

## **Cinema of Going West and the Emergence of Transnational Memory Communities. The Case of Romania**

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**Abstract.** Since the fall of Communism in Romania, migration has been emerging as a prevalent cinema theme. Various Romanian and foreign filmmakers are drawing public attention to the social phenomenon of migration and the challenges of social inclusion not only by bringing these issues to the screen and shaping different migration narratives, but also by increasingly involving film crew members from emigration and immigration countries. In doing so, these films have a significant contribution in shaping a transnational social space or communities of remembrance. This paper investigates the emergence of transnational memory communities by analyzing two feature films produced in Romania and Germany: *Occident* (Cristian Mungiu, 2002) and *Offset* (Didi Danquart, 2006). It argues that feature films are reinforcing transnational communication between emigrants and those staying behind, including the host society.

**Keywords:** *transnational cinema, transnational memory, Romania, Germany, migration*

### **Introduction**

Contemporary societies create new socio-spatial linkages and boundaries in order to identify and assure themselves as communities. Not only as a result of political and social upheavals but also because of the various long-term globalization manifestations and, in particular, the accelerated development of media and media usage, old spaces and borders become more fluid, whereas new borders and social spaces emerge instead. In the context of accelerated social change, migration proves to be a significant social phenomenon that creates new spaces of belonging, which are no longer supported by the container structure of the national state, but rather by transnational links and socialization processes. People are increasingly involved in migration networks, which in turn are being transformed by changing migration goals and reshaping the regions of the origin and host countries. Ludger Pries refers

in this context to “permanent transnational connections”<sup>1</sup> having as consequence that “people’s subjective localizations of the self and the other are spanned in a pluri-local and transnational space.”<sup>2</sup> This applies also in the case of Romanian (labor) migration. Romanian (working) migrants are neither accommodated by the host countries inasmuch as they could homogenously integrate in the culture of entry. Nor are they given the opportunity to similarly integrate in the political, cultural and economic spheres. In addition to this gradual and sectoral integration which leads to a diversification of the migrant community, migrants are also creating transnational networks and thus maintain contact with their country of origin in different forms: whether through economic investments, retirement plans, political participation, holiday arrangements or even just by media consumption and social networks. After arriving in the host country, the migration process is far from complete, but is continued through the interaction with the host society, the other migrant or diaspora communities and the own (Romanian) migration community. Migration experiences are thus the common denominator that ultimately shape the identity of migrant communities. Following Ludger Pries, it can be argued that these communities do not constitute “either-or-identities” confirming the affiliation to one or another community, but rather “hyphenated identities”<sup>3</sup> that rely precisely on intertwining of various spaces of belonging. Consequently, migrant communities can not develop homogeneous cultural identities, if uniform cultural identities can be assumed in the present days at all. According to the cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall – who himself have had migration and diaspora experiences as a native Jamaican in England – the diaspora community is characterized by heterogeneity and hybridity being further reproduced by representations.<sup>4</sup> He also states that „...as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute `what we really are`; or rather – since history has

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<sup>1</sup> “dauerhafte transnationale Verflechtungsbeziehungen”. Ludger Pries, „Integration als Raumentwicklung – Soziale Räume als Identifikationsräume,“ in *Der europäische Raum. Die Konstruktion europäischer Grenzen*, ed. Petra Deger and Robert Hettlage (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 138.

<sup>2</sup> “die subjektiven Selbst- und Fremdverortungen der Menschen in einem pluri-lokalen und transnationalen Raum aufgespannt.“ Pries, “Integration als Raumentwicklung,“ 138-39.

<sup>3</sup> “Entweder-Oder-Identitäten”/ “Bindestrich-Identitäten.” Pries, “Integration als Raumentwicklung,“ 141.

<sup>4</sup> Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,“ in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia (London: Arnold, 1996), 119-120.



intervened - `what we have become`“.<sup>5</sup> Thus, such communities are not constant in their nature and identity, but they are changing due to their interaction with other migration or host communities, as well as in the relation to their own past.

