Glocality and Cosmopolitanism
in European Crime Narratives

Indhold | Contents

akademisk
kvarter
academic quarter

4

Glocality and Cosmopolitanism in European Crime Narratives

Monica Dall'Asta	*Monica Dall'Asta is Full Professor of Film and Media Studies at the University of Bologna. She has written extensively on seriality in film and television, film theories, feminist film history and the transnational circulation of popular media culture. She is the author of* Trame spezzate. Archeologia del film seriale *(2009) and the editor of a special issue of* Feminist Media Histories on female found footage cinema *(2016). She currently coordinates the Horizon 2020 DETECt project.*

Natacha Levet	*is Maître de conferences at the University of Limoges. She is a member of the DETECt project. She is a specialist of French crime fiction, on which she has published several articles and book chapters. She is the author of* Sherlock Holmes: De Baker Street au grand écran *(Autrement 2012).*

Federico Pagello	*is Lecturer in Film and Media Studies as D'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara. He is a member of the DETECt project. He works on the circulation of European popular culture, intermedial serial narratives, and film theory. He has published two monographs: Grattacieli e superuomini.* L'immagine della città fra cinema e fumetto *(Le Mani 2010),* Quentin Tarantino and Film Theory: Aesthetics and Dialectics in Late Postmodernity *(Palgave Macmillan 2020).*

Glocality and Cosmopolitanism in European Crime Narratives
Monica Dall'Asta
Natacha Levet
Federico Pagello

Abstract

As an introduction to this issue of Academic Quarter, the article offers a few reflections on how the notions of glocalism and cosmopolitanism can help frame the transcultural significance of one of the most popular narrative genres of the last decades – crime fiction. Stemming in part from the research conducted in the frame of the European Union's Horizon 2020 DETECt project, the articles in this issue explore whether or not European crime fiction, in its different literary, audio-visual and transmedia manifestations, has been contributing to shape a cosmopolitan culture across the continent. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the European crime genre has increasingly exploited the diversity of European cultures and landscapes to create engaging narratives able to travel transnationally. In so doing, it has become one of the clearest examples of today's glocal culture, but the question remains of whether its celebration of local singularities on a global scale has concretely promoted the generation of cosmopolitan identities able to transcend the barriers that national and linguistic boundaries keep maintaining between different countries and communities.

Keywords: European crime fiction, glocalism, cosmopolitanism, transmediality, Mediterranean Noir

This special issue stems from the research conducted in the frame of *DETECt: Detecting Transcultural Identity in European Popular Crime Narratives*, a project funded by the EU Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme between 2018 and 2021 (www.detect-project.eu). DETECt explores whether and how the products of contemporary European popular culture – particularly within the crime genre – can possibly contribute to shape what we call a transcultural identity, or rather a set of transcultural identities able to transcend the barriers that national and linguistic boundaries keep maintaining between different countries and communities. The project looks at the contemporary period, and especially at the decades following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, taken as a conventional date for the onset of the process of European integration – and, more broadly, globalization. The crucial changes precipitated by the fall of the wall in the political and economic organization of Western societies went hand in hand with the emergence of new

transcultural forms of representation, stimulating the appearance of stories, figures and voices revolving around new social, gender and ethnic subject positions that do not conform to or challenge rigid cultural identities. While the special issue also presents welcome contributions from scholars who do not participate in the project, many papers and this Introduction were penned by DETECt members, giving us the opportunity to showcase part of the work so far completed in the frame of the project.

We believe that the themes, the objects of study and the approaches addressed by DETECt can be of great interest for a larger scholarly community as well as for the general public. The problem of cultural identity – and, specifically, of European identity – is indeed of extreme urgency. Social and political conflicts around this issue affect the everyday lives of European citizens with a growing dramatic impact. Frictions and resentments between individuals and communities with different cultural backgrounds, ideological and material struggles around the destiny of migrants in our societies, economic and geopolitical tensions between different countries and regions across Europe have become increasingly visible during the last decade, leading scholars, commentators and society at large to conduct a profound questioning of the project of European integration, as well as, more broadly, of the process of globalization itself.

Popular media narratives, and cross- and transmedia crime fiction in particular, have not only been privileged observers of these phenomena but also prominent vehicles of their development and international spread, in Europe as elsewhere (Bondebjerg et al. 2015). If we focus on the field of crime fiction – this quintessential product of the European and global media industries – it is indeed easy to notice how much it has actively participated in these processes, sometimes closely following larger trends, other times anticipating or shaping some distinctive aspects of the forms, the themes and the modes of production, distribution, and consumption of contemporary popular culture (Turnbull 2014). From the regionalization of crime narratives (Levet 2020) to their increasing cultural legitimization (Collovald and Neveu 2013), from the growing international visibility of local and national products (Hansen et al. 2018) to the emergence of transnational forms and formats (Hansen et al. 2018), the genre's contemporary developments offer

themselves as ideal opportunities to both investigate DETECt's research questions about European cultural identity and mobilize the theoretical framework deployed through the project.

While the space limits of this special issue will allow to only touch upon a few of the themes and approaches explored in DETECt, the two keywords included in the title of this issue highlight two crucial features of contemporary crime fiction. The articles in this publication explore how and why the concepts of *glocality* (Roudometof 2016) and *cosmopolitanism* (Beck 2006), which have inspired the research agendas of many a contemporary approach to European literature (Domínguez & d'Haen 2015), film (Eleftheriotis 2012; Mulvey, Rascaroli, Saldanha 2017) and television (Chalaby 2009; Bondebjerg 2016), can be applied to gain interesting insights in the (trans)cultural significance of contemporary European crime fiction.

From glocal crime narratives…

This issue investigates the ways in which European crime narratives represent European landscapes and social realities to showcase the great geographical, social and cultural diversity that characterizes the continent. It is apparent that, in the last few decades, crime fiction has been one of the genres that have most often been used as lenses to observe, and a means to negotiate, the tensions, fears and hopes of our time as experienced in specific social-cultural contexts, while framing them through the intrinsically international form provided by the genre's conventions. In Europe as elsewhere, the trend of 'regional' crime fiction has indeed characterized a surprising number of recent crime novels, films and TV dramas. Leaving behind the metropolitan atmosphere – very much associated with the image of such modern world cities as London, Paris or New York – that had distinguished classical detective and gangster stories for most of the 20th century, contemporary crime narratives have been decidedly shifting their interest towards peripheral, marginal and remote settings, thus representing parts of Europe and other world regions which used to be largely forgotten by either mainstream popular culture and traditional crime fiction.

It is no coincidence that David Damrosch, one of the main proponents of the notion of glocalism in the field of literature (Damrosch 2009), is also one of the editors of an important collection of essays, *Crime Fiction as World Literature* (2017), which highlights the multi-

ple ways in which the genre has been used, and critically analysed, to explore provincial, rural and oft-forgotten areas. In this respect, the crucial feature of the genre proves to be the flexibility of its narrative structures, which can serve a double purpose (Weissmann 2018). On the one hand, crime narratives are used to attract the attention of an international audience on some characteristic features of a specific local community. On the other hand, they help creatives convey a content explicitly conceived for domestic, and even local audiences through international generic forms and formats, so as to allow the inhabitants of particular regions or countries to recognize themselves, their habitats and cultures in products that adopt global patterns of representation.

As a result of this trend, crime fiction has started to focus more and more on the representation of spaces where the threshold between geographical and cultural barriers is constantly trespassed, and where local, regional, and national identities keep superimposing one onto another. As happened with other narrative genres in recent years, the crime genre has given increasing attention to the physical and political geography of borders, with a growing number of stories revolving around the vicissitudes of individuals and groups moving across frontiers. In this way, crime narratives have lent themself to be used as critical lens to investigate the diversity, contradictions as well as, often, utterly controversial aspects of contemporary European society. Interestingly enough, this emphasis on regionalism is also entirely in line with an almost opposite objective, as proved by the fact that localised narratives have been increasingly used in planning and developing touristic strategies aimed to promote the areas in which they are set. This might not come as a surprise to the connoisseur of detective fiction, as all the classics of the genre have been closely associated to specific spaces and places: from Holmes's London to Marlowe's Los Angeles, from Poirot's British countryside to Maigret's Paris. Contemporary crime narratives, however, build on this well-established generic bond to space to divert the audience's gaze to a varied set of new potential destinations, shedding light on places as diverse as the Sicily of the Commissioner Montalbano and the Stockholm of Lisbeth Salander, from the Marseille of Fabio Montale to the Edinburgh of John Rebus, from the Athens of Kostas Charitos to the Ystad of Kurt Wallander, and even as far as the new polar settings of Arctic Noir.

The counter cultural influences on many of these series and their direct links with a leftist critique of late capitalism, however, are still clearly evident in much of the new 'glocalised' context, as this kind of narratives are perfectly suited to explore the social and political problems faced by the inhabitants of specific territories as well as to narrativize the really global impact of the environmental crisis (as testified by the emergence of the 'eco-thriller' subgenre). Even the apparently neutral category of 'Mediterranean Noir', first introduced in the 1990s by Jean-Claude Izzo, was coined with an explicit, very specific polemical goal: that of questioning the simplistic association of Marseille – Izzo's hometown and one of the main subjects of his novels – to a homogenized notion of European culture, which threatens to dissolve the multiple ethnic, linguistic and cultural influences behind the identity of not only this particular city but also Mediterranean societies at large (Izzo 2006). The widening role of language and ethnic minorities is indeed another key element in recent European crime narratives and has become a powerful tool to explore and question a number of stereotypes that have traditionally been reinforced by the products of popular culture – for instance by the countless detective stories in which marginal groups, migrant communities or foreign powers were represented in the role of criminals and villains.

To look at popular narratives from the prism of glocality might thus lead us to think that the motto of the European Union – "Unity in diversity" – corresponds to a visible reality, as crime fiction from across the continent shows a stunning mixture of a variety of local, national and international cultures interacting with one another through the common language of the genre. At the same time, all the ambiguity and possible shortcuts of a simplistic reading of the European integration process become all the more visible when looking more closely at this peculiar cultural production. To further investigate the riddle of European identity, this special issue engages with another central concept in contemporary cultural and social studies: cosmopolitanism. As many authors have suggested, contemporary articulations of cosmopolitanism are largely shaped by practices of aesthetic consumption, such as culinary choices, listening to music, reading fiction or watching TV. According to Beck (2006), all these unremarkable everyday practices participate in moulding a type of "banal cosmopolitism" productive of new so-

cial identities that thrive in the consumption of differences. And yet, we cannot help asking whether the transnational cultural encounters undeniably enabled by popular media do actually give shape to a transcultural space truly accessible to all Europeans, or whether they don't also highlight the widening gap existing between the cosmopolitan ethos expressed by the professionals of the creative industries and the strong attachments to traditional identities that is still very much alive in large sectors of European society.

…to cosmopolitan crime fiction?

The new global configuration of the world's geography – imposed by such powerful systemic factors as transnational trade, connective technologies, and the movement of large masses of people across different boundaries – have fuelled a variegated debate over the transcultural potential, or cosmopolitan nature, of contemporary culture. Developing their reflections in a post-national, post-colonial analytical framework (Mellino 2005), scholars have proposed new approaches to account for both the positive and the negative aspects of an increasingly hybrid world, such as "critical transculturalism" (Kraidy 2005) and "critical cosmopolitanism" (Delanty 2006; Rumford 2008). As our brief discussion of glocalism already suggested, the representation of particular local/national spaces and cultures in popular print and screen fiction can also be usefully regarded through concepts like "translocality" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, Hansen and Waade 2017), transnational mobility and cosmopolitan networking, which help understand how place-specific production cultures and genre-specific approaches typical of contemporary crime narratives are affected by the cosmopolitan attitude of both their authors and their audiences.

In this special issue we refer to the notion of cosmopolitanism to indicate "an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences" (Hannerz, cit. In Roudometof 2005, 114). It is important to emphasize the difference between this concept and the idea of transnationalism, which has a more clearly defined political and economic inflection. Indeed, our goal is not so much to investigate the forms that transnational exchange takes up in fields like cultural trade and communication, but rather to explore the impact of these processes on people's behaviours, atti-

tudes and cultural identities. As Victor Roudometof observes, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism should not be confused: while the former is undoubtedly facilitated by the latter, there is no guarantee that the subjects involved in transnational processes (such as, for example, migrants, refugees, or international students) would develop a cosmopolitan approach (Roudemotof 2005, 117).

The peculiar cosmopolitan sensibility of crime fiction can be examined from many different perspectives. First of all, narrative consumption can be regarded as a form of virtual travelling, an immersion in a distant reality which transports the reader/viewer farther away from their everyday experiences (Bondebjerg et al. 2015). Regional crime fiction is again a perfect case in point: not only are the products of Nordic and Mediterranean Noir enjoyed as a sort of comfortable, entertaining introduction to the landscapes and customs of some more or less exotic culture, but, as already noticed, they also contribute to support physical tourism, inspiring both official and unofficial tours to the locations represented in the stories (Hanse and Waade, 2017).

A second, important way through which crime novels, films and TV dramas participate in the spreading of a cosmopolitan ethos is by confronting its audiences with the portrayal of transcultural social contexts. More and more often, writers and screenwriters depict detectives and criminals as the representatives of a society comprising an increasingly diverse mixture of cultural identities, and they regularly structure their plots around current conflicts arising from the clash between individuals from seemingly incompatible communities. Also in this specific respect, the features and the very success of Nordic Noir indicate a model for this approach: on the one hand, writers and screenwriters use their characters to vehicle an inclusive vision, emphasizing the opportunities for mutual understanding between individuals and communities; on the other hand, the criminal and investigative activities at the centre of the narrative often translate in fictional form the perceived dangers haunting Western liberal democracies and, particularly, the struggling social-democracies of Northern Europe. The quick and widespread influence of this sub-genre across the continent is a blatant effect of its 'cosmopolitanism', affording non-Scandinavian creators the opportunity to appropriate the Nordic imagery and narrative style to renew the representation of their own countries and regions

through a somewhat exoticizing lens (the curious and symptomatic case of 'Hungarian Nordic Noir' is examined in Kalai and Keszeg's article included in this issue – see also below).

Thirdly, the genre as a whole strongly participates in the broader process of transformation of the ways in which new social and cultural identities are represented in contemporary popular culture, through the portrayal of characters of mixed background and shifting personalities, moving between physical spaces as much as between mental boundaries, traversing sexual, gender, ethnic and national identities (Christian 2001; Anderson 2012).

Fourthly, and perhaps more visibly, the cosmopolitanism of crime fiction appears on the level of its modes of production. Here, a number of crucial research questions could be asked: which are the industrial players and the production strategies that are put in place to facilitate the creation of works able to travel across different countries? What is the social and cultural background of the authors and producers behind these creations? Are these 'cosmopolitan' narratives designed to simply replicate established models – already appreciated by specific niche audiences, namely the educated, urban middle class – to the effect of simply reinforcing the comfortable liberal attitudes of the most culturally influential audiences and, therefore, widening their distance from the rest of the population? Or are these individual and collective subjects capable of giving an accurate representation of society, including its many, 'not-so cosmopolitan' sectors?

In summary, by combining the perspective of glocality and the issue of cosmopolitanism, this special issue aims to highlight the contradictions at the core of the process of European cultural integration from the vantage point of popular media culture. The glocal and cosmopolitan features of European crime fiction which will be examined in this issue cannot be conceived of as simply unifying factors, fostering the generation of a single, shared and uniform transnational identity, but rather, they must be approached as signs that speak of a whole variety of European transcultural identities, expressed in different writing and audio-visual styles, characteristic narrative models, and place-specific production cultures. In fact, a proper dialectics can be seen at work here, where the process of hybridization and transculturation appears as much a driver of cultural homologation as a vehicle for a growing differentiation of nar-

rative forms and styles, content and formats. Whether this process will contribute to the emergence of a post-national assemblage of multiple cosmopolitan identities remains uncertain at the moment, but still it is all too apparent how deeply these phenomena are affecting and renewing traditional European culture(s).

The articles

The articles in this issue elaborate on the relationship between glocality and cosmopolitanism from different perspectives, looking at largely different corpora and individual case studies.

The first two articles address some of the structural features in the transnational circulation of European crime narratives. Jacques Migozzi – a member of the DETECt consortium – adopts the perspective of distant reading to look at the circulation of crime narratives in the field of literature. By analysing the translations of a significant corpus of European crime novels through quantitative methods, Migozzi describes the increasing importance acquired by non-American or British crime novels in the European market, providing detailed figures and analyses that show how the number of authors and works that have been successfully translated in other European languages has grown significantly during the last 15 or 20 years. While focusing on the role of translation in the publishing market, the article touches on key aspects in the circulation of popular narratives in Europe, highlighting how trespassing linguistic barriers is a necessary precondition for a true cultural integration.

Sándor Kalai and Anna Keszeg – also members of the DETECt consortium – adopt a rather different perspective to discuss a more specific example of cultural adaptation. Their contribution looks at recent Hungarian crime narratives to reconstruct the interesting (if belated) reception and appropriation of Nordic Noir in the country. The scholars take into consideration the influence of Scandinavian crime fiction on the production and marketing of a small corpus of Hungarian novels, films and television series moulded on the successful North-European model. Kalai and Keszeg therefore engage with the crucial dialectics at the core of the process explored in this special issue: the tension between the risks and affordances implied in the adoption of cosmopolitan forms, namely cultural homogenization and cultural diversification. The case of 'Hungarian Nordic Noir' shows not only the limitations, but also the potential of this

encounter between East and West, proving the ability of local creative industries to rework in original ways (including the use of parody) the models proposed by Western popular culture.

The following two articles look at glocalism and cosmopolitanism in relation to the production strategies of crime TV dramas. The topic is crucial for the DETECt project (see the report *Location marketing and cultural tourism*): crime TV dramas provide some of the best examples of how the process of glocalization and the related emergence of a cosmopolitan aesthetics has stimulated a quick increase in the number of European series engaging with the modes of production, narrative strategies and stylistic trends of international television, striving much more often than in the past to reach a continental audience, and beyond. In their articles, Massimiliano Coviello and Valentina Re – also members of the DETECt consortium – and Lothar Mikos examine two different ways in which specific spaces play a key role in both the production and representation strategies of crime TV dramas. Coviello and Re look at the increasing relevance of peripheral locations in Italian television. By analysing in particular the production, marketing and reception of the RAI show *La porta Rossa* (Rai 2, 2017-), the two scholars show in detail how the choice of a specific location – the border town of Trieste, in the north-east of Italy – modified the screenwriters' original idea and led to other unexpected choices. The series is a telling example of how the choice of locations can be profoundly affected by industrial strategies and policy regulations, but also strongly contribute to the final narrative and stylistic outcome.

Lothar Mikos examines the cosmopolitan attitude that characterizes contemporary TV series production in Berlin. He argues that cosmopolitanism can be seen as the result of a media industry "in which not only films and television series are traded globally, but in which talent mobility and a global openness to cultural products from all regions of the world are continually on the rise." In this context, a crucial role in the propagation of a cosmopolitan style of contemporary crime TV dramas is played by the common aesthetic orientations that guide the choices of television buyers from everywhere in the world in the global market of television production.

The following group of three articles decisively shift the focus on the issue of representation, looking at a set of case studies from different countries and different media. Livio Lepratto's paper looks at

the multifaced, always changing representation of Rome, its different areas and suburbs in a corpus of Italian crime productions from over the last decade. The complex image of the Italian capital city has been at the centre of recent novels, films and TV series, including the screen adaptations of Giancarlo De Cataldo's bestseller novels, *Romanzo criminale* and *Suburra*. In recent years, these works, together with other examples of crime fiction from Italy, particularly the *Gomorrah* franchise, have reached an international success rarely obtained before by Italian media industries, proving that the exploration of specific localities can effectively contribute to the appeal of European creative works.

Alice Jacquelin – another member of the DETECt consortium – compares and contrasts a group of novels by two French writers, Colin Niel and Antonin Varenne, who are often referred to as the heirs of French *néo-polar* as well as part of the more recent trend of 'ethnopolar.' Jacquelin focuses in particular on the way in which marginalized communities within metropolitan France and in overseas territories are represented in these novels to raise questions about French identity and national borders, highlighting the authors' different approaches to the environmental issues they put in the foreground. Despite these differences, the article emphasises how both Niel and Varenne use the crime genre as a tool to explore new territories and underrepresented social realities, with the clear objective to develop a powerful social critique very much in line with Jean-Patrick Manchette's description of crime fiction, and specifically noir, as "the great moralist literature of our times."

Kaisa Hiltunen's article looks at how the use of Lapland as the setting for the Finnish-German TV series *Ivalo* (Elisa Viihde / Yle, 2018-) engages with the category of Nordic Noir and, more specifically, 'Arctic Noir', in order to offer the viewer an original border narrative and careful investigation of the relationship between Lappish and Finnish identities. Interestingly, the series' plot also seems to forebode the COVID-19 pandemic, portraying the spread of a life-threatening "Yemenite virus" developed as a biological weapon from the Balkans to Lapland, thus adding a further element that simultaneously alludes to the breaking down of national boundaries and the rise of new conflicts between countries.

The last three articles look more specifically at the multiple consequences that the adoption of a glocal and / or cosmopolitan sensi-

bility produces in the critical representation of gender, national and migrant identities. Lynge Stegger Gemzøe – a member of the DETECt consortium – discusses one of the most acclaimed recent European TV dramas, *Killing Eve* (BBC America, 2018-), pointing to the series' many original features, from its representation of female (anti)heroic, and, particularly, villainous figures, to its (self)ironic use of stereotypes of European culture(s). Gemzøe's article highlights both the strengths and a few shortcuts of the series in these respects, which appear in any case a symptomatic example of current developments in European crime drama.

Jamie Nicholas Steele, on the other hand, goes back to a more classic example of contemporary European auteur cinema looking at a film of the Dardenne brothers – *La fille inconnue* (2016) – to analyse its engagement with the themes and forms of European noir. Steele emphasises that the unusual combination of the Dardenne's distinctive style and poetics with the conventions of the crime genre finds a host of creative, and perhaps unexpected, opportunities precisely in a field that is presently most often associated with mainstream TV seriality. The film's attention to the *bas-fonds* of a Belgian provincial town (Liège) and its critical exploration of the migrants' and refugees' experiences in the Western world emerges a perfect example of how the crime genre can be effectively used to address urgent social and political matters.

Finally, Caius Dobrescu – also member of the DETECt consortium – critically examines the outcome of an American production set in Eastern Europe as a sort of cautionary tale for our continental production. His analysis of *Comrade Detective* (Amazon Prime Video, 2017) consequently works as a most appropriate conclusion to this special issue. The series is an attempt at portraying the life in the Eastern Block from an ironic, yet sympathetic perspective – a parodic re-creation of a detective story set and produced in 1980s Romania. Dobrescu points out the inadequacy of this attempt, which in his view is only partially due to the series' misrepresentation of its subject that actually bears no connection to the actual experience of the Romanian people during the last years of the Ceaușescu's regime. In fact, according to Dobrescu, the series undermines its own effort to create a real connection between the world it depicts and its Western viewers particularly because of its choice of dubbing all of the Eastern characters with the voices of famous Holly-

wood actors and actresses. In this way, he argues, the Eastern characters are turned into simplistic caricatures that do nothing but reinforce well-established stereotypes. European creatives and producers, Dobrescu writes, could learn a valuable lesson from the show's infelicitous outcome: "The problem with Europe's East-West cohesion lies with the solution of the moral conundrum of bringing together a prosperous West that tends to go beyond itself in the Faustian quest for owing everything, of exercising an unlimited and arbitrary authority, and a destitute East whose hubris is the desperate attempt to escape the overload of its indigence and subalternity." While "the example of *Comrade Detective* shows that, in and by themselves, strategies of parody and satire are powerless in front of such a tremendous challenge," the analysis of its failure indicates that a more intelligent use of the crime genre's conventions should rather be aimed to project on a global scale the European "model of productive transgression of narrowly defined cultural identities." From this perspective, Euro Noir should work to become, rather than a stockpile of stereotypes and clichés, a welcome opportunity for a "de-mock-cracy."

References

Appiah, Kwame. A. 2017. "Afterword". In *Cosmopolitanisms* edited by Bruce Robbins and Paula Lemos Horta, 271-274. NYU Press.

Anderson, Jean, Carolina Miranda, and Barbara Pezzotti. (Eds.) 2012. *The Foreign in International Crime Fiction: Transcultural Representations.* London: Bloomsbury.

Beck, Ulrich, and Edgar Grande. 2010. "Varieties of Second modernity: The Cosmopolitan in Social and Political Theory and Research." *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61(3), 409-443. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2010.01320.x

Beck, Ulrich. 2006. *The Cosmopolitan Vision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Berg, Wolfgang, and Aoileann N. Éigeartaigh. (Eds.) 2010. *Exploring Transculturalism: a Biographical Approach*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Bondebjerg, Ib. 2016. "Transnational Europe: TV-drama, Co-production Networks and Mediated Cultural Encounters." *Palgrave Communications*, 2(1), 16034.

Bondebjerg, Ib, Eva Novrup Redvall, and Andrew Higson. (Eds.) 2015. *European Cinema and Television: Cultural Policies and Every Life*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Casanova, Pascale. 2008. *La République mondiale des lettres* (1999). Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 43.

Chalaby, Jean K. 2009. *Transnational Television in Europe: Reconfiguring Global Communications Networks.* IB Tauris.

Christian, Ed. (Ed.) 2001. *The Post-Colonial Detective*. Houndmills New York: Palgrave.

Collovald, Annie, and Érik Neveu. 2013. *Lire le noir: Enquête sur les lecteurs de récits policiers*. Paris: Éditions de la Bibliothèque publique d'information.

Damrosch, David, Theo D'haen and Louise Nilsson. (Eds.) 2017. *Crime Fiction as World Literature*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Delanty, Gerard. 2005. "What does it mean to be a 'European'?" *Innovation: the European Journal of Social Science Research*, *18*(1), 11-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/1351161042000334763

Delanty, Gerard. 2006. "The cosmopolitan imagination: critical cosmopolitanism and social theory." *The British Journal of Sociology*, *57*(1), 25-47. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2006.00092.x

Delanty, Gerard. 2011. "Cultural diversity, democracy and the prospects of cosmopolitanism: A theory of cultural encounters." *The British Journal of Sociology*, *62*(4), 633-656. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2011.01384.x

Delanty, Gerard, and Chris Rumford. 2005. *Rethinking Europe: Social theory and the implications of Europeanization*. London: Routledge.

Domínguez, César, and Theo d'Haen. 2015. *Cosmopolitanism and the Postnational: Literature and the New Europe*. Brill.

Esser, Andrea. 2007. "Audiovisual content in Europe: Transnationalization and approximation." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 15(2), 163-184. https://doi.org/10.1080/14782800701499863

Greiner, Clemens, and Patrick Sakdapolrak. 2013. "Translocality: Concepts, applications and emerging research perspectives." *Geography Compass*, 7(5), 373-384. https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12048

Eleftheriotis, Dimitris. 2012. "The foreignness of Jules Dassin: Notes on cosmopolitan authorship." *Screen*, 53(4), 339-358. https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjs037

Hansen, Kim Toft, Steven Peacock, and Sue Turnbull. (Eds.) 2018. *European Television Crime Drama and Beyond*, 119-137. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Hansen, Kim Toft, and Waade, Anne Marit. 2017. *Locating Nordic Noir: From Beck to The Bridge*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Izzo, Jean-Claude. 2006. *Aglio, menta e basilico. Marsihlia, il noir e il Mediterraneo*. Roma: Edizioni E/O.

Kraidy, Marwan M. 2005. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Temple University Press.

Lewis, Jeff 2002. "From culturalism to transculturalism." *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*, *1*(1), 14-32. https://doi.org/10.17077/2168-569X.1003

Levet, Natacha. 2020. "The Appeal of Local Noir in France: Local and International Crime Fiction." In Hansen et al. *Researching transcultural identity I: production perspectives*, report published by the DETECt project, 14-17.

Mellino, Miguel. 2005. *La critica postcoloniale: decolonizzazione, capitalismo e cosmopolitismo nei postcolonial studies*. Meltemi Editore srl.

Mulvey, James, Laura Rascaroli, and Humberto Saldanha. 2017. "For a Cosmopolitan Cinema – Editorial". *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*, 14, 1–15 http://www.alphavillejournal.com/Issue14/Editorial.pdf

Roudometof, Victor. 2016. *Glocalization: A Critical Introduction*. Routledge.

Roudometof, Victor. 2005. "Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization." *Current Sociology*, 53(1), 113-135. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392105048291

Rumford, Chris. 2008. *Cosmopolitan Spaces: Europe, Globalization, Theory*. Routledge.

Saumon, Gabrielle, Sylvain Guyot, and Jacques Migozzi. 2015. "Du roman policier au territoire touristique. Ystad, Stockholm: enquête sur les phénomènes Wallander et Millénium." *M@ppemonde*, 1 (117). http://mappemonde-archive.mgm.fr/num45/articles/art15102.html

Turnbull, Sue. 2014. *The TV Crime Drama.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Weissmann, Elke. 2018. "Local, National, Transnational. *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* as Crime of/for All Places." In *European Television*

Crime Drama and Beyond edited by Kim Toft Hansen, Steven Peacock and Sue Turnbull, 119-137. Palgrave Macmillan.
Welsch, Wolfgang. 1999. "Transculturality: The puzzling form of cultures today." *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, *13*(7), 194-213.

Crime Fiction Import/Export in European Publishing
The Emergence of Euro Noir through the Process of Translation

Jacques Migozzi

is Professor of French Literature at the University of Limoges. Focusing his investigations about popular fiction for twenty-five years, he published a monograph on this topic, Boulevards du Populaire (PULIM, 2005), edited or co-edited eleven volumes or special issues of journals, and published several articles, mainly adopting a theoretical perspective, in international peer-review journals.

Abstract
The term 'Euro Noir' has been recently proposed to account for the emergence of a shared, cosmopolitan *koinè* in the current production of crime fiction across Europe (Forshaw 2014, Hansen et al. 2018). While the characterization of the specific aesthetic and narrative features of this production is currently underway and constitutes one of the objectives of the DETECt project, the study of the role of translation in the circulation of crime fiction can contribute to better understand the emergence of such cosmopolitan form of expression. Inspired by the methodology proposed by Franco Moretti in his *Atlas of the European Novel* (1999), this article throws light on how both forms of translation – *extranslation*, or the exporting of literary works into another language, and *intranslation*, or the importing of foreign works into a given country by way of translation – are products of economic and cultural competition (Sapiro, 2008 and 2010). The research results are in line with both Moretti's conclusions about the past concurrence for hegemony between the dominating poles of English and French publishing and Pascale Casanova's work on the geopolitics of *The World Republic of Letters* (1999 and 2015).

Keywords: Crime Fiction, Euro Noir, Distant reading, Translation, Cultural transfers.

Introduction: Describing the corpus

This article examines the processes of import/export of European crime fiction works on a pan-European scale, as a contribution to the DETECt project's research around the notion of 'Euro Noir', its origins and developments as a shared narrative and aesthetic *koinè* on the continental level. While the characterization of the specific features of contemporary European crime fiction is currently underway, the study of the pathways by which these works travel across the continent can contribute to better understand the role of translation in creating the conditions for the emergence of cosmopolitan forms of expression, such as that which has been recently labelled as 'Euro Noir' by critics and scholars such as Barry Forshaw (2014), Hansen, Peaock and Turnbull (2018), Amir, Migozzi and Levet (2020).

In the following, I present the results of an analysis of data collaboratively collected by the Limoges research team from the online catalogues of all European national libraries. The datasets includes metadata about the releases, the translations and awards relative to the works of a representative sample of contemporary European crime writers. The goal was to bring a new perspective on mass-scale phenomena such as the production, marketing and circulation of literary crime fiction in Europe during the last three decades, thus highlighting the rise of Euro Noir from a quantitative perspective.

The analysis of exports is based on metadata harvested through Zotero from the websites of all European national libraries, complemented, where necessary, with data available from the websites of European publishers. The sample includes data about the foreign European editions of 15 European crime writers. On the one hand, 10 French authors have been selected on the basis of a number of different criteria. In the first place, out of all the awards attributed between 1990 and 2018 by the main French crime fiction festivals, the authors who had received at least 6 awards were included in this selection: Fred Vargas, Olivier Truc, Hervé Le Corre, Dominique Manotti, Marcus Malte and Caryl Ferey. All of these writers, at the exception of Vargas, are known for producing critical narratives about contemporary societies and their dark side, and can thus be

affiliated to the French noir tradition. In the second place, this list was complemented by three internationally recognized authors of thriller novels, Pierre Lemaître, Michel Bussi and Franck Thilliez, who have also been the recipients of festival awards, plus one notorious best-selling writer, Maxime Chattam, who is poorly recognized by the legitimizing institutions of the "polar" scene. On the other hand, for comparative purposes, similar criteria have been use to select a sample of international writers who are widely recognized to be currently the most renowned crime authors of their respective country: Petros Markaris (creator of the Kostas Charitos series, Greece), Andrea Camilleri (creator of the Montalbano series, Italy), George Arion (creator of the Andrei Mladin series, Romania), Vilmos Kondor (author of the Budapest Noir trilogy, Hungary) and Jo Nesbø (creator of the Harry Hole series Norway). The harvest of metadata, which covered all the European editions of crime novels published by these 15 authors after 1990, was then sorted using Excel pivot tables and used to produce graphs (through Excel) and maps (through the Khartis free software).

A second, more coarse-grained source of metadata was used to provide additional information about the extranslation of the 10 selected French writers. In this case, the results provided by the analysis of their performance in terms of foreign editions were compared with those of 20 more European authors (including the 5 non-French writers mentioned above) who have been widely translated into several European languages. The test sample was selected to reflect a broad spectrum of countries, so as to include authors from the same "artistic generations" – to quote the term used by Pierre Bourdieu in his reference book *The Rules of Art* (1996) – as the 10 French authors. For each of these writers, we collected the number of entries archived before December 31, 2016 on the European Library portal. This enabled us to compare, regardless of the author's country of origin: 1) the number of entries retrieved for any single translated edition work European editions in translation, and 2) the number of European languages that each author was translated into. These two figures were used as basic quantitative indicators of a book's as well as a writer's cultural influence outside of their country of origin.

These observations about the import-export dynamics of literary crime fiction on a pan European scale have been complemented by

an acute focus on the intranslation of foreign crime fiction in France. For this purpose, we mined the post-1990 catalogues of 5 major French publishers of crime/noir and thriller fiction (Gallimard, Le Seuil, Rivages, Métaillié, Actes Sud), some of which have a special series dedicated to these genres (for instance, Gallimard's most iconic "Série Noire"). We also included the catalogues of three particularly active up-and-coming publishers (Le Mirobole éditions, Agullo, Les Arènes).

Exporting Crime Fiction Across Europe

If we consider export figures for the translations of print crime fiction in Europe from 1990 to 2018, what conclusions can be drawn about the economic and cultural power relations that underpin cultural transfers in the contemporary European cultural sphere? Due to length constraints, this paper will offer only a few figures, and will allude to other graphs and maps available for consultation in the full digital portfolio hosted by the DETECt Atlas (see https://www.detect-project.eu/portal/, Tab "Atlas", Section Maps and Graphs, sub sections "Works" and "Authors").

First of all, if we focus on the case of French writers, the novelists who are associated with the noir tradition of social and political critique are characterized by relatively modest export figures, and, therefore, by a limited geographical reach. On the contrary, thriller authors, who are generally less politically engaged, tend to be more successful. This confirms the idea that, within the spectrum of crime fiction's subgenres, the thriller shows a higher potential for transnational translation on a pan-European level. This is clearly shown in the cumulative number of extranslations into different European languages obtained over the past thirty years within the French sample: while for the main noir authors (Manotti, Ferey, Le Corre, Truc, Malte) the curve remains flat at a relatively low level, the export performance of the thriller authors is visibly more significant, with sharply ascending curves for authors of international best-sellers, such as Michel Bussi, Pierre Lemaître and, to a lesser degree, Franck Thilliez.
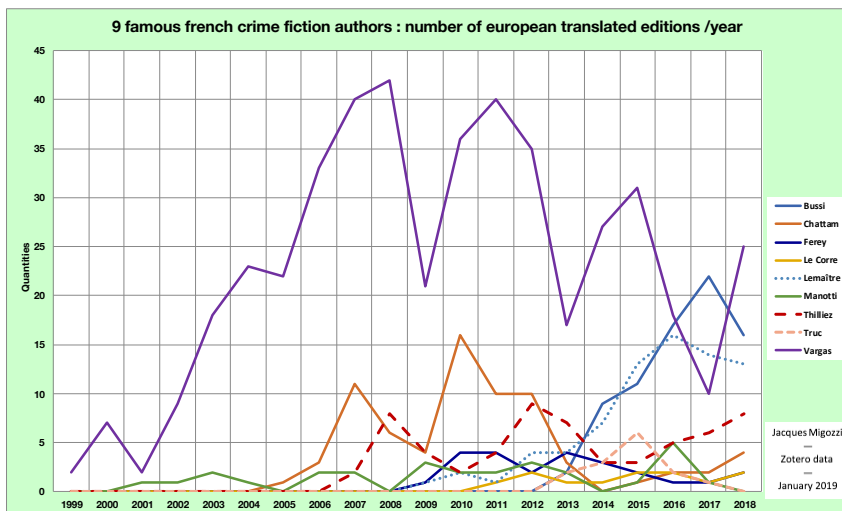
Graph 1. Nine famous French crime fiction authors; number of European translated editions per year (1999-2018)

A comparison between the two graphs produced to visualize the countries where noir and thriller authors, respectively, are published in translation also reveals that thriller novels are disseminated across a much wider area in Europe:
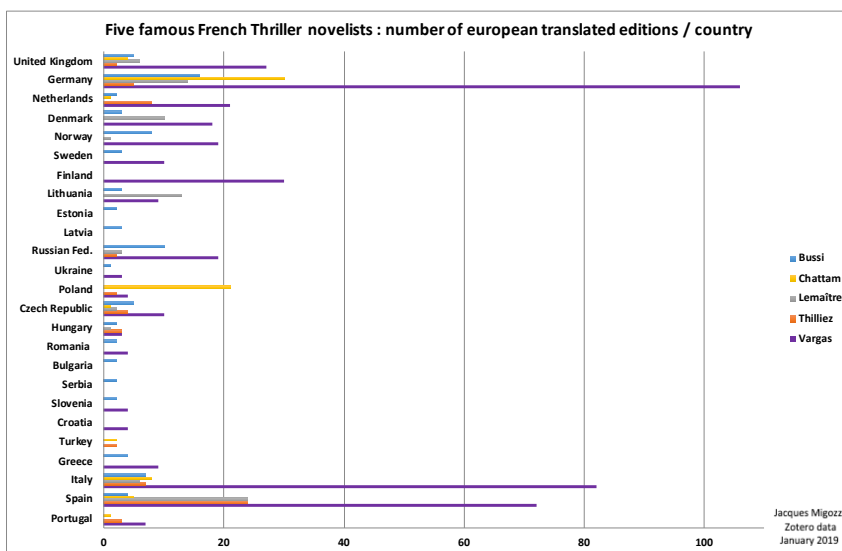
Graph 2. Five famous French thriller novelists: number of European translated editions/country
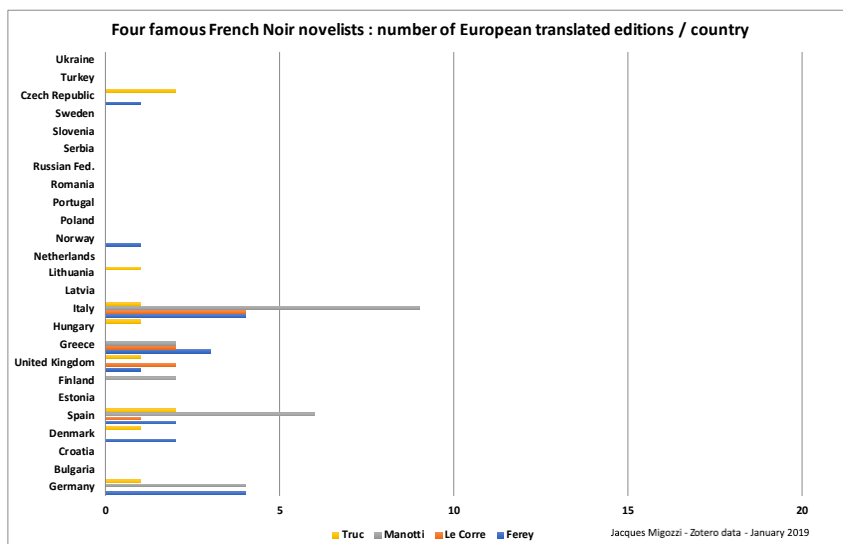
Graph 3. Four famous French noir novelists: number of European translated editions/country

This is particularly visible when the same metadata are used to generate maps on the authors' popularity in translation: for instance, although her first polar novel was published in 1995, Dominique Manotti has a much narrower reach than Michel Bussi, who only debuted in crime fiction in 2006 – and the same obvious evidence could be visually produced for both Franck Thilliez and Pierre Lemaître.

