce their own films and seek funding from national and international bodies.

Although this extra- and intra-textual mobility is by no means gender specific, female cinematic journeys vividly reflect the complex process of fluctuation within European identities and cinemas. Mark Betz's identification of the "wandering women" in European modernist cinema as "engaged in a quest for meaning … of [within] a changing Europe" may still be relevant in the post-communist era (2009: 95). As both subjects and objects of cinematic representation, the figure of the Eastern European "wandering woman" reveals deep fissures and cracks in the body of this supposedly "unified" Europe.

Cinematic images of Eastern European migrant women feature in post-1989 films made in both Eastern and Western European cinema, for example, *Prostytutki* (Poland, *Prostitutes*, Eugeniusz Priwieziencew, 1997), *Córy szczęścia*

(Poland/Germany/Hungary, *Daughters of Happiness*, Márta Mészáros, 1999,) *Masz na imię Justine* (Poland/Luxembourg, *Your Name is Justine,* Franco De Pena, 2004) and *La Sconosciuta* (Italy/France, *The Unknown Woman*, Giuseppe Tornatore, 2006), *A mi madre le gustan las mujeres* (Spain, *My Mother Likes Women*, Daniela Féjerman and Inés París, 2002) or *Habitación en Roma* (Spain, *Room in Rome*, Julio Medem, 2010). Although the mobility of female characters constitutes "a broad representational continuum," this theme predominantly manifests itself in two opposing forms, the "traveller" and the "trafficked" (Engelen and Heuckelom 2014: x). In the latter case, a disenfranchised Eastern European woman, whose country is in the midst of an economic crisis engendered by the rampant implementation of Western capitalism, is either forced or lured to leave. She becomes a victim of capitalism as her body is used as an object of exchange. It is significant that Western European cinema features this negative variant of female mobility with more frequency than films made in Eastern Europe. These dual figures of the exploited female worker and the prostitute reveal economic and social inequalities in a "unified" and border-free Europe. They serve the purpose of political and social criticism and simultaneously demonstrate that the West/East division is still extant. The geopolitical order of "unified" Europe is presented as being implicitly hierarchical, with a stable "center," the West, and a centrifugal "periphery," the East, a fact which ultimately reinforces ethnic stereotypes (the masculine variant being the violent Eastern European gangster).

The majority of films concerning victimized Eastern European women are made by (Western) male directors (Tarr 2010: 175). They often utilize the device of the inter-ethnic romance narrative. One of the best known of these is *Ondine* (Ireland/USA, Neil Jordan, 2009) featuring Polish actress Alicja Bachleda-Curuś and Colin Farrell.

It exploits the familiar motif of a "damsel in distress" who is ultimately saved by a (Western) man, a trope which reinforces both patriarchal and Western supremacy. Though performing in the role of a helpless Eastern European woman, Bachleda-Curuś is herself a truly cosmopolitan actress working in the film industries of her native Poland, various European countries, and Hollywood. In turn, Katia Golubeva, a Russian-Lithuanian-French actress, epitomizes international success and recognition in the arena of international art cinema due to her appearances in films directed by Bruno Dumont, Claire Denis and Leos Carax. Among other Eastern European actresses who have achieved significant transnational recognition are Lithuanian-Russian Ingeborga Dapkunajte, *Mission: Impossible* (Brian de Palma, 1996), and Serbian Branka Katić, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (Anthony Russo and Joe Russo, 2014). Although they personally and professionally move fluently across transnational cinematic space, these performers seem to experience a representational glass ceiling in that they are often type-cast in the roles of victimized and helpless Eastern European woman.

