

I. Creating the Space

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The “Transnational Turn”. New Urban Identities and the Transformation of the Romanian Contemporary Cinema

Abstract

The pressure of globalization and the transformations of the international film markets are rapidly changing the recent Romanian cinema. In a period spanning from 2010 to 2014, the paper describes some of the most important transformations, visible early on in productions like *Martți după Crăciun* (*Tuesday after Christmas*) and even more importantly in a film like *Poziția copilului* (*Child's Pose*). The process, called by the author “the transnational turn” of the Romanian film, is characterized by the fact that urban spaces become more and more neutral and generic and the stories are increasingly de-contextualized. Designed for international markets, these films are changing both the setting and the mise-en-scène, creating a non specific space which is more likely to be accepted by cinema goers around the world. The second argument is the present generation Romanian cinema makers are moving even further, they are choosing to abandon the national cinema. As Elisabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden noted in their introduction to the classical reader on “transnational cinema”, another major aspect is that the recent films are increasingly indicating a certain “Hollywoodization” of their storytelling, and, implicitly, of the respective urban contexts of their narratives. This impact goes beyond genrefication, and, as is the case with productions like *Love building* (2013), which are using both cosmopolitan behaviors and non-specific urban activities, are manifestations of deep transformations in the Romanian cinema. More and more, the Romanian films tend to look like “foreign” movies, as the universe they depict, the life-styles they are centered upon, are less and less culturally distinct.

Keywords: Transnational cinema, Romanian cinema, identity and Hollywoodization, genrefication, urban mise-en-scène.

The difficulties of the national cinema marketplace

Although there is a relevant increase of the total revenues from the cinema tickets sales in Romania, according to the European Audiovisual Observatory in 2013 the total sales increased with 13,8%, the country is placed among the lowest ranking European markets in terms of

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movie theater admissions. Compared to the European wide 6.3 billion Euros revenues, the market share of Romania is merely 2,8%, with and 9 million assessed viewers and 36,3 million Euros in sales (data estimated for 2013). The staggering increase of the exports of Romanian films, which reached an impressive 90% of admissions in the EU market during 2006-2007, slowed down after 2010-2011, with a total of 2,3 million viewers in the members states (for the 1996-2012 period). More so, the national film industry suffers deeply from a lack of resources, since most of the viewers prefer American-made productions, more than 90% percent of the tickets sold in Romania are for international blockbusters. To make things even worse, in 2013 the domestic earnings decreased dramatically, from 880,000 Euros in 2012 to 671,000 Euros. According to the data provided by the Romanian Council for Competition, the market is characterized by an extremely high rate of concentration (almost 90%), focusing on blockbusters and highly popular commercial movies, while the independent productions have limited access to screenings. Even successful movies like *4 luni, 3 săptămâni și 2 zile* (*4 months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*), which managed to reach an impressive 975.158 viewers in the EU, reached inside the national market a total of 89,662 viewers¹¹. While in 2014, a single Hollywood production (Martin Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street*, which dominated the national admissions in the first half of the year) was able to attract more viewers (over 295,000) than all the Romanian films of the same year, together!¹²

The key argument of this study is that these changes in the film marketplace influenced recent Romanian cinema, which is gradually transforming. Clearly these laze film-makers who are reaching a transnational audience, one which has provided them a wider public. Transnational film theory emerging today provides same answers. Starting with the suggestions of authors like Hamid Naficy, for whom the political and ideological aspects of transnationalism and post-colonialism were explanations for the new representations of a transnational cinematic style, we can call this "accented cinema" (Naficy 2001). Although I am more interested in the thematic and the identity formation level of the transnational cinema, rather than on the elements of distribution or production, as I pointed out in another study (Pop 2014), the Romanian cinema must be seen as part of a European film-making industry, due to its financing structure and its implicit audiences. I am rejecting the argument put forward by Halle, for whom the transnational cinema is made possible by "supranational funding mechanisms", which in turn lead to the development of a "transnational orientation for audiovisual production, expanding dramatically the popular orientation, and bolstering pan-European structures of synergistic cooperation" (Halle 304). The "multicultural logic" designed to undermine the "national specificity" that Halle suggests (306) is not supported by his argumentation, since he makes no clear distinctions between transcultural and transnational. Halle argues that there are three levels of the aesthet-