A second interesting insight emerges from a synoptic reading of the full digital portfolio that summarizes our investigation of the French crime fiction corpus: Fred Vargas stands out from the rest of the corpus, with 18 of her books translated in as many as 19 European countries: by the end of 2018, she had a total of 459 editions in translation across Europe. In addition, according to the European Library's catalogues, she is the only French author in the shortlist of post-1990 European crime fiction writers who have been translated into over 15 European languages, or have over 400 entries outside of their country of origin due to publications in translation. If we map out the authors' pan-European success, using color to mark territorial expansion and indicating the total number of editions in translation per country, Vargas appears to be part of the very exclusive category of pan-European crime fic-
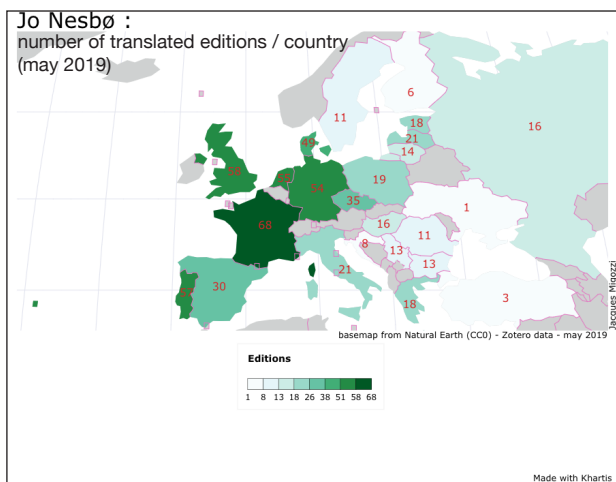
Map 1. Fred Vargas's Adamsberg series: number of translated editions per European country by May 2019
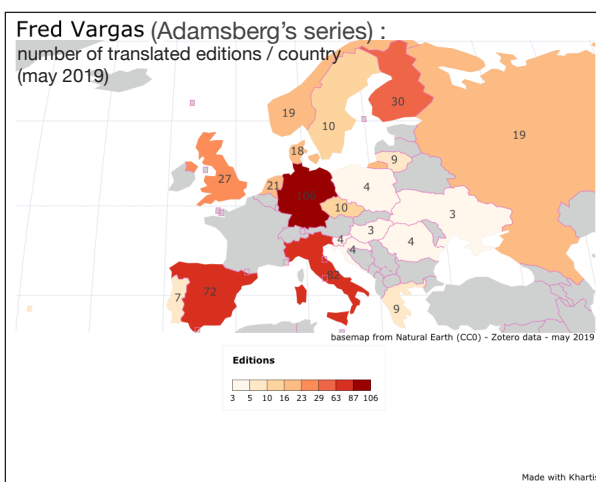
Map 2. Jo Nesbø: number of translated editions per European country by May 2019
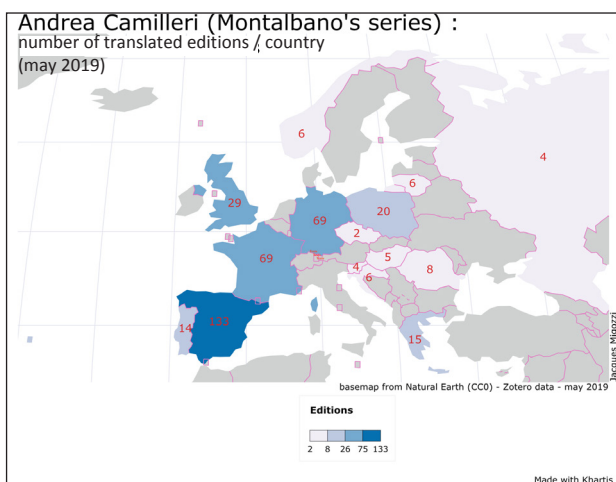
Map 3. Camilleri's Montalbano series: number of translated editions per European country by May 2019

tion bestsellers, alongside with such literary superstars as Jo Nesbø and Andrea Camilleri:

If we now examine the results provided by our mining of metadata from the European Library's catalogues, another massive phenomenon appears clearly: the quantitative hegemony of Nordic and British writers among European crime novelists. The ranking of the most popular 9 authors, based on the number of languages they have been translated into, is as follows: Marek Krajewski, Fred Vargas, Arnaldur Indridason, Camilla Läckberg, Ian Rankin, Philip Kerr, Stieg Larsson, Henning Mankell, Jo Nesbø. The ranking based on the number of entries found in the same catalogues outside of the authors' countries of origin is almost similar, with only Arne Dahl replacing Krajewski.
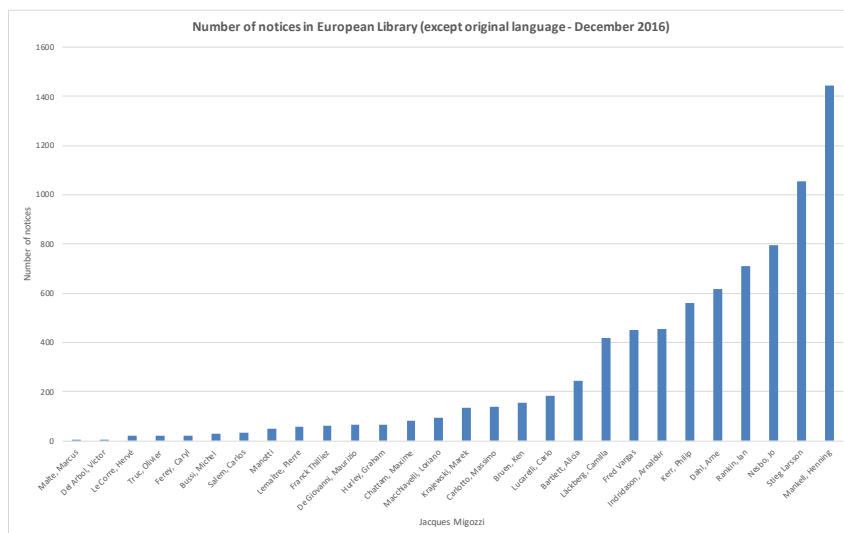
Graph 4. Twenty-eight European crime fiction writers: number of translated editions referenced on the European Library's catalogue

This graph reveals that the club of authors with over 400 entries stands out quite spectacularly from the rest of the selection: the 10th author on the list (Alicia Bartlett) has under 250 entries. What it shows is the existence of a compact group of pan European best-sellers, and the composition of this group is illuminating: 5 authors are from Nordic countries (Stieg Larsson, Arne Dahl, Joe Nesbø, Arnaldur Indridason, Camilla Läckberg), 2 from the UK (Philip Kerr, Ian Rankin), 1 from Italy (Andrea Camilleri), 1 from France (Fred Vargas). Nordic noir rules nowadays over the European literary crime genre, as it does on TV screens.

Comparing the number of European editions accumulated by the 15 writers of our core sample (10 French authors plus Camilleri, Nesbø, Kondor, Markaris, Arion) reveals another interesting fact: there is a huge gap, in terms of both the numbers of translated editions and the number of countries intranslating foreign authors, between the major pan-European bestsellers, such as Nesbø, Vargas and Camilleri, and other writers who are nonetheless considered the most renowned ones in their own country. For instance, Markaris quantitative and geographic spectrum is much narrower than those of either Camilleri or Nesbø. The cases of Vilmos Kondor and George Arion are even more striking. As for Kondor, only the first opus of his Hungarian series, *Budapest Noir* (5 volumes), has been

translated in 7 countries (the Netherlands, France, Poland, Italy, Greece, the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic), while German and Finnish bookstores only hosted the translations of, respectively, two and four of the series' volumes. A similar situation is found in the case of Romanian author George Arion: of the 17 crime novels he had published in his country by 2018, only one had been translated into English in the UK and 3 into French by a small independent Belgian publisher. These observations confirm Pascale Casanova's thesis (2002) about the inequality of the symbolic exchange embedded within translation, as a cultural result of economic and geopolitical domination.

Despite some distortions due to the somewhat arbitrary acquisition strategies that might have been adopted of the different national institutions that share their data with the European Library, it appears difficult to challenge the trends revealed by these findings. I will now present a few additional conclusions to attempt to explain some of the factors that have impacted the exportability of European print crime fiction over the last 25 years.

First of all, although festival awards may definitely increase the popularity and symbolic capital achieved by a work of fiction and thus facilitate its extranslation, their role should not be overstated. For instance, while most of the novels by Olivier Truc, Dominique Manotti, Hervé Lecorre and Pierre Lemaître that have been translated abroad had previously received awards from the main French crime fiction festivals, other authors like Maxime Chattam, Franck Thilliez and even Michel Bussi are widely translated without ever being acknowledged by the genre's legitimizing institutions. The only obvious example of an award's boosting effects in terms of extranslation is provided by Pierre Lemaître, who received the 2013 Prix Goncourt for *Au Revoir là-haut*.

Outstanding library sales figures that bring a writer into the highly selective club of bestseller authors can undeniably have boosting effects in terms of extranslation: this was the case with Michel Bussi's *Nymphéas noirs*, which, according to our informant Sophie Lajeunesse, Bussi's editor at Presses de la Cité, sold up to 800,000 copies. This was also the case with the takeoff of Fred Vargas' international career after the phenomenal success of *Pars vite et reviens tard* (2001): in France, Vargas went from an early print run of under 100,000 for *L'Homme à l'envers* (1999) to a run of 400,000 cop-

ies in just two years. A successful film or television adaptation can also pave the way to the extranslation of both the original book and the author's other works: this was the case with the 2013 French/South African adaptation of Caryl Ferey's 2008 novel *Zulu* (directed by Jérôme Salle with a high-profile international cast, including Orlando Bloom and Forest Whitaker) as well as with the many TV adaptations drawn from Michel Bussi's novels.

Finally, it can be interesting to interrogate a specific trend in Southern European crime writing, which I will call a 'Mediterranean tropism'. Indeed, research data indicate that the most politically aware among French crime writers are mostly translated and published, unlike authors of thrillers and Fred Vargas, in the Mediterranean countries. A possible explanation for this trend is that these countries are historically part of the French publishing's sphere of influence, as pointed out in various studies (Moretti 1999; Sapiro 2008; Boumediene and Migozzi 2012). However, I would like to suggest an additional hypothesis. France, Italy and Spain may be indeed 'culturally' more predisposed than other European countries to welcome noir novels with a strong political and critical dimension, so much that the corrosive potential of crime fiction as a 'literature of crisis' – according to Jean-Patrick Manchette's formula – is at the core of all the national traditions of French and Italian noir novels since the 1970s and Spanish noir since the 1990s. This could be explained by the specific national histories that characterize the three countries: in the 20th century, both Italy and Spain supported the burden of their fascist regimes, while France was by the stigma of Collaboration and the colonial wars. This may have triggered the engagement of many intellectuals, who have embraced the mission to denounce and uncover the dark corners and traumas of their country's collective memory (Collovald and Neveu 2004; De Paulis-Dalambert 2010).

Importing European Crime Fiction in France

Let us now move on to what we can learn in terms of cultural transfers from a quantative analysis of the catalogue of the main French publishers with a dedicated crime writing collection, specifically, Gallimard, Le Seuil, Rivages, Métaillié, Actes Sud, Le Mirobole, Agullo, Les Arènes. Our aim is to assess the importance of the different national varieties of crime fiction intranslated within the flow

of French imports after 1990, so as to use this national lens to highlight in a different way the transnational contemporary trends we have already pointed out in our previous remarks.

First observation: although the share of European crime fiction in imports has been tendentially growing since 1990, the French 'republic' of crime fiction is overwhelmingly dominated by products from the United States.
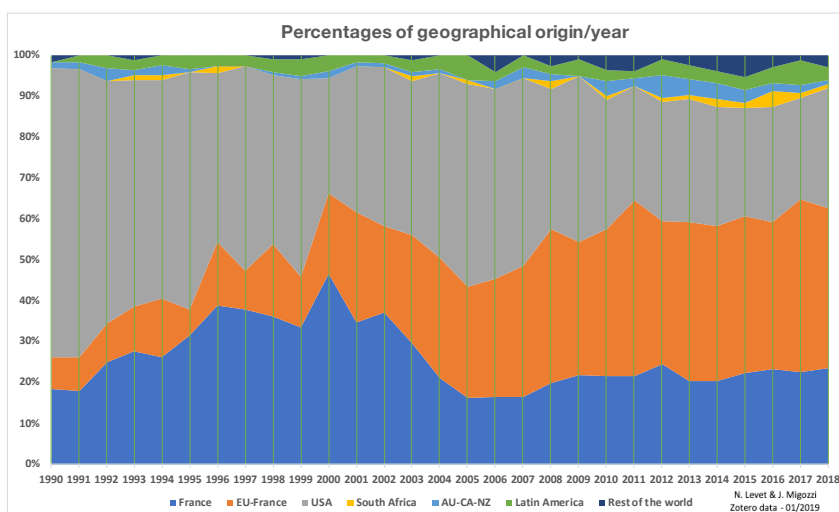
Graph 5. Percentage of novels per country of origin in the catalogues of 8 French crime fiction publishers (1990-2018)

Intranslations from American English account for 40.5% of the total amalgamated catalogue – far ahead of French crime titles (26.4%), leaving just under a third for novels from all other countries, including European countries. If we add up the shares of novels by British (6.7%), Irish (1.2%), Northern Irish (0.2%), Australian (0.7%), Scottish (0.6%) and Canadian writers (0.6%), English does come out as the predominant language of crime fiction, with over half of published titles.

Second overall observation: if we now only consider European novels (or 25.5% of the total catalogue), it appears that, since 1990, the most represented country is the United Kingdom (224 titles), followed by the countries that are associated with the Nordic Noir sub-genre (178), and then Italy (131) and Spain (78). In fact, while the public at large showed a clear preference for Nordic Noir nov-

els, at the same time European crime fiction as a whole became increasingly diverse in both cultural and geographic terms.
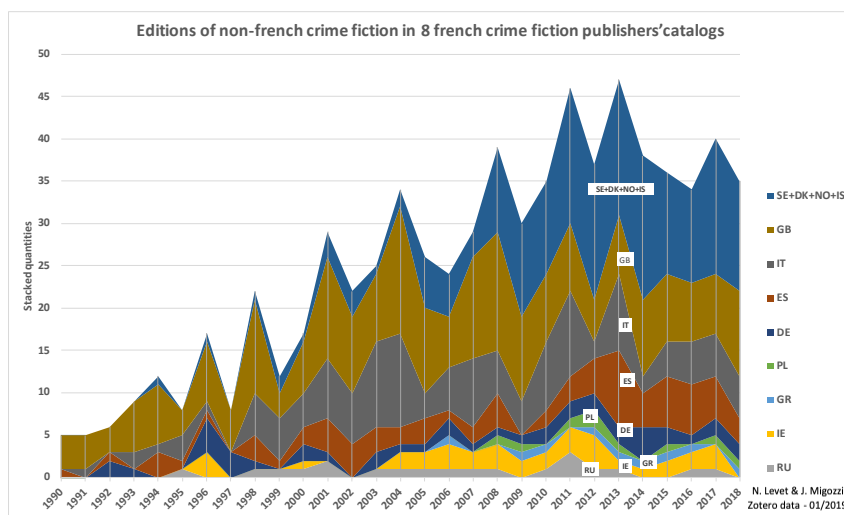
Graph 6. Numbers of translated novels in the catalogues of 8 French crime fiction publishers (1990-2018)

As shown in the graph above, every year since 2009 the number of translated Nordic Noir novels from Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland has been greater than the number of British novels: France does not escape the trend shown in Graph 2 toward the in-translation of Nordic Noir novels, which has a particularly clear example in the pan European expansion of Jo Nesbø's novels. The year 1998 appears to be a pivotal point in the history of the French crime fiction publishing industry: after this year, over 20 European novels were translated annually. Italian and Spanish fiction (from 1998) and to a lesser extent Irish and Greek fiction (respectively from 2004 and 2006) also carved a new place for themselves in French publishing catalogues.

If we connect these symptomatic French phenomena and the apparent periodization obtained through data analysis with a few emblematic cases of European dissemination via extranslation, we may, perhaps recklessly, propose a more general hypothesis: there appears to have been a historical turning point, which marked the genesis of what could be today amalgamated under the very plastic label of 'Euro Noir'.

The various graphs obtained from the analysis of the catalogues of French crime fiction publishers suggest that the year 2005 was marked by the boom of what we might call a 'seduction of the exotic'. In other words, these data suggest a surge of interest from French crime fiction readers for novels of more diverse origins than the dominant Anglo-American one, novels that opened up the imagination to territories other than the United States and presented a new kind of local colour. If we consider Graph 3, showing the percentage of foreign titles translated into French, grouped according to their spatial/linguistic origin, it also appears that since 2011 the share of North American fiction has dropped in parallel with the increase of intranslations from other European languages – so much that since 2009, these latter have become quantitatively more important than North American crime fiction. At the same time, the share of French fiction has sharply dropped since 2004, reaching an average of just 20 to 24%, meanwhile the importance of even minor crime fictions from Latin America, South Africa and other faraway countries has been constantly increasing.

Significantly, according to the datasets harvested through Zotero, it was also around this time, the beginning of the 21st century, that the three most successful exporters in our sample (Fred Vargas, Andrea Camilleri and Jo Nesbø) had one of their novels translated for the first time into another European language. Fred Vargas was published for the first time in 17 European countries between 1997 and 2005 (in 8 countries between 1999 and 2002). The first volume of Camilleri's Montalbano series was translated in 12 European countries between 1998 and 2005 (in 8 countries between 1998 and 2002). And Jo Nesbø was published for the first time in translation in 9 European countries between 1997 and 2000. Based on this cluster of convergent evidence we can therefore postulate that, from a pan-European perspective, an impressive, continuing process of transculturation is today on the way, one that mixes a background trend toward a cosmopolitan reach with the strong appeal of local colour and local anchorage.

Conclusion

This first sectorial approach certainly needs to be completed and reinforced by other quantitative surveys, but it already allows us to spot some major trends in the contemporary process of European

transculturation, as observed through the lenses of crime fiction's translation strategies. The contemporary European market of crime fiction seem to be torn between a unifying cosmopolitanism driven by a small group of international bestsellers and the specificities of local national identities. Beyond the blurring 'Euro Noir' label, research results also reveal the inequality of the symbolic exchange embedded within translation as well as the cultural and economic competition that shapes crime narratives and representations in our contemporary globalized media culture.

References

Boumediene, Farid, and Jacques Migozzi. 2012. "Circulation transnationale des romans et séries de la culture populaire en Europe (1840 - 1930)." In *Géographie poétique et cartographie littéraire*, edited by Véronique Maleval, Marion Picker, and Florent Gabaude, 187-199. Limoges: PULIM.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1996. *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Casanova, Pascale. 1999. *La république mondiale des lettres*. Paris: Seuil.

Casanova, Pascale. 2002. "Consécration et accumulation de capital littéraire. La traduction comme échange inégal." *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 144: 7-20. English translation in *Translation Studies: Critical Concepts,* 2009, edited by Mona Baker. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org//10.3406/arss.2002.2804 .

Casanova, Pascale. 2015. *La langue mondiale*. Paris: Seuil.

Collovald, Annie, and Érik Neveu. 2004. *Lire le noir. Enquête sur les lecteurs de récits policiers*, Paris : BPI/Centre Pompidou.

De Paulis-Dalambert, Marie-Pia, ed. 2010. *L'Italie en jaune et noir, La littérature policière de 1990 à nos jours*. Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle.

Forshaw, Barry. 2014. *Euro Noir: The Pocket Essential Guide to European Crime Fiction, Film & TV.* Harpenden: Pocket Essentials.

Hansen, Kim Toft, Steven Peackcok, and Sue Turnbull Sue, eds. 2018. *European Crime Drama and Beyond.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Migozzi, Jacques, Natacha Levet, and Lucie Amir. 2020. "Gatekeepers of Noir: The Paradoxical Internationalization of the French Crime Fiction Field." *European Review*, online publication July 16, 2020: 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798720001118

Moretti, Franco. 1999. *Atlas of the European Novel*. London and New York: Verso.

Moretti, Franco. 2005. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History.* London and New York: Verso.

Moretti, Franco. 2013. *Distant reading*. London and New York: Verso.

Moretti, Franco, ed. 2016. *La littérature au laboratoire*. Paris: Ithaque.

Sapiro, Gisèle, ed. 2008. *Translatio. Le Marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la mondialisation*. Paris: CNRS éditions.

Sapiro, Gisèle. 2010. "Globalization and Cultural Diversity in the Book Market: the Case of Literary Translations in the US and in France." *Poetics*, 38: 2010-4. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2010.05.001

Is there such a thing as a Hungarian Nordic Noir?
Cultural Homogenization and Glocal Agency

Sándor Kálai

is Associate Professor at the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Debrecen. His research focuses on the history of European media culture and popular genres, like in particular crime fiction. He published a book, in Hungarian, on the history of French crime novel and he recently edited, with Jacques Migozzi, in Belphégor a collection of articles on European media culture.

Anna Keszeg

is Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising of the Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. Her main research interests are contemporary visual culture, with special focus on television, and fashion communication. She published several articles in French and Hungarian on contemporary Eastern European crime series.

Abstract

In Hungary, the last few years were witness to an increasing appropriation of Nordic Noir aesthetics. Books, films and a television series were written and produced under a 'Scandinavian' crime label on this small-scale market, adapting, relatively late, the bestselling genre of the last two decades. Our aim is to situate this tendency in the context of Hungarian creative industries by underlining the most important discursive elements involved in the remediation of Hungarian crime stories within a "network of similarities" (García-Mainar 2020) with Nordic Noir. An investigation of the paratexts of these cultural products sheds light on the main idea behind the creation of those different mediatic appropriations: in Hungary, a market where the crime genre has had, and still has, a difficult and

discontinuous affirmation, adopting the label of a globally success-ful (sub)genre may help crime fiction through its process of cultural institutionalization.

Keywords: Nordic Noir, appropriation, creative industries, glocali-ty, paratexts

In this article, we explore the trajectory of the Nordic Noir subgenre in the context of its Hungarian adaptation and appropriation. The following case studies prove that, in a given geographic cultural market, the Nordic Noir label provides an opportunity for a trans-national relocation of a recognized local form. The double localiza-tion of a cultural product produces a structure of systemic ambi-guities which has peculiar consequences in the context of different cultural and industrial realities. In contemporary cultural and creative industries, such processes are fairly common. Discussing changes in visual culture, curator and art theoretician David Jo-selit has proposed the notions of "buzz" and "image explosion" to refer to the value of saturation of a cultural phenomenon, described as "a dynamic form that arises out of circulation. As such, it is lo-cated on a spectrum between the absolute stasis of native site speci-ficity on the one hand, and the absolute freedom of neoliberal mar-kets on the other" (Joselit 2013). Similarly, Nordic Noir acts not simply as a buzzword (Seppälä 2020, 255), but rather as a buzz it-self, an explosion of texts with different media and cultural fea-tures. Many different analytic patterns were used to describe the international circulation of Nordic Noir. The creation of a geo-graphically fixed generic label went hand in hand with the evolu-tion of various transmedia cultural forms, suggesting not so much a homogeneous concept, but rather a "network of similarity", a no-tion coined by García-Mainar in 2020. Reframed as network of sim-ilarity, Joselit's concept of buzz describes "a radically different type of adaptation, constituted by diffuse networks of influence that can only be traced through similarity and where conscious authorial intention is replaced by complex webs of cultural intercommunica-tion emerging in the shape of thematic and aesthetic coincidence" (García-Mainar 2020, 158).

Given Nordic Noir's international success, its circulation has been characterized by many different patterns, and yet, all of its

multiple variations prove that it is as much a social as an aesthetic construct. The term "genre awareness", introduced by Yves Reuter in his book on crime novels, confirms that a genre exists as such only when it is aware of its institutionalized nature. That is to say, alongside with a textual dimension (meant as the consolidation of thematic and structural elements referring back to previous texts belonging to the genre) there is always a social dimension (genre-specific conditions of production and reception, specialized critiques, awards) to the making of a genre (Reuter 1997, 10). To avoid any essentialist misconception, we would like to point out that the late appropriation of the global, and mainly Anglo-American, Nordic Noir frenzy (Forshaw 2013) has contributed, in Hungary, to the emancipation of crime narratives in general. The main reasons behind our concerns with any all-encompassing definition of the Nordic Noir concept lie not only in its generic instability, but also in a consideration of the discursive panorama of both the academic and everyday uses of the term. We are not the first ones to notice that the various scholarly investigations of the concept have created an extraordinarily dense discursive field, where the reiterations of the definition have only added new layers to an analytically weak notion (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017, 6). In order to facilitate orientation on the scholarly map of current perceptions of Nordic Noir, we distinguish three major discursive levels in the semantics of the expression, and namely: the first level defines it as a style "that can be adapted and appropriated" (Seppälä 2020, 257); the second one considers it as a cross-media brand, a label that is open to appropriation and circulation across various international cultural industries (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017, 4–9, 300–302); the third one interprets it as a genre and, more specifically, a subgenre, which narrows down the *noir* genre to one of its geographic versions (Stougaard-Nielsen 2017, 14–16).

Having in mind the methodological limitations implied in every effort of classification, we would like to underline that the three meanings sketched above are not completely independent from each other. However, they are recognizable enough to help us highlight the history of the Hungarian appropriation of Nordic Noir. The effort to re-read some of the canonic texts of the Nordic Noir genre according to this three-folded discursive approach allows a classification of recent Hungarian Nordic Noir productions based

on the analysis of their paratexts. Even the tenseness of the expression, 'Hungarian Nordic Noir', points out the difficulty behind the appropriation: how can a geographically determined cultural construct travel to other cultural destinations without losing its own distinctive features? Our main thesis tries to deal with this ambiguity by proposing that the appropriation of Nordic Noir on the Hungarian market operates according to a double-layered adoption of the global-local dialectics.[1] On the one hand, Nordic Noir is a notion that proves useful to implement international tendencies into the Hungarian cultural industries. The brand value of Nordic Noir allows artistic representations of Hungarian criminality to gain an international status. On the other hand, when the brand value is confronted with local creative labour and stylistic solutions, the analytic inaccuracy of Nordic Noir acts as an agent of dissent, and its generic and stylistic values slip apart. The case studies we are going to discuss below prove that there are as many Nordic Noirs on the Hungarian market as the number of its appropriations and the number of key speakers who were responsible of creating the paratexts to those products. Or, to put it differently, the notion is so multifaceted that the plethora of its definitions end up dissolving in scarcity: in practice, as we will see in the following, there is no such thing as a 'Hungarian Nordic Noir.'

2019: A Year of Nordic Noir in Hungary

Investigating the connection between the global presence of the noir genre and its local and regional settings, Eva Erdmann (2009) noticed that in many cases the location where the crime takes place appears to be more important than the crime itself. According to this reading, when readers and spectators consume crime fiction, their attraction is first captured by the location and the ways in which it is presented and designed. As the brand concept of 'Nordic' Noir underlines, the genre was born out of a kind of an ethnographic turn, which has facilitated its cross-media explosion (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017, 1–4). In Hungary, the adaptation processes matured in the last few years. Accordingly, this period saw an increasing appropriation of the Nordic Noir stylistic features in the realms of film (with Károly Ujj Mészáros's *The Exploited*, also known as *X*, 2018, and Béla Bagota's *Valan*, 2019), television (with *Alvilág*, lit. Underworld, 2019, a series again directed by Ujj Mészáros) and

literature (with two novels by respectively Ákos Szelle, *Sebek a falon*, lit. Wounds on the walls, 2019, and Zoltán Kőhalmi, *A férfi, aki megölte a férfit, aki megölte a férfit*, lit. The man who killed the man, who killed the man, 2019). All of these works were written and produced under the Scandinavian noir[2] label, adapting, relatively late, for this small-scale market, some characteristic features of the best-selling genre of the last two decades. One of the books is written by a well-known Hungarian stand-up comedian (Zoltán Kőhalmi) and is an ironic presentation of Nordic Noir's generic clichés, so much that the appropriation appears at the same time as a form of criticism.

In order to point out what the label stands for in this particular cultural environment, we need to give an overview of how Hungarian cultural products came to be influenced by the Nordic Noir aesthetics. We must emphasize that the appropriation of Nordic Noir is a very recent phenomenon, manifesting as a trend only around 2018. Given the fact that Scandinavian crime fiction became an international trend after being rebranded as Nordic Noir in the late 2000s, the Hungarian market lags at least one decade behind the global tendencies (Badley et al. 2020, 2; Forshaw 2013, 16–20; Toft Hansen and Waade 2017, 105). However, the average duration of financing and producing a movie/book in Hungary as well as the multiple responsibilities held by the filmmakers and the writers who have authored the most important appropriations of the Nordic style testify that the creative journey towards the genre dates back to the beginning of the 2010s[3], so that only the release of the products seems in fact outdated. One of the main differences that characterize small-scale markets as compared to large-scale ones is that the former requires the author/director to hold multiple synchronous obligations, in contrast to the latter, which instead allows the possibility to specialize in single tasks. These differences are linked to two specific risks of small markets as qualified by Hjort: the risk of mono-personalism on the one hand and the risk of wasted talent on the other (Hjort 2015, 53–54). The accuracy of the small-scale market concept in relation to the Hungarian case was discussed by Andrea Virginás, who concluded that the decrease in the number of films produced annually in Hungary through the last decade shows that the country's cultural production increasingly accommodates with this specific category (Virginás 2014, 66). Ba-

lázs Varga, the author of a monograph on the Hungarian film industry in the period of the political-cultural transition, distinguishes three specific problems of the Hungarian movie market, which he terms "traps of visibility." The first of these problems has to do with the chances that the success achieved by a local film on the national market obscures other local productions (in the case of Hungary, Varga elaborates, there are only a few successful national productions, usually comedies, but still, their overexposure do not incite the spectator to go and watch other Hungarian films). The second trap has to do with the (very low) visibility of European films on the European market compared to North American productions. The third problem has to do with the low visibility of nationally successful films on the European market (a Hungarian comedy or detective film is not as accessible in other European countries as are, for instance, French comedies or British gangster films). Hence, according to Varga, locally produced genre films have just a chance to succeed – and that is on the domestic market (Varga 2016, 20-22).

Situating the 'Scandification' trend in the context of Hungarian creative industries thus helps us understand the most important cultural reasons behind this phenomenon. An investigation of the paratexts[4] of the above-mentioned cultural products (Kääpä 2020, 113-133) in our final paragraph will shed further light on the meanings and uses of these different media appropriations: in Hungary, a market where the crime genre has always had, and still has, a difficult and discontinuous affirmation (Kálai 2014), adopting the label of a globally successful cultural phenomenon can effectively contribute to the institutionalization of crime fiction as a whole.

At the same time, the curious thing about Nordic Noir is that a cultural variation has succeeding in becoming a (sub)genre, so the appropriation of its style and formal features will always fluctuate between glocal agency and cultural homogenization. For a small cultural market, the international recognition of a local literary model, such as has happened to the Nordic Noir, is at once an inspiration (what happened to them can happen to us) and a threat (authors and directors risk remaining simple copycats). This ambiguity can be observed behind each of our case studies.

By the same token, the global reception of the genre within the contemporary traditions of cultural studies shows that all critical

interpretations of the Nordic Noir phenomenon have focused only partially on the texts and more on issues of production, readership and representation. Many studies – including studies about manuscripts published in lesser spoken languages that became global beststellers (Steiner 2012, Berglund 2017, Nilsson 2016), about the logics of location and cultural tourism (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017), about the glocalizing aspects of the crime genre (Bondebjerg and Redvall 2015, Hedberg 2017), and about questions of market value (Toft Hansen and Christensen, 2018) – have all confirmed that, beyond its aesthetics, Nordic Noir has a strong productional imprint. As for its generic formula, it seems so recognizable as to allow a well-known cultural journalist and promoter of crime fiction such as Barry Forshaw to publish, as early as 2012 with Palgrave Macmillan, a critical essay entirely devoted to Nordic Noir and to later include the genre in what he has called 'Euro Noir' (Forshaw 2014). Consequently, Nordic Noir became a generic label which translates easily into common knowledge and brand value.

How Small is the Hungarian Cultural Market?

To understand the place of the five above mentioned cultural products in their autochthonous market, we have to situate each of them in the context of their respective cultural industry. Although Hungary is certainly a small market when compared to other European countries,[5] its cultural products have been often categorized as objects of prestige consumption, as becomes obvious when considering the names of such internationally acclaimed film directors as Béla Tarr, Miklós Jancsó, Ildikó Enyedi, or the Oscar-winner László Nemes Jeles, and authors such as Imre Kertész, Péter Nádas, Sándor Márai. Given this critically acclaimed cultural tradition, the Hungarian cultural landscape is still dominated by a tendency to disregard the products of popular culture, such as genre narratives and formats. In terms of production, this translates into an ambiguous attitude towards mainstream trends: while marketing professionals have a predilection for popular labels, professional critics are concerned with the standardizing effects they have on the appreciation of the single works. In terms of cultural consumption, the gap between professional and everyday reception is quite significant, since important Hungarian cultural critics still adopt a view on popular cultural products that echoes the rather harsh ap-

proach of the Frankfurt School towards mass culture. In addition, the power dynamics of academic literary studies is still ruled by methods focused on the close reading, textual analysis and interpretation of 'high-brow' works.

As for the Hungarian publishing industry, according to the data of the Hungarian National Institute of Statistics, the period of the political transition from real socialism to capitalism was characterized by both a fallback in the number of prints per title and a parallel growth of the number of published titles. Nowadays, only 3.8% of the publications are printed in at least 5,000-10,000 copies, while 0.2% reach 20-30,000 copies and 1.2% do not exceed the limit of 10-20,000 copies.[6]

Year	Number of titles	Number of titles: fiction	Number of copies	Number of copies: fiction
2018	13,128	3,813	31,084,000	8,791,000
1990	8,322	1,560	125,741,00	47,009,000

Fig. 1. The Hungarian publishing industry in 1990 and 2018.[7]

The translation of Nordic crime novels into Hungarian started at the end of the 2000s. As it developed into a successful business, several publishing houses became specialized in the publication of Scandinavian crime fiction. However, one single company emerged as leader in the field, namely Animus, founded in 1991 and already a thriving business thanks to its edition of the Harry Potter series. The first Nordic Noir novel published by Animus was an Icelandic title, the fourth chapter in Arnaldur Indriðason's detective Erlendur series, *Grafarþögn* (2001; English translation: *Silence of the Grave*, 2005; Hungarian translation: *Kihantolt bűnök*, 2007). Indriðason was chosen because he was the first non-English speaking writer to have won the Crime Writers Association's Gold Dagger award (Marosi 2019). After the publication of a Jo Nesbø book in 2008, in 2009 Animus issued the Hungarian translation of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy, which resulted in a substantial increase of the company's sales. The list of the authors published by Animus since then is quite impressive: Camilla Läckberg, Lars Kepler, Jussi Adler-Olsen, Yrsa Sigurðardóttir, Hjorth-Rosenfeldt, and Håkan

Nesser are just a few. Interestingly, alongside these and other nordic authors, the company's *Skandináv krimik* (Scandinavian crime fiction) series also hosts a French crime novel, Olivier Truc's *Le dernier lapon* (2012; Hungarian trans. *Sámándob*, 2015), also labelled a Nordic Noir. It was in this context that, in 2019, Animus published a psycho-thriller by a Hungarian author, Ákos Szelle's *Sebek a falon* (lit. Wounds on the wall), expressly marketing the book as a Hungarian Nordic Noir novel.

Animus publishes 10–14 titles annually, and a quarter of its revenues come from crime novels (Marosi 2019). Its bestselling novels can reach several tens of thousands of copies, which is quite a remarkable number on the Hungarian book market. Several other Hungarian publishers have published works by Scandinavian authors: Scolar (Arne Dahl and Karin Fossum), Cartaphilus (Lars Kepler), Libri (Erik Axl Sund or Mons Kallentoft), Athenaeum (Carin Gerhardsen, Samuel Carin Gerhardsen, Samuel Bjørk), but only Animus has made Nordic Noir into a publishing strategy. According to the company's editor in chief, their best-selling novels (i.e the Harry Potter novels) have reached some tens of thousands of copies (Marosi 2019). According to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, only a few other Scandinavian crime novels have reached similar figures: this is the case of both David Lagercrantz's sequels to Larsson's Millennium series (*Mannen Som Sökte Sin Skugga / The Girl Who Takes an Eye for an Eye / Mint az árnyék,* all editions 2017; *Hon som måste dö / The Girl Who Lived Twice / A lány, aki kétszer élt,* all editions 2019) which reached respectively 17,000 and 13,000 copies, and two of Jo Nesbø's Harry Hole books (*Tørst / The Thirst / Szomjúság,* all editions 2017; *Kniv / The Knife / Kés,* all editions 2019), each reaching 15,000 copies.[8]

Zoltán Kőhalmi, the author of the successful Hungarian spoof of Nordic Noir, *A férfi, aki megölte a férfit, aki megölte a férfit* (lit. The man who killed the man, who killed the man) is a well-known stand-up comedian who transferred his popularity into another cultural field. His publisher, Helikon, does not specialize in crime fiction, although it recently acquired the rights to Agatha Christie's novels. Kőhalmi's book is a parody of the Nordic Noir genre, which highlights the writer's expectation that his readership is well familiar with the genre's conventions. With 20,000 copies sold in 2019, the novel became a relative success, although it still lags behind the

figures achieved by another famous stand-up comedian, Tibor Bödőcs, whose parody book that mocks the work of classic Hungarian writers (*Addig se iszik*, 2017; lit. He doesn't drink until then) sold up to 70,000 copies and is considered the main competitor to Kőhalmi's work.

In the field of cinema, a most significant event in this period was the establishment of the Hungarian National Film Fund in 2011, first chaired by Andy Vajna – a Hungarian-born producer who built his career in Hollywood. During his presidency (he died in 2019, when the film financing system was in the process of being redesigned) a centralized and script-oriented movie-financing system came into being. Between 2011 and 2019, seven to eight feature films were funded annually by the Hungarian state. For 2018 and 2019 – the years when the two cases discussed below were produced – the Hungarian Film Fund lists 26 titles (which include co-productions and TV movies)[9]; four of these are labelled as thrillers, of which only three are productions made for the big screen and only two deal with contemporary events. We will thus focus on these two films, which represent in fact the totality of Hungarian non-costume crime movies produced in 2018 and 2019. Interestingly, they both reveal the crucial influence of Scandinavian noir.

The Exploited[10] was made by Károly Ujj Mészáros after his first successful work for the big screen, *Liza, a rókatündér* (*Liza, the Fox-Fairy*, 2015), a fantasy-romantic comedy. Following the unanimous success of *Liza*, the director expressed his wish to make a movie in a completely different register, anchored in contemporary Hungarian realities, stressing that Nordic Noir would be a perfect model for his project. In this case, as we will discuss later in more detail, Nordic Noir stands as a synonym for an existential crime story. By contrast, in the case of *Valan*[11], the directorial debut of Béla Bagota, the relation with Nordic Noir emerges from the choice to set the story in Transylvania, a region of Romania with an important Hungarian minority. This region, which carries particular exotic connotations in the Hungarian collective imagination (Feischmidt 2005), had to be represented paying attention on its peculiar local features, and the approach of Nordic Noir helped the director meet these expectations.

The television series *Alvilág* (lit. Underworld) also has an interesting production story.[12] Developed in the same period as the two

above mentioned films (it was announced in 2018 and broadcast in the first half of 2019), it was produced by the foremost private broadcasting company in Hungary, RTL Klub. After being auditioned as a candidate for directing *Aranyélet / Golden Life* (2015), a critically acclaimed crime television drama produced by HBO Europe, which was eventually directed by others, Károly Ujj Mészáros was chosen by RTL Klub to develop *Alvilág*, which is now considered one of the best examples of the current revival of Hungarian serial production. In fact, since the second half of the 2010s, Hungary has witnessed a growing interest in the production of television series, after a period when only daily soap operas were commissioned. Until then, the only player on the market of high-end quality dramas had been HBO Europe, whose crime production *Aranyélet / Golden Life* went remarkably well in 2015 on streaming television. Following the success of HBO series, private broadcasting companies started to be interested in producing high quality TV drama. *Alvilág* is a result of this tendency. To date, however, it remains the only example of a quality crime series produced by a Hungarian broadcast company. Its modest audience shares seem to prove that the public of Hungarian broadcast television is not that interested in crime stories. In fact, *Alvilág* never reached the shares obtained on the channel by comedies or soap operas, and even *Aranyélet / Golden Life* proved a flop when broadcast on the second most important Hungarian private broadcasting channel, TV2. Nevertheless, *Alvilág* is available on RTL Klub's streaming platform and, according to the producers (Heszler 2019), it has managed to find its audience in this context. To complete our quick survey of Hungarian TV crime series, it is important to observe that no crime series were produced by PBS television channels between 2018-2019, and only the most important commercial broadcasting company took the risk to produce a crime series for the small screen.

Even though *Alvilág* is an adaptation of a Dutch series (*Penoza / The Black Widow,* 2010-2017), its advertising campaign emphasized the Nordic Noir influence (Sergő Z. 2019), which supports our thesis that Nordic Noir has become an institutionalized genre on the Hungarian market, creating a cultural logic that allows a dialogue between production and reception. As our next examples will make even clearer, the generic, stylistic and brand value of the concept are

all equally important to shaping the ways in which it is used in different media contexts.

Nordic Noir, an (Almost) Empty Signifier?