Very few filmmakers have attempted to dismantle or subvert the cultural persistence and narrative attraction of the ethnically stereotyped Eastern European woman. Of these few, one of the most effective is Mimi Chakharova, a Bulgarian filmmaker living in the US. Her strategy in *The Price of Sex* (2011) is to use a form of investigative documentary to reveal the passivity and occasional complicity of Western law enforcement agencies in the trafficking of Eastern European women. Despite these sporadic attempts to resist the representational pattern of subjugated Eastern European female characters, they usually fit into Thomas Elsaesser's category of the "sub-national," associated with such categories as migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, who constitute the very opposite of the supra-national cosmopolitan

elite (2005: 116). These two valuing categories of "hyphenated nationals," as Elsaesser calls them, are useful tools with which to approach the issue of female cinematic mobility and uncover the postcolonial framework within which they operate. The films portray Eastern European women as "sub-nationals," yet "supra-national" Eastern European female film professionals produce them. Importantly, these actresses and directors do not work within the category of exilic or diaspora cinema but mostly engage with specific co-production projects (Iordanova 2010: 50). Thus they represent what Jane Mills calls "sojourner cinema," that is, work "made by filmmakers who are not involuntarily relocated in another country but who choose to travel across national borders and who do not relocate permanently" (Mills 2014: 142). Among these filmmakers are a significant number of women.

Polish director Agnieszka Holland's case demonstrates a gradual shift from "exilic cinema" (she chose to stay in France after Poland's introduction of martial law in 1981 and made films such as *Bittere Ernte* (Germany, *Angry Harvest*, 1985) and *To Kill a Priest*, (France/USA, 1988)) to "sojourner cinema." Since 1989 she has engaged with film and television projects in various countries, including co-productions such as *Europe, Europe* (Germany/France/Poland, 1990), *Copying Beethoven* (USA/Germany/Hungary, 2006) and *W Ciemności* (Poland/Germany/Canada, *In Darkness*, 2011), and has directed the acclaimed HBO TV shows *The Wire* (2002 – 2008) and *Treme* (2010 – 2012), yet she always returns to Poland. Holland's younger compatriot Małgorzata Szumowska embraced the category of "sojourner cinema," and opportunities for international co-productions created beyond 2000, from a very early stage in her cinematic career. As early as 2004 she directed a segment called "Crossroads" within a portmanteau film *Visions of Europe*, which she co-produced. (The film brought together a number of European

directors, including Eastern European Béla Tarr, Sarunas Bartas and Damian Kozole, to explore the topic of the European Union). She has very successfully secured funds from the Polish Film Institute and various trans-European producers, and her films circulate widely on the film festival circuit; her *33 Sceny z Życia* (Germany/Poland, *33 Scenes from Life*, 2008) won a Special Jury Prize at the 2008 Locarno International Film Festival, while *In the Name Of* and *Ciało* (Poland, *Body*, 2015) were presented at numerous film festivals and both won the Silver Bear in Berlin. Even though *Elles* (2011) was slightly less successful, its model of financing follows the model that has been developed so successfully in the case of the Romanian New Wave. It mixes funds from the national body The Polish Film Institute and from various international bodies, including the European Union's MEDIA Programme, and uses her own production company, Shot-Szumowski. It also references European art-house films through casting Juliette Binoche in the main role. Apart from producing her own films, Szumowska has also co-produced such well-known European films as Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* (2009) through Zentropa International Poland. Similarly, the Bosnian filmmaker Jasmila Žbanić has pursued a border-crossing path and a model of producing her own films, co-producing films of others, and securing national and international funds. For example, *Emma's Secret – Grbavica* (Bosnia and Herzegovina/Croatia/Austria/Germany, 2006) was sponsored, among others, by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Culture and Sport and Ministry of Culture, the Republic of Croatia and Eurimages Council of Europe. Although her films are mostly concerned with local themes concerning the Bosnian war and its aftermath they are evidently resonant with an international audience, as proven by their international critical acclaim and box office success.

When they stand behind the camera, as directors, Eastern Europe's "wandering women" epitomize the decline of national cinemas within the continent and the disappearance of its internal cultural borders. However, when the same women become objects of the camera's gaze, as actors, they find themselves residents of a different geopolitical order in which the center is as intransigent as it was before the Iron Curtain was torn down.

The Romanian New Wave: European Cinema, Co-productions and Film Festivals

The recent phenomenon of the Romanian New Wave brings into focus many features which characterize post-1989 Eastern European cinema and its move towards Europeanization and transnationalism, such as cinematic representations of the collapse of communism, the examination of life under communism, pan-European co-productions, and the increasing role of international film festivals in promoting low-budget national cinema productions.