1 All data available at <http://www.obs.coe.int> and <http://lumiere.obs.coe.int> retrieved July 2014.

2 <http://www.cinemagia.ro/stiri/cu-21-mai-multe-bilete-vandute-arn-cinematografe-26038/>

ics of the transnational cinema, which stem from either a disregard for the actor's ethnicity and their reliance on English, of the use of well known literary texts and transnational topics. These elements are not enough to make a movie "transnational", but rather "transcultural".

My contention is that the Romanian cinema is changing from a national to a transnational film philosophy and, more importantly, that the directors are agglutinated into a cosmopolitan identity, which expresses the values of transnational lifestyles, and sometimes of a transnational elite. The main purpose of this paper is to map the most important transformations brought forward in the contemporary cinema-making in Romania and to show how, while some of the authors who concentrated in the early 2000 on topics and narratives which were deeply rooted in a national experience, and created a truly European cinema, are now surpassed by the searches for means of expression which go beyond the local, regional and even international relevance. Looking for wider contexts and audiences, the Romanian film-makers are gradually becoming part of the transnational cinema. The paper is intended as a framework which would explain the re-orientation of recent Romanian cinema and an effort anticipate the possible future developments.

Hollywoodization and genrefication in the recent cinema

The signs of a widespread genrefication were visible in the Romanian film industry even before 1989, when the Romanian film industry was often mimicking popular genres from other international cinema cultures. The grand historical epic films made by Sergiu Nicolaescu were offshoots of the famous *peplum genre* movies in Italian cinema, while the comedies of the same era were using easily recognizable narrative schemes from gangster parodies and other popular cinematic productions in the Italian cinema, like the "Transylvanian Westerns" of Pița or Veroiu. This process of imitation was slowed down by the reducing of the budgets in the Romanian cinema, yet it did not disappear, many productions made after 1989 were clearly influenced by the cinematic practices of Hollywood, which have a global impact on many national film industries.

Although some authors also claim that the transnational cinema is part of the globalization of cinema industry, I would argue that the internationalization of Romanian cinema had already begun in the early 2000 and, again as I pointed out in my previous works (Pop 2014, 13-15), the Romanian directors of the post-2000 generation developed their own international co-productions, influencing regional and international cinemas. It is not the co-productions which make the Romanian film industry part of the transnational cinema – rather it would make it part of a global cinema, which is following another aesthetics. A global cinema, be it influenced by Hollywood or, more generically, by a global block-buster culture, is different from the transcultural cinema which is de-localizing the narratives and the settings. An extremely relevant example for this trend is *Closer to the Moon*, the production of Nae Caranfil, which got released

in 2014, although it obtained its national financing in 2007 and started its shooting in September 2011. This film, which tells the story of the only bank robbery in Stalinist Romania, casts famous American and British actors like Mark Strong, Vera Farminga, Christian McKay and Tim Plester. The movies, entirely spoken in English, albeit placed in the Bucharest of late 1959, uses the topic of the Communist past in an attempt to reach global audiences. Although released also in the USA and internationally, the movie had only 18,400 viewers in Romania (box office data from cinemagia.ro). *Closer to the Moon* is representative for the development of a new film industry in Romania, where numerous movies were made possible because of the presence of international co-production resources. Although performed by international stars who are speaking English, this international mix is still a Romanian production, part of the national cinema, since it is placed during the Stalinist regime in Bucharest, and refers to a particular historical context. *Closer to the Moon* might be internationally relevant, but is national in its extent. Although a co-production of a Romanian company (Mandragora Movies), an Italian group (Rainier), a French firm (Denis Friedman) and a Polish financing group (Agresywna Banda) it does not show any traits of transnationalism. The international cast and the internationalization of the formal expression in cinema, if not followed by content, remain attempts to *globalize the national*.