In the title of an interview with Ákos Szelle, the writer of *Sebek a falon* is labelled "the author of a Hungarian 'Scandinavian' crime novel" (Fráter 2019). This is an obvious example of how the relation with the generic features of Scandinavian crime fiction is used in paratexts to draw attention to Szelle's novel. Since the book is published by Animus, it is actually not the novel's uniqueness that is highlighted, but, rather, its possible assimilation into the Nordic Noir brand represented by the publisher. Although not included in the *Skandináv krimik* (Scandinavian crime fiction) series, the book can be linked to it through different paratextual elements: the black, red and white colours in the cover may recall the design used for Jo Nesbø's books. Moreover, the back cover, after providing a short summary of the story, makes the connection overtly explicit: "This psychothriller by Ákos Szelle evokes the creepy atmosphere of Scandinavian crime fiction".

In his interviews, the author points out the paradox of this situation: "While I was writing, it never occurred to me that I was writing a Hungarian Scandinavian crime novel" (Fráter 2019). Despite the author claims not to have been familiar with Nordic Noir (although he says he had seen films – such as the *Millennium* trilogy and the *Department Q* film cycle – and TV series – such as *The Bridge*), the publishing house decided to market his work as a 'Hungarian Scandinavian' crime fiction, rather than simply Hungarian. Szelle states to have read Nordic Noir novels after finishing his book, which means that any similarity can only be constructed retrospectively. In a podcast, the interviewer and the writer list a series of generic features characteristic of Scandinavian crime fiction: a general mood of hopelessness, social problems, confinement, the milieu and the weather conditions, the detective (struggling with his own problems), violence, and psychological elements (secrets, traumas) (Oláh 2019). All these features – which in fact may be considered as common to all noir fiction – are assimilated here into one of the genre's cultural forms. Moreover, it is assumed that these concepts are part of a common knowledge. It thus appears that the marketing logic behind the book's circulation is more interested in

assimilating Szelle to a *brand* rather than creating a conceptual consistency between the text and other examples of Nordic Noir. For this reason, we consider that the discursive model of Nordic Noir as brand value is the most important element, in this case as well as in the case of the book market in general.

Let's now turn to discussing Zoltán Kőhalmi's work, *A férfi, aki megölte a férfit, aki megölte a férfit.* Thanks to the author's wide popularity as a stand-up comedian, the publication of his book was accompanied by several interviews, each of them addressing the author's relation to Scandinavian crime fiction. The book's title immediately indicates that it is a parody of the Nordic Noir genre, a concept reinforced by both the name of the fictional city in the subtitle (*Avagy 101 hulla Dramfjordban*, lit. Or 101 corpses in Dramfjørd) and the image on the cover, which represents the author in a snowy landscape with fishes. The brief text on the back cover, written by András Cserna-Szabó – a well-known writer and the novel's editor, who also serves here as a kind of guarantee for the book's quality – functions as a guideline for the reader. Three authors are mentioned in Cserna-Szabó's presentation, each one representing a different tradition: Jenő Rejtő[13] for the humor, Italo Calvino for the postmodern approach, and Jo Nesbø for the crime genre. Kőhalmi's book is actually a metanovel: not only are the characters aware that they are fictional, but they also know their task is to represent the figures of the publishing industry (the editor, the author or the publisher) as the criminals. The author obviously presumes that the readers are familiar with the clichés of the genre.

In his interviews, the author revolves around several recurring themes: the figure of the alcoholic and antisocial detective, childhood traumas, social criticism, and extreme methods of killing. Köhalmi's description of these clichés are as funny as the novel itself: "Overall it might not be true, but it occurred to me that, in classical crime novels, one sinner is sought among the normal ones, and in the Scandinavian crime fictions, the question is more which of the many burdened, perverted lunatics has just committed the crime. The investigators do not solve the case because they have such incredible abilities, or because they are so terribly dedicated to the task, but simply because the investigation comes to them as yet another difficulty in their unfortunate life, and there is no one other than them to solve the case anyway" (Hercsel 2019). Unlike Szelle,

Kőhalmi did serious research on the genre. For example, answering the question: "Do you often read the type of novels parodied in the book? Do you read a lot of Scandinavian crime stories?", he replied: "I read them, yes, so I also felt obligated to analyze them, but for me the unique sun in this sky is Jo Nesbø. I've read others too […], but they're not that good. And it became a separate genre on TV, with *The Bridge* and its thousands of mutations, and those that just look like *The Bridge*. But for me, in a sense, everything comes from *The Bridge*" (Herczeg and Sarkadi 2019). This is a good example of a tie-in: a well-known public figure adopts a well-known literary genre for writing his first novel, the success of which reinforces both brands, that is, that of the stand-up comedian and that of the genre at the same time.

Linda Hutcheon (2000) has proven the important role that parody has played in the construction of artistic modernity. Hungarian literature has a strong tradition of copying and reworking texts in the high-brow canon (Balogh 2018), a practice initiated in 1912 by Frigyes Karinthy (a sort of father-like figure for Hungarian humoristic literature) with the publication of his book of parodies, *Így írtok ti* (lit. Here's how YOU write). Kőhalmi's novel is part of this tradition. As he explained in one of his interviews (Herczeg and Sarkadi 2019), his project originated more than a decade ago, when he wanted to write a book, ironically called "All the books", composed exclusively of parodies of different genres, with the ambition to obliterate all the books ever written before. Of the stories included in this project, his publisher especially appreciated the one shaped in the fashion of Nordic Noir, so Kőhalmi decided to turn it into an independent book. And yet, the ironic idea of a sort of an all-encompassing literary algorithm is more attached to the parodistic tradition of Hungarian literature than to the genre of Nordic Noir. This particular cultural context allows Kőhalmi to play with Nordic Noir as an easily imitable stylistic frame. The appropriation of Nordic Noir as *style* underlines the author's attempt to reconstruct crimes linked with politics, Satanic youth movements and coffee-fetishism.

In the realm of audio-visual production, a stronger generic awareness can be observed. This is where the discourse of the Nordic Noir as a *genre* is the most inspiring, given the crucial role that film noir has historically played in the film industry. However, a paradoxical situation can be pointed out: while both Ujj Mészáros and Bagota

have no doubt something original to say about Nordic Noir beyond its mere existence as a commercial trend, the label is generally brought up more in the discourse of professional critics and journalists than in the wider marketing strategies of the production companies (Nordic Noir is not mentioned in the commercial para-text, although it surfaces in the press material). At the same time, since movies and TV series attract larger audiences than books, and especially crime and thriller novels, the adoption of a 'Nordic' style has an obvious use value for the purpose of addressing a specific market segment (Seppälä 2020).

Discussing the *Alvilág* TV series, producer Péter Kolosi labeled the show as "dark crime." When asked for an opinion about the series's poor performance in terms of viewers ratings, he declared that the mainstream Hungarian audience is not prepared for that type of storytelling (Heszler 2019).[14] Expressing his view on Scandinavian crime narratives, the series' director, Ujj Mészáros, explained that both *Alvilág* and his earlier film, *The Exploited*, were based on the same creative inspiration drawn from the Nordic generic model. In both cases, he observed, the aim was to recreate the kind of existential investigations into human nature, the sense of loneliness and transience that characterize the works of Nordic Noir (Varga and Pozsonyi 2018). For Ujj Mészáros, this existential approach is the main reason for adopting this narrative model (Seppälä 2020).[15] From a production point of view, a strong similarity between the movie and the series is that both involve the same group of actors, starting with the creator's wife, Móni Balsai.[16] With her rather humble or ordinary appearance, portrayed as the wife of a Hungarian mobster in the series and as a policewoman in the movie, the actress embodies the director's choice to introduce an inconspicuous female character in the underworld as a reference to the Nordic Noir genre. Other elements that evoke the Nordic narrative and visual style include the strong psychological profiling of the characters, an interest in underlining the systemic, structural problems with Hungarian law enforcement, the overpoweringly grey panoramas and landscapes of Budapest, and a lack of summery scenery (Papp 2018; Benke 2018; Becságh 2018).

In the case of Béla Bagota's film *Valan*, the critical discourse is dominated by the idea that this is the first ever 'Transylvanian Scandinavian' noir (Inkei 2019). While the main Nordic ingredient in

The Exploited appears to be its existential approach, the most characteristic marker of 'genre awareness' in *Valan* according to film critics lies in its use of locations. One of Bagota's main objectives was indeed to situate his fictional universe within the specific "cinematic geography" (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017, 28, 40–42) of Transylvania. Set in a mining town plagued with unemployment, corruption and religious fanaticism, the movie had a relatively positive reception in Hungary because of its accurate portrayal of local realities: "The artificial recreation of the industrial town of Balánbánya, with its defunct character, added a lot to the atmosphere. The site provides criminals with a gloomy space, the residents are fighting for a living, and no one really lives in the abandoned buildings" (Jánossy 2018). Some elements that are repeatedly mentioned in the film reviews are the director's willingness to thoroughly reconstruct social reality, an interest in portraying a multilingual and multiethnic community, the snowy landscapes and panoramas, and the problem-oriented approach to the criminal investigation. Bagota has declared to have had an unwavering interest in directing crime stories ever since he started his studies in filmmaking (Varga and Horváth 2018). In his case, a broader generic interest in crime narratives is the point of inception for the making of his first feature film as a director, and the Nordic Noir specificities emerge as a consequence brought by the unfamiliar location, which was not in the script's first draft. Not coincidentally, in one of his interviews the director coined the term *Transnoir* (Transylvanian noir) to both label his movie and characterize it in relation to Nordic Noir (Soós 2017).

Conclusions

The adaptation of the Nordic Noir concept in the context of Hungarian cultural industries has proved to be a case of infinite mirroring between the global and the local. There are four main takeaways from our research. Firstly, the main difference in terms of adaptation and appropriation between the different creative industries is the productional rhythm specific to each market, which has a strong influence on the specialization mechanisms of a given industry. The process of appropriation produces ambiguous results, in that, while the brand value of Nordic Noir seems to reinforce the simplistic idea of the subgenre as a stable entity, creators coming

from different fields use particular interpretations of the concept and highlight different problems behind the adaptation process. Nordic Noir is at once existential crime drama (Ujj Mészáros), easily localizable crime drama (Bagota), a receptacle of imitable stylistic features (Kőhalmi). In the case of Hungary, the relatively late frenzy surrounding Nordic Noir is deeply rooted in market-specific productional processes. Applying our three discursive categories, we have pointed out how the book industry made the most use of Nordic Noir as a brand, the film industry of Nordic Noir as a genre and a popular comedian of Nordic Noir as a style. The second element to be underlined is the role played by Nordic Noir as an enduring, extremely popular international trend in helping crime fiction to stay relevant as a generic label in both the Hungarian book market and other creative industries. The third element to be emphasized is how the same label conveys different meanings and expresses different positionings and motivations: from a weak connection motivated by a strategic consciousness, such as in the case of Szelle's book, to the specific locational interests of much critical discourse, our research suggests that the Hungarian reception of Nordic Noir is multilayered. Moreover, while the interests of the market dictate the use of Nordic Noir in a culturally homogenizing manner, authorial appropriations tend to act in the name of a glocal agency. Finally, trying to respond the question in the title, we argued that, while there might not be any such thing as a 'Hungarian Nordic Noir', the cultural and industrial processes behind the construction of this 'empty signifier' demonstrate the different ways in which an international cultural label can translate into homogenization and of diversification at the same time.

References

Badley, Linda, Andrew Nestigen, and Jaakko Seppälä, eds. 2020. *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Balogh, Gergő. 2018. *Karinthy nyelvet ölt. Nyelv, technika és felelősség Karinthy Frigyesnél*. Budapest: Fiatal Írók Szövetsége.

Becságh, Dániel. 2018. "Skandináv borzongás Kőbányán." *Art7*, October 31, 2018. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://art7.hu/film/skandinav-borzongas-kobanyan/.

-béla. 2019. "Pótolhatatlan lapok – Mit olvas Balsai Móni?" *Népszava*, March 29, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://nepszava.hu/3030596_potolhatatlan-lapok-mit-olvas-balsai-moni

Benke, Attila. 2018. "Skandináv thriller magyar módra." *Prae*, November 1, 2018. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://www.prae.hu/article/10650-skandinav-thriller-magyar-modra/.

Berglund, Karl. 2017. "With a Global Market in Mind: Agents, Authors, and the Dissemination of Contemporary Swedish Crime Fiction." In *Crime Fiction as World Literature*, edited by Louise Nilsson, David Damrosch and Theo D'haen, 77-90. New York, London: Bloomsbury.

Bondebjerg, Ib, and Eva Novrup Redvall. 2015. "Breaking Borders: The International Success of Danish Television Drama." In *European Cinema and Television, Cultural Policy and Everyday Life*, edited by Ib Bondebjerg, Eva Novrup Redvall, and Andrew Higson, 214-238. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.

Erdmann, Eva. 2009. "Nationality International: Detective Fiction in the Late Twentieth Century". In *Investigating Identities. Questions of Identity in Contemporary International Crime Fiction*, edited by Marieke Krayenbrink and Kate M. Quinn. Amsterdam, 11-26. New York: Rodopi.

Feischmidt, Margit, ed. 2005. *Erdély-(de)konstrukciók*. Budapest, Pécs: Néprajzi Múzeum, PTE Kommunikáció- és Médiatudományi Tanszék.

Forshaw, Barry. 2012. *Death in a Cold Climate. A Guide to Scandinavian Crime Fiction*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Forshaw, Barry. 2013. "The Larsson Phenomenon: Sales Figures and Sexual Abuse." In *Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Nordic Noir on Page and Screen*, edited by Steven Peacock, 12-34. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Forshaw, Barry. 2014. *Euro Noir. The Pocket Essential Guide to European Crime Fiction, Film & Tv*. Harpenden: Pocket Essentials.

Fráter, Zsuzsanna. 2019. "Szelle Ákos, a magyar 'skandináv' krimi írója – interjú." *Corn and soda*, October 10, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. http://cornandsoda.com/szelle-akos-a-magyar-skandinav-krimi-iroja-interju/.

Hedberg, Andreas. 2017. "The Knife in the Lemon: Nordic Noir and the Glocalization of Crime Fiction." In *Crime Fiction as World Literature*, edited by Louise Nilsson, David Damrosch and Theo D'haen, 13-22. New York, London: Bloomsbury.

García–Mainar, Luis M. 2020. "Nordic Noir. The Broad Picture." In *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation*, edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestigen, and Jaakko Seppälä, 157-174. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Genette, Gérard. 1997. *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hercsel, Adél. 2019. "Kőhalmi Zoltán: Haragból sosem lehet humort csinálni." *Könyves Magazin*, September 12, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://konyvesmagazin.hu/nagy/kohalmi_zoltan_haragbol_sosem_lehet_humort_csinalni.html.

Herczeg, Márk, and Sarkadi Zsolt. 2019. "Kőhalmi: Nem az irodalmat akartam megreformálni, hanem nekem ez így vicces." *444.hu*, August 29, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://444.hu/2019/08/29/kohalmi-nem-az-irodalmat-akartam-megreformalni-hanem-nekem-ez-igy-vicces.

Heszler, Róbert. 2019. "Sorozatos felfutás – interjú Kolosi Péterrel." *Marketing & Media*, April 11, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://www.mmonline.hu/cikk/sorozatos-felfutas-interju-kolosi-peterrel/.

Hjort, Mette. 2015. "The Risk Environment of Small-Nation Filmmaking." In *European Visions. Small Cinemas in Transition*, edited by Janelle Blankenship and Tobias Nagl, 49-65. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

Hutcheon, Linda. 2000. *A Theory of Parody. The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Inkei, Bence. 2019. "Valan: Megszületett az erdélyi skandináv thriller." *24.hu*, November 22, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://24.hu/kultura/2019/11/22/valan-az-angyalok-volgye-film-kritika/.

Jánossy, Villő. 2018. "Így készül a pszichothriller egy erdélyi bányában." *24.hu*, March 13, 2018. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://24.hu/kultura/2018/03/13/valan-film-forgatasi-riport-balanbanyan/.

Jánossy, Villő, and Inkei Bence. 2019. "Balsai Móni: Ebben az országban szeretünk félni, akkor is, ha ismertek vagyunk." *24.hu*, November 23, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://24.hu/kultura/2019/11/23/balsai-moni-ebben-az-orszagban-szeretunk-felni-akkor-is-ha-ismertek-vagyunk.

Joselit, David. 2013. *After Art.* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Kálai, Sándor. 2014. "Miért intézményesül(t) nehezen a magyar krimi." *Korunk* 3:12-17.

Kääpä, Pietari. 2020. "'Why Don't We Do Television Like That in the UK?': Promotional and Paratextual Strategies in the Transnational Branding of Nordic Noir." In *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation*, edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestigen, and Jaakko Seppälä, 113-133. Palgrave Macmillan.

Marosi, László. 2019. "Interview with Marosi László, editor in chief of Animus Publication House" by Kálai Sándor. February 27, 2019.

Nilsson, Louise. 2016. "Uncovering a Cover: Marketing Swedish Crime Fiction in a Transnational Context." *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 7(1). Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6308x270.

Oláh, Andrea. 2019. "Sebek a falon – Szelle Ákos." *Listennotes.com*, February 2, 2020. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/könyvben-utazom/sebek-a-falon-szelle-ákos-0k5HDTba3s9/.

Papp, Attila Zsolt. 2018. "Budapest noir." *Filmtett*, October 25, 2018. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://www.filmtett.ro/cikk/budapest-noir-x-a-rendszerbol-torolve-kritika/#maszol.

Reuter, Yves. 1997. *Le roman policier*. Paris: Nathan.

Sergő Z., András. 2019. "Végre elhagytuk a műanyag világot – Alvilág." *Filmteckers*, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://www.filmtekercs.hu/sorozat/vegre-elhagytuk-a-muanyag-vilagot-alvilag.

Soós, Tamás. 2017. "Az erdélyi krimi is lehet olyan izgalmas, mint a skandináv. Beszélgetés Bagota Bélával." *Filmtett*, December 26, 2017. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://www.filmtett.ro/cikk/4748/az-erdelyi-krimi-is-lehet-olyan-izgalmas-mint-a-skandinav-beszelgetes-bagota-belaval.

Seppälä, Jaakko. 2020. "The Style of Nordic Noir: *Bordertown* as a Stylistic Adaptation of the Prototype." In *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation*, edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestigen, and Jaakko Seppälä, 255-273. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Squires, Claire. 2007. *The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stanitzek, Georg. 2005. "Texts and paratexts in media." *Critical Inquiry,* 32 (1): 27-42. https://doi.org/10.1086/498002

Steiner, Ann. 2012. "World Literature and the Book Market." In *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, edited by Theo D'haen, David Damrosch and Djelal Kadir, 316-324. London and New York: Routledge.

Stougaard-Nielsen, Jakob. 2017. *Scandinavian Crime Fiction*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

Toft Hansen, Kim, and Anne Marit Waade. 2017. *Locating Nordic Noir. From Beck to The Bridge*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Toft Hansen, Kim, and Jørgen Riber Christensen. 2018. "Local Noir and Local Identity." In *European Television Crime Drama and Beyond*, edited by Kim Toft Hansen, Steven Peacock and Sue Turnbull, 213-232. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Varga, Balázs. 2016. *Filmrendszerváltások*. Budapest: L'Harmattan.

Varga, Dénes, and Pozsonyi Janka. 2018. "Filmhu podcast #11: Ujj Mészáros Károly." *Filmhu*, November 8, 2018. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://magyar.film.hu/filmhu/hir/filmhu-podcast-11-ujj-meszaros-karoly.

Varga, Dénes, and Horváth Bálint. 2019. "Filmhu podcast #28: Bagota Béla." *Filmhu*, November 28, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2020. https://magyar.film.hu/filmhu/podcast/filmhu-podcast-28-bagota-bela.

Virginás, Andrea. 2013. "Varga Katalin és Lisbeth Salander: a trauma közvetlen és hipermediális nyomai" (Katalin Varga and Lisbeth Salander: Direct and Hipermediatic Traces of Traumas). In *Test és szubjektivitás a rendszerváltás utáni magyar filmben,* edited by Zsolt Győri and György Kalmár, 15-29. Debrecen: Debrecen University Press.

Virginás, Andrea. 2014. "A kis mozik fogalma: román és magyar gyártási példák" (The Concept of Small Cinemas: Romanian and Hungarian Production Examples). *Filmszem* IV/3: 56–67.

Virginás, Andrea. 2016. "Hungarian and Romanian film production in transnational frameworks: small domestic taste." In *Transformation Processes in Post-Socialist Screen Media*, edited by Jana Dudková and Katarina Mišíková, 77-96. Bratislava: Academy of Performing Arts, Institute of Theatre and Film Research, The Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Notes

1 One of the first articles comparing a Nordic Noir work to a Transylvanian-Hungarian thriller made by a British director was published by Andrea Virginás (2013). The article does not deal with the concept of Nordic Noir, but Virginás states that, compared to other, culturally more grounded movie genres, crime movies in general are more likely to facilitate cultural exchange.

2 Despite the difference between Nordic Noir and Scandinavian crime, in this article we will use the two terms as synonyms given that there is practically no reflection on the distinction between the two in the Hungarian reception.

3 This is the period when the reception of Nordic Noir started in Hungary, Stieg Larsson's trilogy having been translated in 2009 and the works of Jo Nesbø since 2008.

4 As Genette explains, the role of the paratext is "to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book" (Genette 1997: 1). Stanitzek adopted the system of Genette to films (Stanitzek 2005). For the relation between paratexts and book marketing, see Squires (2007: 75-85).

5 There are four measures qualifying a market as a small one. The Hungarian market can be considered small according to three criteria: population (the country counts 9,7 million inhabitants, and there are around 15 million Hungarian speakers in the world, less than the population of Mumbai); geographical scale (93 km^2); per capita income (49th country according to worldometers.com). As for the fourth element, being ruled by non-co-nationals over a significant period of time, Hungary's position inside the Communist bloc has to be taken into consideration, cf. Hjort 2015: 50–51.

6 KSH, "A szépirodalmi művek megoszlása példányszám-kategóriák szerint (1990-)", accessed May 10, 2020, https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_zkz005.html.

7 KSH, "A kiadott könyvek és füzetek jelleg szerint (1990-)", accessed May 10, 2020, https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_zkz003.html.

8 KSH, "Kiadott szépirodalmi, ifjúsági és gyermekirodalmi könyvek", accessed May 10, 2020, https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_evkozi/e_zkz001.html.

9 NFI, "Játékfilmek 2019/2018", accessed May 10, 2020, https://nfi.hu/hu/kereses/legfrissebb/jatekfilmek-2019.

10 The news announcing the production of this movie on the webpage of the Film Found mentions that the movie is inspired by Scandinavian crime stories. NFI, "Új kezdetek, izgalmas folytatások: ők forgatnak 2017-ben", accessed May 10, 2020, https://nfi.hu/hu/hirek/uj-kezde-tek-izgalmas-folytatasok-2017-ben-keszulo-magyar-filmek.

11 Produced between 2017 and 2018, the movie was framed as a Scandinavian Noir from the beginning. Debrecen Nagyváradi Értesítő, "Mától látható a magyar mozikban a Valan – Az angyalok völgye", accessed May 10, 2020, https://denagy.hu/ajanlo/matol-lathato-a-magyar-mozikban-a-valan-az-angyalok-volgye/.

12 AJ, "Megérkezett az Alvilág, az RTL Klub vadonatúj sorozatának első előzetese", accessed May 10, 2020, http://sorozatwiki.hu/hirek/megerkezett-az-alvilag-az-rtl-klub-vadonatuj-sorozatanak-elso-eloze-tese.

13 Jenő Rejtő (1905-1943) is the best-known figure of Hungarian popular literature.

14 Kolosi's opinion is reflected in the production strategy of the channel, which has made two rural comedies and one dramedy since *Alvilág*.

15 In an interview the director references the two last episodes of the second season of *The Bridge / Broen / Bron* (2011–2018), which he considers to be a perfect portrayal of human solitude in the face of death, describing the series as an existentialist drama (Varga and Pozsonyi 2018).

16 Mészáros and Balsai claimed in several interviews to be both avid consumers of Nordic Noirs, which for them are about much more than just finding a murderer (Varga and Pozsonyi 2019; -béla 2019). In another interview Balsai underlines the fact that the success of Nordic countries in creating crime fiction may be explained with the increasing specialization of the field, where the authors are given the opportunity to focus on the same topics for a longer time than in Hungary (Jánossy and Inkei 2019).

Translocal landscapes

La porta rossa and the use of peripheral locations in contemporary Italian TV crime drama

Massimiliano Coviello   *is Research Fellow of Film and Media Studies at Link Campus University. Among his publications are the books* Sensibilità e potere. Il cinema di Pablo Larraín *(Cosenza 2017, coauthored with F. Zucconi),* Testimoni di guerra. Cinema, memoria, archivio *(Venezia 2015), and the essay Nuove serialità in* Il cinema del nuovo millennio *(Roma 2020, edited by A. Cervini).*

Valentina Re   *is Full Professor of Film and Media Studies at Link Campus University. Among her publications are the books* Streaming media. Distribuzione, circolazione, accesso *(Milano-Udine 2017),* L'innesto. Realtà e finzioni da Matrix a 1Q84 *(Milano-Udine 2014, coauthored with A. Cinquegrani), and* Cominciare dalla fine. Studi su Genette e il cinema *(Milano-Udine 2012).*

Abstract

The article introduces and discusses the notion of 'peripheral locations' as a key concept for understanding the relation between, on the one hand, the production and distribution strategies of contemporary Italian television and, on the other, screen tourism initiatives. After defining the notion and stressing its relevance in the European circulation of national crime productions, the article focuses on the TV series *La porta rossa* (*The Red Door*) as a case study. The series is co-produced by Rai Fiction and Vela Film (Garbo Produzioni from the second season) and is internationally distributed by Studio Canal. Set in the city of Trieste, close to the border between Italy and Slovenia, the story plot intertwines crime and fantasy. The series' production history demonstrates the complex role

played by peripheral locations in both the writing process and the represented fictional world. The Virtual Reality walking tours organised by Esterno/Giorno – a tourism organisation related to the regional film commission of Friuli Venezia Giulia, which also contributed its own funding into the production – underline how peripheral locations can help create innovative and engaging forms of screen tourism.

Keywords: Italian TV crime drama, Peripheral locations, Production studies, Screen tourism, Translocal identities

Introduction[1]

This article discusses the notion of 'peripheral locations' as a key concept for understanding the relation between, on the one hand, the production and distribution strategies of contemporary Italian television and, on the other, screen tourism initiatives. After defining the notion and its relevance for the study of both the transnational circulation of national crime TV dramas and the formation of a European translocal imagery (first and second sections), the third section presents the TV series *La porta rossa* (*The Red Door*), set in the city of Trieste, as an exemplary case study.

The series' production history, retraced in the fourth and fifth sections, demonstrates the complex role played by peripheral locations in both the writing and the production development processes.

Finally, the sixth and seventh sections provide a few insights into the role played by the filming locations in the creation of the series' fictional world and into the design of the Virtual Reality (VR) walking tours by Esterno/Giorno – a tourism organisation related to the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission. The analysis shows how peripheral locations can help to create innovative and engaging forms of screen tourism.

In search of a definition: the notion of 'peripheral location'

A recent trend in the production policy of Rai Fiction (the production branch of Italian public broadcaster Rai) has shown a distinctive turn to what we call 'peripheral' filming locations: Aosta for *Rocco Schiavone* (2016-ongoing), Matera for *Imma Tataranni – Sostituto procuratore* (2019-ongoing), Turin for *Non uccidere* (2015-2018),

Bologna for *L'ispettore Coliandro* (2006-ongoing), and Trieste for *La porta rossa* (2017-ongoing).

Our take on this notion is based on the interdisciplinary approach elaborated in the emerging field of Location Studies, which include "textual media studies, production studies, policy studies, geographical, topographical and place studies, literary studies, arts in general, tourism research and urban and rural studies" (Hansen and Waade 2017, 54). In this framework, peripheral locations can be discussed at three different, and yet interrelated, levels: production, aesthetics, and the socio-cultural context.

In the broadest possible sense, in Italy, 'peripheral location' can be assumed to mean 'away from Rome', i.e. away from both the production and symbolic centre of the country. The term 'peripheral', therefore, refers to a double 'marginality', both at the level of either production facilities opportunities[2] and visual imagery.

Rome has long been established as the main production centre for film and television fiction, while the production of entertainment, news programmes and audiovisual advertisement is equally distributed between Rome and Milan. Rome has several studios and production facilities (e.g., Cinecittà) and many companies are located in the city (especially in the Prati and Esquilino neighbourhoods). Only Rai has also studios in Turin and Naples, which are mainly used for long-running daytime soaps and children's programmes. Mediaset, the largest Italian commercial network, and Sky, a pay TV channel, regularly use existing facilities in Rome.

In contrast to these practices that have long since established Rome as the principal site in Italy for TV drama production, a move towards peripheral locations has emerged in recent years that has conspicuously widened the representation of Italian geography and cultural heritage on screen, while also resulting in increasingly complex productions schemes. In fact, although the regional film commissions have proved instrumental in supporting production in terms of both funding and logistics, the inability to rely on established studios and facilities has often amplified the complexity of these production ventures (Cucco and Richeri 2013).

One could reasonably object that the use of peripheral locations is not a totally new phenomenon in the recent history of Italian television, as proved either by two extremely popular long-running series produced by Rai as *Il commissario Montalbano* (1999-ongoing) and

Don Matteo (2000-ongoing), and by *Gomorra* (2014-ongoing), the global hit produced by Sky. However, our concept of 'peripheral locations' does not exclusively imply a distance from Rome and its audiovisual production facilities. As mentioned above, the concept entails a notion of marginality that involves a series of productive, aesthetic and cultural aspects. What we call peripheral locations are locations that are not included (unlike Venice or Florence) in primary tourist routes, or that do not quite correspond to the conventional, stereotypical representation of the Italian landscape and cultural heritage – that is, locations that are quite dissimilar from Sicily (*Il commissario Montalbano*), Naples (*Gomorra*) or the small, medieval towns that characterize the landscape of central Italy (*Don Matteo*). Furthermore, the potential for visual innovation implied in the use of peripheral locations is often amplified by further aesthetic factors like innovative directing styles, complex narratives (multiple storylines, timeline manipulations, ambiguous characters; Mittell 2015), or genre hybridisation, especially through the integration of genres that do not strictly belong to the Italian tradition.

From a cultural perspective, the use of peripheral locations in crime narratives can facilitate the "embedding" of fandom engagement and emotional investment in physical places whose cultural identity plays an active role in the plot, possibly resulting in the choice of the filming locations as sites for fan conventions and meetings. Based on the categories elaborated by the anthropology of space (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003), peripheral locations can be defined as *inscribed spaces*, namely spaces that take on new meanings through the multiple ways in which they are occupied and experienced by different groups of people. These cultural elaborations of a given environment (by means of narrative, creative and spatial tactics) embed a diverse range of experiences, emotions, memories and values (de Certeau 1984).

Finally, peripheral locations can play a relevant role in shaping the production strategies of the major audiovisual players. This is true, in particular, for such big global platforms as Amazon and Netflix, which have been increasingly connecting the "regional" with the "transnational" (Hansen, Peacock, and Turnbull 2018) by localizing 'universal' stories. Transcending the familiar iconography of world capitals, this strategy aims to foster the international circulation of their productions through a translocal imagery that gives vis-

ibility to under-represented territories and promotes transcultural exchanges, while also broadening the viewers'geographical culture. Again, the anthropology of space helps us understand this transformation through the categories of "translocal spaces" and "postnational geography" (Appadurai 1996), which highlight how widely diversified phenomena such as migration processes, diasporic communities and mobility experiences (travel, tourism) contribute to creating new forms of spatial belonging as well as new transcultural identities.

In this perspective, the crime genre proves doubly strategic. On the one hand, as an expression of a transnational popular culture deeply rooted in the literary tradition, it provides a shared framework (the 'universality' of the plot) in which local specificities can be integrated in innovative and challenging ways. On the other hand, the genre has always benefitted from a localised dimension that stresses the *topoi* of suburbs and gated communities, where the tensions generated by the perpetration and investigation of crimes can be accelerated and exacerbated, with great emotional resonance.

Peripheral locations and European crime narratives

The use of peripheral locations is not limited to the Italian context; on the contrary, it appears to be a significant trend across Europe as a whole. We can think of this phenomenon within a more general trend towards the transnational circulation of European works, which multiplies the opportunities to experience 'cultural encounters' and leads to the progressive formation of a cross-cultural narrative models and translocal visual imagery.

> The role of media narratives, the central role of everyday life, and therefore the identity and perspectives we derive from living within a particular local and national reality is crucial […] for our perception of a transnational reality and of European others. […] Cultural encounters matter, they are part of processes where we are able to look into (fictional) other worlds and realities, where *our own local reality and experience meets other European realities* (Bondebjerg et al. 2017, 3-4, our emphasis).

British and Scandinavian TV dramas (Hansen and Waade 2017) are a case in point: series like *Broadchurch* (2013-2017), set in Dorset, *The Fall* (2013-2016), set in Northern Ireland, *Hinterland/y gwyll* (2013-ongoing), set in Wales, as well as the Scandinavian *The Killing* (2007-2012) and *The Bridge* (2011-2018), have gained international acclaim thanks to a similar combination of aesthetic and production factors: a focus on unusual, little-known settings (or, alternatively, on unconventional aspects of well-known cities); the crucial role played by the locations in defining the series' visual style as well as the characters' perceived authenticity and narrative development; the quality of both the direction and the writing, aimed at satisfying a demanding audience that requires originality and invention even in a familiar genre like crime.

More European crime TV dramas offer different combinations of these elements: for example, *Les Revenants* (2012-2015) was shot in Haute Savoie, *La Mante* (2017) in Val-d'Oise, *Glacé* (2017) in the Pyrenees, *La Trêve* (2016-2018) in the Ardennes, *El embarcadero* (2019-2020) in the Albufera National Park, near Valencia. As for Italy, recent cases are *Il processo* (2019), set in Mantua, and *Petra* (2020), set in Genua, along with the already mentioned *Imma Tataranni, Rocco Schiavone, Non uccidere, Coliandro*, and, finally, *La porta rossa*, the focus of the present paper.

Case study: *La porta rossa*

Our case study focuses on the prime-time TV drama *La porta rossa* (*The Red Door*, 2017-, 2 seasons, 12 episodes per season, third season currently in production). The series is co-produced by Rai Fiction and Vela Film (Garbo Produzioni from the second season) and internationally distributed by Studio Canal, the distribution division of Canal+ (Vivendi Group). Season 1 was broadcast from 22 February to 22 March 2017 on Rai 2, the second Italian public channel. Season 2 was shown between 13 February and 20 March 2019. Both seasons are currently available on-demand on the broadcaster's streaming service, RaiPlay.

The story, a hybrid of crime and fantasy, is set in the city of Trieste, close to the border between Italy and Slovenia. In an interview given to us during the preparation of this study, the producer, Maurizio Tini, defined the series as a "high-concept product", a notion currently used to describe audiovisual products based on a "fresh,

unique, and compelling story *premise* that can be easily summed up in a single sentence or two".[3] On the Vela Film website, the premise is presented as follows: "*The Red Door* series is based on combining a classic investigation with a supernatural element: a dead police commissioner refuses to leave this world so that he can investigate his own murder and save his wife's life".[4]

Although Trieste contributes significantly to the series' unique visual style and gradually acquires a stronger relevance in the development of both the storyline and the characters, the original concept placed the narrative in another location, specifically, Bologna. Furthermore, the project had been initially designed for Rai1, not Rai2. These two aspects contribute to make the series a unique case and a relevant example for discussing the role of locations in contemporary Italian television production.

The following sections provide a few insights into the series' production history, the most significant contextual factors behind the choice of Trieste as the main filming location, and the series' territorial impact in terms of the economic, social, and cultural benefits stemming from the virtuous relationship achieved between the production and the hosting territory. The methodology is inspired by the approaches developed in the areas of production studies and location studies, and analyse data collected through in-depth interviews with Sofia Assirelli, screenwriter (Bologna, 6 May 2019); Giampiero Rigosi, creator and screenwriter (Bologna, 7 May 2019); Federico Poillucci, chair of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission (Bologna, 7 May 2019); Maurizio Tini, producer at Garbo Produzioni (Rome, 14 May 2019); Gianluca Novel, deputy chair of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission (Trieste, 22 July 2019); and Carmine Elia, director (Siena, 9 January 2020).

From Bologna to Turin

La porta rossa had a very long and complex writing process. The first version was co-authored between 2011 and 2012 by two popular Italian crime and noir writers and screenwriters, Carlo Lucarelli and Giampiero Rigosi, both based in the central Italian city of Bologna. Although production facilities are hardly available in Bologna, the series was initially meant to be filmed there. At the time, the two writers had already co-authored another popular crime series produced by Rai Fiction, *L'ispettore Coliandro* (2006-2010 and

2016-ongoing), also set in Bologna and based on short stories and novels by Lucarelli.

Coliandro is still currently airing on Rai2, the second public channel. As Rigosi explained, when the financing programme for original productions to be aired on Rai2 was discontinued, the two writers decided to set *Coliandro* aside and set about designing a brand new project for Rai1, the most watched Italian public channel. It is important to emphasise that the choice of this new channel ended up affecting the writing process in many ways, for, while Rai2 allows for more freedom and innovation, Rai1 tends to prioritise simple and linear stories told in a clear and conventional language.

Movie-savvy, irreverently ironic and politically incorrect, *Coliandro* had greatly benefited from the creative flexibility that characterizes the editorial policy of Rai2. In adapting *La porta rossa* for Rai1, the writers were expected to comply with more binding editorial constraints, such as a more linear story plot, a thorough clarity and a straightforward, conventional language. The unprecedented combination of crime and fantasy in the original concept inevitably challenged such established canons. In Rigosi's reconstruction, the 'Bologna version' interpreted the supernatural element in a highly realistic way, and the tone was very noir and gloomy – apparently too gloomy for the standards of Rai1. As a result, the project was dropped.

In 2014, when the writing team was joined by Sofia Assirelli, the project was resumed, and the story location was transposed from Bologna to Turin. The input for this change came from the broadcaster: as mentioned, Rai owns an important studio in Turin and the benefits to filming there, rather than in Bologna, were deemed relevant.

During the two-year rewriting process that followed, the main problem experienced by the authors had less to do with the new location, which they already knew and liked, than with the need to balance the hybridisation of different genres. The protagonist, Leonardo Cagliostro, is a ghost – a character type (Bartoletti et al. 2020; Ingrassia 2020) that introduces gothic, supernatural and fantasy elements that are relatively underrepresented in traditional Italian storytelling. These elements needed to be balanced with more familiar and conservative genres. The narrative frame provided by the crime thriller plot, merged with a number of melodra-

matic elements, provided a comfortable context to attain this goal. The ghost is a dead cop who is called to uncover the identity of his own murderer before the criminal has a chance to kill his wife. In the final version, the detection plot was then largely complemented with a sentimental, melodramatic storyline provided by the impossible, devastating relationship between the wife and the ghost of her husband.

The broadcaster monitored and supervised the entire process of 'genre balance', while the producer and the writers engaged in complex negotiations, which Rigosi fittingly described as a "tug-of-war". While the mix of crime and romance, with an emphasis on the sentimental, is a typical feature of many Italian productions, the particular blend of crime, fantasy and sentimentalism achieved with *La porta rossa* was described by the producer Maurizio Tini as a most original accomplishment. Although the need to comply with generic conventions slowed down the writing and production, requiring a number of adjustments between the writers and Rai Fiction's story editors, once the right balance was found, it definitely contributed to the series' success and originality.

La porta rossa lands at Trieste

When director Carmine Elia entered the production process in March 2016, a few months before the shooting was due to start, he proposed a new change of location: from Turin to Trieste, where he had previously worked. In his interview, Elia declared that he loved Trieste for being a border city, suspended between the sky and the sea, between the Mediterranean Sea and Northern Europe. Despite the broadcaster's initial insistence on using the studios in Turin, Trieste was finally chosen as the story's setting.

The writers fell in love with the city, and within a matter of weeks they had re-written large parts of the story to adapt them to the new location. During the interview, Rigosi explained their approach as follows:

> And then someone asked: "What about setting the story in Trieste?" We said: "Trieste, a border town... And this is indeed a border story, a story on the border between life and death..." We went to visit the city. It's a beautiful city, and Federico from the Film Commission is such a great

location manager. They took us to visit a few places. We said: "We definitely have to set the story here in Trieste". Hence we partially rewrote it based on Trieste, just before shooting began.

The originality of Trieste as a film location is a perfect match to the originality of the narrative in terms of genre hybridization; in addition, the city provides a unique visual identity. Its geographic and cultural location, on the Italian-Slovenian border and at the crossroad of the Latin, Slavic, and Germanic cultures, lines up neatly with a story that delves into the liminal space between life and death. The hybrid identity of Trieste matches the series' hybrid identity. On the one hand, as an important seaport in the Mediterranean Sea, Trieste is placed at the border between earth and sea. On the other, Trieste is a prototypical Middle-European Mediterranean city – also halfway between Northern and Southern, Eastern and Western Europe. It combines Northern architectures, lights and atmospheres with the Mediterranean attitude of its people. Trieste thus perfectly embodies the in-betweenness of Italian identity, its halfway position between North and South, East and West. As a location, it makes *La porta rossa* an ideal object to explore the potential of a contamination between the Mediterranean and the Nordic versions of the Noir style.