The grouping of generationally-defined directors who ostensibly share thematic and stylistic similarities has always been contentious, especially when, as in the case of the Romanian New Wave, they do not produce a manifesto. Nevertheless, the unprecedented success of Romanian films on the art-house festival circuits (especially the Cannes Film Festival which uses national identity as a primary selection criterion) and among critics has created such a cachet for Romanian films that they have been collectively labeled the Romanian New Wave (Scott 2008). *Moartea domnului Lăzărescu* (Romania, *The Death of Mr Lăzărescu*, 2005) by Cristi Puiu and

California Dreamin' (Romania, Cristian Nemescu, 2007) won top prize in Un Certain Regard and in the next three years the Palme d'Or went to *A fost sau n-a fost* (Romania, *12:08 East of Bucharest*, 2006) by Corneliu Porumboiu, *4 luni, 3 săptămîni şi două zile* (Romania/Belgium, *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, 2007) by Cristian Mungiu and a short film *Megatron* (Romania, Marian Crişan, 2008).

The directors who form the core of the movement – Cătălin Mitulescu, Cristian Mungiu, Radu Muntean Corneliu Porumboiu, Cristi Puiu and the late Cristian Nemescu – and their films share a remarkable number of characteristics (Scott 2008; Nasta 2013; Pop 2014). The majority of these directors were born in the late 1960s and early 1970s and are so-called "children of the Decree 770," the 1966 law forbidding any form of abortion in Romania (Scott 2008; Pop 2014: 25). They share the generational experience of living under an extreme version of communism, enduring the truly tragic effects of the abortion decree and witnessing the only violent ending of a communist regime in Eastern Europe, all of which have become prominent themes in their films. These directors also went to the National University of Drama and Film (U.N.A.T.C), where they experienced the tutorship of the older generation of Romanian directors and collectively rebelled against the old ways of representation. In particular, the Romanian New Wave's insistence on realism is not only an aesthetic choice, and verisimilitude is not its only motivation; rather, it is an ethical choice to present the truth (Scott 2008). The directors of the Romanian New Wave take an ethical and revisionist stance against the former mendacious ways of representing reality (governed by censorship under communism) and against the older generation of directors, some of whom may have compromised with the communist regime. In that sense, the RNW displays striking parallels with another European movement, Italian neo-realism, which took a moral and aesthetic stance against

fascism (Hayward 2000: 202).

Cristi Puiu's *Marfa si banii* (Romania, *Stuff and Dough*, 2001), the film often cited as the precursor to the Wave, announced a set of hallmarks of the movement: a thematic focus on stories set amid everyday life under communism (even if they explore the historical event of 1989 revolution, it is through personal experience), an emphasis on the grim facts of quotidian existence, and minimalist stylistic choices: plain, available lighting; unobtrusive natural sound; hand-held camera; everyday décor, and an austere, neo-realist style with a penchant for the Bazinian essence of realism (the long takes, deep focus, limited editing and static camera positions) (Scott 2008; Nasta 2013; Pop 2014). The stylistic convention of "unflinching realism" is a logical choice when making films based on real events under financial restrictions, and it is to the directors' credit that they have made a virtue out of necessity. While small budgets let directors avoid "market censorship," the aesthetic and stylistic similarities of the films are also due to the minute scale of the Romanian cinema industry which forces the directors to rely on the same pool of available talent, such as the screenwriter Răzvan Rădulescu, who wrote or co-wrote a number of critically acclaimed films: *The Death of Mr Lăzărescu*; *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, Radu Muntean's *The Paper Will Be Blue* (Romania, *Hîrtia va fi albastră*, 2006) and *Tuesday, After Christmas* (Romania, *Marti, dupa Craciun*, 2010) and *Child's Pose* (Romania, *Pozitia copilului*, Calin Peter Netzer 2013); the cinematographer Oleg Mutu (*The Death of Mr Lăzărescu*; *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* and *Beyond the Hills*); the editor Dana Bunescu; and actors, with Luminita Gheorghiu as the muse of the movement.