Following a convincing theoretical explanation for transnational cinema, that suggests to see it as a type of cinema-making that has lost its “nationality” (Palacio 37), such co-productions are usually environments where the crossing over from the national to the transnational could take place, and is allowing new forms of expression, yet the universe of meanings that addressed wider audiences, which is cross-cultural by its nature, is not necessarily transnational.

Another tendency is indicated by more recent productions, like Alexandru Maftei’s *Domnișoara Christina* (*Miss Christina*, 2013), which points to an inclination of the Romanian cinema-makers towards explicit block-buster genres. Maftei, in his efforts to make movies differently from the generation represented by Puiu or Mungiu, is betting on genre cinema for innovation. His film, marketed as the “first Romanian horror movie”, premiered on Halloween and claimed to be a new beginning for the national film industry. Unfortunately for the producers, the re-inventing of the genre cinema was put into place by an awful melange of Hitchcock meeting *Dracula* and the *Exorcist*, with ill adjusted elements from *Child’s Play*, which attracted only about 26,000 viewers in cinemas in 2013. The most important defect of such a production, stemming from the lack of proper funding, was transparent in the cinematic representation. The adaptation of Mircea Eliade’s homonymous novel is placed on a country estate which belonged to the Moscu family. Here comes Egor, a young painter, who falls in love with a strange woman, who proves to be an undead creature, killed during the peasant revolution of 1907. Regrettably, the entire fantastic narrative is undermined by the total lack of verisimilitude in the visual depictions. The theatrical displays, the poorly made special effects and the artificial backdrops are cluttered by impossible dialogues.

Actually almost all the necessary information is presented by the exaggerated use of words, with the visuals reduced to simple de-contextualized sequences. In his efforts to create a true "Romanian horror", Maftai manages to create a caricatured and sometimes grotesque identity, in an ill constructed story, with characters lacking credibility. Without suspense and without sustained tension building, *Miss Christina* ends up a disappointment for the genre and for the hopes of a Romanian blockbuster cinema.

Another trope of the global popular culture is the romantic comedy, more specifically the mainstream American "romcom" (McDonald 2013). A relevant illustration is *Love Building* (2013), a romantic comedy directed by Iulia Rugină, one of the young female directors in Romania who represents the new Romanian cinema. This was the second most viewed Romanian film in 2013, with about 27,400 paying viewers in cinemas, a remarkable achievement for a debut movie. As schematic and melodramatic as it might appear, *Love Building*, exploits some of the most important conventions of a genre mostly ignored in the recent Romanian cinema. Relevantly enough, Rugină is casting in her movie three of the most important male actors of the Romanian New Wave cinema: Dragoș Bucur, Alexandru Papadopol (both in Cristi Puiu's *Marfa și Bani*) and Dorian Boguță (from *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu*). The movie looks very much like any typical Hollywood productions, using clichés like those employed in films like *Couples Retreat* (2009) or *Hope Springs* (2012). What is more significant is the fact that the film brings to the attention social relations and social contexts which are no longer linked to a narrow, national specificity. Bucur plays Silviu, a cynical sexologist; Papadopol is Cristian, a shy psychiatrist for couples; and Valentin is also a group psychiatrist and personal development specialist who are dealing with the problems of 14 different couples. The couples are also socially "globalized": Eugen and Dana, are in a relationship for 4 years, and while he is playing computer games, and is addicted to gadgets, she is extremely bossy; Claudia and Emil are in a relationship for over 8 years, and they have infidelity and jealousy problems; Andreea and Mihai are in a relationship for more than 2 years and his dependency on his mother causes problems; Melania and Ioana are in a homosexual relationship for about a year, and they are confronting alcohol issues; and so on. The movie, placed in a summer retreat that can be in any resort around the world, shows generic human relationships in a context which is oversimplified so that it could appeal to a global audience.