In production terms, the choice of a peripheral locality like Trieste as a filming location was neither completely rational nor cheap. Shooting in Rome tends to be cheaper, for the financial support of regional film funds does not cover the extra costs of moving people and equipment that are not available in the area. Turin would have been also comparatively more convenient and cheaper, for, in this case as well, Rai would have been able to provide on-site personnel and technical equipment. And yet, the choice of Trieste appears to be perfectly in line with Rai's ongoing production policy, as a public service broadcaster, to promote shooting in peripheral locations as a way to showcase regional diversity, tell authentic stories and stimulate the creativity of both screenwriters and directors. Production-wise, this policy effectively allowed the independent Vela Film company to enjoy great freedom and autonomy from Rai's supervision.

The last important factor behind the choice of Trieste was the likelihood to obtain funding support from the local film commis-

sion. As Garbo Produzioni producer, Maurizio Tini, explained in his interview, 80% of the total budget of *La porta rossa* was provided by the broadcaster, with the remaining 20% supplied by the independent company. This is a standard ratio in the Italian TV industry. The financial contribution from the film commission, to be included in the 20% quota, amounted to €200,000. Without even counting the results in terms of local employment, the direct economic impact of this contribution on the territory was remarkable, with the expense in the region during the shooting of the first season amounting to around €3,6m (See Table 1, featuring data provided by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission).

Shooting days:	120
Preproduction – number of days:	84
Total expense in the region:	€3,600,000
Film Fund contribution:	€200,000
Multiplier:	18:1
Local professionals involved:	28
Hotel accommodations:	5.480
Local extras involved:	about 1.200

Table 1

As shown in Table 1, the relationship between the film commission, the production company and the territory involved several more levels beyond financial support. The Friuli Venezia Giulia film commission provides complete assistance to production companies, from bureaucratic procedures to contacts with local technical and logistics teams, with the aim of promoting the employment and development of local expertise. In the case of *La porta rossa*, Federico Poillucci, chair of the film commission, played a key role in scouting the locations. He personally accompanied the director, authors and producers on the premises, helping them to find the settings that best matched the series' storyline and visual style. He was even given a cameo role as a swimming instructor in one of the episodes. Furthermore, he coordinated the creation of a Virtual Reality tour

along the series' locations, based on a platform developed since 2012 in the frame of the Esterno/Giorno project.

A final major twist in the series' production history that is worth mentioning occurred in late 2016. Ironically, Rai2 resumed financing original productions just when the shooting was coming to an end. Following this turn of events, the series, originally written and produced for the mainstream channel, Rai1, was then finally broadcast on Rai2, getting good ratings and gaining a faithful fandom.[5] In the wake of the series' success and after starting a Facebook group, *La porta rossa* fandom went on to organize a public convention in Trieste, which was held on October 19, 2019, and included a 'bottom-up', self-managed tour along the beloved filming locations.

A matter of borders: a Nordic Noir shot in Trieste

La porta rossa and its plot are only partly influenced by Trieste's difficult historical past, although they fully embrace its urban features, cultural hybridity and suggestive atmospheres. In his interview, Rigosi underlined how the use of gothic lighting, shadows and artificial rain was decided as a deliberate reference to the atmospheres of Nordic noir (Hansen and Waade 2017) and the landscapes of Northern Europe (Image 1).
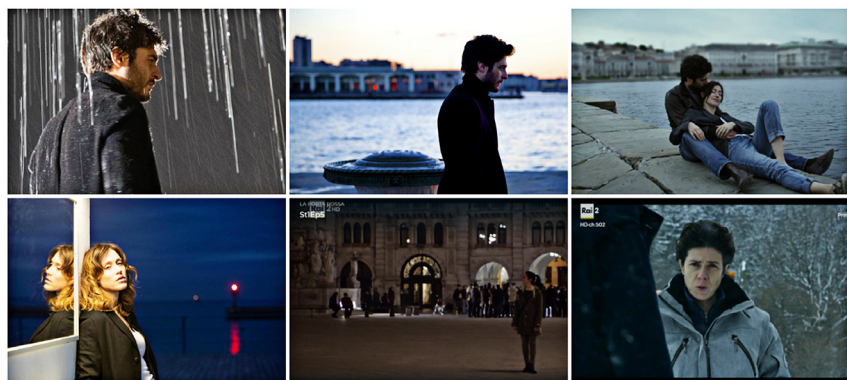
Image 1: The influence of Nordic Noir on *La porta rossa* locations.

As highlighted by Federico Poillucci during his interview, the film commission provided essential support in identifying the locations (such as historical neighbourhoods and squares, but also peripheral and lesser known areas) that could best fit the actions and the psychology of the different characters. For example, Cagliostro lives in

the old port area, a site filled with decaying buildings. His death takes place in warehouse 22, and in the final scenes of each episode he is framed alone while he looks down onto the city from one of Trieste's most distinctive landmarks, the 'Ursus' crane.

Vanessa, played by actress Valentina Romani, is a young medium who allows Cagliostro to communicate with living people. Her house is situated in the periphery, in the working-class neighbourhood of Melara. Vanessa wanders through arcades covered in graffiti and surrounded by modernist buildings, built as public housing at the beginning of the 1960s and influenced by Le Corbusier's architectural style (Image 2). The police headquarters, a place of intrigues and interrogations, are located in the RAS (Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà) Palace in Piazza della Repubblica, one of Trieste's main historical squares.
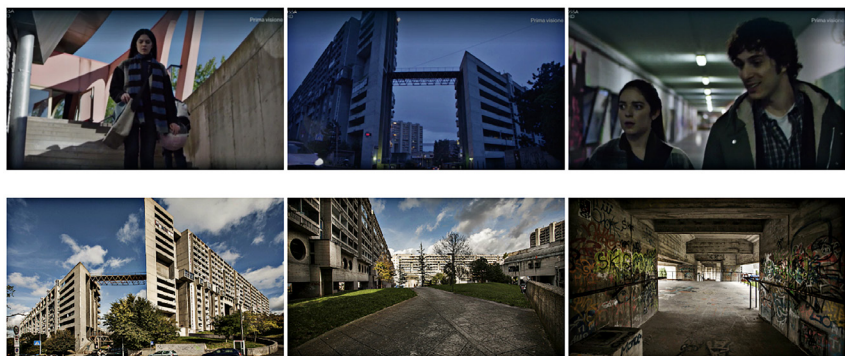
Image 2: Vanessa's neighbourhood (Melara Complex)

Discovering Trieste through *La porta rossa* VR walking tour

Founded in 2012 on the initiative of the Associazione Casa del Cinema di Trieste (a cultural body that includes the local film commission), with the contribution of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region, the tourism organisation Esterno/Giorno is a project specifically aimed to promote on-location screen tourism (Beeton 2005; Lavarone 2016; Roesch 2009). It offers film tours, thematic walks and educational itineraries along the locations of TV series and films set in the region, targeting three main goals. Firstly, the itineraries are designed to promote sites that are usually excluded from traditional sightseeing tours. Secondly, they are designed in such a way as to involve

the local community and help it cope with the inconveniences of the shooting. Finally, they are meant to introduce the visitors to the basics of film language[6].

A virtual reality platform called VirTours and developed by the Friulian company IKON is employed for sharing and creating immersive content along the different thematic walks[7]. The sophisticated technology used by Esterno/Giorno enables a screen tourism experience that is unique, to date, in the Italian context. The VR headsets allow the tourists to access short films, 360-degree immersive views, photos from film sets as well as backstage interviews.

Film critics and crew members lead the VR visit and coordinate the content for all participants in real time through a tablet. Tourists are thus accompanied across different environments and enjoy an experience that is at once collective and personal, physical and virtual, having an opportunity to discover "invisible places" that are usually ignored in sightseeing tours, or difficult to reach.

Visitors with an interest in *La porta rossa* can choose between two different VR experiences, either a day-time or a night-time walking tour. The latter was introduced to specifically showcase the noir and fantasy atmospheres that the TV series has drawn out of the city's locations. According to Gianluca Novel, "in a way, the location to be discovered becomes part of the mystery story". Following the phantom's footsteps through the city, the visitors are turned, just like Cagliostro, into as many unseen witnesses of other people's lives (Image 3).
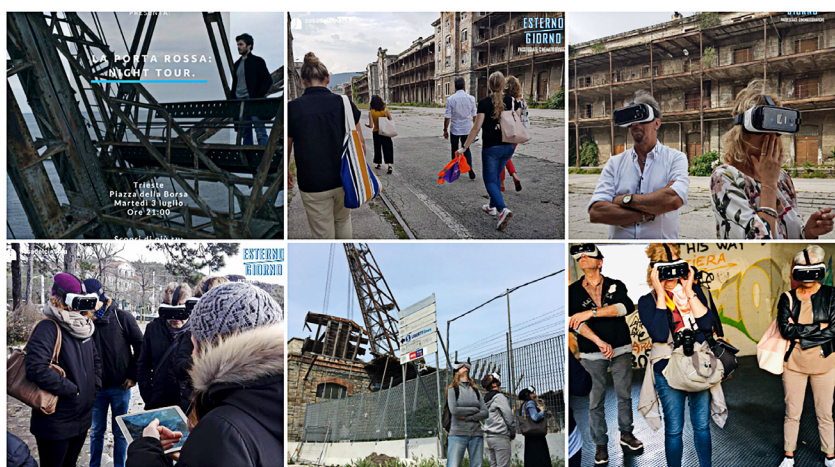
Image 3: The VR walking tour dedicated to *La porta rossa*

During the visit, the VR headsets are employed for multiple purposes. Introduced by a video featuring the leading character (played by Lino Guanciale) and shot expressly for this use, the immersive content focuses in particular on Porto Vecchio, a secluded and scarcely inhabited, yet extremely picturesque, historical area. The virtual guide leads the group of visitors to the hangars, where some of the scenes – for example, the murder of Cagliostro on the roof of warehouse 22 – were shot, while interviews and backstage videos disclose some of the backstage secrets.

On the site where 'Ursus', the massive crane, is located, the VR devices offer a 360-degree photographic rendition of the entire location (Image 4). The tour draws the visitors' attention on some of the more original production choices behind the series' location strategy. For example, a sequence at the beginning of the second season shows a group of inmates enjoy their yard time in a prison. This place is actually a shipyard in the harbour where vessels are stored dry. Tourists can explore this site while also watching an immersive video in which a photographic reconstruction of the place is combined with interactive material, enriched with the crew's comments and short clips from the series.
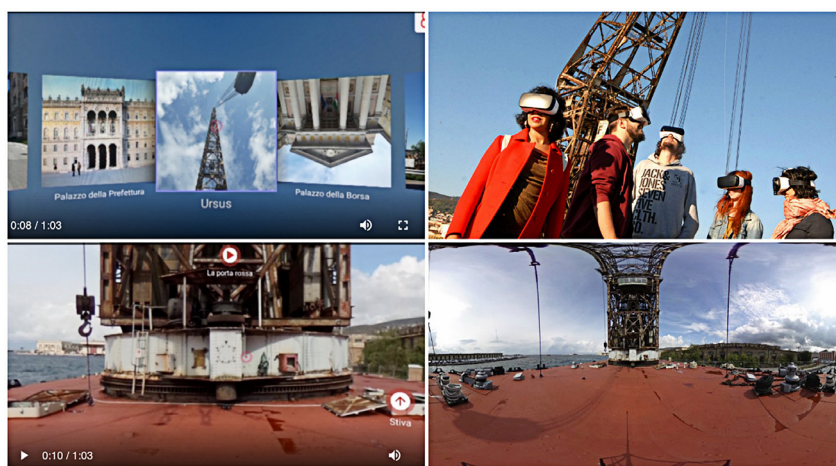

Image 4: VR visit at the Ursus crane

Along the tour, the special effects and editing techniques employed in post-production are also revealed, particularly for educational purposes. For example, when the tour reaches the storehouse in

Porto Vecchio, which appears at both the beginning and the end of the second season, recast as an old bolt factory, the VR headset lets the visitors discover that the scene's interior have in fact been shot at a technical institute located elsewhere in the city. This prompts the guide to explain the formal strategies, such as, in particular, the editing and shot/countershot techniques, employed to merge the two different locations.

As a result of their discovery of what lies behind the scenes through the materials presented via the VR headsets, the screen tourists are made able to relocate (Casetti 2015) the imagery of *La porta rossa* into an immersive experience (Manovich 2005), where the location's physical space is overlaid with dynamically changing multimedia content, while the series' narrative interacts with their direct apprehension of the premises.

Conclusion

Detective plots are powerful narratives devices that show an extraordinary potential to promote movie-induced tourism (Riley and Van Doren 1992; van Es and Reijnders 2018). Recent developments in Italian TV production show that the crime genre has become a relevant pull factor for peripheral locations that don't fit representational stereotypes yet offer favourable environmental conditions in terms of production requirements.

The choices and strategies behind the production of *La porta rossa*, fostered by the support received from the local film commission, have both given a significant impulse on the touristic promotion of Trieste and generated a positive direct economic impact on the territory.[8] Rai and many other players in the Italian audiovisual sector are increasingly aware of the crime genre's potential to boost the value chain of peripheral locations. A growing share of their products is now on the map of movie-induced tourism, contributing to the new cultural geography of the European crime genre.

Regardless of the geographical context and the specific places – either rural or urban – portrayed onscreen, peripheral locations offer an original glimpse of little-known territories, thus enabling a more articulated, composite knowledge of the European landscape. In addition, they typically play a crucial role in terms of character and narrative development. As a result, they contribute significantly to

the current trend towards the development of a transnational visual culture and the formation of new transcultural narrative models.

References

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. "Sovereignty without Territoriality: Notes for a Postnational Geography." In *The Geography of Identity*. Edited by Patricia Yeager. Ann Arbor, 40-58. University of Michigan Press.

Bartoletti, Roberta, Stefania Antonioni, Sergio Brancato, and Francesca Pasquali. 2020. "Il dispositivo del fantasma. Narrazioni della perdita e del lutto nella serialità televisiva italiana". *Studi Culturali* 17 (1): 3-26.

Beeton, Sue. 2005. *Film-Induced Tourism.* Aspects of tourism, 25. Clevedon: Channel View.

Bondebjerg, Ib, Eva Novrup Redvall, Rasmus Helles, Signe Sophus Lai, Henrik Søndergaard, and Cecilie Astrupgaard. 2017. *Transnational European Television Drama: Production, genres and Audiences*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Casetti, Francesco. 2015. *The Lunière Galaxy. Seven Key Words for the Cinema to Come*. New York: Columbia.

Cucco, Marco, and Giuseppe Richeri. 2013. *Il mercato delle location cinematografiche*. Venice: Marsilio.

de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practices of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hansen, Kim Toft, Steven Peacock, Sue Turnbull, eds. 2018. *European Television Crime Drama and Beyond*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Hansen, Kim Toft, and Anne Marit Waade. 2017. *Locating Nordic Noir: From Beck to The Bridge*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Honthaner, Eve Light. 2010. *The Complete Film Production Handbook*. Burlington, MA-Kidlington, Oxford, GB: Focal Press.

Ingrassia, Walter. 2020. "Il segno del comando. *Una ghost story in giallo*." In *Sulle tracce del crimine. Viaggio nel giallo e nero Rai. Il catalogo*, 151-165. Roma: Rai Com.

Lavarone, Giulia. 2016. *Cinema, media e turismo. Esperienze e prospettive teoriche del film-induced tourism*. Padova: Padova University Press.

Manovich, Lev. 2005. "The Poetics of Augmented Space." *Manovich. net*, 2002 (updated 2005). Accessed April 29, 2020. http://

manovich.net/content/04-projects/034-the-poetics-of-augmented-space/31_article_2002.pdf.

Mittell, Jason. 2015. *Complex TV*. New York: New York University Press.

Roesch, Stefan. 2009. *The Experiences of Film Location Tourists*, Bristol – Buffalo – Toronto: Channel View Publications.

Low, Setha M, and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, eds. 2003. *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Riley, Roger W. and Carlton S. Van Doren. 1992. "Movies as Tourism Promotion: a 'pull' Factor in a 'push' Location". *Tourism Management* 13 (3): 262-274. https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(92)90098-R.

van Es, Nicky and Stijn Reijnders. 2018. "Making Sense of Capital Crime Cities: Getting Underneath the Urban Facade on Crime-Detective Fiction Tours". *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 21 (4): 502–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549416656855.

Notes

1 This article is part of a wider research on Italian TV crime dramas conducted in the framework of DETECt - Detecting Transcultural Identity in European Popular Crime Narratives, a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme (Grant Agreement No. 770151). The article combines and expands the presentations given by the authors at the "Euronoir. Producers, distributors and audiences of European crime narratives" international conference, Aalborg University, 30 September - 2 October 2019. Massimiliano Coviello wrote the Introduction, the last two sections and the Conclusion. Valentina Re wrote the first five sections. The authors would like to thank Luca Barra (University of Bologna) for his help during the research, and Daniela Almansi for the revision of the English version.

2 In this sense, the idea of peripheral location can be compared with the industrial notion of "distant location" (Honthaner 2010), meaning far enough from the production company to generate extra expenses (e.g., housing the cast and crew).

3 See "Tv Tropes", https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/HighConcept (Accessed 29 April 2020).

4 See https://www.velafilm.it/en/the-red-door/ (Accessed 29 April 2020; website no longer available in December 2020).

5 The audience share of season 1 was good, moving from 13,01% (3.284.000 viewers) to 14,10% (3.471.000) between the premiere and the season finale. The audience share of season 2 had a slight decrease from 12,51% (3.043.000 viewers) to 12,41% (2.807.000) between the premiere and the season finale. For a comparative evaluation, the first episodes of respectively the second and seventh seasons of *Rocco Schiavone* (2018) and *L'ispettore Coliandro* (2018) were watched by 13,09% and 10,9% of the viewers on the same channel.

6 More information about Esterno/Giorno's objectives and thematic walks is available on the organization's website https://www.casa-delcinematrieste.it/passeggiate-cinematografiche-esterno-giorno/ (Accessed 29 April 2020).

7 See, for more information, the organization's website https://www.virtours.com/en/ (Accessed 29 April 2020).

8 According to a survey conducted by the film commission in 2018, the tours operated by Esterno/Giorno involved 900 participants along 45 walking tours, spread over 10 different itineraries, during 10 months. This can be judged an excellent result, especially because, due to technological limitations, the groups of tourists could not exceed 20 participants.

Berlin's Cosmopolitan Production Culture

Lothar Mikos

Professor of Television Studies at Filmuniversity Babelsberg in Potsdam, Germany and Honorary Professor for Theory and Practice of Collaborative Innovation at University of International Business and Economy, Beijing, China. His research focusses on global media economy, international TV format trade, transnational television culture, (de-)convergence in the media industry, audience studies, and qualitative methodology.

Abstract

Through the first decades of the 21st century, the Berlin-Brandenburg region has become an important production location, first for international films and then, most recently, also for transnational television drama series. Since 2015, more than 20 transnational TV drama series were produced in the region. Berlin has been attracting talent from all over the world, becoming a hotspot for international production where both above and below-the line talents from different countries work together in a creative and productive way. In this article, I argue that Berlin has thus successfully established a cosmopolitan production culture. In what follows, I outline the cosmopolitan conditions that underpin Berlin's production culture and the creative collaboration of talent with different cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Berlin, production culture, creative collaboration, cosmopolitanism, transnational TV drama series, international films.

Introduction

Berlin has a long history as a production hub for film and television, which dates to the end of the 19th century. The history of the city as a centre of audiovisual production was massively influenced by historical events, beginning with World War I and through the Weimar Republic and the Nazi Regime, World War II and the Cold War period, spanning between the building of the Berlin Wall until the proclamation of Berlin as capital of the unified Germany in 1990 (Borgelt 1979; Hake 2008). During the Cold War, films and television series were produced in the context of two different production cultures, one based in the GDR, or rather East-Berlin, and one in West-Germany, or rather West-Berlin. After unification, in 1990 Studio Babelsberg and the city of Berlin launched Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg as a public funding body for audiovisual production, which gradually promoted the city as the famous production site that it is today. Since the 2010s, Berlin has attracted not only many international film productions, including many Hollywood films (Eichner and Mikos 2017), but also many transnational television drama productions, starting with the 5th season of *Homeland* (USA 2011-2019, Showtime) in 2015, which was later followed by *Berlin Station* (USA, 2016-2019, Epix) and *Counterpart* (USA, 2017-2019, Starz). More than 20 transnational TV drama series have been produced in the region from 2015 onward. One reason for this success is that global streaming giants such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video started to produce original content in Germany.

These productions brought a wide array of talent to Babelsberg and Berlin. Gradually an international production culture was established in the region that now has talents from different countries work together. My main argument here is that the vitality of the Berlin-Brandenburg region as a production culture is based on its consistent promotion of a cosmopolitan mentality, that is, on cosmopolitanism as a cultural practice. This cosmopolitan production culture is to be understood as the outcome of an increasingly global media industry in which not only films and television series are traded globally, but in which talent mobility and a global openness to cultural products from all regions of the world are continually on the rise. Kuipers (2012), for example, has shown that television buyers in the global market share a common knowledge and general aesthetic orientations, which can be said to amount to something

like a cosmopolitan cultural capital. Despite this common cosmopolitan capital, however, Kuipers (2012, 599) could also observe "considerable differences in the professional ethos of television buyers." It can be assumed that the same is true for other professional groups in the global media industry, such as producers, writers, directors or technical crews, whose different professional self-conceptions coexist with their accumulated cosmopolitan capital, especially when they work for international films and transnational TV series, as in the Berlin production landscape.

Before I explain how the cosmopolitan production culture emerged in Berlin and Babelsberg, and the role played by cosmopolitanism in creative collaboration, two remarks are important: firstly, a clarification of the terms 'international', 'global' and 'transnational', and secondly, some comments on the differences, but above all the similarities, between the film and television industries.

Transnationalism is not necessarily synonymous with globalization. As Kearney asserts, "Transnationalism overlaps globalization but typically has a more limited purview. Whereas global processes are largely decentred from specific national territories and take place in a global space, transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states" (Kearney 2008, 273). As I have noted elsewhere, "transnational television is anchored in the nation state and national media legislation, and it is linked to the multidirectionality of flows and interactions" (Mikos 2020, 75). Therefore, by transnational drama series and transnational television, I refer to productions that are produced locally but aimed at an audience that is constituted beyond national borders. By international production, I refer to a production in which a global company, such as a U.S. studios, produces a film in another country, for example in Berlin and Babelsberg. From the point of view of production culture, the film and television industries, even if they have different distribution channels and different aesthetic forms, have more in common than differences. In the production culture of the 21st century, characterized by big blockbuster productions and high-end drama series, the boundaries between film and television are blurring. Authors, directors and cinematographers work for film as well as for television and streaming services. For set designers, drivers, location scouts and others below the line talent, working for both media has always been perfectly normal.

Before I turn to discuss a few examples of cosmopolitan creative collaboration against the background of the concepts of cosmopolitanism and creative collaboration, first in the international film industry, and then in transnational TV drama production, the next paragraph offers a brief overview of the history of Berlin as a production site. This will give some contextual information about the political influences that have made Berlin a city in which the history of the 20th century condensates (Huyssen 2003, 51).

Film and Television Production in Berlin – Brief Overview

The first film shooting in Berlin took place in November 1892, when film pioneer Max Skladanovsky started filming short scenes with his brother Emil. The first public screening took place three years later, marking the birth of German cinema (Hake 2008). The first decade of the 20th century saw a growing number of film productions. The Roaring Twenties and the 1930s coincided with the peak of film production in Berlin, and particularly in the UFA studios at Babelsberg. Signature films such as *Metropolis* (GER, 1927, Fritz Lang) and *Der blaue Engel* (The Blue Angel; GER, 1930, Josef von Sternberg) were both shot there. Until World War II, Berlin was the centre of the German film industry: "Before 1945, 90 percent of German feature film production took place in Berlin" (Borgelt 1979, 222). During the Cold War many local films and television series were produced in Babelsberg (GDR) and Berlin (GER).

After reunification, the Babelsberg studios were acquired by the French Compagnie Générale des Eaux (later Vivendi), which tried to rebuild a prominent location for international productions. However, only one of the films produced in the studios, *The Pianist* (F/GER/POL/UK 2002, Roman Polanski), gained international attention. In the 2000s, the funding policy of Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and other Berlin-based funding bodies – like the German Motion Picture Fund (GMPF), created to specifically support international co-productions – led to a growing attractiveness of Berlin and Studio Babelsberg as production site for international productions. For example *The Bourne Supremacy* (USA/GER 2004, Paul Greengrass), *Bridge of Spies* (USA/GER 2015, Steven Spielberg), *Captain America: Civil War* (USA 2016, Anthony Russo & Joe Russo), *Grand Budapest Hotel* (GER/USA 2014, Wes Anderson), *Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part One and Two* (USA 2014 and 2015,

Francis Lawrence), *Inglourious Basterds* (USA / GER 2009, Quentin Tarantino), and *The Reader* (USA / GER 2008, Stephen Daldry) were all shot in Berlin and Babelsberg.

With international productions, international talent also came to Berlin, often to stay. Mixed teams formed by local and foreign creatives became increasingly common and the open cultural climate often led the international talents to stay in the city. For example, the series *Berlin Station* (USA, 2016-2019, Epix) had an international cast with 287 actors and 841 international crew members. Among them was Carlos Fidel, a Spaniard who had formerly worked in London but had moved to Berlin with the international production *The Reader*, and stayed. The creative collaboration worked so well that Frank Marshall, the American producer of *The Bourne Supremacy*, could state: "Berlin is an excellent shooting location. Most of our crew are Germans, the city has great locations, and the rest is taken care of in the Babelsberg studios. You've got all you need there" (quoted in Wedel 2012, 40). The availability of qualified personnel, production facilities, technical infrastructure, and a diverse range of other creative industries, as well as the 'internationality' of the city, are all important factors when it comes to deciding whether to shoot in Berlin or in other German cities (Castendyk and Goldhammer 2018, 130-1).

During this period Berlin and Babelsberg have also emerged as an important production site for television series. With the appearance of new players such as Amazon Prime Video and Netflix, the production of television drama series in Germany has undergone a new, substantial change. The region was well prepared for it, for it had already gained considerable experience with international Hollywood film productions. At the same time, German authors, producers, and directors were introduced to new modes of production, such as those related to the figure of the showrunner and the writers' room technique.

Cosmopolitanism as a Cultural Practice of Creative Collaboration

To successfully undertake international productions and co-productions, both above and below-the-line talent need to develop a cosmopolitan mentality, which is an essential requisite in order to advance creative collaboration in a fruitful way. Therefore, I think it

is necessary to conceptualize cosmopolitanism as a cultural practice in which not only openness is performed, but also lived inclusivity and cultural-symbolic competences play an important role (Kendall et.al. 2009, 111ff.). A cosmopolitan production culture can only exist if creative collaboration is characterised by a cultural practice of cosmopolitanism.

The notion of cosmopolitanism is widely discussed in sociology, media and cultural studies. It is a "contested term" (Beck, 2007, 286) that has inspired a variety of definitions, which all revolve around the attempt to make sense of its relation to the phenomenon of globalization. Globalization is a structural process involving the worldwide interconnection of politics, economy, and culture (see Robertson, 1992). Media underpins this process, with mediascapes working as important drivers (Appadurai 1996, 35). But globalization is always linked to localization, for the global appears in the local, and the local in the global. The notion of 'glocalization', then, describes the very kernel of the globalization process (Robertson, 1992, 173; Robertson 2012), since no real contradiction exists between the global and the local. Globalization has profoundly influenced the representation of locality, merging the global and the local into the glocal.

This process has been accompanied by an extensive transformation of lifestyles and by the emergence of cosmopolitanism as a way to deal with the growing diversity brought about by globalization. Beck and Grande (2007, 12) see cosmopolitanism as a social science concept that helps understand the circumstances of life in the context of globalization. It is "a specific way of *dealing socially with cultural difference*" (ibid., emphasis in the original). For cosmopolitanism, the recognition of difference "becomes the maxim of thought, social life and practice, both internally and towards other societies" (ibid, 13).

Operating on both a social and a cultural level, cosmopolitanism implies a fundamental willingness to engage with the other. For example, Hannerz (1990, 239) speaks of "an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward different cultural experiences." This openness is regarded by many authors as an essential characteristic of cosmopolitanism (see Beck 2006 and 2011; Delanty 2009; Skrbis and Woodward 2007; Szerszynski and Urry 2002). Therefore, Tomlinson (1999, 194) calls cosmopolitanism an "ethical glocalism".

At the same time, while individuals, as empirical studies show, can live openness as a pleasurable experience that is important for their own identity (Skrbis and Woodward 2007, 744), when associated to threatening and challenging experiences, openness acquires negative connotations. Therefore, Skrbis and Woodward call openness "a fragile commitment", which suggests that it is not to be seen as one and the same as cosmopolitanism. Ong (2009, 454) has developed the notion of cosmopolitanism on a continuum ranging from closed cosmopolitanism through instrumental, banal, and ecstatic cosmopolitanism. This is neither the place nor the time to discuss this concept in detail. Yet, it is at least worth mentioning Ong's remark that "at the core of cosmopolitanism" lies "a multiplicity of tensions" (ibid., 463). He lists tensions between attachment and commitment, proximity and distance as well as "between global and local, between universals and particulars, between us and them, between media and identity" (ibid., 464).

In the case of the creative collaboration occurring in the context of the film and television industries, cosmopolitanism can be characterised as both a cultural practice and a form of cultural capital (see Igarashi and Saito 2014) which allow a negotiation of all these different tensions. Cosmopolitanism as a cultural practice is at the core of creative collaboration in the production process of both international film productions and transnational television series. With each production involving talents from different countries, further cosmopolitan capital is accumulated, so that ultimately cosmopolitanism as a cultural practice emerges as a distinctive asset of the audiovisual products made in the Berlin and Babelsberg area.

Media drives the process of globalisation and are important vehicles for the idea of cosmopolitanism. The transcultural flow of media and pop cultures "inspires new forms of global consciousness and cultural competency" (Jenkins 2006, 156). This "pop cosmopolitanism" (ibid.) or "cultural omnivorousness" (Saito 2011, 129) or "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" (Regev 2007) is arguably a recognizable element of contemporary cultural production, in the fields of film and television as well as art and popular music. It is not only "the cosmopolitan embrace of cultural difference through cult reception practice" (Smith 2017, 21), but, more crucially, an inescapable condition for collaboration in the creative industries, one that has openness in its kernel. Media products such as films, television

programmes and series, and popular music targeting a global or transnational audience need to rely on cosmopolitan openness, both in their production process and in the way they address their audience through their textual strategies. Bondebjerg (2014, 54) noted that "globalization is also about a growing need for a cosmopolitan mentality and imaginary." Of course, this not only applies to globalization itself, but also and foremost to the media products made for global audiences.

It might be true that "collaboration has always functioned as the kernel of creative work" (Graham and Gandini 2017, 1), but the nature of creative work has greatly changed over time. The global media landscape is not only about collaborative practice in the production of films, television shows and popular music, but also increasingly about international and intercultural cooperation. In this context, the openness of cosmopolitanism is essential.

The film and television industries have been international from the very beginning. Not only did films travel across the world, but special films were produced for specific international audiences. In the 1930s, for example, the UFA studios in Babelsberg produced numerous films in multiple-language versions, sometimes with different actors (Wahl 2009). After the deregulation of television in Europe during the 1980s, the digitalization of television in the 1990s and the advent of streaming services in the 2000s, the demand for audiovisual content grew enormously. The international format trade and the growth of co-productions deals provided a remedy here. A transnational television culture developed out of a social process occurring "in a transnational arena where agents, institutions and structures interact with one another" (Mikos 2020, 76). These interactions can obviously succeed better when supported by a cosmopolitan mentality and a cosmopolitan cultural capital.

Even though authors and directors are considered the creative minds behind a film or a television series, audiovisual productions are based on teamwork. Therefore, the production is simultaneously "highly individualized and fully collaborative" (Banks, Conor and Mayer 2016b, ix). In the end, only the creative collaboration between different departments makes a film come to life. The number of people involved in any film production can be seen by the cinema audience in the long end credits that scroll on the screen at the end of the show. Yet proportions can be very different, for exam-

ple in the case of arthouse films as opposed to blockbusters. According to imdb.com, an arthouse film like *The House that Jack Built* (DK/SWE/F/GER, 2018, Lars von Trier) had just 40 cast members and 179 crew members. On the opposite end, a blockbuster like *Avengers: Infinity War* (USA 2018, Anthony and Joe Russo) counted up to 143 cast members and 4468 crew members. The situation is similar with television series. This can be seen by comparing two recent European co-production, *The Team* (BEL/DK/GER/A/CH 2015-), which involved 181 cast members and 345 crew members, and *The Borgias* (GER/F/I/A/CZ 2011-2014), on which 787 crew members and 265 actors from 18 different countries worked together (Mikos 2017, 28). Larger collaborations often cause many problems, which can be extremely "troublesome and tiresome" (Bondebjerg et.al. 2017, 123). In international co-productions, it is therefore important that the partners involved rely on a long experience in this kind of projects and are provided with the conditions they need to trust each other, for communication is a crucial aspect of any creative collaboration (ibid., 103-122). Especially at sites that are regularly used for international productions, like Barandov Studios in Prague, or Studio Babelsberg in the Berlin region, it is of paramount importance that communication works well, fostered by the cosmopolitan mentality and capital of those involved.

The "collaborative turn in the creative economy" (Graham and Gandini 2017, 7) has led to a greater focus on production in media studies as well. By now, production studies have established themselves as a special form of research on media industries (Banks, Conor, and Mayer 2016a; Caldwell 2008; Mayer, Bank, and Caldwell 2009; Redvall 2013). Among other issues, the topic of television authorship has been particularly researched, foregrounded by the interest raised by the American model of the writers' room and the role that the new figure of the showrunner has acquired in that production culture (Henderson 2011; Mann 2009; Phalen 2018; Phalen and Osellame 2012; Phalen, Ksiazek and Gaber 2016). This model was adapted in the production of television series in Europe, although it was not adopted one-to-one, but rather adjusted to local conditions (see, for the UK, Cornea 2009; for Denmark, Redvall 2013). This demonstrates a fundamental openness, characteristic of a cosmopolitan cultural practice. I would now like to briefly discuss how these adaptations also took place in Berlin and

Babelsberg to show how a different production culture is integrated into a local context.

A historically grown local production culture tries to maintain its standards and habits. New developments are usually adapted only slowly. Traditionally, broadcasters and directors have had the say in German productions. Made for TV movies and drama series were written by individual authors and author-directors. This form of production is being changed mainly by young talent and young production companies adopting international production practices, since they are more open and able to negotiate the tensions of a cosmopolitan cultural practice. But, as mentioned above, new concepts are not being adapted one-to-one. Each production has dealt with them somewhat differently. While some have enthusiastically adopted the American model and others have been open to experiment with it, others have rejected it and stuck with their old roles. In the shift to an American way of drama production, the role of the showrunner became more prominent. While the *Babylon Berlin* (GER 2017-) series continued to follow old production methods, other series, like *Dark* (GER 2017-2020), *4 Blocks* (GER, 2017-2020), *Deutschland 83* (GER, 2015, RTL), *Deutschland 86* (GER 2018) and *Bad Banks* (GER, 2018-, ZDF), moved closer to the American model.

In an unpublished interview given to the author, Quirin Berg (2017), producer of both the *Dark* and *4 Blocks* series, made respectively for Netflix and the pay TV channel TNT Series, commented on this shift in the vision of drama series production. He described how, in the case of *Dark*, the American model was adapted in such a way that the director and the head author acted together like a showrunner. The production of *Deutschland 83* (GER 2015, RTL) and *Deutschland 86* (GER 2018, Amazon Prime Video), which were both filmed mainly in Berlin, followed the showrunner concept more closely. In this case, the role of the showrunner was played together by Anna Winger (the leading author in the writers' room) and Jörg Winger (producer), who are an American-German couple. As Jörg Winger (2017) stated in his interview: "We basically ran the creative decision-making processes, so we made all the creative decisions. We chose the director, we cast the actors, and so on."

As these examples demonstrate, in Berlin and Babelsberg, just like in the Scandinavian countries, the showrunner concept is not being adapted one to one, but rather the American mode of produc-

tion is being combined with traditional methods. In Germany, the role of executive producer is still a crucial one, as Lisa Blumenberg (2017), producer of *Bad Banks* (GER 2018-, ZDF) explains: "The system is not transferable. This is another system. At least for me as a producer, that's how I work, that's the secret, it's always a balance between intimacy and distance, like working very closely together and participating in the process of content development, but not completely. Should I be in the Writers' Room the entire time, I would be part of the process and would no longer have any 'outside' view on it. So, I always strike a balance between intimacy and distance. We still have a more classic division of tasks between author, director and producer, but at the same time they work very closely together as a team."

Conclusion – Cosmopolitan production culture in Berlin

After unification, and particularly since the 2000s, Berlin has become a major production site for both international films and transnational television drama series. Different production cultures came into play, and, with them, different understandings of the cultural processes implied in audiovisual production. Without a cosmopolitan mentality of cultural openness, these films and series could not have been realized. What mattered most through this development was not just the creative collaboration of casts and crews, but, rather, the cooperation in intercultural teams. Today, international Hollywood productions do not come to Babelsberg and Berlin only attracted by public funding opportunities, but, above all, because of the cosmopolitan openness that characterizes the mentality of the creatives they can find in the area. They know that talent in Berlin has a cosmopolitan cultural capital. The huge drama series productions of global streaming services such as Amazon Prime Video and Netflix have discovered this for themselves, as have American premium cable stations such as Epix, Showtime and Starz. Especially cable network productions employ mixed teams that are formed by crew members from different countries. At the same time, original German productions produced for streaming services are increasingly adapting American production methods to German conditions. All these different forms of production are contributing to the development of a lively cosmopolitan production culture in which creative collaboration works as a cosmopoli-

tan cultural practice based on the cosmopolitan capital of both above and below-the-line talent.

References

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Banks, Miranda, Bridget Conor, and Vicki Mayer, eds. 2016a. *Production Studies, the Sequel! Cultural Studies of Global Media Industries.* New York and London: Routledge.

Banks, Miranda, Bridget Conor, and Vicki Mayer, eds. 2016b. "Preface." In *Production Studies, the Sequel! Cultural Studies of Global Media Industries,* IX-XV. New York and London: Routledge.

Beck, Ulrich. 2006. *The Cosmopolitan Vision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, Ulrich. 2007. "The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails." *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (7-8), 286-290. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764070240072505

Beck, Ulrich. 2011. "Cosmopolitanism as Imagined Communities of Global Risk." *American Behavioral Scientist* 55 (10), 1346-1361. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211409739

Beck, Ulrich, and Edgar Grande. 2007. *Cosmopolitan Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Berg, Quirin. 2017. Personal interview. April 13, 2017.

Blumenberg, Lisa. 2017. Personal interview. April 20, 2017.

Bondebjerg, Ib. 2014. "Cosmopolitan Narratives. Documentary and the Global 'Other'." *Nordicom Review* 33 (Special Issue), 53-63. https://www.nordicom.gu.se/sites/default/files/kapitel-pdf/bondebjerg.pdf

Bondebjerg, Ib, Eva Novrup Redvall, Rasmus Helles, Signe Sophus Lai, Henrik Søndergaard, and Cecilie Astrupgaard. 2017. *Transnational European Television Drama. Production, Genres, and Audiences*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Borgelt, Hans. 1979. *Filmstadt Berlin*. Berlin: Nicolai

Caldwell, John Thornton. 2008. *Production Culture. Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Castendyk, Oliver, and Klaus Goldhammer. 2018. *Produzentenstudie 2018. Daten zur Film- und Fernsehwirtschaft in Deutschland 2017/2018*. Leipzig: Vistas.

Cornea, Christine. 2009. "Showrunning the Doctor Who Franchise: A Response to Denise Mann." In *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, edited by Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John Thornton Caldwell, 115-122. New York and London: Routledge.

Delanty, Gerard. 2009. *The Cosmopolitan Imagination. The Renewal of Critical Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eichner, Susanne, and Lothar Mikos. 2017. "Berlin in Television Drama Series: A Mediated Space." *Series – International Journal of TV Serial Narratives* 3 (1), 41-49 https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2421-454X/7141

Fidel, Carlos. 2016. Personal conversation with author. October 24, 2016.

Graham, James, and Allesandro Gandini. 2017. "Introduction: Collaborative Production in the Creative Industries." In *Collaborative Production in the Creative Industries,* edited by James Graham and Allessandro Gandini, 1-13. London: University of Westminster Press. https://doi.org/1016997/book4

Hake, Sabine. 2008. *German National Cinema*. 2nd edition. New York and London: Routledge.

Hannerz, Ulf. 1990. "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture." In *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity,* edited by Mike Featherstone, 237-251. London: Sage.

Henderson, Felicia D. 2011. "The Culture Behind Closed Doors: Issues of Gender and Race in the Writers' Room." *Cinema Journal* 50 (2), 145-152. https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2011.0008

Huyssen, Andreas. 2003. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Igarashi, Hiroki, and Hiro Saito. 2014. "Cosmopolitanism as Cultural Capital: Exploring the Intersection of Globalization, Education and Stratification." *Cultural Sociology* 8 (3), 222-239. https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975514523935

Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers. Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York: New York University Press.

Kearney, Michael. 2008. "The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism." In *The Transnational Studies Reader. Intersections & Innovations,* edited by Sanjeev Khagram and Peggy Levitt, 273-274. New York and London. Routledge.