Given these introductory considerations, the present paper focusses on the Romanian migration community and its cinematic self-image. It argues that shaping the image of oneself also implies a confrontation with direct or mediated migration experiences, ultimately leading to the emergence of a community of remembrance. The question to be raised is: what cinematic self-representations and migration narratives can be evidenced and to what extent does a transnational community of remembrance articulate in the case of Romanian migration? The investigation of this issue requires firstly a closer look to different forms of collective memory and their media, provided in the first section of the paper. The increasingly transnational functioning of migration communities and cinema are also emphasized here. The second section deals with the cinema of going west, namely with cinematic representations of migration in the feature films *Occident* (Cristian Mungiu 2002) and *Offset* (Didi Danquart 2006), which consequently permits formulating conclusions on the emergence of transnational communities of remembrance.

### **The Role of Cinema in Shaping Transnational Memories**

Taking the above described cultural identity into account, migrant communities can be furthermore considered as communities of remembrance where migration, integration, inclusion, exclusion or even commuter experiences are shared. They also evolve in a mutual relationship with the communities of origin and arrival. But what forms of remembrance can be identified, given the heterogeneity and transnational functioning of these communities? Following Jan Assmann, one can firstly mention “communicative memory”<sup>6</sup>, which is shaped and supported by human bearers and is based on direct, everyday communication of contemporary witnesses, in this case the first generation of migrants. This implies a confrontation with the near, experienced past that is mutually shared in the community. However, the author distinguishes between this form of memory and what he calls “cultural

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<sup>5</sup> Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” 112.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München: Beck, 2000/1997), 50.

memory”<sup>7</sup>, which implies an evocation by means of communication and symbolic support of a distant past. This enlarged spatio-temporal frame does not include the recent (lived) past, but spans several generations, with contents of the cultural memory coming under the authority of so called “memory specialists”.<sup>8</sup> Although Jan Assmann himself has applied the concept of cultural memory to the migration and diaspora experience of the Jews, this apprehension of collective memory seems to be less tenable for our concern, as it addresses the contemporary social phenomenon of migration with its experiences grounded in the recent past. Rather, one can further differentiate the communicative memory by the memory of the first generation, the “postmemory”<sup>9</sup> of the following generation, and the “prosthetic memory”<sup>10</sup> of non-members of the community. Marianne Hirsch introduced the term “postmemory” in order to describe the inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic memories of the Holocaust through the medium of photography. Despite indirect knowledge transfer, the postmemory generation appropriates the traumatic past of the predecessors as its own memory.<sup>11</sup> The mediated memories differ, however, from the direct memories of contemporary witnesses not only in terms of “post-ness”, namely the temporal delay, but also because of the critical distance to the narrated events and the closer connection to the memory transmission forms and vehicles used by the witness generation. The affective attachment to the familial transmission forms gives rise to “affiliative acts of postgeneration”, which are no longer just a vertical transmission within the family setting, but also a horizontal identification with contemporaries of the second generation.<sup>12</sup> This seems to be of particular importance for conveying migration experiences, since second generation members are no longer oriented solely to the memory formed in their own family, but generally to that of their contemporaries. In Hirsch’s words, postmemory implies even an “oscillation between continuity and

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<sup>7</sup> Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 52.

<sup>8</sup> Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 54-55.

<sup>9</sup> Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” *Poetics Today*, 29, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>10</sup> Alison Landsberg, “Prosthetic memory: the ethics and politics of memory in an age of mass culture,” in *Memory and Popular Film*, ed. P. Grainge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) quoted in Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg, “Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe,” in *European Cinema in Motion. Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 18.

<sup>11</sup> Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 106-107.

<sup>12</sup> Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 114-115.

rupture”<sup>13</sup> that can be nonetheless applied to the second generation of the migration community still influenced by the migration background, but more tied to the host community. Regarding migration or diaspora societies, one can also talk about “prosthetic memory”<sup>14</sup>, the memory of those who do not belong to the diasporic community. They present the past rather from the perspective of the “other” and, depending on their position, they are also able to mediate between diasporic communities and the host or home society. They can not only promote more convergence, but also reinforce clichés, opposed to or counter-productive for the diasporic group.<sup>15</sup> It can be therefore concluded that the transnational migration space is shaped as remembrance community by the communicative memory of the migrant community, the postmemory of subsequent generations and the prosthetic memory of non-members. Now that the various memory forms have been discussed, one can ask what role media – in this case the feature films – play in the memory construction process within the transnational migration space.

Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg refer to feature films as migrant communities’ „self-representations“<sup>16</sup> which evolve with the increased number of filmmakers having direct or indirect migratory experiences, who deal either with their own past or that of their community. But feature films could be considered more than simple self-representations, they could also contribute to the construction of a transnational communicative space. Both through their content and form of production and reception, feature films can reflect a transnational community and at the same time contribute to its further reproduction. Their material and social dimension transform them into what Astrid Erll calls „media of collective memory“.<sup>17</sup> While the materiality of feature films serves as a precondition for the extension of the communication space, for the message structure and, in general, for representations of the past, the social dimension of media is what concretely allows the construction of memory discourses. Social actors as knowledge producers or so called „memory specialists“ are those who attribute a feature film,

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<sup>13</sup> Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 106.

<sup>14</sup> Landsberg, “Prosthetic memory.”

<sup>15</sup> Berghahn and Sternberg, “Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema,” 18.

<sup>16</sup> Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg, “Introduction,” in *European Cinema in Motion. Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.

<sup>17</sup> Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen* (Stuttgart/ Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2005).

for example, a formative or prescriptive function, while at the moment of decoding, the audience confer this film a mnemonic function. Therefore, the media of collective memory are closely related to this interplay between the material and social function which differentiates them from classical mass media.<sup>18</sup> The film has the capacity to store and disseminate information, and implicitly extend the communication range by its technology. Moreover, the social dimension of institutionalization and functionalization can articulate a film as a medium of memory triggering remembrance processes either during the film's appearance or later.<sup>19</sup> A closer look to the social function of contemporary feature films shows that filmmakers in particular have accompanied the social phenomenon of migration by further developing the transnational migration space both through the cinematic portrayal of migration experiences and the trans-nationalization of film production. Film scholars refer in this regard to "transnational cinema"<sup>20</sup> as being not only a consequence of the free market economy and the global consumer society, but also a reaction of former colonized communities when dealing with their own migration and diaspora experiences.<sup>21</sup> Here are even some former established cinema movements such as the Black Cinema in the UK, Beur Cinema in France or German-Turkish Cinema in Germany.<sup>22</sup> These may be followed by the East European film after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. Thus, the medium of film has been invested with the social function of dealing with the past and the new cultural interferences. But how does cinema deal with the above mentioned issues and what characterizes these new cinemas? Some general features relevant to the following film analysis are presented by Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg<sup>23</sup>, and therefore they are briefly summarized below:

The film topics, production and reception overcome the national state as reference term by constructing transnational identities and emphasizing diversity instead of uniformity. These films reflect the difference between migrant and diasporic experiences in terms of the first generation and the subsequent ones. They

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<sup>18</sup> Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 130-136.

<sup>19</sup> Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 137-139.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Dina Jordanova, "Transnational Film Studies," in *The Cinema Book*, ed. Pam Cook, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 508-509; Berghahn/ Sternberg, ed., *European Cinema in Motion*, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Berghahn and Sternberg, "Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema," 22.

<sup>22</sup> cf. Jordanova, "Transnational Film Studies", 508-508; Berghahn and Sternberg, "Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema", 21-23.

<sup>23</sup> Berghahn and Sternberg, "Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema," 41.

are the expression either of the filmmakers' direct experiences, their postmemory, or of their external observations. The film aesthetics also draw on the „double consciousness“ regarding artistic conventions, music, narratives and performances belonging to different aesthetic cultures.

European migration films are characterized by the predominance of spatial tropes concerning not only mobility between different social spaces, but also the immobilization or captivity in closed spaces reflecting marginality. However, marginality moves to the center, becoming the core of the plot.

Finally, the “otherness” is being considered in terms of cinema traditions and ideological divisions. “It is a cinema of identity politics that probes difference along multiple coordinates of race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, regionality, language, religion, generation, class, gender and sexuality.”<sup>24</sup>

Given this analytical framework but without systematically addressing the above listed features, the following section concentrates mainly on transnational remembrance and migration narratives.