Minte-mă frumos (*Lie to me nicely*, 2012) is another production, directed by Iura Luncașu (who has specialized in soap-operas at Media Pro Films) which describes the lives of social groups otherwise ignored by the art films of the New Wave generation. Like *Love Building*, this is a movie which presents new social occupations, depicts a job marketplace only recently developing in Romania. This aesthetically irrelevant comedy, which depicts the love mishaps of a hacker and an IT manager, is a story taking place in call centers and online chats, depicting activities like career advisors and PR specialists, gigolos and chocolate shop owners (of French origins). The main characters are having online love lives and are leading superficial lives, all in shallow urban

spaces (coffee shops, taxi cabs) which are contextualized in a globalized Bucharest. Regrettably the scenario is following all the conventions of the online dating genre, with borrowed elements from *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940) or *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993)– even the poster is mimicking the famous *You've Got Mail* (1998).

Perhaps the most interesting for the globalization trend in the recent Romanian cinema is Cristina Iacob's first feature film, *#Selfie* (2014), which was better received by the national audience than many other productions, since it reached in only 2 months of screenings over 81,000 viewers³³. Filmed like a road trip, *#Selfie* marks in my opinion the completion of a full circle in the Romanian contemporary cinema – from the road trip movie of Cristi Puiu (*Marfa si banii*), which started the New Wave cinema, to this gag-comedy of teenage chase film, the Romanian movie making finished its crossing from the national, to the international, the global and now the transnational cinema. This movie is relevant for the final integration of global subjects and stories in the national cinema. If the New Wave films were focusing on subjects from the marginality and disenfranchised, the directors of this "New Cinema" are more and more interested in a youth culture which has no more links to the Romanian society, one which is easily agglutinated in the generic discourse of any Western hemisphere culture. This teenage comedy uses the star system practices – it includes pop/dance stars like Alex Velea and Andrei Maria a.k.a. Smiley and is spoken in Romglish (the pidgin version of Romanian) as common langue, where expressions like "epic genre" (epic gen) are indications of a globalized generation.

However, these productions which are representing economic realities and human relations depicting not only the transformation of the Romanian society, but also the changes in the imaginary of the community, are nothing but manifestations of the impact of an internationalization and globalization of media discourses and cannot be described as transnational films. Although they no longer belong to a limited national identity, they are mostly part of the globalized, internationally uniformed media expressions.

Clinging to the national subjects and stories

While many recent films are indicating a clear disinterest for the national themes, locations and historical relevance, there is an obvious resistance of the national cinema. Even if this national cinema must be understood as different from the nationalist cinema (practiced during Communism) this is still an artistic expression depending on historical traits, focusing on national traumas. If the nationalist cinema has exhausted its ideological resources, the national cinema presents local or international viewers distinct historical facts taking place in a give culture. The best example is *După dealuri* (*Beyond Hills*, 2013) which is made using the cinematic tools of the New Wave, yet it remains part of a national cinema, since it provides the viewer with a narrative totally

3 <http://www.cinemagia.ro/stiri/cu-21-mai-multe-bilete-vandute-arn-cinematografe-26038/>

linked to a national context. The participants (the nun Voichița and her friend Alina) the environment (a remote Orthodox monastery) the problems faced (exorcism, faith) are all deeply national in their scope. In this respect we must distinguish between a national cinema, dealing with specific themes, which are intended to provide an understanding of a given, national psyche, and the transnational cinema. Unlike the nationalistic representations of glorified national identity, the national cinema-making provides the viewers (national or international) with a glimpse into social problems like prostitution, exploitation or authority, within a determined social group.