Kendall, Gavin, Ian Woodward, and Zlatko Skrbis. 2009. *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism. Globalization, Identity, Culture and Government.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kuipers, Giselinde. 2012. "The Cosmopolitan Tribe of Television Buyers: Professional Ethos, Personal Taste and Cosmopolitan Capital in Transnational Cultural Mediation." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 15 (5), 581-603. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549412445760

Mann, Denise. 2009. "It's Not TV, It's Brand Management TV: The Collective Author(s) of the *Lost* Franchise." In *Production Studies. Cultural Studies of Media Industries,* edited by Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John Thornton Caldwell, 99-114. New York and London: Routledge.

Mayer, Vicki, Miranda J. Banks, and John Thornton Caldwell, eds. 2009. *Production Studies. Cultural Studies of Media Industries*. New York and London: Routledge.

Mikos, Lothar. 2020. "Transnational Television Culture." In *The Routledge Companion to Global Television,* edited by Shawn Shimpach, 74-83. New York: Routledge.

Mikos, Lothar. 2017. "(Die) Borgia(s) – Geschichte als Ressource für transkulturelle Fernsehserien." *Spiel – Neue Folge. Eine Zeitschrift zur Medienkultur. Journal of Media Culture* 3 (1), 25-37. https://doi.org/10.3726/spiel.2017.01.02

Ong, Jonathan Corpus. 2009. "The Cosmopolitan Continuum: Locating Cosmopolitanism in Media and Cultural Studies." *Media, Culture & Society* 31 (3), 449-466. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443709102716

Phalen, Patricia F. 2018. *Writing Hollywood. The Work and Professional Culture of Television Writers*. New York: Routledge.

Phalen, Patricia F., and Julia Osellame. 2012. "Writing Hollywood: Rooms with a Point of View." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 56 (1), 3-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2011.648686

Phalen, Patricia F., Thomas B. Ksiazek, and Jacob B. Garber. 2016. "Who You Know in Hollywood: A Network Analysis of Television Writers". *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 60 (1), 160-170. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2015.1127244

Redvall, Eva Novrup. 2013. *Writing and Producing Television Drama in Denmark. From "The Kingdom" to "The Killing"*. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan.

Regev, Motti. 2007. "Cultural Uniqueness and Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism." *European Journal of Social Theory* 10 (1), 123-138. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006068765

Robertson, Roland. 2012. "Globalisation or Glocalisation?" *The Journal of International Communication* 18 (2), 191-208. https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2012.709925

Robertson, Roland. 1992. *Globalization. Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage.

Saito, Hiro. 2011. "An Actor-Network Theory of Cosmopolitanism." *Sociological Theory* 29 (2), 124-149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2011.01390.x

Skrbis, Zlatko, and Ian Woodward. 2007. "The Ambivalence of Ordinary Cosmopolitanism: Investigating the Limits of Cosmopolitan Openness." *The Sociological Review* 55 (4), 730-747. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2007.00750.x

Smith, Iain Robert. 2017. "Theorising Cult Cosmopolitanism: The Transnational Reception of Bollywood as Cult Cinema." *Transnational Cinemas* 8 (1), 20-34. https://doi.org/10.1080/20403526.2017.1258160

Szerszynski, Bronislaw, and John Urry. 2002. "Culture of Cosmopolitanism." *The Sociological Review* 50 (4), 455-481. https://doi.org/10.1177/003802610205000401

Tomlinson, John. 1999. *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wahl, Chris. 2009. *Sprachversionsfilme aus Babelsberg. Die internationale Strategie der Ufa 1929-1939*. München: Edition text + Kritik.

Wedel, Michael. 2012. "Studio Babelsberg Today (1993-2012)." In *100 Years Studio Babelsberg. The Art of Filmmaking*, edited by Hochshcule für Film und Fernsehen 'Konrad Wolf' and Filmmuseum Potsdam, 12-49. Kempen: teNeues.

Winger, Jörg. 2017. Personal interview, March 16, 2017.

Film references

Avengers: Infinity War. 2018. Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo. USA: Marvel Studios, Jason Roberts Productions, South Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures.

Bridge of Spies. 2015. Directed by Steven Spielberg. USA/Germany: DreamWorks.

Captain America: Civil War. 2016. Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo. USA: Marvel Studios.

Der Blaue Engel. 1930. Directed by Josef von Sternberg. Germany: UFA.

Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1. 2014. Directed by Francis Lawrence. USA: Lionsgate, Color Force.

Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2. 2015. Directed by Francis Lawrence. USA: Lionsgate, Color Force.

Inglorious Basterds. 2009. Directed by Quentin Tarantino. USA/Germany: Universal Pictures, The Weinstein Company, Studio Babelsberg.

Metropolis. 1927. Directed by Fritz Lang. Germany: UFA.

Sonnenallee. 1999. Directed by Leander Haußmann. Germany: Boje Buck Produktion, Ö-Film, Sat.1.

The Bourne Supremacy. 2004. Directed by Paul Greengrass. USA/Germany: Universal Pictures.

The Grand Budapest Hotel. 2014. Directed by Wes Anderson. USA/Germany: Fox Searchlight Pictures, Indian Paintbrush, Studio Babelsberg.

The House That Jack Built. 2018. Directed by Lars von Trier. Denmark/Sweden/France/Germany: Zentropa Entertainment.

The Pianist. 2002. Directed by Roman Polanski. France/Germany/Poland/UK: R.P. Productions, Studio Babelsberg.

The Reader. 2008. Directed by Stephen Daldry. USA/Germany: The Weinstein Company, Mirages Enterprises, Studio Babelsberg.

TV drama series references

4 Blocks. 2017-present. Created by Hanno Hackfort, Bob Konrad, and Richard Kropf. Wiedemann & Berg Television. TNT Serie.

Babylon Berlin. 2017-present. Created by Henk Handloegten, Tom Tykwer, and Achim von Borries. X-Filme Create Pool, ARD Degeto, Beta Film. ARD and Sky.

Bad Banks. 2018-present. Created by Oliver Kienle. Letterbox Filmproduktion, Iris Productions. ZDF.

Berlin Station. 2016-2019. Created by Olen Steinhauer. Anonymous Content, Seven Islands Film, Studio Babelsberg. Epix.

Borgia. 2011-2014. Created by Tom Fontana. Atlantique Productions, EOS Entertainment. ZDF, Canal+, Sky Italia.

Counterpart. 2017-2019. Created by Justin Marks. Gilbert Films, Anonymous Content, Gate 34 Productions, MRC productions, and Starz Original. Starz.

Dark. 2017-2020. Created by Baran bo Odar and Jantje Friese. Wiedemann & Berg Television. Netflix.

Deutschland 83. 2015. Created by Anna Winger and Jörg Winger. UFA Fiction. RTL.

Deutschland 86. 2018. Created by Anna Winger and Jörg Winger. UFA Fiction. Amazon Prime Video.

Homeland. 2011-2020. Created by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon. Teakwood Lane Productions, Cherry Pie Productions, Keshet Broadcasting. Showtime.

The Team. 2015-2018. Created by Mai Brostrøm and Peter Thorsboe. Network Movie Film- und Fernsehproduktion, Lunanime, Nordisk Film, Superfilm, C-Films. ZDF.

"ROMA(nzo) criminale"

Portrayals of Rome in Third-millennium Crime Genre Screenwriting

Livio Lepratto

received his Ph.D. in History of Visual and Performance Arts from the University of Parma in 2017. From 2016 to 2019 he was a member of a SIR research group, studying Italian film criticism in post-war cultural and popular magazines. From 2017 he has been a Research Assistant at the Department of Humanities, Social and Cultural Enterprises (DUSIC) of the University of Parma.

Abstract

In recent years, the city of Rome continues to be 'read' by Italian cinema as a privileged habitat for the setting of crime narratives. Some emblematic examples are such recent Italian films as *Suburra* (*Id.*, Stefano Sollima, 2015), *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* (*They Call Me Jeeg*, Gabriele Mainetti, 2015), *Non essere cattivo* (*Don't Be Bad*, Claudio Caligari, 2015) and *Dogman* (*Id.*, Matteo Garrone, 2018), which offer the opportunity to explore the creative processes behind the adaptation of successful cross over into television crime narratives and trans / cross-mediated crime narratives such as adaptations, since they are stories and creative processes that transcend the borders between countries and media.

My contribution seeks to engage with scholarly debates about Italian crime narratives, investigating how the case study of the representation of "criminal Rome" provides its own individual contribution to the distinct imagery of contemporary Italian noir.

Keywords: Rome, crime, suburb, non-place, contemporary Italian cinema.

As highlighted elsewhere in this special issue (Re and Coviello 2021), in recent years Italian crime screenwriting has been gradually shifting farther away from setting its narrative locations in the symbolic and productive centre of the country, i.e. Rome, moving towards more provincial and peripheral locations and urban contexts.

Nevertheless, in parallel to this trend, an equally evident, very recent reappraisal of the Italian capital city as a setting for crime films and TV series has also emerged. Of course, the features of Roman criminality have been broadly explored by Italian cinema well before the third millennium, in a number of compelling representations of "a thousand contradictions accumulated over millennia of history" (Severi 1983, 15). The description of the inexorable growth of a vicious underworld in the suburban streets of the metropolis was actually seen so frequently on the Italian screens that several scholars – among them Matteo Santandrea – proposed to classify the vast body of work focusing on delinquency and corruption in Rome in a distinct category: the "Roman crime movie" (Santandrea 2019, 218).

In light of the utterly unique features of these representations, I am going to focus on the particular and varied declinations that the city of Rome has been able to embody in a few recent Italian crime films and TV series. I will start from discussing the way in which these productions portray the official capital Rome as an exorbitant anthill of corruption and immorality where politics, the Church and the underworld fight animalistically for power. This is particularly the case of the *Suburra* franchise, originated by a novel by Giancarlo De Cataldo.

I will then turn to examine how the topography of Rome is shown as a space traversed by gangs that unleash their raids against powerless police forces: this is the context that saw the rise and the epic downfall of the 'banda della Magliana' as well as the emergence of the so called 'mafia capitolina', which provide the subjects for *Romanzo criminale*, another franchise stemmed from one of De Cataldo's novels. The final section will briefly discuss the thematic and poetic fulcrum par excellence of the crime genre, that is, the Roman 'borgata', made up of depressed areas located on the city outskirts, places – or better 'non-places', in the sense given to this expression by French anthropologist Marc Augé (1992) – that appear artificial,

alienating and dehumanizing. Examples are the suburban neighborhood of Tor Bella Monaca and the area of Ostia, a coastal fraction of the municipality of Rome that works as a real 'city within the city' tyrannized by a new feral mafia. It is in this 'no man's land' that the Pasolinian and very human anti-heroes of Claudio Caligari's films drift toward their ineluctable destiny.

The criminal face of power in 'patrician' Rome

One of the most frequently represented faces of Rome is undoubtedly that of the 'patrician' city, the seat of both the national political power and the Catholic Church as well as the place where many financial and economic decisions are taken. This is the setting of *Suburra*, a complex transmedia franchise that includes a novel (Carlo Bonini and Giancarlo De Cataldo, 2013), a feature (Stefano Sollima, 2015) and a Netflix series (three seasons from 2017 to 2020).

The title, *Suburra*, alludes to the corruption that flourished in the namesake, disreputable quarter of ancient Rome, thus evoking the dissolution that continues to spread unchecked through the city several millennia later. As we are told by one of the characters in the Netflix series, "This place hasn't changed for two thousand years. Patricians and plebeians, politicians and criminals, whores and priests: Rome".

Portrayed as a vast anthill of corruption and perdition, in both the film and the TV series Rome emerges as a city where "the insatiable greed of organised crime, the ferocious voracity of a certain type of rotten, dissolute politicians, and the grasping cupidity of various eminent leaders in the Vatican constantly cross paths in an ugly, eternal orgy of violence" (Santandrea 2019, 185).

In particular, Sollima's film focuses on the sordid power struggles surrounding the breakdown of established political and spiritual powers: the fall of the fourth Berlusconi government, occurring in 2011, is made to coincide with the astounding resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, which he announced in 2013. Writing about the film, Hannah McGill notes that these two events become the "signals of a country on the verge of moral collapse" (McGill 2016, 89).

Set against this desolate backdrop, the city of Rome plays a starring role as the true cause behind the apocalyptic disaster we are witnessing. Sollima's cinematography makes it appear as a glacial metropolis, almost Nordic in appearance, so cold and colourless as

to be almost unrecognisable, and the effect is amplified by the inclusion of many night scenes, shot beneath an incessant, unnatural amount of rain.

The film is replete with spectacular references to Rome's ecclesiastical power. Even in the opening sequence, we see the pontiff, his back to the camera, kneeling in prayer before a crucifix, as he confesses for the first time to his young, trusted private secretary that he intends to resign. From its very first episode, *Suburra – La serie* also refers to the ecclesiastical Vatican domain. It opens with a night-time shot of the majestic façade of St. Peter's Basilica, and the choice of this image alludes to the moral catastrophe sweeping over, and inexorably compromising not just the Holy See, but the sacred image of the city as a whole.

Both the film and the TV adaptation also refer to the corruption that affects the political institutions. One of the main characters in Sollima's film is a corrupt member of parliament, Filippo Malgradi (Pierfrancesco Favino), who is entrenched in the underworld and is an old acquaintance with a powerful criminal boss, Samurai, since the 'Years of Lead' in the 1970s. The corruption of morality and traditional values is clearly represented by Malgradi's drug-fuelled night of sex in a hotel room with two escorts, one of whom is underage and tragically ends up dying of an overdose that same night.

Then there is the mansion where the young, anxious events-organiser Sebastiano throws a party. The interior also definitely evokes a certain type of Roman society: a bourgeois, affluent, corrupt and debauched society that looks very similar to the type portrayed, just two years earlier, at Jep Gambardella's sixtieth birthday bash in *La grande bellezza* (*The Great Beauty*, Paolo Sorrentino, 2013). The motley menagerie of politicians, social climbers, industrialists, entrepreneurs, C-list showbiz types, wideboys and escorts is a clear reference to Sorrentino's film.

Not long afterwards Sebastiano's father commits suicide, jumping off Ponte Vittorio to escape his debts with the Anacleti mafia clan. In this way, the Tiber river, a symbol of the Eternal City, becomes a place of significant dramatic consequence in the plot.

The Tiber river also comes in the foreground in *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* (*They Called Me Jeeg*, Gabriele Mainetti, 2015), a fantasy film with a realistic subtext, straddling the action, crime and the superhero genres. It tells the story of Enzo Ceccotti (Claudio Santamaria),

a small-time delinquent who makes ends meet by dubious means and petty theft in the *borgate*, the rundown Roman suburbs. One day, having stolen a watch, he is being chased by the police. He escapes by jumping into the Tiber, where he accidentally comes into contact with a radioactive substance in the water. Further on, he finds out he has gained a superhuman strength, which he puts immediately to use, first to boost his criminal career, and later to mutate into an actual superhero.

While most of the shooting locations are around a lesser-known, peripheral part of the city, the film nevertheless contains frequent references to Rome's most symbolic landmarks. Although they are always shown fleetingly, almost on the edge of the frame, these include the Colosseum, the area between Campo Marzio and Castel Santangelo, extensively shown during a frantic police chase, and the Olympic Stadium. This latter site, packed to the brim for the Rome-Lazio derby, is indeed the location where the film's most tension-filled, pivotal sequence takes place. Up and the down the stadium's wide staircases, along its external walkways and even within the stands, a hair-raising chase plays out between Enzo and the crime boss known as lo Zingaro (the 'Gipsy', played by Luca Marinelli), complete with a fight between the two 'superheroes'. The buildings and rooftops of the more touristic, monumental districts of Rome return in the final sequence, where Enzo is shown hanging from the highest cornice of the Colosseum, wearing the Jeeg Robot mask made for him by his deceased sweetheart, before flying off to watch over the city at night.

Gangs of Rome

A completely different Roman landscape appears in a number of contemporary films centred on the nefarious deeds of criminal gangs. Their characteristic approach has its roots in the *poliziottesco* movies, which flourished during the 1970s: taking its cue from both American gangster movies and the Spaghetti westerns, this subgenre reflected a country that was then bloodied by social unrest and terrorist activity. Rome, in particular, emerged as an ideal urban setting for developing this category of films.

The late 1990s saw a resurgence in Italian cinema's fascination with the blight of Roman crime: a case in point is the second feature by the maverick auteur Claudio Caligari, *L'odore della notte* (*The*

Scent of the Night, 1998). The film is loosely based on a gritty *romanzo verità* novel (Sacchettoni 1986), which is in turn inspired by a true story, namely the criminal acts of the so-called Clockwork Orange gang. Centred upon the story of Remo Guerra, a working-class young man who is both a policeman and a criminal, *L'odore della notte* portrays Rome's criminal topography in all of its glory: "From the grand houses of Collina Fleming to the high-rise blocks of Tor-pignattara, the city is once again shown as raw, divided, torn by social unrest: wealthy, serene and presumably strait-laced on one side; impoverished, hapless and irreparably disillusioned on the other" (Santandrea 2019, 114-115).

Such a renewed interest in the Roman 'criminal question' was to culminate a few years later with the publication of Giancarlo De Cataldo's novel *Romanzo criminale* (2002). This book can truly lay claim to having reignited a cultural interest in the Italian 'criminal question' across the media system, from literature to cinema and television.

Thanks to the author's masterful reinterpretation of the gangster mythology as well as his renewal of noir storytelling, *Romanzo criminale* turns the true story of the Magliana gang into a kind of legend (Amici 2010, 77-78), while at the same time also using the narrative to investigate the blood-spattered Leaden Years and the tumultuous political upheavals of post-1968 Italy.

The gang depicted in De Cataldo's plot consists of 'hungry', vainglorious youths (Selvetella 2007, 104) who are at the same time the victims of the dehumanising decline of the Roman working-class suburbs. It offers a clear representation of the transition from a grasping small-time 'banditry' to a business-like system of 'institutionalised' crime.

Some, such as Millicent Marcus, have seen this this representation as possessing the same "charm, dignity and almost sacred mystery" (Marcus 2008, 394) that Pier Paolo Pasolini had bestowed upon the Roman underclass. As in the case of *Suburra*, the extraordinary success of *Romanzo criminale* also led to a transmedia franchise in a relatively short frame of time. After a film adaptation directed by Michele Placido in 2005, De Cataldo's novel was further adapted in a TV series produced by Sky Cinema and directed by Stefano Sollima (three seasons from 2008 to 2010). As in De Cataldo's book, the film also presents us with a "friendship and coming-

of-age tale: one that tells a story of people from the masses, instinctive to the point of cruelty, yet capable of love in their own way" (Dal Bello 2009, 81), animated by the romantic, straight-talking, blue-collar temperament that is typical of the Roman suburbs and amplified by the use of Roman dialect throughout (Trifone 1993, 15).

As for the TV adaptation, *Romanzo criminale - La serie* remains to date "one of the few […] Italian media products that became a social phenomenon and a vehicle for exporting the national culture" (Boni 2015, 78). It proved capable of innovating the methods of Italian serialiaty, heralding a nouvelle vague of Italian-style action crime drama in the wake of the American quality television, and paving the way for *Gomorra - La serie* (2014-) and *Suburra - La serie*. The Italian audiences were finally witnessing a crime series featuring realistic sets, gritty, no-holds-barred language, new narrative approaches and stylistic codes, which showed the perspective of the 'bad guys' and revisited the tradition of mob films as revived in recent American TV series, such as *The Sopranos*.

Another painful representation of the Roman criminal 'underworld' is found in Matteo Garrone's film *Dogman* (2018), which is based on a gruesome true crime. In 1988, Pietro De Negri, a dog groomer whose nickname was *er canaro* (the 'dog man' of the title) carried out a ferocious murder in his salon in the Magliana neighbourhood, on the south-western outskirts of the city, as a revenge against his former accomplice Giancarlo Ricci, an ex amateur boxer and small-time hoodlum.

Engaging in armed robberies and drug dealing, the odd criminal couple featured in the film – one (the dogman) skinny, meek and calm, the other (the ex boxer) corpulent, hot-headed and violent – belong to a local gang of small-time mobsters which appears very different from the violent and organised crime network that sheds blood in the Rome of *Suburra*.

If anything, the pair's petty crimes evoke those carried out by the criminals trio in the already mentioned *L'odore della notte*. See for example the scene in which the trio robs an apartment in an affluent Roman neighbourhood: Marcello gets out of the car and looks around the upmarket Roman street almost like a wild animal that has been suddenly released into an unfamiliar habitat. In a similar vein, Caligari's next (and last) film, *Non essere cattivo* repeatedly focuses on a gang of youngsters who spend their days loitering in a

small, seedy bar in the outskirts of Rome, planning yet another robbery: "Come with us, we've got a rock solid tipoff. A Parioli penthouse, we're talking luxury. When else would you get a chance to get your hands on those keys? A mate of mine works at the hardware store and made me a copy".

'Criminal topographies' in the Roman 'borgate'

The literary and film examples considered so far bear witness to a clear, ongoing narrative and civic interest developed by various contemporary authors vis-à-vis the Roman *borgate,* a clearly-defined thematic as well as poetic location choice that appears to approach a "suburban area as a condition of the soul" (Raimo 2016).

In the specific case of the Roman hinterland, this suburban area underwent a delicate phase of chaotic construction, passed off as 'regeneration', in the 1970s. Peripheral areas such as San Basilio, Tor de Schiavi, Trullo, Ostia, Acilia and the Magliana neighbourhood became so many symbols of urban and social decay, "depressing results of a mistaken calculation reiterated by the administrations which, hypocritically aiming to improve living conditions in outlying communities, produced the opposite effect by ruining landscapes, crushing hopes and aggravating resentment" (Santandrea 2019, 144).

The Magliana gang portayed in the *Romanzo criminale* franchise formed in that exact geographical context, and yet, on closer inspection, the Roman suburb is kept strictly off-screen in Placido's film, although it is constantly evoked through the dialogues. Instead, the gang members are shown wandering around a very recognisable Rome and landmarks such as Piazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere or the Spanish Steps, as many sites that are picturesque and aesthetically appealing for the camera too.

Unlike the film adaptation, the TV series draws attention to the city's outer suburbs in all their bloodless pallor. It shines a light on the devastation produced by unregulated construction, describing a poverty-stricken place smothered by daunting, stark blights on the landscape: "unresolved, marginal places, incapable of being a convincing blend of city and countryside, characterised only by infinite repetitions of the same grid-like division of land and the same architectural style" (Clementi and Perego 1983, 36). The various neighbourhoods on the edge of the city – from Spinaceto to Val Melaina,

from Trastevere-Testaccio to Trullo, Centocelle and Tufello – take on the visual features and distinctive characteristics of a marginal, and yet authentic Rome which, as Mario Tronti puts it, actually embodies the true communal spirit of the capital (Tronti 1983, 10).

Similarly, the metropolis portrayed in *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* is very far from a postcard-perfect Rome. Here we see a city that is almost unrecognisable: peripheral, neglected, abandoned in the clutches of a violent criminal network that acts unchallenged.

The film's main location is undoubtedly Tor Bella Monaca; this district on the eastern edge of Rome, wedged between Via Casilina and the Grande Raccordo Anulare, the city's orbital motorway, has often had the dubious distinction of cropping up in the crime pages (Raia 2016). With its skyline of identical 'cookie-cutter' tower blocks, Tor Bella Monaca is not only the place where the protagonist, Enzo, resides; it is also home to the den of the criminal gang that rules over the neighbourood: they too are confined to the desolate streets of this shabby 'ghetto', excluded and distanced from the bacchanal of power. For example, the gang leader, Lo Zingaro, refers to his own home scornfully as 'the kennel', and we can tell that he hates it from his wretched confession, "I don't want to die in this place like my father. This place makes me sick; this stink of shit makes me sick". Tor Bella Monaca stands out as the lawless outer circle of the Italian capital: something like a Roman 'Bronx' consisting of squalid, pitiful building sites and betting shops, in addition to distinctive, inhospitable landmarks such as the so-called *serpentoni*, snakelike social housing blocks named R5 and R6.

The constant references to the complex *borgatara* social fabric of Tor Bella Monaca – conveyed, albeit in sci-fi style, by *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* – were instrumentally exploited in the heated political battle that characterised the 2016 Rome local elections (Menarini 2020). When the film's lead actor, Claudio Santamaria, expressed his support in favour of Virginia Raggi's candidacy for Mayor, his move was immediately interpreted "in light of his latest role on the big screen: that of a superhero who moves against a backdrop of a corrupt capital city controlled by criminals" (Renzi 2016). This instrumental use of Mainetti's film continued throughout the first few months of Raggi's office as newly elected mayor. Right from her first day of work, article in the press emphasised her efforts and commitment to improve life conditions in "the Tor Bella Monaca

district, which was Claudio Santamaria's neighbourhood in the famous film on a troubled Rome. Hence, the working-class suburbs and refuse collection are on the agenda of the new Mayor of Rome on her first real work's day on the ground" (Cerami 2016).

The Tor Bella Monaca district was also used as a location for *La terra dell'abbastanza* (*Boys Cry*, 2018), the debut feature film by the Fabio and Damiano D'Innocenzo brothers. Observed through what could be described as a post-neorealist gaze, the district emerge once more as a desperate ghetto, the embodiment of neglect. It is in these desolate surroundings that two post-Pasolinian characters, Mirko and Manolo (Matteo Olivetti, Andrea Carpenzano), live their whole short lives up and eventually fade away. The pair are drawn to what they see as a unique opportunity to change the course of their destiny, namely, joining a criminal organisation. Although it does feature some Gomorrah-style features, such as its coarseness and the extreme realism of the squalor on screen, the portrayal of these delinquents is nevertheless untarnished by the "blind adulation and childish braggadocio seen in the armed street urchins of Gomorrah [...], since here, among the tower blocks on the outskirts of Rome, there seems to exist no criminal mythology, no utopia, no dream of glory" (Santandrea 2019, 180).

Chronicles of poor criminals in Ostia

Another notable "pole of attraction for mafias and delinquency" (Sabella 2016, 104) which often features in contemporary crime reports and has attracted considerable attention from television and film producers in recent years is Ostia. A coastal town that comes under the municipality of Roma Capitale and a city within a city in its own right, in recent years it has seen the emergence of a ferocious new mafia.

Images of Ostia are scattered throughout the whole duration of *Suburra*, the film, and in a sense they drive the plot: the colossal Waterfront speculative construction project that is repeatedly mentioned in the film, evokes a true project proposed since 1999 by architect Paolo Portoghesi to turn the Ostia coastline into a huge tourist attraction, almost a version of Las Vegas. Although never put into operation, the project received support from a vast array of groups and individuals, attracted from the prospect of real estate speculation. In the film, mafia bosses, politicians and prelates

are all involved to varying extents in the struggle to make the project approved.

An example is the scene in which criminal boss Aureliano Adami, nicknamed Numero 8 (Alessandro Borghi), is seen daydreaming and describing his fantasy to his junky sweetheart, Viola, one rainy night in his hideout on the Ostia coast. As he looks out the window onto the lights along the sea front, his fingers trace these wished-for imaginary scenes on the windowpane:

> I see this shithole completely transformed. All lit up, cars coming and going on the sea front, neon signs, fireworks, like a non-stop party, day and night. Skyscrapers everywhere, gaming halls, slot machines, casinos… and then a mile-long stretch of restaurants, clubs, people having fun, the hottest babes you can imagine... Everything rich, everything beautiful…

Ostia is also the location where Claudio Caligari placed the plot of his debut feature film, *Amore tossico* (*Toxic Love*, 1983), a docu-drama shot in the reportage style. The cast consisted of former drug addicts who were in a sense playing themselves (Stanzione 2016; 33). Here Ostia appears as "an abandoned, desolate no-man's-land" (Santandrea 2019, 111), littered with weeds, trash, used syringes: in short, a place of death through which the film's characters wander aimlessly, starting from the slow panoramic shot that appears along the opening titles.

Some of the local Ostia landmarks are clearly recognisable, and all are heavy with a sense of foreboding that is symbolic of the irremediable downfall of an entire generation: the jetty on Piazza dei Ravennati (where the protagonists meet, in the memorable ice cream scene); the steps of the Regina Pacis church and, in the final sequence, the monument to Pier Paolo Pasolini, which stands, surrounded by scrubland and uncultivated fields, as the derelict symbol of a memory that has been gravely suppressed over the years. Hardly surprisingly, many have suggested that *Amore tossico* (as indeed Caligari's entire career) owes much to Pasolini's oeuvre; so much so that one of the film's most disturbing sequences – that of Michela's death – is set in front of the director's monument, at the Idroscalo in Ostia where Pasolini was found dead (Rigola 2020).

These same places return in *Non essere cattivo*, Caligari's third and last film. Once again, the Ostia *borgata* is the setting for a story that deals with the surge in drug use in the 1990s. And once more, the reference to Pasolini's legacy seems inevitable (Raimo 2015), albeit reassessed in the light of the radical transformation that shook the archaic, sub-proletarian world of the *borgate* from the 1970s onwards.

The new Generation X represented by Cesare and Vittorio (Luca Marinelli, Alessandro Borghi) moves through a new type of decay and collective dispossession. Although the protagonists are still, like Pasolini's street boys before them, as many hustlers or *ragazzi di vita*, they are now in the grip of synthetic drugs and end up being tragically drawn to the darkest depths of the suburbs, such as armed robbery or drug pushing. In Caligari's own words, *Non essere cattivo* should be considered a "snapshot of the final aftermath of Pasolini's world. […] Nowadays any religious dimension has been lost; today's Accattone goes clubbing, he takes and deals in cocaine and pills" (Caligari 2015).

This bleak scenario is tellingly portrayed in a key sequence in which the group of wheezing, heroin-addicted friends gathers on the beach in Ostia, kicking a ball around to stave off the torment of boredom. The dilapidated, half-abandoned shacks – a favourite retreat for local drug users in mid-nineties Ostia; the emptiness of the beach in the winter season; the characters basking in the sun in order to warm up: all these elements suggest the poverty and neglect experienced by the characters.

A remainder of a Pasolinian ethos can nonetheless still be found in the squalid tower block where Cesare lives with his mother and his sick niece, as well as in the derelict shack that Cesare and Viviana choose as their future dream home and where they end up moving in together. In these domestic and family interiors, all the problems, turmoil and poverty that afflict the characters still do not manage to extinguish the warmth of loving and affectionate relationships. For example, the scene in which Cesare tenderly gives his niece Debora a teddy bear as a gift unveils the poignant, delicate bond that exists between the two characters.

Nevertheless, floating above this world like an ineluctable punishment are the spectres of drug addiction, crime, sickness and death. Death spares none, not even little Debora, or Cesare himself:

neither his brotherly bond with Vittorio, nor his new-found love with Viviana can save him. In this way, unlike the other cases we have looked at, *Non essere cattivo* presents us with a criminal microcosm that nurtures no ambition or self-aggrandisement. Instead, these criminals are motivated by the sole purpose of surviving their life of hardship. In the words of Emiliano Morreale, "the characters of Caligari's film do not move up the career ladder, do not become the kings of Rome, [in fact,] they don't even know what politics is" (Morreale 2015).

Conclusion

Not unlike Hollywood film noir productions, each of the literary, film and television examples we have analysed portray the city as a place that is "sinister, dual and mysterious, in which the individual struggles and gets lost, with no real hope of integration" (Pravadelli 2007, 133). Italy's capital city is portrayed along the lines of a somewhat apocalyptic representation. In all of these works, the choice of the Roman suburbs as an ideal location for crime plots is meant to bring to light the most obvious as well as most interesting signs of a derelict humanity, destined for collapse and (self) destruction. Indeed, the screen productions we have examined show how, to quote Paolo Ricci, "Marginal spaces […] form the new image […] of Rome as a constantly evolving organism, and not merely a postcard" (Ricci 2016, 50).

Rome is represented as metropolis that is often very remote – in terms of both atmosphere and physical geographical location – from its classic identity, its tourist attractions, its monumental and baroque appearance, that is, from the identity that has become established through an array of glorious imagery in both the national and the global visual culture. We must then acknowledge that, over the years, Italian cinema has enacted a series of transformations aimed at radically changing the audience's perception of the city of Rome and its urban and social fabric. No less importantly, the international success of many of these productions have multiplied the impact of this changing representation of Rome, transforming the perception of what it means to be Italian (or, more specifically, Roman) in these challenging times.

References

Abbate, Lirio. 2012. “Anche la mafia è su Facebook.” *L'Espresso*, September 26, 2012. Accessed May 6, 2020, https://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/cronaca/2012/09/26/news/anche-la-mafia-e-su-facebook-1.46976.

Amici, Marco. 2010. “Dall'epopea criminale all'ambiguità dei nostri giorni. Alcune considerazioni su *Romanzo criminale* e *Nelle mani giuste* di Giancarlo De Cataldo.” In *Memoria in noir: un'indagine pluridisciplinare,* edited by Monica Jansen and Yasmina Khamal, 77-86. Bruxelles: Peter Lang Publishing Group.

Augé, Marc. 1992. *Non-lieux: introduction a une anthropologie de la surmodernité*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Boni, Marta. 2015. “Mapping *Romanzo criminale*. An Epic Narrative Ecosystem?” *Series. International Journal of TV Serial Narratives*, 1: 77–88. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2421-454X/5116

Caligari, Claudio, 2015. “Note di regia di Non essere cattivo”, in Id., Non essere cattivo, DVD Special Contents, Italy, Good Films.

Cerami, Gabriella. 2016. “Virginia Raggi comincia da *Jeeg Robot*, dichiara battaglia all'Ama sull'emergenza rifiuti. Sullo sfondo l'irrisolto nodo nomine.” *Huffpost*, July 11, 2016. Accessed May 3, 2020. http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2016/07/11/raggi-rifiuti-nomine-olimpiadi_n_10928356.html .

Clementi, Alberto, and Francesco Perego, eds. 1983. “Questioni dell'abusivismo.” In *La metropoli "spontanea". Il caso di Roma. 1925 - 1981: sviluppo residenziale di una città dentro e fuori dal piano*, 29-65. Bari: Dedalo.

Coviello, Massimiliano, and Valentina Re. 2021. “Translocal landscapes: La porta rossa and the use of peripheral locations in contemporary Italian TV crime drama.” *Academic Quarter,* 22: 60-78. https://doi.org/10.5278/ojs.academicquarter.vi22.6601.

Dal Bello, Mario. 2009. *Inquieti. I giovani nel cinema italiano del Duemila*. Cantalupa: Effatà.

De Cataldo, Giancarlo. 2002. *Romanzo criminale*. Torino: Einaudi.

Mainetti, Gabriele. 2016. “Intervista,” in Gabriele Niola, ed., “Mainetti, regista di *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot*: 'Ecco il mio supereroe che sradica bancomat'.” *Wired*, February 6, 2016. Accessed May 2, 2020. https://www.wired.it/play/cinema/2016/02/06/jeeg-robot-intervista-mainetti/?refresh_ce=

Marcus, Millicent. 2008. "*Romanzo criminale*: the Novel and the Film through the Prism of Pasolini." In *Watching Pages, Reading Pictures: Cinema and Modern Literature in Italy*, edited by Daniela De Pau and Georgina Torello, 393-405. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

McGill, Hannah. 2016. "*Suburra.*" *Sight and Sound*, 26(6): 89–90.

Menarini, Roy. 2020. "Storia eroicomica di *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot*. Ricezione, legittimazione, politicizzazione di un film." In *Il sistema dell'impegno nel cinema italiano contemporaneo,* edited by Dom Holdaway and Dalila Missero, 107-116. Milano-Udine: Mimesis.

Morreale, Emiliano. 2015. "I cattivi ragazzi di Caligari: con un film postumo il nostro cinema torna vero." *L'Espresso*, September 17, 2015. Accessed May 8, 2020. https://www.mymovies.it/film/2015/nonesserecattivo/rassegnastampa/726841/.

Pravadelli, Veronica. 2007. *La grande Hollywood. Stili di vita e di regia nel cinema classico americano*. Venezia: Marsilio.

Raia, Enrica. 2016. "*Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot*, le location del film." *Cineturismo,* 2016. Accessed April 30, 2020. http://www.cineturismo.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1673&Item.

Raimo, Christian. 2015. "Nel mondo di Claudio Caligari il bene e il male hanno ancora un valore." *Internazionale*, September 7, 2015. Accessed May 12, 2020. http://www.internazionale.it/opinione/christian-raimo/2015/09/07/claudio-caligari-film-recensione.

Raimo, Christian. 2016. "C'avevano ragione Caligari e Mainetti." *Minima & Moralia*, March 23, 2016. Accessed May 14, 2020. http://www.minimaetmoralia.it/wp/cavevano-ragione-caligari-e-mainetti/.

Renzi, Valerio. 2016. "Comunali Roma: Jeeg Robot sceglie Virginia Raggi." *Fanpage.it*, May 28, 2016. Accessed May 2, 2020. http://roma.fanpage.it/comunali-roma-jeeg-robot-sceglie-virginia-raggi-claudio-santamaria-sul-palco-del-m5s/.

Ricci, Paolo. 2016. "Roma nel cinema e il cinema a Roma. Luoghi, valori, identità." In *Roma in divenire tra identità e conflitti, Vol. 1, Pratiche di vita e produzione del senso fra Roma e San Paolo*, edited by Isabella Pezzini and Ana C. de Oliveira, 45-55. Roma: Nuova Cultura.

Rigola, Gabriele. 2020. "Il cinema di Claudio Caligari e *Non essere cattivo*. Impegno e legittimazione postuma nel sistema cinematografico italiano." In *Il sistema dell'impegno nel cinema italiano contemporaneo,* edited by Dom Holdaway and Dalila Missero, 124-135. Milano-Udine: Mimesis.

Sacchettoni, Dido. 1986. *Le notti di "Arancia meccanica"*. Napoli: Pironti.

Sabella, Alfonso. 2016. *Capitale infetta: si può liberare Roma da mafie e corruzione?* Milano: Rizzoli.

Santandrea, Matteo. 2019. *È stata Roma. La criminalità capitolina dal "poliziottesco" a Suburra*. Soveria Mannelli (CZ): Rubbettino.

Selvetella, Yari. 2007. *Banditi, criminali e fuorilegge di Roma*. Roma: Newton Compton Editori.

Severi, Pierluigi. 1983. "Conoscere per governare." In *La metropoli "spontanea". Il caso di Roma. 1925-1981: sviluppo residenziale di una città dentro e fuori dal piano*, edited by Alberto Clementi and Francesco Perego, 15. Bari: Dedalo.

Stanzione, Davide. 2016. "Un'appropriazione indebita del 'pasolinismo'?" In *Il cinema di Claudio Caligari*, edited by Fabio Zanello, 31-38. Piombino: Il Foglio.

Trifone, Maurizio. 1993. *Aspetti linguistici della marginalità nella periferia romana*. Perugia: Guerra.

Tronti, Mario. 1983. "Presentazione." In *L'apparire dei luoghi, i luoghi dell'apparire. Tra campagna città e metropoli*, edited by Luca Ciancarelli, 4-13. La periferia. Roma: Officina Edizioni.

Identity, Borders and the Environment
New Political Issues in Contemporary French Noir

Alice Jacquelin

is a Ph.D in French and Comparative Literature specializing in crime fiction and media studies. She currently holds a position as a postdoctoral fellow in the H2020 DETECt program (Limoges team). Her academic works focus on popular culture, detective and crime novel, Country Noir in French and US literature.

Abstract

This article examines the works of two contemporary French crime writers, Colin Niel and Antonin Varenne, whose crime novels are set in marginalized spaces and places in France: rural areas in the Hexagone and French Guiana. Why did Niel and Varenne choose to set their novels in the "margins of the society" (Gorrara 2003, 16)? Do these novels follow the French néo-noir tradition of social critique and politically engaged fiction (Levet 2006)? To which extent do they fall within the spectrum of the *ethnopolar*, or under the umbrella of postcolonial fiction? The seven noir novels in our corpus depict French outskirts, both within metropolitan France and in overseas territories, raising burning questions about French identity and national borders. But their divergence on the environmental issue draws a clear political fracture between the two authors.

Keywords: Noir novel, French Guiana, Ecofiction, Rurality

Historically, the noir genre was produced in an urban and industrialized context: "the genre's literary and editorial development as well as that of its readership is linked to the development of cities in the second half of the nineteenth century[1]" (Levet 2018). However, the *néo-polar* of the 1970s and 1980s started to shift the setting of detective stories "out of the big cities to the suburbs and the margins of society; to those places, such as public housing estates, perceived to be a wasteland for social outcasts and rejects" (Gorrara 2003, 16). The geographical shift initiated by the *néo-polar* was also a political move that looked more closely at the social margins of French society. Today, some contemporary crime writers such as Colin Niel and Antonin Varenne are venturing into the outskirts of metropolitan France, pushing narrative borders further back than their predecessors of the *néo-polar*. The seven novels in our corpus are set either deep in the heart of rural France (Niel, *Seules les bêtes,* 2017 and Varenne, *Battues,* 2016 [2015]), or in the faraway overseas *département* of French Guiana (Niel's Guianese tetralogy, formed by the novels *Les Hamacs de carton,* 2012, *Ce qui reste en forêt,* 2013, *Obia,* 2015, *Sous le ciel effrondré,* 2018; and Varenne's novella *Cat 215,* 2016).