As the RNW reaches its twelfth year (2004 – 2016), a span of time that tends to herald the death of any European movement, we can begin to understand the reasons

for this unparalleled success story from Eastern Europe. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, industry changes have had the most profound impact on the Europeanization of Eastern European cinema, and the trajectory of Romanian cinema from year zero of no film production in 2000 to the definitive recent inclusion of the RNW into the canon of European movements best exemplifies this. Romania introduced the new Law of Cinematography in 1999, modelled on the French law, which "regulated the relationship between the private production companies and the state source of funding, mostly in the form of state interest-free loans for private companies" (Uricaru 2012: 435). The system allocates up to 50% of the film cost from the Romanian National Centre for Cinematography (Centrul Naţional Cinematografei, CNC) based on a points system for the quality of the screenplay, the track record of the production company, and the director's previous international success at film festivals, which validates 'the decisive role of the international film festivals' (Uricaru 2012: 434). While virtually all later films of the RNW have been sponsored by the CNC (e.g. *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, *Tuesday, After Christmas, Beyond the Hills*), the establishing films of the movement did not benefit from the state system of funding (and were produced independently) because the system puts a premium on previous film festivals' awards (see Iordanova). However, many of the directors of the RNW formed private production companies as early as 2000, which helped them raise funds from international sources and gave them a degree of artistic freedom and control. Famously, Cristi Puiu's Mandragora produced *The Death of Mr Lazarescu*, the first film of the movement, after the CNC refused to sponsor it, while Corneliu Porumboiu's 42Km Film produced the second film of the movement, *12:08 East of Bucharest* (and co-produced all of his films) and Cristian Mungiu's Mobra Films produced three of his films. A combination of private

production companies, therefore, initially enabled the creativity of the RNW directors to emerge. Later financial boosts from the state-owned CNC built upon this foundation to establish the Romanian New Wave as a truly European movement.

Both the CNC requirement of previous festival awards to sponsor film projects and international co-productions have also ensured that thematically the Wave is a transnational phenomenon aimed at international art-house audiences. Despite the fact that the films are set in a recognizable Romanian reality, themes and images of communism and its fall have become the defining moments of recent European history and belong to a pan-European heritage. The transnational nature of the phenomenon at the interface of the national and international is also evident in the RNW's reliance for its own definition on international festival circuits that paradoxically insist on defining in national terms those films that do travel well across borders. It is this interaction between national and international funding, national milieus and European themes, and effective international film festival strategies that has brought Romanian cinema to the attention of worldwide audiences.

Conclusion

The three case studies presented illustrate our contention that the change in finance model is the most significant tendency in recent Eastern European cinema. Béla Tarr's cinematic career serves as a primary instance of the persistence of auterism in the cinema of the region, but also of Eastern European's cinema's transference from the realm of national to transnational cinema. National and European funds and the availability of globalized production opportunities have also opened up the cinematic space of Europe for female Eastern European filmmakers who, as argued, experience unprecedented freedom of artistic movement and display a savvy economic approach

to producing films. However, this positive experience of film practitioners' mobility across European and world cinema is contrasted with its negative counterpart in the "trafficking of women" theme that predominates in the narratives of feature films made by Western, mostly male, filmmakers. If Eastern European female filmmakers fully contribute to the recent "sojourner cinema," transgressing essentialist notions of national identity, cinematic representations of women from the region are still linked with the negative stereotype of a woman who is forced to travel and is sexually exploited. The two radically opposed forms of the cinematic mobility of Eastern European women are both a symbol and a symptom of, on the one hand, the Europeanization of Eastern European cinema and, on the other, entrenched perceptual divisions in Europe. Finally, the Romanian New Wave is a stellar example of the Europeanization of Eastern European cinema, and a collective cinematic trajectory from the national to the transnational in terms of mode of production based on funding from national and international bodies (both private and the European Union), and co-production by directors' own companies.

At the same time critical insistence in Romania and elsewhere that a number of films can be seen as both examples of auteur cinema and national cinematic movements prove that seemingly old-fashioned critical categories are still valid. To sum up, Eastern European cinema participates in the new development of European globalized and transnational cinemas but at the same time it manifests the validity of national and auteurist frameworks.

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