Some of the recent productions are even forms of re-telling previously developed issues, and this is obvious by the recurrence of locally contextualized narratives. It is the case with productions like *Quod erat demonstrandum* (*The Unsaved*, 2013) by Andrei Gruzniczki, who is returning to Communist Romania as a source of inspiration. Gruzniczki's movie is a metaphorical repetition of an argument already made clean by the films of Mungiu and Porumboiu. Using a black and white aesthetics, the director places his story in 1984, when the Securitate and the Communist Party were still in charge of the lives of the Romanians. The same is true for other productions of the same year, like Stere Gulea's *Sunt o babă comunistă* (*I am a Communist Hag*, 2013) and *Roxanne* (2013), a movie by Valentin Hotea. In both movies the recent past, be it the memories of a self proclaimed "Communist hag" or the drama of a man who finds out a dark truth from the files of the former Romanian Secret Police (Securitate) are haunting the imaginary of present times. An even more explicit movie in this respect is Nicolae Mărgineanu's *Poarta Albă* (*The Poarta Albă Penitentiary*, 2014), placed in one of the darkest labor camps of Stalinist Romania, not much different from another of his remarkable tales about the Communist regime, *Binecuvântată fii, închisoare* (*Bless you, prison*, 2002).

These movies show no signs of novelty, they repeat elements which previously characterized the national film-makers – the return to the recent past (mostly Communism), dealing with moral issues linked to socially problematic circumstances and a predisposition to use localized events as ways of expressing universally valid questions. The national cinema which, again, should not be confused with the nationalist cinema of late Communism, is cultivating the same themes of the recent past, which seem to play an important role. Another example comes from a production like *Despre oameni și melci* (*About Men and Snails*, 2012) by Tudor Giurgiu or *Și ciii sunt verzi pe pereți* (*Chasing Rainbows*, 2012) by Dan Chișu, centered on stories which are recurrently focusing on national problems, like the economic transition, and are placed in urban spaces which correspond to the depiction of a national/ local specificity. Describing peripheral problems and placed in social peripheries, these films are examples of a nation centered movie-making.

Even a movie made by one of the young promising directors, *Câinele japonez* (*The Japanese Dog* 2013), which marks the feature debut of Tudor Cristian Jurgiu, is relying heavily on specific ties to the regional (albeit local) identities. His story remains centered around a national narrative, with a mild internationalized twist. The plot is

placed in a remote village where the main character, Costache Moldu (played by Victor Rebengiuc), is allowing the spectators to witness the troubled life of an old man, trying to survive the consequences of the flooding of his already derelict home. The biggest problem of Costache is the coping with the fact that his son (Ticu) lives now in Japan and, when he returns with his wife and son, is totally estranged from his father. This apparent internationalization [which occurred in other contemporary movies like *Medalia de onoare* (*Medal of Honor* 2009), where the same actor (Rebengiuc) plays Ion Ion, an old man who has a son living in Canada], is counterbalanced by the backdrops, which are redundantly narrow, describing the typical poor Romanian village. At best these productions could be described either as multi-national films, which are depicting contexts in which the specificity of an ethnic group is mirrored in the perception of other groups and individuals, or as international films, where the national meets a larger perspective.

The “transnational turn”

There are three important movies relevant for the changes in contemporary filmmaking, indicating a trend towards the creation of a transnational urban identity in the recent Romanian cinema; Radu Muntean’s *Marți după Crăciun* (*Tuesday after Christmas*, 2010), Călin Peter Netzer *Poziția copilului* (*Child’s Pose* 2013) and Corneliu Porumboiu’s *Când se lasă seara peste București sau Metabolism* (*When Evening Falls on Bucharest or Metabolism* 2013). These aesthetically relevant movies are simultaneously carriers of the traits of the “transnationalization” of the Romanian cinema, which has several key characteristics: limited references to territorial or national identities, reduced background information, transnational subjects and stories which are less and less linked to particular cultural milieus.