The aim of this article is to study why Niel and Varenne are pushing back the geographical boundaries of the noir novel and setting their narratives at the new fringes of the French national space. Are there any similarities between the rural setting of the Cévennes (*Seules les bêtes*), or the fictional small town of R. in Auvergne (*Battues*), and the tropical scenery of French Guiana? What contemporary political concerns are these new settings responding to?

The first section of this article will analyze how Niel and Varenne build their main characters as 'monsters' in opposition to the traditional figure of the affable, *debonair* French commissaire, and why these 'misfits' dismantle the notion of 'French identity'. The second section will examine how the seven novels question the boundaries of the French national space, including the external borders of former colonial territories and the internal social margins in disenfranchised rural spaces. Finally, the third section will focus on the depiction of natural settings, demonstrating how nature is at the heart of a political battle between the advocates of the environment and the adversaries of the practice known as 'agribashing'. Each in their particular way, Colin Niel and Antonin Varenne explore three political issues at stake in French contemporary noir: identity, borders and the environment.

Monsters, Outcasts and Misfits: Questioning Identities

A major resemblance between Niel's and Varenne's writings is their fondness for complex characters with problematic identities. In *Battues* and *Sous le ciel effondré*, the main characters, Rémi Parrot, a gamekeeper, and Angélique Blakaman, a warrant officer, share the common trait of having been disfigured after an accident. As a result, they are both regarded as "monsters" and live as outcasts in their homeland: Rémi Parrot, because his family arrived in Auvergne 'only' three generations earlier, which is why he is still considered as a newcomer, and Blakaman, because she left her Guianese village – Maripasoula – to go study and serve in mainland France before coming back. But while Niel's characters are looking for their identities through cultural dialogue, by adapting to a new environment and striving to integrate into local communities – even if adaptation can be painful – Varenne's characters have to fight for their territory and confront others to find themselves. The final duel in *Battues* is typical of this revengeful dynamic:

> Parrot' grandson did what he had to do, a shotgun in hand, and no one could misjudge his deeds. Who cared what the police thought? Rémi Parrot walked through the barracks without paying attention to the stares. From now on and until the end of time, Rémi Parrot had become a local. Rémi Parrot, third generation, was no longer a stranger. (Varenne 2016 [2015], 277)[2]

The use of free indirect speech and the anaphoric repetition of the family name, "Parrot", show how the character has acquired his own identity and his own voice by fighting with "a shotgun in hand" and defying the police's authority. Only then does he stop being "a stranger" in his own land. Parrot and Blakaman are the detectives in the novels, even if their professional status is not legitimate to conduct investigations. These physical and professional particularities are narratively significant, since they confer the status of social outcasts upon them. This specific condition brings these two characters closer to the figure of the US hardboiled novel's detective – always oscillating between the positions of the lawman and the outlaw – than to the debonair French police chief whose authority is unquestioned (see Boltanski 2012, 58). Also, these

characters' specificities draw Niel's and Varenne's novels closer to postcolonial and minority crime fiction: "this conversance with a multicultural modernity may be one reason the hardboiled detective has proven so popular a figure in postcolonial and minority detective fiction" (Pearson and Singer 2009, 5).

Niel's Guianese tretralogy's first three books are centered on Capitaine Anato, a Black chief police officer. Anato and Blakaman befriend and collaborate in the fourth volume partly because of their shared Ndjuka origins and black identities, whereas their colleagues are mainly white males exiled from metropolitan France. In the first three volumes of the cycle – *Les Hamacs en carton, Ce qui reste en forêt* and *Obia* – Capitaine Anato, who left Guiana as a child and was raised in an urban suburb in metropolitan France, is also looking for his identity by exploring his parents' secrets and families, in an attempt to understand the Ndjuka traditions and fit in his native community. On different levels, Parrot, Blakaman and Anato are all struggling with their identities. On the contrary, the central character in Varenne's *Cat 215* – Marc, a white metropolitan mechanic – who used to live temporarily in Guiana – returns in his host country to fix an engine in the middle of the forest. Both Blakaman and Anato, but also Marc, might be compared to the figure of the "post-colonial detective", defined as "indigenous to or settlers in the [postcolonial] countries where they work: they are usually marginalized in some way […] and their creators' interest actually lies in an exploration of how these detective's approaches to criminal investigation are influenced by their cultural attitudes" (Christian 2001, 17).

Marc's position as a marginalized outcast depends on a social factor: Marc and his wife are very poor. The first four pages of this very short novella are dedicated to the couple's money problems: "I added up the cost of repairs – what it costs to be broke and only have broken down things. I needed around three bucks, always, that was it. Three bucks" (Varenne 2016, 5)[3]. The paradox in the sentence resides in the fact that being poor is more expensive than being rich, while the repetition of the noun phrase, "three bucks", stresses the anguishing lack of money. The poverty and loneliness of some rural characters is also the starting point of Colin Niel's *Seules les bêtes*. Joseph Bonnefille is a sheep farmer who lives alone on the *causse* (plateau):

> He lived alone in his house on the *causse*, no wife, no parents anymore, fewer and fewer childhood friends in the area (*département*), just his dog that went in circles around him and his two hundred and forty sheep that he occasionally took care of. He was the only permanent resident in the small group of houses huddled at the center of the steppe – all the others were holiday homes. (Niel 2017, 18)[4]

The loss of all human connection leaves Joseph alone with his animals, his dog and cattle. The mentions of different administrative and geographical scales such as "the *causse*", "the *département*", and then "the small group of houses" show a gradual reduction of Joseph's environment, which eventually shrinks down to his house. The use of the term "steppe" to describe the landscape of the *causse* evokes both a geographical and a social desertification. The almost oral character of the last sentence, where the negation is omitted ("*c'était plus que des résidences secondaires*"), may be understood as Joseph's own exasperation at being the last permanent resident in the village. The precarious situation of the characters in both Niel's and Varenne's novels confirms that these authors write noir novels where the criminal behavior is always a consequence of economic distress, human violence and emotional isolation. The misfit characters of the seven novels mirror the social and geographical marginalization of the rural and overseas territories explored in the novels.

Enclosed Places and Open Spaces: The New Borders of French Noir

The border, a recurrent topic in all seven novels, can be either symbolic or physical, delineating the French national territory either internally or externally. The way in which Colin Niel and Antonin Varenne describe the edges of their respective fictional universes reflects two very different visions of the world: an open world we need to adapt to in Niel's case, and a closed world that needs to be conquered in Varenne's narratives.

The little town of R., where Varenne's novel *Battues* is set, was once a city but is now compared to "a cemetery". This deserted place, symbolic of the decline of the working class, predetermines people's lives in advance: "In the middle school playground, we no longer played with everyone, groups would form by affinity and

resemblance. In R., this shift took a permanent turn" (Varenne 2016 [2015], 31)[5]. This sociological comment about the "groups" of teenagers explains why the characters' trajectories seem determined, and how they have to fight to overcome the fatality of their destinies. The internal borders of the rural margins draw up enclosed territories that symbolically incarcerate the characters: "The noir novel goes beyond the realistic and mimetic depiction of demographic, economic and social realities: margins are not only a special territory, they are a form of symbolic imprisonment for the characters" (Levet, 2018)[6]. In *Seules les bêtes*, Niel describes the Lozère *département* as a very isolated location from which only one character manages to escape: beef farmer Michel evades through an online chatroom with Amandine – his virtual lover from Abidjan (capital of the Ivory Coast).

The character of Amandine is in fact a fake identity for Armand, a young *brouteur* (scammer) who intends to scam the married white farmer to extort money from him. The very colonial fantasy of a young black girlfriend is the only thing that allows Michel to put up with the boundaries of his wintery and secluded life. Armand, for his part, believes that African people have a right to take advantage of the whites' gullibility as a fair compensation for slavery and the triangular trade. Armand's observation is unambiguous concerning this colonial background:

> That's why when they say that Africa has a debt to Europe, I say: no. That's a lie. It is them who have a debt to Africa for what they have inflicted to our ancestors. This is called the colonial debt. (Niel 2017, 164-165)[7]

Colin Niel's novels can thus be considered as postcolonial crime fiction, since they are "produced in encounters between nations, between races and cultures, and especially between imperial powers and their colonial territories" (Pearson and Singer 2009, 3). When Niel examines the relations of France with its current overseas *départements* or ex-colonized territories, he never forgets to question domination and the relations between black and white populations. Niel's Guianese tetralogy also questions the absurd borders of the French national territory with its Surinamese and Brazilian neighbors, only delimited by the banks of the Maroni and Oyapock rivers,

which are mostly located within indigenous territory. The problem posed by these physical borders is at the heart of the investigation in the first volume of the series. *Les Hamacs en carton* (lit. Cardboard hammocks) tells the story of illegal immigrants from Suriname and Brazil, who cross the river to settle in French Guiana and fight to obtain French nationality. The title of the book refers to the asylum application files that indefinitely hang in a civil servant's closet like abandoned hammocks. In this novel, Niel's implicit criticism of France's anti-immigrant policies is linked to the idea that the Amazonian forest belongs to the communities who live in it – the natural border crossed for generations by indigenous people has been turned into a 'national' and closed border. In Niel's novels, the space is never closed: even in harsh territories such as the isolated *causse* Méjean or in multicultural French Guiana, the environment is fluctuating and cannot be policed. Human beings can only adapt to it. On the contrary, for Varenne, rural places as well as the Amazonian forest are enclosed territories that can convey a claustrophobic and violent atmosphere.

These notions of closure and openness are also perceptible in the composition of the novels. *Cat 215 – a* very short Amazonia-set story of about a hundred pages – is very dissimilar to Niel's Guianese tetralogy which adds up to more than 1600 pages. In *Cat 215*, Marc's knowledge of the Guianese territory is only very basic: "As if I had forgotten Guiana, its river, its crime bosses, its gold fever and its moral degradation"[8] (Varenne 2016, 22). This quick enumeration of clichés is supposed to sum up the Guianese reality, and the moral judgment sounds a bit like a caricature. *Cat 215* also adds a thriller-like touch, with a psychological tension gradually building up between three characters stuck in the middle of the forest. On the contrary, Niel's enormous series is closer to what Thiphaine Samoyault (1999, 79) calls a "world-novel" (*roman-monde*). The world-novel's specificity resides in both its expansion and dilatation: it is always overflowing and excessive. The topic of the border signifies the closure of places in Varenne's novels, as opposed to Niel's open spaces – both internally, within the stories, and externally, considering the books' dimensions. The narrative divergence between the two literary universes can in fact be explained by their divergent opinions on the status of nature and environmental issues, which is apparent in their stance on questions such as gold panning or 'agri-bashing'.[9]

Divergence on Environmental Issues:
Gold Panning and 'Agri-Bashing'

The control of the land, with its load of grudges and concupiscence, is sometimes the prime motive for the murder and the ensuing police investigation. In *Battues*, the narrator Rémi Parrot is the son of a farmer who had to sell his land as a result of a real estate feud between two industrial and farming entrepreneurial families, the Courbets and the Messenets. The victim in the novel – Philippe Mazenas, a park ranger from the French National Forestry Office – is described by the other characters as an "eco-terrorist," and not even Rémi Parrot is as radical as to approve of Mazenas's convictions: "nature, Parrot had always thought, did not need to be defended. It would eat us alive if we only turned our backs on her for a moment" (Varenne 2016 [2015], 41)[10]. Nature is a hostile beast that needs to be tamed. In the war between ecologists and industrialists, Parrot – and probably Varenne behind him – sides with the farmers' cause against 'agri-bashing': the land can be exploited yet of course not destroyed. Here lies the main political disagreement between Colin Niel and Antonin Varenne: a specular vision of the humans' domination over their environment. This dichotomy is particularly vivid in the two Amazon-set novels that deal with the problem of gold panning: Varenne's *Cat 215* and Niel's *Obia*. In *Cat* 215, French Guiana is described as a violent place, corrupted by gold panning: "This place is like an anthill, there are shootings all over the place. Gangs from Suriname go down there to rob the gold panners, the Approuague ferrymen fight each other and the pirogues are riddled with bullets[11]" (Varenne 2016, 13). The metaphorical description of Guiana as a swarming "anthill" and the double mention of armed assaults suggests that the narrator condemns the social violence associated with gold exploitation, but not really its consequences on the environment.

   In Varenne's novels, it is other people, rather than the gold panners, who are seen as a threat to reckon with, almost as dangerous as wild beasts. Throughout *Cat 215*, main character Marc learns how to read the signs produced by others. The pattern of the hunt is central in Varenne's writings. Chapter 2 of *Battues*, whose title literally means "hunting beats", is a long scene representing Rémi Parrot the gamekeeper silently tailing a female wild boar and its

boarlets. In *Cat 215*, the Brazilians gold panners are great hunters who know how to read the signs of the forest. Here Varenne applies the "evidential paradigm" described by Carlo Ginzburg in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*: the hunter is the one who knows how to read and decipher the animal's tracks, that is, the original "semiotician" who can "sniff out, record, interpret, and classify such infinitesimal traces" (Ginzburg 1989, 102). This paradigm of the clue as an archetype of the sign waiting to be read is a traditional approach to analyzing the noir genre (Jacquelin 2018): Varenne is an heir of this tradition.

On the contrary, Colin Niel is closer to the ethnographic approach to the noir genre. Before becoming a writer, Colin Niel's was an agronomist specializing in rurality. He lived for a long time in French Guiana and worked for the Guiana Amazonian Park and the Guadeloupe National Park. His political engagement for the preservation of the Amazonian forest and biodiversity is particularly obvious in *Obia*, which delivers a critique of both the legal and illegal gold panning industry. Niel's work can be linked to the *ethnopolar.* According to Naudillon (2006, 13), the expression *ethnopolar* was first used in France in 1992. The term also refers to the father of the subgenre, the American writer Tony Hillerman, who sets his novels within the Navajo country of the "Four Corners" (Delanoë 2009) and whose two main investigators, Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee, belong to the Navajo tribal police force. In this sense, Niel's crime novels also belong to the *ethnopolar* genre, since Anato and Blakaman are both indigenous investigators from French Guiana, but also because Niel's literary ambition is to explore every inch of Guianese society and unveil all the community's secrets. *Les Hamacs en carton* delves into the *noir-marron* (black-brown) communities of the Alukus and the Ndjukas, former slaves who escaped the white people's rule. *Ce qui reste en forêt* is set in the scientific community of an observation station in the heart of the forest. As for the novel *Obia*, it deals with Brazilian *garimpeiros* (gold panners) and drug mules. The last volume of the tetralogy, *Sous le ciel effondré*, explores the traditions and social issues of the Wayanas, a tribe of indigenous people still living in their villages in reserved areas. The peritextual system of the tetralogy is also significant: every book starts with a detailed map of the story setting, while local dialect terms (either in Ndju-

ka, Creole or Wayana) are indexed at the end in a glossary, and the acknowledgments sections demonstrate how thoroughly documented each novel is.

To conclude, Colin Niel's and Antonin Varenne's crime novels are pushing back the boundaries of French contemporary noir, both symbolically and physically: the seven novels in our corpus do not only explore new territories, such as deep rural areas (*Battues* and *Seules les bêtes*) and faraway colonial spaces (*Les Hamacs en carton, Ce qui reste en forêt, Obia, Sous le ciel effondré* and *Cat* 215), but they also question the identity and borders of the French national construction. However, the two writers' approaches differ on many levels: the expansion of Niel's Guianese tetralogy aims to create an open literary universe where spaces are fluctuating and connected, whereas Varenne's novella *Cat 215* is more akin to a tropical thriller in an enclosed space. These Amazonia-set novels also highlight a significative political dissent between the two authors on the environmental issue: the hunting paradigm in Varenne's novels reveals a conception of nature as a thing to be conquered whereas, in Niel's case, the characters adapt to and merge with their environments, in the direct filiation of ethnographic noir. Ultimately, however, Varenne and Niel's moral ideas are quite similar: their descriptions of the gold panners and the poor turning to violence because of terrible social conditions reveal similar ontological beliefs – neither cynical nor angelic – which confirm Jean-Patrick Manchette's description of noir as "the great moralist literature of our times[12]" (Manchette 2003 [1977], 27).

References

Boltanski, Luc. 2012. *Énigmes et complots: une enquête à propos d'enquête*. Paris: Gallimard.

Christian, Ed. 2001. *The Postcolonial Detective*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Delanoë, Nelcya. 2009. "Ethno-polar et ethno-pillard, ou les voleurs de temps." *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, 39(3): 113-116. https://doi.org/10.7202/045811ar

Ginzburg, Carlo. 1989. *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gorrara, Claire. 2003. *The Roman Noir in Post-War French Culture: Dark Fictions.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jacquelin, Alice. 2018. "L'indice policier, une trace indécidable?" In *Trace(s),* edited by M. Deperne, S. Dichy-Malherme, and L. Pichard, 229-241. Limoges: PULIM.

Manchette, Jean-Patrick. 2003 [1977]. *Chroniques*. Paris: Rivages / Noir.

Levet, Natacha. 2006. *Le genre, entre pratique textuelle et pratique sociale: le cas du roman noir français (1990-2000)*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Limoges. Accessed May 1, 2020. http://www.unilim.fr/theses-doctorat/2006LIMO2002/html/index-frames.html

Levet, Natacha. 2018. "Le roman noir français et les marges rurales: modalités, enjeux, évolutions." Unpublished paper presented at the conference "Quand le noir se met au vert," University of Poitiers, May 2, 2018.

Naudillon, Françoise, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink. 2011. "Le polar africain: un genre post-colonial." In *Violences postcoloniales: enjeux de la représentation et défis de la lecture*, edited by Isaac Bazié and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 145-163. Berlin: Lit Verlag.

Niel, Colin. 2017. *Seules les bêtes.* Rodez: Le Rouergue.

Niel, Colin. 2018. *La série guyanaise*. (collecting *Les Hamacs en carton*, 2012 ; *Ce qui reste en forêt,* 2013; *Obia,* 2015). Rodez: Le Rouergue.

Niel, Colin. 2018. *Sous le ciel effondré*. Rodez: Le Rouergue.

Pearson, Nels, and Marc Singer. 2009. *Detective Fiction in a Postcolonial and a Transnational World.* Surrey: Ashgate.

Samoyault, Thiphaine. 1999. *Excès du roman*. Paris: Martin Nadeau.

Varenne, Antonin. 2016 [2015]. *Battues*. Paris: Points.

Varenne, Antonin. 2016. *Cat 215*. Paris: La Manufacture de livres.

Notes

1 "Néanmoins, le développement littéraire, éditorial, lectoral du genre est lié au développement des villes dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle." My translation.

2 "Le petit-fils Parrot avait fait ce qu'il avait à faire, un fusil à la main, et personne ne pouvait en juger autrement. Qui se souciait de ce que pensait la police ? Rémi Parrot traversa la caserne sans se préoccuper des regards. Rémi Parrot, désormais et pour la fin des temps, était devenu

un gars d'ici. Rémi Parrot, troisième génération, n'était plus un étranger." My translation.

3 "[…] j'ai fait les calculs des réparations, de ce que ça coûtait d'être fauché, de n'avoir que du matériel qui tombait en rade. Il fallait trois ronds, toujours, on en était là. Trois ronds." My translation.

4 "Il habitait seul dans sa maison sur le causse, pas de femme, plus de parents, des amis d'enfance de moins en moins nombreux dans le département, juste son chien qui lui tournait autour et ses deux cents quarante brebis dont il s'occupait en pointillé. Il était l'unique habitant à l'année du petit groupe de maisons assemblées au milieu de la steppe, les autres bâtiments, c'était plus que des résidences secondaires." My translation.

5 "Dans les cours du collège, on ne jouait plus avec tout le monde, les groupes se formaient par affinités et ressemblances. À R., cela prenait une tournure définitive." My translation.

6 "Le roman noir va au-delà d'une représentation réaliste, mimétique, des réalités démographiques, économiques et sociales : la marge n'est plus seulement un territoire à part, elle est une forme d'emprisonnement symbolique pour les personnages." My translation.

7 "Voilà pourquoi quand ils disent que l'Afrique a une dette envers l'Europe, moi-même je dis Non. C'est un mensonge. C'est eux qui ont une dette envers l'Afrique pour tout ce qu'ils ont fait subir à nos ancêtres. Cela s'appelle la dette coloniale." My translation.

8 "À croire que j'avais aussi oublié la Guyane, le fleuve, les boss, la folie de l'or et la dégradation morale de cette partie du globe." My translation.

9 A term used to refer to the criticism against agricultural practices deemed harmful to the environment.

10 "[…] la nature, avait toujours pensé Rémi, n'avait pas besoin qu'on la défende. Elle nous boufferait tout cru si on lui tournait le dos quelques temps." My translation.

11 "Le coin est une vraie fourmilière, ça tire dans tous les sens. Des bandes du Suriname descendent jusque là-bas pour rançonner les orpailleurs, les passeurs de l'Approuague se foutent sur la gueule et les pirogues sont criblées de balles." My translation.

12 "La grande littérature morale de notre temps." My translation.

Remote but connected
Lapland as a scene of transnational crime in *Ivalo*

Kaisa Hiltunen

is a film scholar and senior researcher at the Department of Music, Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. She has recently published about cinematic representations of refugees, belonging and Nordic Noir. Her current research focuses on ecocinema and human–nature relationship.

Abstract

Set in a small town in the north of Finland, the crime TV series *Ivalo* (*Arctic Circle*, Finland, 2018) exemplifies the fascination of Nordic Noir with 'remote' locations as scenes of transnational crime. The plot seems to forebode the corona pandemic, portraying the spread of a life-threatening 'Yemenite virus' developed as a biological weapon from the Balkans to Lapland. In this article, I analyze how the virus narrative allows the series to bring new perspectives on Nordic Noir. The narrative emphasizes international connections while creating representations of places that can be characterized as both *translocal* (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013) and *glocal* (Robertson 2012). Because of its far northern location, the series can be described as an example of Arctic Noir. However, *Ivalo* breaks with traditional representations of both Lapland and the Russian border in Finnish audiovisual culture, striving towards a new cosmopolitan imagination.

Keywords: Arctic noir, border, cosmopolitanism, glocality, Nordic Noir, translocality

A co-production venture between the Finnish Yellow Film & TV and the German Bavaria Film, the crime TV drama *Ivalo* (*Arctic Circle*, 2018) takes its name from a small Lappish town, the administrative center of the second northernmost municipality in Finland, Inari. Ivalo is located close to an international airport, at about 50 kilometers from the border with Russia. The area has become a popular travel destination for tourists with its skiing centers, national parks and wilderness areas. This arctic location is the series' prime production value (Waade 2017, 6) and reflects the current fascination of Nordic Noir with "remote" locations and the interest to turn them into scenes of transnational crime.

Ivalo was filmed by Finnish director Hannu Salonen, co-written by the Finnish Joona Tena and the Icelandic Jón Atli Jónasson. It stars actors from Finland, Germany and Iceland. The main languages spoken in the series are Finnish and English. It has been sold to more than 20 countries, including Germany, Spain and China (Koskela 2019). It exemplifies Ib Bondebjerg's (2016, 5) observation that "the crime genre on television is one of the genres where European co-production has resulted in quite advanced forms of transnational stories and creative collaboration." In Finland, *Arctic Circle* was premiered on the Elisa Viihde video-on-demand service from December 2018 to April 2019.

The plot starts when the local police find an abused Russian prostitute barely alive in an old cabin. Taken to the hospital she is found carrying a life-threatening, sexually transmitted 'Yemenite virus'. When two more prostitutes are found murdered, the National Bureau of Investigation takes over the case and sends for German virus specialist Thomas Lorenz (Maximilian Brückner). Local police officer Nina Kautsalo (Iina Kuustonen) is ordered to assist Lorenz; together they will come to realize that not only is the virus in direct connection with the murders, but that the infection, which was started in a distant place, might now have serious consequences for Lapland and even for the whole world.

Ivalo seems to convey forebodings of the corona pandemic, whose first suspicions in Finland were reported in Ivalo in January 2020. Although in the plot the 'Yemenite virus' is developed and spread deliberately, the scenario feels particularly pertinent in the light of the current pandemic crisis, now that we have become aware that globalization also has its dark side and it is not only people, goods

and ideas that travel around the world. As a matter of fact, through its virus-related plot, the series connects a sparsely populated place in the subarctic region with several other, often quite distant, locations.

In the following, I analyze *Ivalo* as an example of Arctic noir and discuss the way in which it creates, through its topical virus narrative, an unconventional representation of Lapland that can be characterized as both *translocal* (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013) and *glocal* (Robertson 2012). There has been a tendency to represent Lapland as Finland's 'internal other' in Finnish audiovisual culture (Hiltunen 2019). However, the fight against the virus portrayed in the series calls for both inter-regional and international co-operation as well as the crossing of borders, especially the Russian border. I argue that the virus plot brings changes to both the nature of crime investigation in Arctic noir and the representation of Lapland and the Russian border in Finnish audiovisual culture.

Arctic noir and translocality

Nordic Noir has recently traveled further north and further away from urban centers, revealing the underbelly of small arctic communities in series such as the Icelandic *Ófærð* (*Trapped*, 2015), Swedish-French *Midnattsol* (*Midnight Sun*, 2016) and the Norwegian *Monster* (*Id.* 2017) (Hiltunen 2019; Waade 2020). Researchers have adopted the term Arctic Noir to describe crime series that use the harsh far northern climate as a marketing device and a central aspect of their aesthetics (Waade 2020, 38–39; Iversen 2020).

Most of the Finnish Nordic Noir TV series, such as *Sorjonen* (*Bordertown*, 2016–20), *Karppi* (*Deadwind*, 2018–20), *Ratamo* (*Id.*, 2018) and *Bullets* (*Id.*, 2018) have been located in cities. The noir-western *Armoton maa* (*Law of the Land*, 2017), a film set in western Lapland, and *Kaikki synnit* (*All the Sins*, 2019), a crime series set in Ostrobothnia, are the only notable exceptions. Therefore, Arctic Noir as a 'sub-genre' of Nordic Noir is a novel context for the analysis of audiovisual productions located in the north of Finland, Lapland. Waade points out that the Arctic has been represented, mostly by outsiders, as an elsewhere (2020, 42). Therefore, it can be argued that *Ivalo* marks a significant turn in the history of Arctic noir and its role in shaping our conceptions of this increasingly contested and vulnerable region.

Greiner and Sakdapolrak note that a translocal perspective on places focuses on both what is in them and what flows through them. They write that "Translocality (…) implies a transgressing of locally bounded, fixed understandings of place and at the same time emphasizes the importance of places as nodes where flows that transcend *spatial* scales converge" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, 377). Therefore, they suggest, translocality can be used as a "starting point from which to challenge dichotomous geographical conceptions (Agnew 2005), such as space and place, rural and urban, core and periphery" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, 380). Although Ivalo is no doubt peripherical when looked at from Helsinki, in *Ivalo* it becomes the center of the action.

The virus, or the invisible connector

Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013, 380) point out that discussions about translocality "direct attention to various modes of mobility beyond the movement of people". In virus epidemics, the infectious agents move with people, but usually unbeknownst to their own human carriers. In the series, the virus is a powerful but at the same time largely invisible driving force of the plot, which adds a medical context to the narrative. Its image is visualized in the first episode when Lorenz lectures about his work at his daughter's school, and when he tries to convince the chief inspector of the dangerousness of the Yemenite virus. In a later episode, an image of the mutated virus is shown. Otherwise, the virus is visualized only in the title sequence as images of enlarged cells and as a black rhizome-like structure that turns dark red while expanding in the snowy landscape, spreading around from buildings, cars, trees and other elements of the scenery, giving the impression that an all-encompassing enemy is taking over everything. The title sequence plays a special role in that it makes the virus visible and illustrates in an exaggerated manner the way it works – something that the actual narrative cannot do.

The Yemenite virus is told to always travel together with the herpes virus. It is activated when a woman gets pregnant and can cause both severe deformity in fetuses and, frequently, the death of expectant mothers. This grim prediction comes true when a local Laestadian woman and her baby die during childbirth. Laestadianism is a pietistic Lutheran revival movement, the members of

which hold conservative values and avoid all forms of 'worldliness'. Ironically, the dead woman's husband has to confess that he enjoyed the services of certain party girls. The only other known carrier of the virus beyond the Russian prostitutes is Nina Kautsalo's promiscuous sister, who is put to quarantine. Yet, when Kautsalo's small daughter is also found infected with the disease, it soon turns out that the Yemenite virus is able to mutate and spread in different ways beyond sexual transmission.

In the second season of *Bron/Broen* (*The Bridge*, Sweden/Denmark, 2011–18), environmental activists use a deadly virus to draw attention to their cause. In a key scene, a character exposed to the infection dies a painful death and a female police officer decides to commit suicide rather than wait for the disease to kill her. In *Ivalo,* the medical context is a more integral and visible part of the narrative than in *Bron/Broen*, but in the latter the consequences of the virus are shown in a more grisly manner.

The crime investigation takes a new turn when the pharmaceutical entrepreneur Marcus Eiben (Clemens Schick) from Amsterdam arrives in Ivalo and asks Thomas Lorenz for assistance. Eiben reveals that the virus was developed in 1993 in Bosnia by a Serbian scientist micic with the intention of destroying the Muslim population of the country. A small group of Serbian soldiers were injected the virus and assigned the task to rape Muslim women, with the goal to infect the whole Bosniac population. However, the operation was interrupted once the war came to an end. Only one soldier with the virus in his blood, Lazar Cevikovic (Aleksandar Jovanovic), was left alive. Called "patient zero" and believed to possess an antidote to the virus, this man has been hiding in Yemen but now lives in Murmansk, in northern Russia. Eiben has been looking for Cevikovic for 20 years, since he lost his wife and child because of this man. When finally Cevikovic is found, he claims to be a victim as well, having been unaware to be carrying the virus until the death of his own child and wife. Therefore, only Micic can disable the virus. We also discover that Cevikovic has ordered the murder of the Russian girls, whom he claims had seen too much at his parties. The first suspects, local thugs, turn out to be minor figures working for Cevikovic.

Spatial and temporal connections are created through actions that are reactions to the virus. By locating the story in the far north

and the origin of the virus in southern Europe more than 20 years earlier, the narrative calls attention to the fact that in today's mobile world everywhere is connected to everywhere else and local and global can become linked in complex ways. Although the virus causes fear and suffering, it also leads to positive forms of co-operation between experts of different fields and nationalities. Before long, the National Bureau of Investigation has to concede that expertise can be found also in Lapland. Local knowledge turns out to be crucial in different phases of the investigation. Moreover, in the present of the story-world, movement across the Russian border is the most significant form of transnational mobility.

Crossing the Russian border

Borders and cross-border operations have been from the beginning important ingredients of Nordic Noir, most importantly perhaps in *Bron/Broen* and in the Finnish *Sorjonen*. Since the Russian girls are victims of human trafficking, the Russian border guard is involved in the investigation, albeit on a rather superficial level. Although Russia is associated with threat, a certain change of attitude towards the eastern neighbor can be seen to take place in the series: the main characters venture to the other side of the border in a way that has not been seen in previous Finnish films and series.

As Juha Ridanpää (2017) has observed, audiences seem to be interested in borders today; he mentions as examples *Bron/Broen*, its several adaptations, and *Sorjonen*. As in *Ivalo*, in these series activity near and across the border is associated with criminal activity. The meaning of borders is therefore easily constructed as negative, and border stories are often used to "strengthen different forms of patriotic ideology", although the same series can have an educational and informative impact, too. (Ridanpää 2017, 100. My translation.) It should be noticed, however, that the focus of Ridanpää's study is not Nordic Noir but rather two earlier Finnish films, Renny Harlin's, *Jäätävä polte* (*Born American*, Finland and US, 1986) and Wilho Ilmari's *Yli rajan* (Finland, 1942), in which the crossing of the Russian border takes up negative meanings related to the stories' time-setting, respectively the Cold War period and WWII.

In Finnish cinema, the author writes, "the crossing of the Finnish-Russian border has been always portrayed in a negative light and as a highly criminal and dangerous activity, and the films'

heroes have always been aware of the severity of the punishments resulting from such activity" (Ridanpää 2017, 102. My translation). For historical reasons, the border has been considered to keep the two nations apart. WWII cemented this view, because Finland lost 12.5 % of its territory to Russia and during the Cold War, Finland was seen as a buffer state between Russia and Europe (Ridanpää 2017, 101–102). Still today, the eastern border is not open, which is in marked contrast to the western border.

In Nordic Noir's representation of transnational crime, border crossing has not always been associated with negative meanings and unlike in periods of war it does not lead to hostilities between nations." In *Bron/Broen* the co-operation across the Swedish/Danish border reveal national differences, which can be a source of humor (Åberg 2015). *Ivalo* too takes small steps towards showing a more easy-going relationship between the Finnish and the Russian authorities than what was seen in, for example, *Sorjonen* or *Jäätävä polte*, where the trip to Russia was nightmarish. In *Ivalo*, on the contrary, the representation of the Russian authorities even displays some humor as in the figure of Alexander Ragulin from the border guard.

On the other hand, the series upholds a negative image of Russia. The Finnish police do not think it is safe to return the prostitutes to Russia and the girls are horrified by the sheer possibility of being repatriated. Moreover, the most violent scenes take place during a dangerous expedition to Russia to find Cevikovic. However, the crossing of the border itself goes almost unnoticed. Although *Ivalo* creates the impression that Russia is somehow closer or can be reached more easily than in previous years (c.f. Saunders 2017, 4), some stereotypes are reminders of the conflicting historical relationship between the two countries. While Cevikovic is not Russian, his criminal activity is organized from the Russian side of the border. As an example of "banal geopolitics" (Ridanpää 2017, 106), the difference between the countries is illustrated by cars. When the search team enters Russia, they change the snowmobiles for old Ladas in order to not draw attention to themselves. Following Saunders's (2017) analysis of "geopolitical television", *Ivalo* can be read as both a geopolitical intervention and an act of "world-building". The series suggests that a change in attitude is possible, although it does not seem to be entirely sure of its own stance. On the

one hand, it sticks to old conventions, one of which is giving Russians, or Eastern Europeans more generally, the role of villains, on the other, it seeks to create, in this geopolitically loaded region, a new kind of transnational narrative.

Although the border is a significant trope in the narrative, *Ivalo* is not ultimately so much concerned with questions like national identity and self-image, which, according to Ridanpää (2017), are typical of border stories. Rather, it is more interested in exploring the nature of the individual characters and the intersections between their lives in a translocal place, which Mandaville (2002, 204) characterizes as "a space in which new forms of (post)national identity are constituted, and not simply one in which prior identities assert themselves".

Constructing a cosmopolitan Arctic

It has been argued that Nordic Noir owes its popularity to a skillful combination of local and global elements, which Stougaard-Nielsen describes with the term "accessible difference". In order to arouse interest, the story needs to be rooted in a certain locality, yet at the same time it also needs to be transnationally recognizable. (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016, 3.) This situation illustrates Roland Robertson's theory that in cultural products locality tends to be "communicated 'from above'". This kind of standardized form of locality is captured by the term glocal. (Robertson 2012, 195.) When Nordic pullovers started to appear in crime series, they became global signifiers of Nordicness. Local is thus a consequence of, or becomes recognized as local through, global processes. Moreover, 'local' elements are combined with the international conventions of the crime genre, as Seppälä (2020, 258) points out. In this respect, *Ivalo* resembles many other Nordic Noir productions. It aims for a new, cosmopolitan representation of Lapland, while at the same time adhering to certain local specificities.

Ivalo does not settle for the authentic landscape but turns it into something more exciting. In its fictional world, on top of Kaunispää Fell sits Arctic Resort, an impressive glass-fronted hotel digitally created for the series. In reality, there sits a log house. Although the hotel features a lot, no key scenes take place there. It could therefore be argued that the main function of the building is to create a cosmopolitan atmosphere on the aesthetic level (c.f.

Mulvey, Rascaroli and Saldanha 2017, 1–3). Hotels are *non-places*, that is, places that are only meant for visiting and are relatively similar everywhere (Augé 1995). The dark, minimalist lobby and the glimpses of smartly dressed people create an effective contrast with the surrounding landscape. The hotel emphasizes the new, translocal character of Ivalo.

The key sites in addition to the hotel are the police station, the hospital and Nina's home. The many aerial views of moving vehicles, a typical trait of Nordic Noir, are mostly of snowmobiles speeding across the fells in a snow-covered landscape. Snowy surroundings have been seen for example in the Icelandic *Ófærð* and the British *Fortitude* (2015) (Waade 2020, 38), but in comparison with these productions, the visual appearance of *Ivalo* is quite bright and not nearly as melancholic and gloomy as is typical of Nordic Noir (Toft Hansen and Waade 2017). The main impression is one of luminous crispy winter days, even though the cold causes mortal danger and there are nighttime scenes as well. The series was shot in February (Kinnunen 2018), when in the Arctic there is a lot of snow, but already quite a lot of daylight. A tranquil fell scenery is repeatedly seen through a window, which heightens the impression of a beautiful view, almost like a painting. Only a limited amount of local specificity is allowed to be on view. This includes reindeer and some buildings made out of wood. There is no sign of the touristic activities that in reality bring people to the region, such as downhill skiing and husky safaris. The kind of serious crime that erupts in remote cabins and abandoned factories has rarely been seen in audiovisual productions set in Lapland.

A sense of physical isolation is created by emphasizing the vastness of the country that surrounds Ivalo. Going to the crime scene across these open spaces takes a long time, and often snowmobiles are the only way to get there. The closest city, Rovaniemi, is hours away. However, when the action starts for real, this sense of isolation is cancelled out. Planes bring people to Ivalo and a helicopter transports them around the area. When it is revealed that the virus originated in the Balkans, the world seems to shrink. Ivalo is constructed as a place that is connected in complex ways to far-away places. In the narrative, it becomes, briefly, a setting for unexpected events and a meeting place for some suspicious people. The criminal activity and the investigation sweep through the place and

change the lives of many, not least the police, whose daily routine used to revolve mainly around settling local brawls. In the last episode, Nina Kautsalo is offered a job as the head of a special unit that would be located in Ivalo. This suggests that perhaps international crime has come to the North to stay.

Concluding remarks

Although the series was made for an international audience, it is altogether relevant to reflect on its place in Finnish national audiovisual culture (c.f. Higbee and Lim 2010, 8). I have argued that *Ivalo* challenges the way northern Finland is represented in audiovisual productions, by turning the location into a translocal place, where local and global elements are brought into tension.

Although *Ivalo* is not entirely free of exoticism, it challenges the view of the Arctic as an elsewhere. By making use of the transnational ethos of Nordic Noir, it emphasizes connections not just between Lapland and southern Finland, but between Lapland and the rest of the world. In *Ivalo* Lapland does not merely appear as Finland's "internal other" (Jansson 2003), as in earlier films, such as *The Earth is a Sinful Song* (*Maa on syntinen laulu*, 1974) (Hiltunen 2019). In Finnish cinema, Lapland is often represented as a large, unnamed place. The fact that here the location has a name emphasizes that it is a place and a center of activity in its own right.

By answering to the expectations of global audiences, Arctic noir produces visions of a North that are increasingly cosmopolitan. *Ivalo* is a "geopolitically inflected text" (Saunders 2017, 5), which shapes our understanding of the North in general and the Finnish-Russian border in particular and can even be said to have "predictive force" (Saunders 2017, 7). Like earlier Nordic Noir series, *Ivalo* draws attention to the negative consequences of globalization, but in a way that could hardly be more topical. A deadly virus developed for biological warfare in southern Europe during the Balkans war threatens the northern community. The story is not only about finding the culprits, but also about taking care of the ordinary people who might fall sick with the virus. In this way, it also emphasizes the power of international co-operation and the need to fight together against an invisible threat that resembles closely the challenge we are facing today in the real world.

References

Augé, Marc. 1995. *Non-places*. Translated by John Howe. London: Verso.

Bondebjerg, Ib. 2016. "Transnational Europe: TV-drama, co-production networks and mediated cultural encounters." *Palgrave Communications* 2(1): https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2016.34.

Esser, Andrea. 2007. "Audiovisual content in Europe: Transnationalization and Approximation." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 15(2): 163–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/14782800701499863.

Greiner, Clemens, and Patrick Sakdapolrak. 2013. "Translocality: Concepts, Applications and Emerging Research Perspectives." *Geography Compass* 7(5): 373–384. https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12048.

Higbee, Will, and Song Hwee Lim. 2010. "Concepts of transnational cinema: Towards a critical cosmopolitanism in film studies." *Transnational Cinemas* 1(1): 7–21. https://doi.org/10.1386/trac.1.1.7/1.

Hiltunen, Kaisa. 2020. "Law of the Land: Shades of Nordic Noir in an Arctic Western." In *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation*, edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestingen and Jaakko Seppälä, 71–87. Palgrave Macmillan.

Hiltunen, Kaisa. 2019. "Exotic and Primitive. Othering in *The Earth is a Sinful Song* and Other Finnish Lapland Films." *Nordlit* 42: 85–102. https://doi.org/10.7557/13.5006.

Hjort, Mette. 2005. "From Epiphanic Culture to Circulation: The Dynamics of Globalization in Nordic Cinema." In *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*, edited by Andrew Nestingen and Trevor G. Elkington, 191–218. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Iversen, Gunnar. 2020. "Arctic Noir: Revitalizing Sámi culture through film noir." In: *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation*, edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestingen and Jaakko Seppälä, 55–69. Palgrave Macmillan.

Jansson, David R. 2003. "Internal Orientalism in America: W. J. Cash's The Mind of the South and the Spatial Construction of American National Identity." *Political Geography*, 22(1): 293–316. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962.