### **Cinema of Going West: *Occident* (Cristian Mungiu, 2002) and *Offset* (Didi Danquart, 2006)**

After the collapse of Communism in Romania an internal migration occurred along with a significant East-West movement that continues until today. This movement expanded with the accession of Romania to the European Union and the later lifting of the restrictions on the free movement of workers in the developed old member states. Romania has become a country of emigration and has been dealing with its social consequences ever since. But for the Romanian emigrants it does not seem to have been a one way path. Rather, they have created a cross-border social space in which mobility prevails. The migration theme – whether as emigration or return – has been and continues to be a concern of old and new generation Romanian filmmakers: from Radu Gabrea who deals specifically with the German minority, to Ioana Uricaru extending the subject to the cinematic depiction of the Romanian migration to the US (see *Lemonade* 2018). Except Radu Gabrea's German exile experiences, these directors, and in particular those of the new generation, have no direct migration background. Dina Iordanova also points this out in the case

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<sup>24</sup> Berghahn and Sternberg, “Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema,” 41.

of the East European migration cinema.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, there are mostly filmmakers who might be seen at first glance as taking the perspective of the emigration country, but their increasing transnational activity has turned them into so called “transnationally mobile filmmakers”<sup>26</sup>, who share to some extent the experiences of multiculturalism, and as a result, they will not unilaterally address these issues.

In the following, the two feature films *Occident* and *Offset* are considered in more detail. While the first feature film is a Romanian production, where foreign film characters are mostly represented by respective foreign actors, *Offset* is a co-production (Germany, Romania, France, Switzerland) based primarily on the cooperation between Romanian and German directors and actors. Here are the directors and screenwriters Didi Danquart, Cristi Puiu and Răzvan Rădulescu to mention as well as the actors Alexandra Maria Lara, Katharina Thalbach and Răzvan Vasilescu. In this respect, *Offset* increases the formation of transnational social space even by means of film production circumstances, whereas in the case of Cristian Mungiu and his feature film debut *Occident*, one can consider him as being a “transnationally mobile filmmaker” who engages “per project”<sup>27</sup> on transnational level. Both films have been produced in the run-up to Romania’s accession to the EU and deal in comical tones with the East-West interferences, however, the film setting is being placed exclusively in the emigration country Romania.

*Occident* starts with an image of crossed railway lines, pointing already in the opening credits to a possible direction change. The issue of life change is in fact the main concern of the characters throughout the plot. The film is divided into three episodes (1. Luci and Sorina/ 2. Mihaela and her mother/ 3. Nae Zigfrid and Mr Colonel), each considering a figure couple dealing with the decision to emigrate to the West. Being rather interwoven, than running parallel, their everyday stories are revealing different perspectives on the same issue of going west.

Unable to pay their rent for an old apartment on the outskirts, the young couple Lucian (Alexandru Papadopol) and Sorina (Anca Androne) were urged one day to leave their home. As they literally end up on the streets, Sorina decides to leave her poor living conditions, to distance herself from her boyfriend Lucian and move in a luxury neighborhood with a French businessman, with whom she eventually

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<sup>25</sup> Dina Iordanova, “Migration and Cinematic Process in Post-Cold War Europe” in *European Cinema in Motion. Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 65.

<sup>26</sup> Iordanova, “Migration and Cinematic Process,” 65.

<sup>27</sup> Iordanova, “Migration and Cinematic Process,” 65.

immigrates to France. While trying to save the situation and engage as an advertising agent, Lucian meets Mihaela (Tania Popa).

The second part of the film focuses on Mihaela and her mother trying to find her a suitable husband to ensure her a safe and wealthy life in which she should not have anything else to do but raise children. After several encounters with different foreign men, the matrimonial agency came up with a concrete suggestion: a rich Italian who owns a publishing house and who has the opportunity to publish Mihaela's poems. But this option was eventually a failure, after the Italian, hosted by her family in an „Italian ambiance“, turned out to be of African origin. Therefore, Mihaela's father, colonel Vişoiu (Dorel Vişan) looked for other solutions.