The first profound modification is visible in the settings of these recent films, which share a common *transnational* trait in the way they depict the ambiance. I would call his transformation of the space as “the transmutation of the kitchen sink”. As I noted before in my study on the Romanian New Wave, many Romanian movies of the new generation used a cinematic style where shooting was done in urban interiors which visually suggested the degradation of individuals and their social condition. Decrepit kitchens, enclosed rooms in block of flats or even bathrooms were physical surroundings that shaped the psychological condition of the characters. This was the case with many movies, some like *Moartea domnului Lăzărescu* (*The Death of Mister Lăzărescu*, 2005) by Cristi Puiu, or *A fost sau n-a fost? (12:08 East of Bucharest)*, 2006) by Corneliu Porumboiu, where the kitchen or the bathroom of an apartment from a working class block of flats were the darkened backdrops for deep human tragedies.

This is why one of the first indications of the transformations happening in the social identity of the characters can be found in the *mise-en-scène*. One of the earliest examples is to be found in the movie of Radu Muntean *Tuesday after Christmas*. The urban interiors of this movie are showing not only other social groups – like the urbanite

middle class, the well to do doctors and their working environments –, but also give way to a certain de-contextualized, nationally non-specific identity.

By using a simple sequence analysis, most of the scenes from Muntean's movie take place in social environments which are not related to any given culture. From the very beginning we are introduced in a private space, a bedroom without any contextualizing elements. The second scene takes place in a shopping mall, where there are no references to a particular place. The third scene happens in a fancy car, where father and daughter are caught in traffic, and the urban space they pass by shows no local references. The following sequence is developed in a dentist cabinet, where Paul's mistress, Raluca, works. We are repeatedly placed in urban spaces which are completely neutral (both by chromatic design and by the external references). This is also the case with the following sequences, where at a restaurant we witness two couples, Paul Hanganu with his wife, and his friend Cristi, with his young lover, who exchange a long conversation. There is no connection with the national, no visual referencing to any local specificity, more so, the jokes at the table are all allusions to international contexts, like the fact that the father of Enrique (Iglesias) is also singing. Clearly this kind of setting allows the construction of the amorous triangle and the development of a narrative which is opened to a wider reception, beyond the limitations of the national cinema. It must be noted that this film shows a stark contrast with a "national" film like *Această lehamite* (*Fed-up* 1994) where resembling backdrops (hospitals, urban spaces) and actions (driving, infidelity) are depicted, yet the depiction is done with an exaggerated intention to localize the narrative.

The same intentions are also visible in the case of another recent movie, which is developing a minimalist mise-en-scène, and this spatial neutrality is able to surpass the limitations of a national cinema. In *Metabolism* Corneliu Porumboiu develops a meta-narrative about the act of movie-making, not far from Truffaut's *La nuit américaine* (*Day for Night*, 1973), where all the sequences are again de-contextualized: from the driving in the middle of the night, to the restaurant discussion which takes place in a Japanese environment, with a minimal scenery of walled paintings. The de-localizing of the scene is almost absolute in one of the final scenes, where we are watching the endoscope images of the director's intestines.

The abandoning the old Dacia automobile for newer models, mostly foreign produced cars, is another physical indication of these changes, which are taking place both in society and in the cinematic representation. Just like in *Tuesday after Christmas*, where the adulterous father drives his daughter home in a foreign made car, in *Child's Pose* by Călin Peter Netzer all the characters are well to do people, driving expensive foreign brand cars. The main tragedy of the movie (a terrible car accident) is caused by a powerful Audi 8; while the main character, Neli, the overprotective mother (played by the remarkable Luminița Gheorghiu) drives a powerful BMW X5. All the more, the most important conversation of the movie, placed at the climax of the story, is about

the fact that the traffic tragedy was generated by the competition between cars. Even in *Metabolism* the long shot takes place in a foreign brand car, and shows us an urban environment which has nothing to do with any localized space, generically presenting steel and glass buildings, with generic ads and street signs.