Kinnunen, Kalle. 2018. "Ivalo on kaikkien aikojen kallein suoma-lainen televisiosarja." *Apu*, December 6, 2018. https://www.apu.fi/artikkelit/ivalo-on-kaikkien-aikojen-kallein-suomalai-nen-televisiosarja.

Kinnunen, Kalle, and Tiia Haapakangas. 2019. "Lapissa kuvattu Ivalo nähdään Ylellä ensi vuonna." *Lapin Kansa*, January 4, 2019. https://www.lapinkansa.fi/lapissa-kuvattu-ivalo-nah-daan-ylella-ensi-vuonna/153293.

Koskela, Alina. 2019. "Suomalainen tv-sarja myytiin yli 20 maa-han – Iina Kuustosen ja Pihla Viitalan tähdittämä jännitysdraa-ma saavutti kansainvälisen suursuosion." *Ilta-Sanomat*, July 10, 2019. https://www.is.fi/viihde/art-2000006169002.html.

Mandaville, Peter. 2002. "Reading the State from Elsewhere: Towards an Anthropology of the Postnational." *Review of International Studies* 28(1): 199–207. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210502001997.

Mulvey, James, Laura Rascaroli, and Humberto Saldanha. 2017. "For a Cosmopolitan Cinema – Editorial." *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* no. 14 (Winter): 1–15. http://www.al-phavillejournal.com/Issue14/HTML/Editorial.html

Ridanpää, Juha. 2017. "Suomalainen elokuva ja rajan ylittämisen geopoliittinen tematiikka." In: *Näkyväksi sepitetty maa. Näkökul-mia Suomen visualisointiin*, edited by Mari Mäkiranta, Ulla Piela and Eija Timonen, 98–111. Helsinki: SKS.

Robertson, Roland. 2012. "Globalization or glocalization?" *Journal of International Communication* 18(2): 191–208. https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2012.709925.

Saunders, Robert A. 2017. "Geopolitical television at the (b)order: liminality, global politics, and world-building in *The Bridge*." *Social & Cultural Geography* 20(7): 981–1003. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2017.

Seppälä, Jaakko. 2020. "The style of Nordic Noir: *Bordertown* as a stylistic adaptation of the prototype." In: *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation* edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestingen and Jaakko Seppälä, 255–273. Palgrave Macmillan.

Stougaard-Nielsen, Jakob. 2016. "Nordic Noir in the UK: The Allure of the Accessible Difference." *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* 8(1). https://doi.org/10.3402/jac.v8.32704.

Toft Hansen, Kim and Anne Marit Waade. 2017. *Locating Nordic Noir: From Beck to The Bridge*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-59815-4.

Waade, Anne Marit. 2017. "Locations in Television Drama Series: Introduction." *International Journal of TV Serial Narratives* 3(1) (Spring): 5–10. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2421-454^X/7138.

Waade, Anne Marit. 2020. "Arctic noir on Screen: Midnight Sun (2016 -) as a Mix of Geopolitical Criticism and Spectacular, Mythical Landscapes." In *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation*, edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestingen and Jaakko Seppälä, 37–53. Palgrave Macmillan.

Åberg, Anders Wilhelm. 2015. "Bridges and Tunnels: Negotiating the National in Transnational Television Drama." In *Nordic Genre Film. Small Nation Film Cultures in the Global Marketplace* edited by Tommy Gustafsson and Pietari Kääpä, 91–103. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ironic Europe

Gender and National Stereotypes in *Killing Eve*

Lynge Stegger Gemzøe   *is a postdoctoral researcher at Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University. He is a member of the DETECt project. His current research area focuses on European crime drama and cultural identity.*

Abstract

BBC America's television series *Killing Eve* (2018 -) can be read as a classic clash between East and West, male and female, but with a twist: some of the (gender) roles have switched, and the show – while certainly also buying into classic stereotypes – seems interested in nuances and a humoristic play with the viewer's expectations. This article explores the female protagonist and antagonist roles in seasons 1-3 of *Killing Eve* in light of contemporary gender stereotypes and representations. It links this analysis with a consideration of how national culture and locations are constructed in the show, exploring the notion of 'secondary markers of location' and illustrating a connection between challenging stereotypes and the corporate purpose to promote BBC America's channel brand.

Keywords: Television series, Gender, National Stereotypes, Europe, Crime

BBC America's television series *Killing Eve* is transnational in more ways than one. BBC America is public service broadcaster BBC's commercially funded branch in the United States, which targets an

audience of "those fans that really respond to that witty, slightly subversive storytelling with a certain kind of smarts to it, underneath it all." (Adalian 2017). As such, it builds on the historical creative trade between the United Kingdom and the United States, which has been described in detail by Weissman (2012). At the time of this writing, *Killing Eve* can be found on streaming services other than BBC, such as HBO Nordic. Based on a series of novellas by Luke Jennings and adapted for television by British screenwriter Phoebe Waller-Bridge, the show features Eve, an American special investigator of Korean descent, as the leading character. Although presented as based in the United Kingdom, Eve lives her adventures all over Europe, thus supporting the transnational character of the production. Repressing her bisexual side, at the beginning of the series she is shown married and living with a man of Polish descent. Eve hunts Villanelle: an international assassin of Russian descent. Villanelle insists on mostly speaking English, but is also fluent in Russian, French, German and Italian.

Despite – or rather because of – this border crossing and transnational setup, the series continually features stereotypical renditions of national culture and locations, sometimes to the brink of caricature. As such, for anyone with an interest in how national culture and identity are represented in transnational narratives, *Killing Eve* is a spectacularly good case in production, storytelling and aesthetics. The combination of a transnational spy setup based in the United Kingdom and the interplay between national stereotypes is clearly inspired by the James Bond-franchise. Both the original motion picture features and their various spin-offs have proven valuable cases for the analysis of gender and contemporary popular culture as well as geopolitical structures (Agger 2017; Funnell 2015; Bennett and Woollacott 1987). In consequence of the complex setup of *Killing Eve*, the theoretical framework of this article is based on both this literature and the scholarship on crime fiction detectives (Piper 2015; Brunsdon 2013), 'bad girls' and anti-heroines (Chappell and Young 2017; Buonanno 2017), geopolitics and national stereotypes (Dodds 2014; Saunders and Strukov 2017).

Powerful Women, Violence and 'Bad Girls' on Screen

Killing Eve is a crime television series featuring three prominent female leads. For a series that appears unquestionably inspired by

and commenting on the James Bond-franchise, female leads are an interesting choice. The James Bond films certainly feature their share of deadly women, but they are typically tamed or outperformed by Bond (Funnell 2015). The female leads also comment on the crime genre. Despite the fact that police work is still male dominated in real life (Mannion 2015), more and more female investigators have appeared on television in the last few decades.

Prime Suspect (ITV 1991-2006) is one of the first influential television serials with a female protagonist who has to balance her ambition, career and private life: the determined Jane Tennison, portrayed to critical acclaim by Helen Mirren. *Prime Suspect* was written by Lynda LaPlante, "with the assistance of DCI Jackie Malton, whose real-life experiences in the masculine stronghold of the Metropolitan Police Flying Squad have since been widely reported" (Piper 2015, 67). Jane Tennison is successful at work, but she sacrifices her personal life to succeed. The impact of this character is highlighted, among others, by Charlotte Brunsdon, who argues that *Prime Suspect* is "a canonical text for feminist television studies and that Helen Mirren's performance of Lynda La Plante's creation has provided an influential template for television, and the broader culture, to imagine what a senior female police officer is like" (2013, 1).

Since *Prime Suspect*, there have been a great many powerful female detectives on television with various degrees of trouble in their personal life, especially in the tradition of Nordic Noir: Ingrid Dahl in *Unit One* (DR 2000-2002), Sarah Lund in *Forbrydelsen* (DR 2007-2012), Saga Norén in *Bron*/*Broen* (DR / SVT 2011-2018), Dicte Svendsen in *Dicte* (TV2 2012-2016), Maria Wern in *Maria Wern* (TV4 2008-2018) etc. In fact, according to Karen Klitgaard Povlsen, "Since the 1990s, female police investigators have taken over Scandinavian screens" (2011, 91). Furthermore, Povlsen states that these investigators are often "young single women, living outside marriage, but with children" (2011, 92). Outside of the Nordic region, Temperance "Bones" Brennan, featured in *Bones* (Fox 2005-2017), is another take on the partly autistic crime investigator seen in various iterations since Sherlock Holmes, but Brennan is special in that she manages to combine work with children and a successful marriage, which only a few Scandinavian female detectives characters seem able to do (see for example Irene Huss in *Huss*, Illusion Films and Yellow Bird 2007-2011, or Liv Hermansson in *Thin Ice*, TV4 2020 -). Sum-

ming up, *Prime Suspect* marked the beginning of a portfolio of female investigators on television trying to juggle career and family at the same time, often unhappily so, with only a few occurrences of happily married female investigators. What unites all of these figures, however, is their unfettered dedication to their work, bordering on obsession. In this respect, they are not so different from their male counterparts (Agger 2016).

Mischievous, rebellious women have become increasingly visible in television, and this has attracted some scholarly attention. The idea of the rebellious and mischievous female is an integral part of Western civilization, in that the allegedly first female in Christian theology rebelled and defiantly ate the forbidden fruit in Eden. Eve and Pandora (Eve's ancient Greek counterpart), are also the starting point for Mallory Young's article in a recent anthology on 'bad girls' in popular fiction (Chappell and Young 2017). While defiant women such as Eve were once shamed, in the new millennium they appear as centrepieces in television series such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (The WB/UPN 1997-2003), *Game of Thrones* (HBO 2011-2019) and *Orange is the New Black* (Netflix 2013-2019). Powerful, transgressive women in television have become common, but researchers question the meaning of their standing up to patriarchal norms: "Is the bad girl's appearance no longer a matter of actual resistance but rather an entertaining performance of transgression?" (Young 2017, 3). Also, according to Kaley Kramer, an important distinction has to be made between female power and female violence. Building on Hannah Arendt's research, Kramer observes that violence is traditionally a masculine act, which is widely accepted if it is undertaken to preserve feminine virtue and innocence. When women are violent, they are culturally justified only if they are protecting their purity or their offspring. Otherwise, they are seen as deviants and therefore potentially subject to social exclusion. Thus, "Violent women upset not only the binary between 'masculine' and 'feminine' but threaten the foundation of patriarchal ideology, which requires ongoing violence in the service of an imagined (but never realized) future peace" (2017, 17). Kramer then goes on to illustrate how Buffy, protagonist in the pop-classic television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, stirs up these traditional accounts by presenting an embodiment of female justified violence. This is of particular interest in this context, for *Killing Eve* is, on the one hand, a

gruesome parade of unjustified female violence and, on the other, a story about two women breaking free of – or not caring about – prevailing societal norms and traditions.

The way *Killing Eve* goes into dialogue with gendered norms is best captured through an analysis of the powerful female characters portrayed in the show. Eve is the main and title character. She is yet another example of the dedicated, analytical detective who sacrifices her private life on account of an obsession with her work, just as Sarah Lund in *Forbrydelsen* (DR 2007-2012, see also Dunleavy 2014 and Gemzøe 2020) or Saga Norén in *Bron/Broen* (DR/SVT 2010-2018, see Philipsen and Hochscherf 2017). While Eve does share these characteristics with Lund, Norén, and a portfolio of brilliant and dysfunctional male detectives that can be traced back to Sherlock Holmes, Eve breaks the stereotype by being in love with the criminal she is hunting. The obsessive crush between protagonist and antagonist in the crime genre has been explored in *Basic Instinct* (1992), in which the male detective becomes intimately familiar with the deadly female killer. However, the trope is neither typical of the genre, nor – to the best of this author's knowledge – has it ever been seen in the form of a lesbian relationship as one of the primary dramaturgical, story-creating engines of a long television series. At times, the *will they won't they* dramaturgy in *Killing Eve* seems more important than the uncovering of the various criminal plots. Also, it is not just a question of whether they will become romantically involved or not – throughout the series they seem just as likely to kill each other at some point, referencing the title of the show. On these premises, the season finale in the first and second season mainly revolves around Eve and Villanelle meeting up and partly making out, partly killing each other.

Eve is initially stuck in the shackles of heteronormative monogamy, the daily treadmill at work and, related to that, the rules and expectations of society at large. Her character development is drawn towards adventure, irrational behaviour and violence. Eve, despite her sometimes violent journey towards a darker side of herself, serves as the primary moral allegiance and identifiable normality in the series. Unlike *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Killing Eve* is not interested in its protagonist becoming an active, glorified and justified female avenger, upsetting the patriarchy (Kramer 2017). Neither does the show want to depict a development towards a salvag-

ing character – one may notice that, especially in cinema, breaking free of norms and expectations is usually a good thing. But where Rose in *Titanic* (James Cameron 1997) is clearly set free by her disregarding society's standards and expectations, Eve becomes increasingly confused the more unconventional she gets. *Killing Eve* is interested in depicting a complex woman torn between her need for comforting safety and her desire for thrilling adventure.

Villanelle, the antagonist, also interacts with gendered norms, balancing the stereotype of the theatrical diva with ruthless physical resourcefulness and violence, completely lacking in the virtues that are traditionally thought of as feminine, such as empathy and motherly compassion (Kramer 2017). Killing for money, with no remorse, she is indeed, in the words of Kramer, a deviant subject to social exclusion. The lack of empathy is often used as a comical element to play with genres, incorporating a bit of violence-based black humour, as already seen in other serial fictions such as *Rick and Morty* (Adult Swim, 2013 -) or *Norsemen* (NRK, 2016-2020). Though certainly not picky with her victims, Villanelle's murders do sometimes show a touch of female revenge on powerful, dominating men. As such, there is occasionally a hint of justification in her graphic murders, potentially challenging the viewers' morals: are viewers supposed to identify with, or understand, this character or not? Adding to this confusion is the fact that over the course of the series Villanelle seems to develop a displeasure with her line of work, challenging the stereotypical figure of the deviant and unredeemable psychopathic serial killer.

Adding further to the viewers' potential moral confusion and feelings of conflict is Carolyn's character. She is a middle-aged high-ranking officer within MI6 section of the Secret Intelligence Service and, as Eve's superior, yet another pivotal and powerful female character in the show. Dubiously scheming and flirting with state-planned executions in the second season, she leaves the viewers with a very small safe moral space to occupy. Carolyn's character clearly comments on Judy Dench's portrayal of the similarly no-nonsensical M in the 1995-2012 James Bond movies. However, unlike Dench's M – who has been described by reviewers and researchers as either 'masculine' or 'maternal', and unlike most middle-aged or older women in the Bond-franchise – Carolyn uses sex and intimacy as tools in her job (Kunze 2015). She rejects roman-

tic monogamy and handles the death of her son mostly with emotional seclusion, alcohol and a stout determination to find out the culprit. Interestingly, *Killing Eve* does not imply that Carolyn's refusal to talk about grief and loss is ill-advised, or that her lack of a romantic long-time relationship is bothering her in any way. Rather, the narrative allows Carolyn to handle the death of her son in her own way and sleep with whomever she likes, indicating that even a woman like her has a place in the world.

Summing up, *Killing Eve* playfully renegotiates (feminine) stereotypes. In *Killing Eve*, breaking free from standards and expectations is not necessarily a good thing. The serial killer is partly redeemable and partly an object of attraction for the detective. Furthermore, it appears perfectly fine for a middle-aged woman to be a sexually active, engage in cynical powerplays and to not talk about feelings. This renegotiation can be read as a feminist project - women cannot be put into boxes and do not fit stereotypes – but it is also very much in line with the witty, subversive storytelling which BBC America actively looks for (Adalian 2017).

Geopolitics, National Culture and Identity

Just like *Killing Eve* challenges traditional gender stereotypes, it also challenges national stereotypes. I have touched upon the transnationalism and border crossing inherent in the series, but this section shall illustrate how the show interacts with locations, national culture and nation-based stereotypes. First of all, it should be noted that the point of departure is clearly Anglo-Saxon. The English language dominates in the series and is spoken across all the different European locations. Villanelle, the primary antagonist assassin, is Russian, but she conveniently insists on speaking English, even to other Russians. The show attempts to justify this choice with some backstory and psychology. *Killing Eve* does feature a bit of non-English dialogue and goes to some length to avoid dialogue in English between, for example, two Frenchmen. With a clear national anchorage in the United Kingdom, keeping most of the dialogue in English becomes plausible, so *Killing Eve* manages to be border crossing and transnational while still having a main, almost believable use of English dialogue, clearly also catering to the American share of the intended audience. In line with the latter remark, Eve,

the protagonist, is an American, which provides BBC America's audience with an opportunity for national identification.

Killing Eve has an interesting, although not exclusive, use of European locations, which goes hand in hand with its overall playful and sometimes over-the-top tone. When the show cuts to a new location, viewers are told the location name with caps on screen: PARIS when in Paris, VIENNA when in Vienna, etc. This is accompanied by what I will label *secondary markers of location*. For example, differently from other transnational crime dramas, such as *Crossing Lines* (Bernero productions, 2013-2015), *Killing Eve* does not rely on such iconic, primary markers of location as the Eiffel Tower to communicate that the action takes place in Paris; rather, it focuses on the city's most quirky streets, with a musical score made by songs with lyrics in French, and has Villanelle speak French to her elderly landlady. Vienna is communicated via an *Eis Café* (Ice Café) situated on a town square and a cashier at said café wearing local, formal clothing. An example of this playfulness with national and regional stereotypes can be found in the occasion of Villanelle's visit to Tuscany. We see images of her riding a motorcycle through an idyllic Tuscan countryside. We then see her consume a perfect *bruschetta* and even squeeze the juice from a ripe Tuscan tomato over a local dish before consuming it. More than anything else, the initial scenes in Tuscany resemble a tourism ad, which is also a nod of the head to the picturesque tourist locations of James Bond (Chevriér and Huvet 2018). The ensuing scenes from a Tuscan family party resemble Italian parties as depicted in the iconic *Godfather* movies (1972-1990). It is almost *too* Italian – an ironic parody, which climaxes with the graphic murder of the *pater familias*. Villanelle's family town in Russia looks like a parody of rural Russia, where people believe the earth is flat and where Villanelle wins the local *dung-throwing contest*.

Killing Eve increasingly engages with the geopolitical opposition between East and West in the third season, particularly by introducing Dasha, an over-the-top parody of a Russian patriotic former KGB-agent, who has lines such as "I killed so many Americans in Cold War, you can make giant, greasy tapestry out of them." Niko's family town in Poland seems almost *too* Polish, and so on. The series' use of the locations is a peculiar mix of caricature, Bond-aesthetics and a tourist gaze (Hansen and Waade 2017). While, on the

one hand, the show depicts locations and persons that are as much formulaic as to border on caricature, on the other, it goes to some length to at least nuance certain national stereotypes. A good example is Carolyn's character. With her power, flawless 'received pronunciation' accent and sometimes cynical use of human resources in an international context, she is certainly an echo of, and interaction with, the British legacy of an arrogant imperialist past. At the same time the series breaks down and plays with this stereotype by showing Carolyn both literally and figuratively in bed with the Russian intelligence, using the discrepancy between keeping up appearances and having a vigorous sex life with the enemy for comic effect. Similarly, the stereotype of a ruthless Russian intelligence officer is nuanced by the seemingly laid-back cooperation with British MI-6. According to Saunders and Strukov, a cultural stereotype is a "popular geopolitics feedback loop", in that it "affects and influence[s] our perception of the world as an imaginary geopolitical space" and may colour our view of a particular nation even if we have increased access to more nuanced information (2017, 5).

On the one hand, then, *Killing Eve* actively promotes cultural stereotypes by replicating them, sometimes negatively so. On the other hand, the either nuanced or over-the-top caricatures may invite a more subtle reading. Read with kind eyes, the show could be playfully inviting viewers to consider: are contemporary Italian family parties really reminiscent of those seen in the *Godfather* movies? Is Russia really just either dung-throwing contests or emotionally secluded mass-murderers?

As already touched upon, the choice to portray the United Kingdom as a base for the fight against transnational crime and the clear opposition that is built between the West – represented by the UK/US/Western Europe – and the East – especially represented by Russia – are both obvious references to James Bond and the geopolitical power structures explored in that franchise (Bennett and Woollacott 1987). At the same time, the East-West opposition is a fundamental trope in geopolitics in general (Dodds 2014). However, while the Bond-movies take viewers through highly profiled upper-class sights and traditions worldwide, often in the frame of the ideological tale of the West resisting or conquering the East, *Killing Eve* appears to move in a different direction. On the one hand, the opposition and conflict between West and East is presented along

the same old lines, on the other hand, the West is not seen to finally conquer the East. Rather, East and West fascinate, frustrate and emulate each other, as exemplified in Eve and Villanelle's cat and mouse play throughout seasons 1-3 of the series.

Conclusion

Mixing elements from James Bond-movies and the crime genre, *Killing Eve* is a fresh take and a revitalisation of both. It is clearly inspired by Bond in the use of tourist locations and the aesthetics of the innovative murder, and it owes a lot to the crime genre in its depiction and update of the obsessive female investigator. With its playful use of especially European locations, national stereotypes and the geopolitical relationship between East and West, *Killing Eve* establishes a distance to the iconic Europe found in a great many fictions. In contrast, the series goes for an *Ironic Europe* – a place in which traditional world views are either maintained to the brink of caricature, or unpredictably challenged, playing with the viewer's expectations. Since the playfulness in the portrayal of the different locations can be read as both upholding and nuancing nation-based stereotypes, the geopolitical message of *Killing Eve* is not crystal clear. Rather, viewers are supposedly invited to be entertained by the unpredictable nature of the show, and perhaps think for themselves, in line with the 'smart' kind of drama which BBC America is looking for. With regards to gendered norms, the series offers a playful reimagination of gender roles, which can be read as feminist or, again, in line with the 'witty' channel brand of BBC America, or both. One could also argue that *Killing Eve* provides its viewers with an opportunity for envisioning what would happen if their comfortable, heteronormative and a little bit boring relationships went rogue, without actually having to go through the trouble and mess of outlive the perils involved in a similar experience themselves. Despite these alignments with BBC America's channel brand, *Killing Eve* has fared very well in the United Kingdom and has been bought and promoted by HBO Nordic, indicating that the show offers fascinating renegotiations of gender and locations that are interesting for various European audiences as well (BARB 2000).

References

Adalion, Josef. 2017. "How BBC America Is Defining Itself Beyond British TV". *Vulture,* February 17, 2017. Accessed October 6, 2020. https://www.vulture.com/2017/02/bbc-america-is-defining-itself-beyond-british-tv.html.

Agger, Gunhild. 2017. "Geopolitical Location and Plot in *The Night Manager*". *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 7(1): 27-42. https://doi.org/10.1386/jsca.7.1.27_1

Agger, Gunhild. 2016. "Nordic Noir: Location, Identity and Emotion." In *Emotions in Contemporary TV Series*, edited by Alberto N. Garcia, 134-152. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

BARB. 2000. "Weekly top 30 programmes." *BARB*. Accessed October 2, 2020. https://www.barb.co.uk/viewing-data/weekly-top-30/.

Bennett, Tony & Janet Woollacott. 1987. *Bond and Beyond*: *The Political Career of a Popular Hero*. London: Macmillan Education.

Brunsdon, Charlotte. 2013. "Television Crime Series, Women Police, and Fuddy-Duddy Feminism". *Feminist Media Studies*. 13(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2011.652143

Buonanno, Milly. 2017. *Television Antiheroines: Women Behaving Badly in Crime and Prison Drama*. Bristol and Chicago: Intellect.

Chappell, Julie, and Mallory Young, eds. 2017. *Bad Girls and Transgressive Women in Popular Television, Fiction, and Film*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chevriér, Marie-Hélène, and Chloé Huvet. 2018. "From James Bond with Love: Tourism and Tourists in the Bond Saga." *Via Tourism Review*, 14. https://doi.org/10.4000/viatourism.3083

Cook, Bernie. 2007. *Thelma & Louise Live!: The Cultural Afterlife of an American Film*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Dodds, Klaus. 2014. *Geopolitics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dunleavy, Trisha. 2014. "Transnational Television, High-End Drama, and the Case of Denmark's *Forbrydelsen.*" *Ripe*. Accessed October 11, 2020. http://ripeat.org/library/RIPE%20Paper%20Dunleavy%202014%20(Revised).pdf

Funnell, Lisa, ed. 2015. *For His Eyes Only: The Women of James Bond*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gemzøe, Lynge Stegger. 2020. "The Showrunner's Touch: *The Killing* Revisited". In *Nordic Noir, Adaptation, Appropriation*, edited by Linda Badley, Andrew Nestingen and Jaakko Seppälä, 235-252. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kramer, Kaley. 2017. "'How Do You Like My Darkness Now?': Women, Violence, and the Good 'Bad Girl' in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*". In *Bad Girls and Transgressive Women in Popular Television, Fiction, and Film* edited by Julie Chappell and Mallory Young, 15-31. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kunze, Peter. 2015. "From Masculine Mastermind to Maternal Martyr." In *For His Eyes Only: The Women of James Bond* edited by Lisa Funnell, 237-245. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mannion, Annie. 2015. "Between Victimhood and Power: The Female Detectives of Television's Crime Dramas." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 22, 2015: https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/between-victimhood-and-power-watching-the-female-detectives-of-televisions-crime-dramas/

Mittell, Jason. 2015. *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*. New York: New York University Press.

Philipsen, Heidi, and Hochscherf, Tobias. 2017. *Beyond The Bridge*: *Contemporary Danish Television Drama*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris.

Piper, Helen. 2015. *The TV Detective: Voices of Dissent in Contemporary*. London: I.B.Tauris.

Povlsen, Karen Klitgaard. 2011. "Gender and Geography in Contemporary Scandinavian Television Crime Fiction". In *Scandinavian Crime Fiction*, edited by Andrew Nestingen and Paula Arvas, 89-99. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Saunders, Robert A., and Strukov, Vlad. 2017. "The Popular Geopolitics Feedback Loop: Thinking Beyond the 'Russia versus the West' Paradigm." *Europe Asia Studies*, 69 (2): 303-324. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2017.1299114

Young, Mallory. 2017. "Bad Girls in Popular Culture." In *Bad Girls and Transgressive Women in Popular Television, Fiction, and Film* edited by Julie Chappell and Mallory Young, 1-11. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Weissman, Elke. 2012. *Transnational Television Drama*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Identifying the Unknown Girl
The Spaces and Inequalities of the Noir Tradition in *La fille inconnue*

Jamie Nicholas Steele   is Senior Lecturer in Film and Screen Studies at Bath Spa University. He has published a monograph, Francophone Belgian Cinema (2019) as part of the Traditions in World Cinema series for Edinburgh University Press. Steele has also published journal articles and book chapters on both French-language Belgian cinema and French Cinema.

Abstract

This article critically analyses *La fille inconnue / The Unknown Girl* (Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne, 2016) as a genre film that operates through a transnational mix of references to the French noir and neo-noir traditions. It argues that these borrowings and references emerge from two key features in the Dardenne's film: firstly, the spatial dynamics of the postmodern city and its anonymous "lower depths", and secondly, the articulation of so-called "ethnic hierarchies" (Vincendeau 2009) of the French neo-noir tradition. It is precisely these transnational connections that draw attention to the evocation of key issues and debates within *La fille inconnue*, such as the migrant and refugee crisis in Western Europe.

Keywords: *The Unknown Girl/La fille inconnue*, film genres, transnational cinema, French neo-noir, postmodern spaces.

After the première of *La fille inconnue* (*The Unknown Girl*, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, 2016) at Cannes film festival, a review in *Sight and Sound* highlighted the Dardenne brothers' turn to the broadly-defined noir genre. In particular, the main protagonist, general

practitioner Jenny Davin, was defined as "a sort of female Wallander" (James 2016a, 22). An exploration of international film criticism returns more mentions of the Dardenne's involvement with the transnational tradition of film noir and the crime genre: Yan Tobin (2016, 36) labels the film "une enquête policière" [police investigation], Nick James (2016b, 32) a "detective story" and Justin Chang (2017) a "carefully plotted thriller". Fontaine's review was perhaps most explicit in drawing links to genre filmmaking, positing that *La fille inconnue* is "comme un roman policier" [like a detective novel] in the same universe as "Agatha Christie" and the "bas-fonds de Liège" [lower depths] somewhat reminiscent of Georges Simenon (Fontaine 2016). In short, with the single exception of the review in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* (Nectoux 2016, 43), critical readings of *La fille inconnue* concur in defining the film's style through genre classification.

Although the Dardenne brothers are most appraised for the production of films that articulate social concerns through Levinas' ethics (Cooper 2007), this article argues that their film *La fille inconnue* refers to different noir traditions, on a range that includes French *polar* and American detective films. The notion of "polar mélodramatique" [melodramatic *polar*] (Régnier 2016) resonates with the early terms afforded to American film noir in its nascent stage. Gates offers the notion of a "maritorious melodrama" in the context of American film noir, defining it as "a melodrama with a female protagonist at its centre, a narrative driven by her goals and desires, [where] moments of excess […] puncture the surface realism of the text" (Gates 2009, 29). This proves instructive in light of the Dardenne brothers' choice to focus on Jenny Davin as an impromptu investigator.[1]

As Nettelbeck outlines, it is common for auteurs in French cinema to turn to the *polar* – the typically French version of crime fiction – at some point in their career (2006, 34). Although Belgian, in the case of the Dardenne brothers, it can certainly be said that they have a certain predilection for the crime/*polar* genre. For example, *Le fils* (2002) and *Le silence de Lorna* (2008) are imbibed with a certain *noirish* tendency. James categorises *Le fils* as a "revenge noir" (James 2016b, 32), and Mosley argues that the link to the noir tradition lies in the "class-based context of deprivation, substance abuse and social marginality [which] contributes to the *noirish* atmosphere",

recalling "the novels of David Goodis" (Mosley 2013, 124). The social context is crucial to these references and allusions to the noir tradition, particularly in relation to French noir. As Vincendeau contends, in France, "film noir serves as a social rather than a generic purpose" (Vincendeau 2007, 46). *La fille inconnue* adopts this social lens to shine a light on contemporary issues connected to the so-called 'lower depths'. The term 'noir' – used as a label for the Dardenne brothers' films – offers a transnational definition that mediates references to American, French and European film cultures.

This article analyses how the Dardenne brothers' film, *La fille inconnue*, articulates the 'lower depths' of Belgian society and the major issue of the contemporary migrants crisis through the noir tradition. The film is limned by the Dardenne brothers' use of a popular film genre to tell an important story with regards to the 'place' that is provided to young migrants and refugees in Western Europe. That is to say, the film highlights how they live in the in-between and liminal spaces of the postmodern urban space. This article uncovers how these issues are articulated to the spectator, by deploying textual analysis to close read the film's mise-en-scène and how the character of the 'unknown girl' posits the persistence of "ethnic hierarchies" (Vincendeau 2009, 111) in a noir context. This approach is nuanced through contextual and theoretical approaches to the noir tradition (Gates 2009; Place 1998; Powrie 2007; Vincendeau 2007; Vincendeau 2009) – particularly within the French crime film (referred to as the *polar* or *policier*) – and the anthropology of space (Augé 1995). This better contextualises the spatial and thematic noir tropes represented in *La fille inconnue*.

The Belgian 'Lower Depths'[2]

The mise-en-scène of *La fille inconnue* operates within the context of a "noir sensibility" (Powrie 2007) and, more specifically, of an aesthetics reminiscent of the tradition of French *polar*. To characterize this particular aesthetics, Phil Powrie brings up the "blackest of noir" subsection of Alain Corneau's Série noire (1979) in which the mise-en-scène is described as city-based (namely Paris), "dismal," "nondescript," and a "muddy wasteland" (Powrie 2007, 67-68). Ginette Vincendeau similarly articulates the French neo-noir's approach to locations describing the "bleaky anonymous spaces" that form the "new lower depths" portrayed in contemporary French

neo-noir (Vincendeau 2009, 111). The *bas fonds* are essentially defined as "the underbelly of society," the lower depths portrayed in French novels "from the early modern period onwards and in particular in the 18th century *roman noir,*" and used by the authors to expose the reality of "those on the margins of the big cities, the poor and the criminals" (Vincendeau 2016, 42). It is within the aforementioned "bleakly anonymous spaces" (Vincendeau 2009, 111) of postmodern Paris that "the connection between the denizens of the lower depths and the ordinary population has been severed" (Vincendeau 2009, 111). In *La fille inconnue*, the Dardennes lace together a depiction of the "lower depths" of both the classical and the 'neo' noir traditions, particularly with an emphasis on urban wastelands, Internet cafés, construction areas and the use of night-time cinematography.

In José Fontaine's review of *La fille inconnue*, the critic also uses the concept of the *bas fonds* to describe the locations visited by detective Jenny Davin in Liège. Similarly, Chang's (2017) discussion of *La fille inconnue* hints at this dialogue with the *polar* and the "noir sensibility", by stating that the Dardenne films "have turned this small world of nondescript apartments and construction zones into one of the most vivid and recognisable landscapes in international cinema" (Chang 2017). This particular articulation of space coheres with Marc Augé's notion of "non-places" (1995). However, as hinted at by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne in interviews (Feuillère 2016; Gilson 2016; James 2016b, 32-34; Pluijgers 2016), the urban spaces of *La fille inconnue* seem rather to operate – to adopt Augé's terms – at the intersection of "non-place" and "anthropological place". In fact, the filmmakers have repeatedly suggested in their interviews about *La fille inconnue* that the working-class and industrial heritage of the urban spaces represent non-descript and anonymous locales (Feuillère 2016; Gilson 2016; James 2016b, 32-34; Pluijgers 2016).

Space and crime are joined together through anonymity, and, therefore, pose questions in light of Augé's (1995) "supermodernity" and late capitalism. For instance, the eponymous *fille inconnue* is "inhumée anonymement" [buried anonymously] (Fontaine 2016) on the site of nondescript spaces in the industrial wastelands of Southern Belgium (Wallonia). The ephemerality of these places is evinced by the fleeting glance given to the location of the unknown girl's body on a concrete platform beside the Meuse river. As Augé

contends, "non-places are there to be passed through, they are measured in units of time" (Augé 1995, 104). As the crane operator states to Jenny Davin, a barge took the concrete block on which the unknown girl's body was found earlier in the day on the riverbank. The site beside the river is a place emptied of its significance. The incessant noise of passing traffic on the motorway that runs both sides of the Meuse (Feuillère 2016), and the power tools from the construction site, further exacerbate this ephemerality, and the sense of transit and in-between-ness attached to the site beside the river. As attested by the conversation between Jenny and the crane operator, Jenny initially finds it difficult to locate the precise site of the unknown girl's death. The camera pays little attention to this empty location – merely a concrete platform with no police tape or evidence to indicate where the body was found – and this further consolidates the notion that individuals can simply disappear without leaving any trace of their previous lives and identities. What is most salient for Jenny is that – in the context of postmodernity or "supermodernity" – the physical trace is not present, with only digital footprints left of what was once a human being: a snapshot of a recording from her CCTV system on her smart phone. This is the single virtual image that is left of the unknown girl for Jenny and the spectator, and it is a harrowing picture of fear and panic that evokes the images of the refugee crisis and their dissemination across media platforms. The combination of the eponymous 'unknown girl', the mysterious death, and the river represents the plight of young migrants attempting to cross the English Channel from France to the United Kingdom and the Mediterranean from North Africa to Spain, Italy, and Greece, as also noted by the filmmakers (Denis 2016, 4). The deaths of these people are reported across news platforms as numbers, and the Dardenne brothers' film is drawing attention to this issue by attempting to reclaim her name. The image is proliferated, but the deeper meaning and individual story is not explained.

To further stress the film's noir sensibility, Jenny drives to a *cybercafé* located in Liège's red-light district. Jenny's exploration of the murky and seedy areas of Liège, shrouded in darkness, reveals a "noir iconography" (Vincendeau 2007, 41) that is reminiscent of the French noir tradition. At the time of the film's production (around 2015), the choice of setting this sequence in an Internet café was al-

ready incongruous, given the proliferation of phone and Internet connectivity and devices already available everywhere. However, images of telephone boxes in bars, cafés and nightclubs populated by criminal gangs are a recurrent feature in American film noir as well as in French noir and neo-noir (Vincendeau 2003, 145; Vincendeau 2007, 37). *La fille inconnue* retains the telephone booth in a 21st century context, attesting to its hybridity. The row of telephone booths and computers provide a front to criminal activities, just as in the nightclubs and bars of both French and American noir films. Unused by locals, they are only utilized by pimps, gangsters and vulnerable individuals (namely migrants and refugees) coerced into prostitution. The front of the Internet café for criminal activities also preys on those who do not have Internet-enabled devices, or intend to use the telephones for long-distance calls to speak to family members. In this way, the sequence conveys a social message, and evokes Vincendeau's (2009, 111) notion of "ethnic hierarchies" in the neo-noir tradition. In fact, Liège is represented as a shorthand for crime. The young refugee and her sister work as prostitutes within Belgium's black market in order to make a living. This is a market that has previously been exposed in other Dardenne films filmed in Liège, such as *Le silence de Lorna* (the arranged marriages).

The postmodern urban spaces are depicted as industrial wastelands that are inherently anonymous. The scene in which Jenny Davin meets the unnamed *fils* Lambert [Lambert's son] under a rail bridge on the outskirts of the industrial town is an example *par excellence*. The industrial complex seen through the steel plant in the background is an image of a post-industrial landscape that has fallen into disrepair, where seedy actions are committed. The mobile homes, the underpass with its shuttling traffic and the abandoned, boarded houses eschew specificity, and, instead, proffer a notion of transit and ephemeral temporality. Speaking of Jean-Pierre Melville's films, Vincendeau (2003, 146; 2007, 43) contends that the mise-en-scène of his *polars* portrays "an abstract, generic [and grim] noir space". Similarly, this sequence and the mid-shots of the two characters – with a primary focus on the body of Jenny Davin – offer abstraction through the lack of specific signifiers. The only code of the noir aesthetics that is absent at the point of this meeting is nighttime cinematography. However, the interior of the cramped mobile home is laced with darkness and evokes the conventions of the *noir*

tradition even without the use of sophisticated lighting set-ups and high contrast cinematography. The characters' actions and vices are placed in a sinister and exploitative underground context, consolidated by its literal position under a rail bridge.

For Tobin (2016, 37), the urban space of *La fille inconnue* represents a "configuration de l'espace qui entourne et isole les personnages" [a configuration of space that surrounds and isolates the characters]. The isolation of the characters within this postindustrial landscape resonates with Augé's reference to the "solitude" experienced by the individual in the non-places of neo-liberal late capitalism. In interviews, the filmmakers contend that the choice of the spaces in *La fille inconnue* is deliberate, as indicated by Feuillère (2016). The purpose for the ambient sound of the doctor's surgery and the non-stop, fast-paced traffic is evocative of "la brutalité du quotidien […] un ordinaire sans pittoresque" [the brutality of everyday life, a normality deprived of any picturesque aspect] (Feuillère 2016). This hostile environment is, according to Luc Dardenne, relieved at the film's dénouement: "on peut dire que lorsqu'elle retrouve le nom de cette fille inconnue, grâce à cette soeur qui vient parler, la circulation s'arrête" [we could say that when she finds out the unknown girl's name thanks to her sister who finally speaks, the traffic comes to a halt] (Feuillère 2016). This experience of "solitude", "isolation", and the "brutality of the everyday" (Feuillère 2016) in the urban space is linked to the plight of individuals, who live anonymously amongst the city's margins, as discussed in the following section.

Inequalities in the neo-noir tradition

Alongside the articulation of place and space set up by the Dardennes' mise-en-scène is the question of "ethnic hierarchies" (Vincendeau 2009, 111). Vincendeau sums up the inequalities portrayed in French neo-noir as present within "a racially marked hierarchy [that] is still in place in the new criminal world (Vincendeau 2009, 110). For the Dardennes, the choice to shoot in the Seraing area demonstrates that the filmmakers have consistently represented "the poor and disadvantaged and, in particular, the fate of immigrants" (James 2016b, 32). The use of the noir references is particularly instructive in terms of how the film evokes aspects of the contemporary global crisis through the representation of a particular cultural context. As Place argues, the style of film noir indicates

a "homogeneous cultural attitude, and is only possible during an isolated time period, in a particular place, in response to a national crisis of some kind" (Place 1998, 50). The use of a noir style as a representation of crisis is particularly poignant in *La fille inconnue* particularly because of its focus on a migrant body, found dead in an anonymous place without identification papers. Rather than a reading centred on its national context – i.e. as a critique of Belgium – the film evokes a clear criticism of, more generally, Western Europe's stance on immigration and the refugee crisis, with its insistence on self-interest and phobic nationalisms. As De Cleen et al. observe, in Belgium, the debate on immigration "has been dominated by a discourse that constructs the recent influx of refugees as a Flemish, Belgian, or European crisis rather than as a crisis suffered by people fleeing war and other hardships" (De Cleen et al. 2017, 66). Moreover, the interpretation of 'crisis' that emerges in media representations shows little engagement with the victims' story and background.