The third part emphasizes the story of the colonel and Nae Zigfrid (Valeriu Andriuţă), old acquaintances from the communist period, when Nae Zigfrid with his friend Nicu tried to cross the border over the Danube. Because he helped him recover his stolen luggage and announce Nicu's family about his death in Germany, colonel Vişoiu asks Nae Zigfrid for a favor: to take his daughter Mihaela with him back to Germany. The film ends with a series of farewells: Sorina takes leave of Lucian, Mihaela also departs from Lucian and finally, two orphaned children, one of whom was adopted by a Dutch, are also constrained to separate.

The migration narratives point to spatial mobility and hybridity. Marginality is brought to the center and this new center is infused with mobility. It moves to the center not only because of the film's emphasis on the simple, everyday life of the characters living on the outskirts, but also because of the West's great interest in discovering the country: the French businessman takes Sorina with him to France, the Dutch businessman adopts an orphan, the Italian of African origin visits Mihaela, but proves to be unsuccessful in his request, and finally Nae Zigfrid who has previously emigrated to Germany, reports in the local police magazine about his escape on the Danube during communism. This creates a „double space“<sup>28</sup> between East and West, in which translators take on the roles of mediators. This double space also exists in the minds of the film characters. They see the West as a space of prosperity and hope, the only place in which to shape the future of the younger generation. However, this perception is counteracted by the only „direct witness“, Nae Zigfrid, who lost his old friend Nicu in Germany, because the latter could not

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<sup>28</sup> Bishnopriya Ghosh and Bhaskar Sarkar, „The Cinema of Displacement: Towards a Politically Motivated Poetics,“ *Film Criticism*, 20, no. 1/2 (1995/6): 109 quoted in Berghahn and Sternberg, „Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema“, 31.

give up his „old habits“. Nevertheless, the mobility remains inevitable. The generation of former pioneers finally decided to move to the West, whereby this decision is accompanied as leitmotif by the pioneering song „Noi in anul 2000“ promising a flourishing future. However, these compressed life stories with their decisions to move west are combined with comic elements, which not only emphasize the naive film character’s expectations towards the unknown West, but also make this resettlement process appear in an ambivalent light.

The other feature film - *Offset* deals with a similar story, focussing, however, on the characters’ triptych Nicu Iorga (Răzvan Vasilescu) – Brândușa Herghelegiu (Alexandra Maria Lara) – Stefan Fischer (Felix Klare). Brândușa Herghelegiu works as a secretary in a printing company and has an occasional love affair with the manager Nicu Iorga. But now she wants to marry Stefan Fischer, a German engineer who had fixed an offset at the company. Iorga opposes this marriage by all means of blackmail and violence, succeeding ultimately on the wedding day.

A „double space“<sup>29</sup> emerges in this case, evidenced firstly by the mission of the German engineer Stefan Fischer who comes to Romania, namely to Nicu Iorga’s printing house, in order to repair a machine imported from Germany. The German expert evaluator Peter Gross arrives in Bucharest shortly after, and finally the German family Fischer visits Romania, in order to participate to Stefan’s and Brândușa’s wedding. On the other side, the French delegation, with whom Iorga starts business negotiations, is presented as competitor to the German partners. The social „double space“<sup>30</sup> now encompasses both the encounter of different corporate cultures and everyday cultures. However, the film plot does not point to a possible convergence between them, but rather to differences and divergences. Due to her German language skills acquired at school, Brândușa assumes the role of translator and mediator, which proves to be more authentic with the Romanian origin of the actress Alexandra Maria Lara. At the same time she wavers in her decision to start a new life in Germany or to continue her old one in Romania. The divergences between the different everyday and corporate cultures are mostly evidenced through dialogue and acting figures. The commonly used stereotypes such as „Don’t work so hard. You are Romanian“<sup>31</sup> (Stefan Fischer to the other secretary), the machine is

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<sup>29</sup> Ghosh and Sarkar, “The Cinema of Displacement”, 109.

<sup>30</sup> Ghosh and Sarkar, “The Cinema of Displacement”, 109.