Child's Pose is another internationally acclaimed movie, relevant for this tendency. Netzer is not only depicting neutral urban identities, but also a cosmopolitan way of life. The opening scene in *Poziția copilului* places the story in a nationally non-specific interior, albeit in an urban environment where two well to do women talk. Relevantly enough, their clothes and accessories, including technologically advanced cell phones and jewels, are placing the characters in a high life social group. The two middle aged women discussing are obviously upper middle class, well to do socially, powerful women who control their environment. The second scene takes us into the middle of a party, in a rich social background, where managers and ministers, celebrities, realtors and medical doctors are coming together. Just like in *Tuesday after Christmas* – except the fact that these characters are speaking a particular national language (here Romanian) – there is nothing in the social background that indicates any national identity or affiliation. Their urban existence is neutral in terms of nationality. They dance on Italian music, the drink champagne and “Campari orange” and their huge house or the fancy apartments they live in, have private cleaning personnel, with sumptuous interior decorations and indicating their affluence.

Cornelia (Neli) Keneres, the main character, is a interior design decorator, a job which is not typical for local people – she is married to a high-priced doctor, and is surrounded by influential people. Even the conversations between the main characters are indicating this transnational transformation, both of the cinema and of certain social groups in Romania. For example Neli, who buys her son “Nobel prize” novels, is totally unaware of the contemporary Romanian writers, and is participating to socially well-heeled events, like the show at the Opera during which she finds out about her son’s accident.

This context can be described with the concept used by Mette Hjort: “modernizing transnationalism” (Hjort in Durovicova and Newman, 24), in the sense that the viewer is exposed to a cultural space which does not belong to the national, but is rather beyond the limitations of its specificity. This “modernized space” allows the movement from one level of narrative to another, since the space and time are not localized. Such neutralized urban spaces and the implicit minimalistic scenery, which does not provide any local fixation is another characteristic of this type of cinema-making makes the national (Romanian) identity undistinguishable from other national identities, belonging to a modernized world. Such cosmopolitan identities and behaviors belong to an urban life which can be attributed to a transnational imaginary, undifferentiated from other urban spaces in Europe. Thus we are exposed to an interesting dynamics between the national identity and the transnational expression. In such contexts,

where transnational values are part of the narrative transnational worldview come into foreground.

Another interesting suggestion was made by Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli who claimed that there is a creation of a "new city", which opens the discussions about a "postmodern cinema" (Mazierska and Rascaroli 2003, 15-16). This is a cityscape that does not belong to a specific national identity, it can not be localized, even if apparently national or local themes and subjects are into place. It is here that "the shedding of national differences and the acquisition of uniform, transnational or postnational identities" happens (Mazierska and Rascaroli 2003, 6).

This space is populated by a new (Romanian) elite, a nouveau riche class which is no longer tied to any ethnic traits. This division is clearly visible in Netzer's movie, where the well to do family is depicted in stark contrast with the environment of the family of the accidentally killed of young boy. Barbu's apartment (the son who accidentally kills a boy) is cosmopolitan, decorated in a modern design style, with an interior stair case and neutral furniture, featuring industrial colors and shapes that could be found in any urban interior around the world. This is underlined by the appliances and technologies available in each room; everything points to a living habitat that is completely non-specific nationally. In the meantime the victim's family is living in a poor rural context – where the final, dramatic scene takes place – also de-territorialized. Or, as Milja Radovic describes the transnational, this is the communication space between the otherwise mutually exclusive national and global (Radovic 2014).