The "Getting the Voice Out" project – a blog initiative focused on detention centres in Belgium, aimed to "get the voice of the detainees out, to inform us on the conditions of their detention and deportation and to report the resistance actions they organize in those prisons" – is particularly instructive to contextualise the film (Gettingthevoiceout.org 2019). The website reports information about the status of refugees and migrants that have moved to and from Belgium, and those who have died either during their journeys, or from suicide in detention centres, run over by cars and buses, killed during confrontation with police, or found deceased on railway tracks, in rivers or canals. Significantly, some of the information for the deceased, such as their names and identities, is incomplete, even if it appears that they are primarily refugees from African countries.[3]

The plight of migrants and refugees who arrive in Belgium without identification papers to search for a better life, but only to suffer abuse, exploitation and neglect by men in the local community is exposed in another of the Dardenne brothers' films, *La promesse* (*The Promise*, 1996). A review in the French newspaper *Le Monde* interprets the two Lambert characters, son and father, of *La fille inconnue* as "the crooks of *La promesse,* two decades later" ["les malfrats de *La promesse*, vingt ans plus tard"] (Sotinel 2016, 17). La *promesse* was

produced contemporaneously with the emergence of *polar* and neo-noir films in the mid and late 1990s. Like *La fille inconnue, La promesse* was also released at a critical time in the debate about the position of migrants and refugees in Belgium and Western Europe as a whole. In particular, while *La promesse* intersects with the *sans papiers* debate in France in the late 1990s, in *La fille inconnue* the death of the unknown girl coheres with the representation of the 'disappeared ones' in European media at the time of the recent migrant and refugee crisis.[4]

This is not to say that *La fille inconnue* marks a return to the early stages of the filmmakers' career. Rather, as a "narrative of racism and exclusion" (Higbee 2005, 313), it insists on the discernible similarities in the treatment of those belonging to ethnic minorities that persist along this whole period of time, i.e. unmarked graves, abuse, and exploitation are represented in both films. Although, on a more nuanced thematic level, the articulation of "ethnic hierarchies" (Vincendeau 2009, 111) is concomitant with similar concerns surfacing in the neo-noir tradition of the French film industry of the 1990s and 2000s. At this point the Dardenne brothers' film operates well beyond the hermeneutics of genre, being definitely 'within the world' and 'of its world' at the time of its production.

As Jean-Pierre Dardenne argues, in the film the question of "Europe's treatment of immigrants" (James 2016b, 32) is articulated through the inclusion of a young girl who is "found dead, without papers, beside water, so it resonates with all the questions of immigration and all the people who die in these circumstances" (James 2016b, 34). In this way, the film calls out wider concerns, addressing and exploring them in a way that connects with contemporaneous spectators. It poses ethical and moral questions through the exploration of key social and political issues in contemporary Western Europe. Jenny Davin's search of the name and identity of the young, disappeared woman, found beside the waterway, nuances a media representation that needs to individualise the victims of today's immigration policy.

Conclusion

By analysing the film in the context of the *polar* genre and the neo-noir tradition, the film's intricacies – such as its socio-political context – I have tried to show how the film contributes to key debates in

contemporary Western European cinema, namely the problem of "ethnic hierarchies" (Vincendeau 2009, 111) and the migrant and refugee crisis. This short article highlights that, by drawing on noir tropes, the notion of anonymity permeates both the spatial and thematic continuities of *La fille inconnue*. It argues that the borrowings from the noir tradition produce an urban space that resonates with Augé's "non-places" in addition to evoking contemporaneous issues and debates that highlight the inequalities that are at play in Western Europe. The Dardennes' treatment of these issues resonates with Vincendeau's analysis of the "ethnic hierarchies" that emerge in the noir tradition in French cinema. This results in *La fille inconnue* drawing on transnational noir tropes and generic references (primarily from the *polar*) to also articulate transnational social concerns (such as the migrant crisis) that are shared across Western Europe as a whole.

References

Augé, Marc. 1995. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso.

Chang, Justin. 2017. "The Dardennes concot a mostly compelling moral mystery with 'The Unknown Girl'." *LA Times*, September 14, 2017. Accessed July 27, 2019. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-et-mn-unknown-girl-review-20170914-story.html.

Cooper, Sarah. 2007. "Mortal Ethics: Reading Levinas with the Dardenne Brothers." *Film-Philosophy*, 11 (2), August 2017: 66-87. https://doi.org/10.3366/film.2007.0011

De Cleen, Benjamin, Jan Zienkowski, Kevin Smets, Afra Dekie, and Robin Vandevoordt. 2017. "Constructing the 'Refugee Crisis' in Flanders. Continuities and Adaptations on Asylum and Migration." In *The Migrant Crisis: European Perspectives and National Discourses* edited by Melani Barlai, Birte Fähnrich, Christina Griessler, and Markus Rhomberg, 59-78. Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG Wien.

Denis, Fernand. 2016. "La culpabilité positive selon les Dardenne." *La Libre Culture*, October 5, 2016, 5.

Feuillère, Anne. 2016. "'La fille inconnue' – Rencontre avec les frères Dardenne." *Cinergie.be*, October 11, 2016. Accessed July

28, 2019. https://www.cinergie.be/actualites/la-fille-inconnue-rencontre-avec-les-freres-dardenne.

Fontaine, José. 2016. "Critique: 'La Fille inconnue' de Jean-Pierre et Luc Dardenne." *La revue toudi*, October 6, 2016. Accessed September 1, 2019. https://www.larevuetoudi.org/fr/story/critique-la-fille-inconnue-de-jean-pierre-et-luc-dardenne.

Gates, Philippa. 2009. "The Maritorious Melodrama: Film Noir with a Female Detective." *Journal of Film and Video*, 61 (3), Fall 2009: 24-39. https//doi.org/10.1353/jfv.0.0036

Gettingthevoiceout.org. 2019. "Death at the border of an exile based in Belgium." July 9, 2019. Accessed July 9, 2019. http://www.gettingthevoiceout.org/death-at-the-border-of-an-exile-based-in-belgium-8-july-2019/.

Gilson, Nicolas. 2016. "Interview: Jean-Pierre & Luc Dardenne." *Un Grand Moment de Cinéma*, October 5, 2016. Accessed January 10, 2021. http://www.ungrandmoment.be/interview-jean-pierre-luc-dardenne/.

Higbee, Will. 2005. "Towards a multiplicity of voices: French cinema's age of the postmodern, part II – 1992-2004." In *French National Cinema*, edited by Susan Hayward, 293-327. Abingdon: Routledge.

James, Nick. 2016a. "Cannes Hall of Mirrors." *Sight and Sound*, 26 (7), July 2016: 18-22.

James, Nick. 2016b. "Identification of a Woman." *Sight and Sound*, 26 (12), December 2016: 32-34.

McChesney, Anita. 2008. "The Female Poetics of Crime in E.T.A Hoffmann's 'Mademoiselle Scuderi'", *Women in German Yearbook*, Vol. 24: 1-25.

Mosley, Philip 2013. *The cinema of the Dardenne brothers: responsible realism.* New York: Wallflower Press.

Nectoux, Gaspard. 2016. "La Fille Inconnue." *Cahiers du Cinéma*, No. 726, October 2016:.43.

Nettelbeck, Colin. 2006. "A Dissolving Genre, or a Cultural Defence? The *polar* in French Cinema since 1980." *A Journal of Detection*, 24 (2), Winter 2006: 31-44.

Place, Janey. 1998. "Women in Film Noir." In *Women in Film Noir*, edited by Ann Kaplan, 47-68. London: BFI.

Pluijgers, Jean-François. 2016. "Disparue sous X." *Focus Vif*, September 30, 2016, 18-22.

Powrie, Phil. 2007. "French neo-noir to hyper-noir." In *European Film Noir*, edited by Andrew Spicer, 55-83. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Régnier, Isabelle. 2016. "La Fille Inconnue: docteur Jenny, inspecteur Davin."*Le Monde*, May 18, 2016. Accessed October 31, 2018. https://www.lemonde.fr/festival-de-cannes/article/2016/05/19/la-fille-inconnue-les-freres-dardenne-menent-l-enquete_4921880_766360.html.

Sotinel, Thomas. 2016. "Dardenne: le tournant de la raideur." *Le Monde*, October 12, 2016, 17.

Steele, Jamie. 2019. *Francophone Belgian Cinema.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Tobin, Yan. 2016. "La fille inconnue: Portrait de Jenny." *Positif*, October 2016, 668, 36-37.

Vincendeau, Ginette. 2003. *Jean-Pierre Melville: An American in Paris.* London: BFI.

Vincendeau, Ginette. 2007. "French Film Noir." In *European Film Noir*, edited by Andrew Spicer, 23-54. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Vincendeau, Ginette. 2009. "The New Lower Depths: Paris in French Neo-Noir Cinema." In *Neo-Noir,* edited by Mark Bould, Kathrina Glitre and Greg Tuck, 103-117. London; New York: Wallflower Press.

Vincendeau, Ginette. 2016. "French film noir." *Sight and Sound,* 26 (11), November 2016: 42-49.

Wittenberg, Jonathan. 2019. "Britain's disappeared: how refugees get stuck in indefinite detention." *The Guardian*, June 28, 2019. Accessed July 1, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jun/28/britains-disappeared-indefinite-detention-refugee-tales.

Filmography

La fille inconnue / The Unknown Girl. 2016. Directed by Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne, Belgium/France: Les Films du Fleuve, Archipel 35, 2016.

La promesse / The Promise. 1996. Directed by Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne. Belgium/France/Luxembourg/Tunisia: Eurimages, Les Films du Fleuve, RTBF, Samsa Film, Touza Productions, 1996.

Le fils / The Son. 2002. Directed by Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne. Belgium / France: Archipel 35, Les Films du Fleuve, RTBF, 2002.

Le silence de Lorna / Lorna's Silence. 2008. Directed by Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne. Belgium / France / Italy / Germany: Les Films du Fleuve, ARTE France Cinéma, Lucky Red, RTBF, 2008.

Série Noire. 1979. Directed by Alain Corneau. France: Prospectacle, Gaumont, 1979.

Notes

1   The concept of the 'impromptu investigator' represents a typical characterisation for female detectives in detective and crime fiction since its early stages in the 19th century. A key example is E. T. A. Hoffmann's novella, Mademoiselle de Scuderi (1819). From this point onward, female detectives are not formalised and institutionalised by the police and systems of law, order and control, but they are brought into and lead the narrative based on their own intuition to drive towards a clear resolution (See: McChesney 2008).

2   In Francophone Belgian Cinema (Steele 2019, 59-64), I also explore the "spatial dynamics" of the Dardenne brothers' films from La promesse to Deux Jours, Une Nuit, referring to Augé's (1995) "non-places" in transnational cinema. The book chapter is primarily concerned with the way in which the films create a rhythm and flow to the urban space that is both locally recognisable and transnational at the same time. The pre-

sent article focuses instead on reading the spatial dynamics as an evocation of urban spaces in the noir tradition. The references to the noir tradition are nothing new in Belgian cinema, as I have also argued in the case of Lucas Belvaux (Steele 2019, 155-177).

3   As Wittenberg reports in The Guardian, refugees fall through the cracks in the system and "there are other ways of disappearing: when you've got no voice; when even if you have, those around you don't, or won't, find the time to listen […] You don't go missing – only your files do" (Wittenberg 2019).

4   Higbee (2005) offers a clear and precise contextual overview of the sans papiers debate in France. He posits that the "socio-political realities" of "subjects such as immigration, racism, unemployment, exclusion and social fracture" were included in key French films of the 1990s and were further evidenced by the filmmakers' involvement "in protests that took place in February 1997" (2005, 308).

Failed Cultural Hybridity and Takeaways for the Euro-Noir in the American-Romanian Series Comrade Detective

Caius Dobrescu

The author is professor at the Bucharest University (theory of literature, cultural studies). He authored books on literature and politics in comparative contexts. As a Fulbright scholar affiliated with the Committee on Social Thought of the University of Chicago he conducted research on terrorism and cultural modernity.

Abstract

Comrade Detective (Amazon, 2017) is a crime spoof that employs Romanian actors dubbed by famous Hollywood stars to pretend to recover a propaganda TV series produced in 1980s Communist Romania. The paper explores the huge asymmetry between the apparent cosmopolitan and glocal program of the show and its total failure in activating the meaning processes and circuits that generate cultural cross-fertilization. This failure is the result of an involuntary deconstruction of the very conditions of possibility for representing multicultural personalities: by creating a symbolic gap between the corporeal and the vocal performers, the series highlights a power relationship that denies the personalist essence of a cosmopolitan ethos. Hybridity is also absent from the series: the presumable networks of connexions activated by a Romanian versus an American ideal viewer are completely non-interfering.

Keywords: Spoof – carnivalization – dubbing – hybridity – Communism

The present case study is in several ways eccentric with respect to topic of this issue. Actually, it attempts to illuminate it from a reverse angle. First of all, it touches on the European area only in a marginal way, since the analyzed series, *Comrade Detective*, is narratively set and filmed on location in Romania, a country generally perceived as one of the remotest and most questionable recesses of the EU. But marginal and questionable as it may be, this area is nonetheless part of Europe, and its image problems, as reflected in the series, are European problems. On another level, the European relevance is challenged by the fact that the series is actually a US production, with a US commercial and political agenda. Even so, a series produced in an EU country, by US creators and sponsors, implicitly asks questions of transatlantic European image and perception.

The case study equally implies the treatment of cosmopolitanism and glocality from a reverse perspective. That is to say, it presents the manner in which the series emphatically contradicts both of these notions/values. But presenting cosmopolitanism and glocality in a distorted mirror of ethical and artistic failure implies not simply their deconstruction, but bringing to the fore their deeper nature: the (possibility of a) multicultural person/personality, for cosmopolitanism; the blending of the global/local space as intertwined cultural memory networks, for glocality.

Vanity Fair expressed a rhetorical puzzlement, probably striking a chord with the larger US audience, when asking, in the subtitle of its review titled "Back in the USSR: 'What the hell is *Comrade Detective*?'" (Schildhause 2017). *LA Times* lapidary answered that it "purports to be a lost Romanian police procedural from the twilight of the Cold War" (Lloyd 2017). Indeed, the show is a six-episodes spoof, "so meta" in the eyes of *New York Times*, "that it's hard to tell what it's actually parodying" (Castillo 2017). *The Guardian* elaborates on this: "OK, fine, *Comrade Detective* isn't a real show. […] Instead, it's an astonishingly high-concept Amazon comedy; a detective spoof written in English, then filmed in Romania with real Romanian actors speaking Romanian, then dubbed back into English" (Heritage 2007). *Comrade Detective* was indeed filmed on premises, that is to say in Bucharest, the Romanian capital city, employing a Romanian cast and crew. The executive producer of the show, Channing Tatum, dubbed the main character, detective Gregor Anghel of the "Bucharest PD" (played by Romanian actor Florin Piersic

Jr.), while lining up the voices of Hollywood peers to interpret the other characters, such as Joseph Gordon-Levitt to vocally impersonate detective Anghel's partner, detective Baciu, (physically played by Romanian actor Corneliu Ulici). An American blogger highlights other dubbing luminaries in the following rapid survey:

> Nick Offerman plays [actually, dubs] the chief of police in Bucharest and Jenny Slate voices Sally, a secretary at the US embassy who becomes the ambassador to Romania. Jason Mantzoukas and Jake Johnson voice two other cops on the force who are lazy and always make fun of our lead duo, and Bobby Canavale appears in an episode as a sleazy porn director peddling porn into Romania. Daniel Craig makes a supporting appearance in an episode [actually, two episodes, CD] as a secret catholic priest running services underground and dealing Bibles, and what makes it so hilarious is he does it in this ridiculously heavy Scottish accent for some reason. Talents like Chloë Sevigny, Richard Jenkins and Debra Winger lend their voices to other roles (Griffin 2017).

To this, we could add Kim Basinger, dubbing Sally Smith, the US ambassador who mysteriously commits suicide at the end of episode 1, and the vocal cameo of Oscar-winning Mahershala Ali, dubbing a wrestling coach who pops up in the childhood memories of the lead Communist detective.

In the following, I will analyse the series along two main axes. On the one hand, I will explore the textual inscription of the logic of cosmopolitanism, understood non so much as an expression of a multicultural society, but of a multicultural personality. This perspective implies a clear link between pluralism and a sense of entity or personal closure. On the other hand, I will propose glocality as a blending of mental spaces defined and constituted by networks of cultural memory that develop analogies and semantic hybridities; consequently, I will evaluate the chances that the networks of cultural associations presumably activated by an American vs. Romanian ideal audience of the series would overlap and develop such hybridities.

Possession and Ventriloquism

Conceptually, cosmopolitanism cannot be separated from the idea of an empowerment bestowed upon the individual person. Therefore, it should be understood against the distinction between multicultural societies and multicultural individuals (Wieseltier 1994, Kern 2003), or citizens (Kymlicka 1996, Delgado-Moreira 2018). The distinction is intuitive: the coexistence of different social-cultural communities in the same political and administrative space does not imply, or automatically generate, the capacity of the individual members of assuming several cultural identities (van der Zee & Oudenhoven 2000, Ponterotto 2010). Cosmopolitanism implies a capacity for transcending cultural boundaries, but, at the same time, the basis for flexibility and pluralism is given by a sense of individual/personal consistency (Moses 1997, Ramirez 1998).

In *Comrade Detective,* the policy of separating voices and bodies is a manner of devaluing the personal integrity, consistency, and autonomy that are foundational for the constitution of a cosmopolitan mind-frame. The regime of bodies vs. voices in the series can be seen as illustrating the definition of spiritual possession given by anthropologist Ann Grodzins Gold: "any complete but temporary domination of a person's body, and the blotting of that person's consciousness, by a distinct alien power of known or unknown origin" (quoted in Keller 2002: 3-4). The use of disembodied voices, akin to superior 'spirits', could be easily associated with ventriloquism, in a metaphor that "allows the violence and violation that are bound up in the exercise of the voice to be deflected into a judicial register of ownership, possession, property and appropriation" (Connor 2001, 75). It most specifically recalls "the ethnic ventriloquism" as identified by Meena Banerjee in 19th century American literature, "through which the white subject creates a situation in which it is un-identical with itself. Ethnic ventriloquism represents the strategy of a white subject looking at itself through – presumably – ethnic eyes" (Banerjee 2008, 16). Though the local Romanian actors are racially white, the telluric inferiority of their muted 'proletarian' bodies might bring to mind the times when anthropologist Franz Boas was opposing, as head of a research commission appointed by president Theodore Roosevelt, a pseudo-science that "used to construct buffer races or intraracial categories of inferiority that were imposed on Italians, Sicilians, Slavs, Hungarians, and Rus-

sian Jews during the first two decades of the twentieth century – the height of the Eastern European migration to the United States" (Baker 1998, 88). Boas' report was dismissed, and, in 1924, the "Immigration Restriction Act" was passed with the explicit intention of keeping at bay immigrants of "inferior stock" (Schaefer 2008, 473).

Even if the voice actors of *Comrade Detective* follow the actual script to a T, the series is in fact no less culturally schizoid than *What's Up, Tiger Lily?*, Woody Allen's 1966 experiment with the absurdist dubbing of a hardboiled Japanese spy movie. It is obvious that both the onstage and backstage universe of *Comrade Detective* bears the imprint of the geopolitical discrepancy between the U.S. and Romania – not dissimilar to the "asymmetrical political order" postulated by Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande with respect to the power balance between the Western and Eastern members of the EU (quoted in Rumford 2008, 99). The interaction between the 'upper' voices and the 'lower' bodies can be associated with what Bakhtin has called "carnivalistic mésalliances" (Bakhtin 1984, 123).

Comrade Detective reverses the normal distribution of symbolic capital between the dubber and the dubbed. The norm has it that the visible performers are the actual stars, while the voice actors are, more often than not, compelled to anonymity. Undoubtedly, a large part of the international audience has seen the stars of *Comrade Detective*'s voice line-up expressing themselves fluently in French, German, Spanish, or Cantonese without a shadow of interest in finding out who were the actual owners of the voices. But in this fake-1980s, fake-Communist show, the aura resides in the audible, while the performing actors are relegated to the condition of a subaltern who, as in the classical analysis of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), cannot actually speak. Their bitter silence is similar to the one suggested by Mike Presdee with respect to television contests that brutally and inconsiderately expose the privacy of the participants: "Of course [they] sign a confidentiality document that restricts them from telling how the programme was made, thereby keeping hidden the processes of the production of humiliation" (Presdee 2002, 69).

Failed common space, diverging memory networks
Glocality is a specific form of shared, and therefore blended mental spaces (Fauconnier 1994, Fauconnier & Turner 2002, Benyon 2014).

The spatiality of the mind could be construed as an indefinite expansion of cultural memory networks. The global-local blending implies the analogies, leading to mutual metamorphosis, or transgressions, between the elements of two different memory networks.

Theoretically, the worlds that seem to collide almost by mistake in *Comrade Detective* could have created at least a piecemeal perception of a "space of wonder," such as those which are "made manifest by processes associated with globalization, which have an unsettling, destabilizing, or disorienting effect in the sense that they are difficult to comprehend or assimilate into understandings of political topography to the extent that they inspire awe or wonder in those trying to apprehend them" (Rumford 2008, 70). In the following, I will show that the networks of associations presumed to underpin the popular culture memory of a Romanian versus an American viewer are completely divergent, and therefore unable to generate the field of reticulated analogies, i.e. hybridities – even the kind of "hybridity without guarantees" mentioned by (Kraidy 2005, 148-162) – that would generate a properly glocal mental space.

Among the most salient stimuli set to trigger the recognition response of an American audience are the Russian and Soviet symbols. Creators Gatewood and Tanaka have generously spread such markers throughout the story, their interest being actually to build a fictional space that would be immediately identified as Soviet. Director Rhys Thomas may well have gathered elements of *couleur locale* and historical atmospherics such as civilian and police clothes, cars, interior decorations, still the creators were manifestly indifferent to Romanian elements beyond the possibility of using them as vectors of Soviet-ness. While perfectly familiar and comfortable for an American audience, the discrepancies generated through this approach are disturbing not only for Romanians. For example, answering the question: "What do Romanians think about *Comrade Detective*?" on the "Quora" platform, David Herron, an American resident of Romania introducing himself as "independent writer and software developer," states:

> "Do Romanians drink Vodka? Nope. Tsuica or Palinka are the choice depending on whether you're from Transylvania or Oltenia. Why were so many of the names slavic sounding? It's almost as if the writers expect all Eastern

akademisk
academic **quarter**

kvarter

Failed Cultural Hybridity and Takeaways for the Euro-Noirin the
American-Romanian Series Comrade Detective
Caius Dobrescu

European countries to be Slavic, when Romania definitely is not a Slavic country. I saw interviews of the writers – they'd never been to Romania, and seemed to not know much about the country. There's a whole lot of story things like that which grated on me the wrong way around." (Herron 2017)

Even more misplaced are the pervasive allusions to the international Communist mythology. A short list of the sequences that emphatically display this symbolisms should contain: the Che Guevara-ish detective Anghel giving his new partner detective Baciu, as a bond of trust, his old copy of Lenin's teachings; detectives Anghel and Baciu going to the movies and letting themselves be mesmerized by Eisenstein's 1925 *Battleship Potemkin*; detective Anghel remembering the moment in his childhood when he discovered that his parents had fallen prey to capitalist hedonism, and consequently turned them in to the political police – a strident allusion to the Soviet child-martyr Pavlik Morozov, who allegedly gave away his own father to the KGB and was eventually killed by his own family (a myth, according to recent investigations, that seems to have been invented by the KGB; see Kelly 2006). This entire symbolic infrastructure is alien to a contemporary Romanian audience, just as it would have been to the audience of 1980s. At that time, the ideology of the Ceaușescu regime had switched completely to nationalism, and allusions to the Soviet origins of the system, or even to Marx himself, were carefully excluded from the propaganda rhetoric, and even seen as almost subversive. The only accepted public idolatry was strictly reserved to Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu (Tismaneanu 2003, 187-232).

   Another network of innuendos that exclusively appeal to an American public is connected to the carnavalization (Bakhtin 1984) of the American establishment. The purely American terms of endearment (or revulsion, for that matter) with *Comrade Detective* would imply an up close and personal connection to the reversal of authority postures and the mock-desecration of American symbols: an assassin wearing a hideous Ronald Reagan mask; the US ambassador represented as a femme fatale with connections to the basest underworld; the US embassy, a sacred space of the civil religion, ostentatiously feminized (both the ambassador and the assistant

who takes over the office after her death are female figures, sexualized in the disco fashion of the 1980s, and then penetrated by the macho Romanian militiamen, who seem to barge in whenever they like, rattling the sack of presumed capitalist conspiracies). The mockery of religiously inspired politics is also done in a manner that is familiar to American audiences – since it reproduces the stereotypes through which the domestic 'religious right' is portrayed in liberal filmmaking, television and media. Anarchy, promiscuity, orgiastic explosions – the carnivalization permeates the whole series and from an all-American perspective.

The presumption that this discourse is intrinsically subversive and that, in spite of its lack of cultural sensitivity towards the Other, it confers the series a certain countercultural edge deserves a special note. Comedian Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who dubs the supporting character of detective Baciu, argues for such a status, on grounds of the claimed independence of the series form all ideological allegiance:

> […] the right-wing *National Review* praised it as "Anti-Communist". But then again, left-wing *Vice* praised it as "Pro-Communist". So, who's right? Well first of all I should probably say, it'd be fair to call me a Lefty. My parents were dedicated peace activists in the '60s and '70s. I voted for Bernie Sanders. I played Edward Snowden in an Oliver Stone movie and donated my fee to the ACLU. So it might be surprising to hear me agree [that] the Communist regimes of the Cold War era deserve to be made fun of. And then some. They were brutal, tyrannical dictatorships. They completely shat on many of the values I hold dear: freedom of speech, press, and religion, the right to privacy, a fair trial, and I could go on. However, *Comrade Detective* isn't only making fun of Eastern Bloc Communism. It also takes a few shots at Western Capitalism, but in my opinion, that's not it either. There's a different "ism" that I think it's really getting at – tribalism. (Gordon-Levitt 2017)

This attitude might invite the sympathy of the liberally-minded, but what the series actually delivers is not a subversion of the men-

tal conditioning that turns communities into mobs, but rather a mechanical reversion of narrative and ideological stereotypes. The ideological equidistance claimed by Gordon-Levitt is in fact only the other side of indifference. Basically, *Comrade Detective* is as formulaic and, implicitly, as voided of any serious political meaning as the classical spoof recipe of Leslie Nielsen's *Naked Gun* franchise. Authentic subversion presupposes the art of letting expressions of lived experience become apparent through the fissures that it creates in the façade of the officially codified 'reality'. But in *Comrade Detective* there are no underlying levels of experience, be they American or Romanian. The series has only to offer a comic collision between the two rudimentary models of ideological propaganda on the one hand and 'capitalist' mass-culture on the other, a show no more subtle or complex than a monster trucks battle.

Let's go back now to the set of interlaced indices presumably activated from the perspective of the Romanian spectator with a history of pre-1989 socialization. This level of meaning is completely inaccessible to an American or a Western European spectator, who could understand neither the point to which, especially in the 1980s, the ideal image of the Romanian society projected by the media was deliriously disconnected from what ordinary people experienced as reality, nor the implicit but pervasive double decoding (as understood in Hall 2018) of official messages.

In the popular culture archive of the Romanian viewer, the Manichean image cavalierly projected by creators Gatewood and Tanaka over the domestic media mythology of the 1980s inevitably resonates with the most successful crime films of the Socialist era, namely Sergiu Nicolaescu's series of films featuring "the Commissar." Surprisingly enough for a Western mind set, this police rank denomination was not derived from the Soviet *komisar*, but rather from the French *commissaire*: it referred to a detective of the pre-Communist Royal Romanian Police, investigating around 1940, a time when the country was collapsing into Fascism. This background allowed for presenting the 'vices' of 'capitalism', mainly the alleged irresponsible hedonism of the upper classes. Brothels and lewd parties were liberally inserted in the movies, just as in the final episode of *Comrade Detective*, which presents the den of anti-Communist saboteurs as a completely implausible Hugh-Heffner-ish manor. At the same time, the arch-enemies of the Commissar were not regular

gangsters or bootleggers – just as in the American series, largely popular in Romania, *The Untouchables* (1959-1963, Desilu Productions/Langroed Productions, for ABC), which obviously inspired Nicolaescu. They were religious fanatics of the radical right, depicted in a somewhat similar manner (e.g. long black leather jackets) to the improbable 1980s fanatical underground patronized by Father Streza in *Comrade Detective*. But an older Romanian audience reminiscent of the television campaigns orchestrated by the Romanian Communist authorities, especially in the 1970s might read *Comrade Detective*'s figuration of religious fanatics rather as a parody of the propagandistic grotesque portrayal of unregimented Christian communities in a feature film such as Întunericul alb (lit.White Darkness, 1982, Româniafilm).

But perhaps the most salient element on a map of connections accessible only to the Romanian audience is the fact that the name of *Comrade Detective*'s lead actor, Florin Piersic Jr. (b. 1968) carries the specification "Jr." in order to distinguish him from his father, Florin Piersic *tout court* (b. 1936), an iconic actor of the Communist times. Still immensely popular in Romania, Piersic Sr. starred in detective and spy movies that were intimately blending ideology and consumer culture, such as *Aventuri la Marea Neagră* (lit. *Adventures on the Black Sea Riviera*, 1972, Româniafilm), *Un august în flăcări* (lit. An August in Flames, a 13 episodes TV series, 1974), *Agentul straniu* (The Strange Agent, 1974, Româniafilm), or *Racolarea* (lit. *Crimping*, 1985, Româniafilm). For the Romanian public, the complexity of Piersic Jr.'s symbolic/symbiotic relation with his father connotes the continuities and gaps between Romanian generations in general. The identification with the father icon is doubled by an implicitly ironic distancing – the character played by Piersic Jr. is worn out, unshaven, decaying, alcoholic, turbulent, in total contrast to the neat, impeccable, elegant secret service officer, clearly fashioned on the James Bond/Roger Moore pattern, played by his father.

The diverging lines of propagation of the Romanian vs. American popular culture memory networks offer an expressive representation of the extended fault that peremptorily divides the global and the local. A concentrated explanation for this failure can be found in an essay on "ethnic detectives" fiction by Gina and Andrew Macdonald (1999, 93): "context rules […] transforming the meaning of what is borrowed; only if large segments of context are

also absorbed does true cultural melding take place" (93). Indeed, both reception horizons surveyed above seem to lack any context transplant that would allow the candid perception of elements coming from the other side, or "world".

Takeaways for a Federating Euro Noir

Comrade Detective is produced by forcefully compacting distinct networks of popular culture and social memory, in such a way as to speed up, artificially and commercially, the ripening of a glocal hybrid. The outcome, at the end of the day, is neither global nor local. But this shouldn't be seen as the fatal outcome of the mental and emotional gap between the two cultures. In order to pre-empt such a hasty conclusion, I will point out at least one area that suggests the (missed) opportunity for an authentic communication that could have transgressed historical, social, ideological, geopolitical divides. Let me start from the fact that most of the Americans and Romanians involved in the project belong to the same generation: they were kids in the 1980s, and their memories of the period are interspersed with the movies and popular culture of that age. In a *Vanity Fair* interview, co-screenwriter Brian Gateway confesses: "We grew up in the '80s, watching *Red Dawn* and *Rocky IV* and all these films – not really knowing as kids that we were essentially watching propaganda," prompting executive producer Channing Tatum to add that every movie that impregnated his juvenile imagination "had a Russian bad guy" (both quoted in Schildhause 2017). At his end, Florin Piersic Jr. also reverted to teenage memories when asked to assess his personal connection to the project:

> It has nothing to do with Communist nostalgia. I have the right to my own personal nostalgia, because back then I was 15, and enjoying my high-school epoch. […] Back then I had the distinct feeling that life is infinite. The fact that everything was forbidden had a charm of its own. Whenever you listened to a Pink Floyd cassette, you instantly became a dissident… (Piersic 2017, my translation).

Paradoxically or not, the decision to treat the series in a neo-noir visual register can be construed, from both the American and the Romanian sides, as an attempt to retrieve the replenishment of 'ir-

responsible' youth. The re-loading the macho mythology of the 1980s could be seen as purely and gratuitously playful, thereby fuzzing the childhood/teenage nostalgia with the fluid melancholy of noir and neo-noir detective movies. Dawn and twilight, aural and nocturnal fantasies seem to convene around a dreamy proliferation of 'crime fighting' childhood fantasies. An authentic transatlantic empathy could have been developed around a common state of mind, such as the one suggestively described by Paula Saukko in an analysis of the cult animation show *South Park*:

> […] the way in which the four central children resist the normalizing agencies and institutions in their lives, such as parents, school, counselling, army, religion, mass media, consumerism and political correctness, is very much in keeping with the notion of the romantic male child, such as Rousseau's Emile, that resist restrictive authorities (Saukko 2003, 145).

Starting from this focal symbolism of the playful/mocking recovery of 'natural' childhood, the crime pattern can as well become a tool for exploring the relationship with the world of the 'adults'. If played upon in an intelligent and insightful manner, this imaginary layer could have transcended the *mental* Iron Curtain, which, instead, is reinforced in the outcome of the project. The fact that such promising latencies have been completely aborted in the actual series should count as a lesson and a warning for a Europe whose prospects of cohesive and robust citizenship are staked on the emergence of vibrant popular narratives that could weave national experiences into a shared cultural memory (Delanty & Rumford 2005).

Among the main takeaways of such an exemplary failure, we should count its implicit representation of international space – which is essentially a mental and imaginary one – as undetermined, governed by caprice and mood, a place of arbitrariness, essentially barren, given its incapacity of nurturing actual cultural hybridization. It is most certainly not the manner in which Europe would want to propagate through symbolism, imagination and fiction its notion of fair and fruitful international communication and cooperation.

Then, *Comrade Detective* could teach Western Europeans a lesson in the moral costs of manipulating the representation of Eastern Europe for domestic purposes. The caricature of Romanian Communism is meant to mock in retroversion the propaganda of the US interventionist right. But this allegedly liberal goal is actually tainted by a complete instrumentalization of the Other, in blatant contradiction to the basic Kantian principle of treating human beings not as means, but as goals to themselves. The problem is not the irreverent treatment of Communism, but the total lack of empathy or, at least, intellectual curiosity for the human experience beyond the ideological façade of the regime. A consequence of this complete lack of empathy is the reinforcement of stereotypes on Eastern Europe as a realm of eternal poverty and destitution – which encourages an attitude of covert revulsion and / or fantasies of unrestricted sadistic power. Eastern Europe is perceived as a territory placed outside social and moral restrictions, the inert setting of an orgy (in the sense of Pettman 2002) enacted by the 'citizens of the world' at the expense of the menial locals.

Europe is the stage of a grandiose moral parable. The problem with Europe's East-West cohesion lies with the solution of the moral conundrum of bringing together a prosperous West that tends to go beyond itself in the Faustian quest for owing everything, of exercising an unlimited and arbitrary authority, and a destitute East whose hubris is the desperate attempt to escape the overload of its indigence and subalternity. A common temptation is experienced from totally opposed angles – selling everything out for standing and status vs. purchasing even the most intimate and valuable things of the disenfranchised. The example of *Comrade Detective* shows that, in and by themselves, strategies of parody and satire are powerless in front of such a tremendous challenge. Mockery could and should be part of the solution, as far as it is a part of the European core cultural legacy, but it cannot frame a substantial process of cultural blending. *Comrade Detective* shows that, left to its own devices, mock-cracy overcomes and paralyzes the fertile hybridity of actual carnavalization.

Europe has to create a shared world – or succumb. A common cosmopolitan and glocal imaginary is instrumental to this, and the transgressive and cohesive latencies of noir crime series already proved very effective in capturing intercultural chemistry. Europe

akademisk
kvarter
academic quarter

Failed Cultural Hybridity and Takeaways for the Euro-Noirin the
American-Romanian Series Comrade Detective
Caius Dobrescu

has the opportunity not simply to use crime narratives as a form of sensitizing its transcontinental texture of moral awareness, but also to project, on a global scale, its own model of productive transgression of narrowly defined cultural identities. And from this perspective, it should act, in its noir and crime fictional exploration, rather as a de-mock-cracy.

References

Baker, Lee D. 1998. *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated from Russian by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Banerjee, Mita. 2008. *Ethnic Ventriloquism: Literary Minstrelsy in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Heidelberg: Winter.

Benyon, David. 2014. *Spaces of Interaction, Places for Experience*. London: Morgan & Claypool.

Chakravorty Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. *Can the subaltern speak?* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Connor, Steven. 2001. "Violence, Ventriloquism and the Vocalic Body." In *Psychoanalysis and Performance* edited by Patrick Campbell and Adrian Kear, 75-93. London-New York: Routledge.

Delanty, Gerard, and Chris Rumford. 2005. "The New Cultural Logic of Europeanization: Citizenship, Memory, and Public Discourse." In *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization* edited by Delanty & Rumford, 87-105. London-New York: Routledge.

Delgado-Moreira, Juan M. 2018. *Multicultural Citizenship of the European Union*. London-New York: Routledge.

Fauconnier, Gilles. 1994. *Mental Spaces*. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fauconnier, Gilles, and Mark Turner. 2002. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.

Hall, Stuart. (1973. Rev. 2007) 2018. "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse." In *Essential essays* edited by David Morley, 357-376. Durham: Duke University Press.

Keller, Mary. 2002. *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power, and Spirit Possession*. Baltimore-London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kelly, Catriona. 2006. *Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero*. London: Granta Books.

Kern, Paul B. 2003. "Culture and the Individual in Multicultural Societies." *Reviews in Anthropology 32*(3), 207-222. https://doi.org/10.1080/00988150390230309

Kraidy, Marwan M. 2005. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Kymlicka, Will. 1996. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Macdonald, Gina, and Andrew Macdonald. 1999. "Ethnic Detectives in Popular Fiction: New Directions for an American Genre." In *Diversity and Detective Fiction* edited by Kathleen Gregory Klein, 60-113. Bowling Green OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

Moses, Michele S. 1997. "Multicultural Education as Fostering Individual Autonomy Studies." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 16(4), 373-388. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1004957802575

Pettman, Dominic. 2002. *After the Orgy: Toward a Politics of Exhaustion*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Ponterotto, Joseph. G. 2010. "Multicultural Personality: An Evolving Theory of Optimal Functioning in Culturally Heterogeneous Societies." *The Counseling Psychologist*, 38(5), 714-758. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000009359203

Presdee, Mike. 2002. *Cultural Criminology and the Carnival of Crime*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ramirez, III, Manuel. 1998. *Multicultural/Multiracial Psychology: Mestizo Perspectives in Personality and Mental Health*. Lanham etc.: Rowan & Littlefield.

Rumford, Chris. 2008. *Cosmopolitan Spaces: Europe, Globalization, Theory*. New York-London: Routledge.

Saukko, Paula. 2003. *Doing Research in Cultural Studies*. London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi: Sage.

Schaefer, Richard T., ed. 2008. *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*. Volume 1. Los Angeles-London: Sage.

Tismaneanu, Vladimir. 2003. *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*. Berkeley etc.: University of California Press.

van der Zee, Karen I., and Jan Pieter van Oudenhoven. 2000. "The multicultural personality questionnaire: a multidimensional instrument of multicultural effectiveness." *European Journal of Personality,* 14(4), 291-309. https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-0984(200007/08)14:4<291::AID-PER377>3.0.CO;2-6

Web sources

Castillo, Monica. 2017. "Noteworthy: Comrade Detective." *The New York Times*, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/watching/titles/comrade-detective. Last accessed 06/08/20.

Griffin, Dylan Moses. 2017. "The Eastern and Western Delights of *Comrade Detective.*" *Death of Film Criticism*, August 26, 2017. https://deathoffilmcriticism.com/2017/08/26/the-eastern-and-western-delights-of-comrade-detective/. Last accessed 06/06/20.

Heritage, Stuart. 2017. "Comrade Detective: Channing Tatum's hidden gem of Romanian TV." *The Guardian*, August 4, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/aug/04/comrade-detective-channing-tatum-hidden-gem-romanian-tv. Last accessed 06/08/20.

Herron, David. 2017. Answer to the question: "What do Romanians think about Comrade Detective?." *Quora*, 2017. https://www.quora.com/What-do-Romanians-think-about-Comrade-Detective . Last accessed 06/07/20.

Gordon-Levitt, Joseph. 2017. "'Comrade Detective', Left, Right, and Center." *IndieWire*, August 11, 2017. https://www.indiewire.com/2017/08/joseph-gordon-levitt-comrade-detective-controversy-exclusive-1201865653/. Last accessed 06/07/20.

Lloyd, Robert. 2017. "With a wink and a nod, 'Comrade Detective' is presented as a Romanian communist-era police show." *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 2017. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/la-et-st-comrade-detective-review-20170805-story.html. Last accessed 06/08/20.

Piersic Jr., Florin. 2017. "Florin Piersic Jr. mi-a spus de ce e OK să faci mișto de comunism." Interviewed by Iulia Roșu. *Vice*. https://www.vice.com/ro/article/vbbz7y/am-vorbit-cu-florin-pier-

sic-junior-militanul-din-comrade-detective. Last accessed 06/06/20.

Schildhause, Chloe. 2017. "Back in the USSR. What the Hell Is *Comrade Detective*?" *Vanity Fair*, August 4, 2017. https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2017/08/comrade-detective-amazon-channing-tatum-communist-propaganda. Last accessed 06/06/20.

Wieseltier, Leon. 1994. "Against Identity: An idea whose time has gone." *New Republic*, November 27, 1994. https://newrepublic.com/article/92857/against-identity. Accessed 09/03/2020.