<sup>31</sup> *Offset*, [0:32:09].

from Germany, it can not have technical problems<sup>32</sup> (Peter Gross, the expert evaluator) or „Don't worry. That's the German traditional family. But should not be contagious”<sup>33</sup> (Iris to Brândușa) point to a communication that, despite its joking intention, is usually prejudiced and conflict oriented. This is particularly expressed by the German family, who can hardly cope with unknown situations in Bucharest and are skeptical of their surroundings. The future of Romania in the EU also came up as a conversation subject at the German-Romanian joint family dinner, where again different views occurred: while Brândușa's father regarded Romania as a poor but culturally rich country that could be profitable for European culture, the German family believed that Romania, still having the post-socialist work ethic, would hardly manage in the EU. On the other hand, the authoritarian, unleashed behavior of Nicu Iorga points out that cultural rapprochement is hardly possible: „You are not at home!”<sup>34</sup> is what he tells the Germans at the marriage registry office. In fact, there is no rapprochement, as even Brândușa finally decides not to enter into this marriage anymore. Only the final intertitle gives further information about the engineer Stefan Fischer and the expert Peter Gross, who have started running a business at European level, about Brândușa Herghelegiu's application for a study abroad and Nicu Iorga reopening business negotiations with the French.

As in *Occident*, this film narrative emphasizes the emergence of a social double space, which is also characterized by transnational mobility. However, cultural differences and discrepancies are more evident in this social space. On the one hand, the West is no longer unconditionally accepted as a place of prosperity and hope, on the other hand, the alienation and Western visitors' lack of trust is clearly noticeable.

## Conclusion

The present paper has attempted to show how transnational social spaces are shaped and reinforced by means of feature films as media of collective memory.

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<sup>32</sup> The expert Peter Gross: “Es ist daher sehr unwahrscheinlich, dass die bereits von Ihnen beschriebenen Probleme auftreten. Immerhin kommt die aus Deutschland”; Brândușa's translation: “Mașinile sunt din Germania și în principiu funcționează impecabil.” *Offset* [0:10:59].

<sup>33</sup> In original: “Keine Angst, so ist die deutsche traditionelle Familie. Ist aber nicht ansteckend.”, *Offset* [0.48.04].

<sup>34</sup> *Offset* [1.38.00].

The focus has been set on the Romanian migration, considered in this respect a transnational social phenomenon. Without drawing the actual migration process into the foreground, the paper has dealt rather with the cinematic examination of identity and community formation and with the cinematic tropes of spatial affiliation. The question that has been raised concerned the cinematic self-representations of the Romanian migrant community and the extent to which it can be considered a transnational community of remembrance. By referring to concepts such as „communicative memory“<sup>35</sup>, „postmemory“<sup>36</sup> and „prosthetic memory“<sup>37</sup> as well as to the „media of collective memory“<sup>38</sup>, the Romanian community of migration and remembrance has been more closely grasped. It has been shown that the medium of feature film helped working out the Romanian migration experiences especially in the context of the communicative memory of the witnesses’ experiences, and of the prosthetic memory. Moreover, the trans-nationalization of this cinematic confrontation with the Romanian migration issue has been also evidenced. Trans-nationalization emerged not only because of the media usage, but was reinforced by the film production and reflected in the self-representations of the migrant community as well. The discussed feature films *Occident* and *Offset* – shot in a period in which Romania was particularly involved in the European integration process but had not overcome yet the post-communist transition – have articulated the transnational social space of Romanian migration as marked by diversity, mobility and spatial interferences. Focusing on the same theme, namely that of going west, the films differ in terms of the perspective addressed. *Occident* proposes, on the one hand, the perspective of the Romanian emigration society looking hopefully at the unknown West, whereas the film does not hesitate to put this attitude into question. Being a co-production, *Offset* addresses, on the other hand, a dual perspective, namely that of the Romanian-German relations in which the attitude of both the Romanians and Germans were overemphasized. However, both feature films perform as media of collective memory that, among other memory practices and vehicles, shape the Romanian transnational community of remembrance.

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<sup>35</sup> Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory.”

<sup>37</sup> Landsberg, “Prosthetic memory.”

<sup>38</sup> Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*.

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## Filmography

- Occident*, directed by Cristian Mungiu, 2002, Temple Film with support from Centrul Național al Cinematografiei, Hubert Bals Fund, McCann Advertising.
- Offset*, directed by Didi Danquart, 2006, noir film GmbH & Co. KG, C-Films AG, Integral Films, Unlimited, in association with Mobra Films.