One of the most relevant cosmopolitan spaces used in the recent cinema is represented by the new shopping malls in Romania. From a society of penury to an affluence culture of the "shopping mall", the Romanian economic environment was totally transformed, and by this the entire culture was re-shaped. The mall allows the national identity to be lost, just like in the second scene from *Tuesday after Christmas* – the action taking place in a shopping mall where, for more than 5 minutes, the viewer receives no information about the specificity of the location. This scene could take place in any city, in any country around the world. This is joined by a narrative function, as it is explicit in one of the key scenes in *Child's Pose*, which also takes place in a shopping center. Here the dynamics between the two spaces (national and global), becomes indicative of the dynamics within the story, the tensions between the characters and their private identity. Bogdan Dumitrache (as Barbu), who depicts an imbalanced young man, fathered by a disturbed older generation, is mirrored by Vlad Ivanov (as Dinu Laurențiu), who creates a memorable role as a demonic arriviste, who pushes the whole tragedy into action and who shows no signs of morals and remorse, and who's rationalistic explanations for an irrational behavior takes us into the depths of the character and also into the depths of an individualistic society. Dinu (as well as Barbu) are no longer manifestations of national identities, they are transnational characters, reaching to an audience beyond the local or the global.

This is why the most recent film made by Călin Peter Netzer, awarded with some of the most important prizes at the Berlin Film Festival (best film, Fipresci) confirms the general transnational trend we are discussing here. In a masterful display of movie-making, *Child's Pose* represents the best characteristics of the recent Romanian cinema. Yet it is also showing how the Romanian contemporary cinema is clearly moving away from the cinema-making practices of their immediate past, shifting from the treatment of the commonly shared themes, to non-specific situations. As is the case with the celebration of Christmas in Radu Muntean's film, where the references are no longer linked to the trauma of Communism (as it was in Porumboiu's movie about the Romanian revolution which tragically ended on Christmas night), but to the consumerism of the contemporary society; Netzer's film is no longer about a case specific to the Romanian society (as it was with Mr. Lăzărescu), but rather a story to which anybody around the world can relate to. The directors which were called "the young Romanian filmmakers" are now mature in their forms of expression and I would argue that they are entering a new paradigm, one based on a transnational imaginary, one which would allow them to move beyond an very specific identity, that of national movie-makers.

The type of transnational cinema they are practicing is one which is no longer related to national issues and, simultaneously, is not a part of a global tendency. They depict a transnational space, a transnational identity and are using transnational discourses and narratives. Following the anthropologic perspective suggested by MacDougall, a radical idea in itself, I would define the nature of this transcultural cinema as part of an art which transcends any cultural barrier (MacDougall 245). For these directors the visual representations are means of expression allowing them to go beyond their individual culture, more so, to transcend the national perspectives.

These films belong to a transnational aesthetics which should be seen, as Newman eloquently puts it, as being "above the national but below the level of the global" (Newman 10). My understanding of the "transnational" is placed along the distinctions lines traced by Natasa Durovicová (Preface p. x), that is as distinct from international and global, where the transnational presupposes a spatial and personal identity which can not be particularized. A transnational cinema allows the translatability, the translation of stories, scenes and spaces into other cultural context, without any need for reinterpretation. In this respect the transnational cinema is refusing the national and is not accepting to be a part of a global, uniformed representation. Even representing an urban space which can be easily recognized, the transnational space is in a clear contrast with a global space; this is the case with the Romanian middle class in these movies, which are apparently sharing bourgeois traits, yet their narratives are transferable into any other context, more than the simple global discourses of genre featured schemes. This is a cinema which is not focusing on the particular, is not dependent on any social group (albeit belonging to a neoliberal, or mostly liberal jobs, which allow a certain freedom of movement) and indicates a clear shift

from the local dimension, from specific (national) problems to a magnitude capable to establish transnational connections. Offering the viewers transparent identities, placed in environments beyond the fixations of the national, the Romanian recent cinema features the most important transnational characteristics: neutral urban spaces, cosmopolitan themes and problems, social identities as part of a transnational form of capitalism.

These films are transnational productions not as a result of the co-production system, nor, as it is the case of Kiarostami's most recent films, as the bi-product of a transnational political option of the directors themselves. Without leaving the Romanian context, these films show an opening towards forms of expression that are no longer part of a national worldview, or generic enough to be part of a globalized system.

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