

**Going West: Intra-European Immigration
After the Fall of the Berlin Wall
in Western European Films**

BY

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation argues that the wave of immigration from Eastern to Western Europe that emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the communist era in what was known as the Eastern bloc, triggered a respective wave of films dealing with the issue. The thesis concentrates on films depicting the specific wave of immigration from the European East to the European West, made by Western European filmmakers who do not share the immigrant experience themselves. In this respect the thesis deals with how this phenomenon of intra-European immigration was perceived and consequently depicted on screen by the West. Through focus on a variety of Western European fiction films, the thesis argues about the new type (and stereotypes) of on screen immigrant characters and the depiction of their integration and relationship with the host nations. The thesis also deals with how the filmic representation of the Eastern European immigrant differentiates from the respective representations of the past phenomena of immigration within and towards Europe (e.g. the post-colonial wave of immigration, the South to North wave of immigration and how fiction films deal with the new dynamics created amongst Europeans).

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INTRODUCTION

On November 9, 1989, as the Cold War was coming to its end, the spokesman for East Berlin's Communist Party announced the change of his city's relations to the West that would ultimately lead to reunification. Starting at midnight on that very same day, citizens of the DDR (GDR) were at last free to cross the country's borders, many of them to be reunited with family and friends. East and West Berliners flocked to the wall with their main demand chanted as a slogan: "Tor auf" ("Open the gate"). At midnight they flooded through the checkpoints. More than two million East Berliners crossed to the West to celebrate. People used hammers and pick-axes to tear down the wall while cranes and bulldozers began pulling it down section by section. Berlin was finally reunited, after more than four decades of division. A newly sprayed graffiti read: "Only today is the war really over". The reunification of the East and West was made official almost one year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, on October 3, 1990 (McAdams, 1994).

The fall of the Berlin Wall was not an isolated event, taking place in a vacuum. It was an emblematic milestone (as was the Wall itself) of the changes occurring in Europe in the years that followed, a consequence of the aftermath of World War II (WWII) that divided Europe into East and West (Lowe, 2012), according to the respective administrative and financial modes that followed reunification. The fall of the Wall flagged the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Kotkin, 2008) and its dominance over the countries of Eastern Europe (with the exception of Yugoslavia and Albania) as a result of the Yalta conference (Harbutt, 2010). Soon the Yugoslav wars erupted, creating a new face and map of the European continent (Lampe, 1996).

The disintegration of the Soviet bloc in the Eastern Europe group triggered a new wave of population movements (the one depicted in the filmic corpus of this thesis). The Yugoslav wars added a population violently displaced and consequently a number of asylum seekers, represented in this thesis in the film *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide* (Marco Tullio Giordana, 2005). Furthermore, the gradual enlargement of the European Union, to include some of the countries formerly belonging to the Eastern bloc, progressively changed the status of some of the Eastern European immigrants

throughout the years of accession to the EU (Mynz, 1995). For the purposes of this thesis, it is therefore critical to take a look at the specific characteristics of this wave of immigration and the particular circumstances that caused it, since these are precisely the types of immigrant protagonists who feature in the films that will be analysed in subsequent chapters of the thesis.

This particular wave of immigration, which in many cases appeared almost as an evacuation (Mazower, 1998), was not controlled or organised, nor did it come in response to a specific demand for labour from a given host nation. In some cases, this movement of migrants from East to West did follow the path of an existing relationship, official or unofficial, between an Eastern European and a Western European country. However, in many cases, the wave of migrants had no specific destination in mind, beyond a generalised desire to gravitate towards “the West”. The phenomenon of migrating to the closest or “easiest” country with the intention of moving to a further one later on, viewing Western European countries as the “gateway” to the USA, or trying to be “reunited” with family members, became a common and repeated feature of this migration from East to West in the decades following the fall of the Berlin Wall (Favell, 2008). Although economic hardship remained the main motivation for migrating, it is obvious that there was a sense of “escape” in this wave of migration during the 1990s and 2000s, triggered by years of oppression that enforced a collective feeling of captivity, as well as an opposite to the anticipated result of the propaganda. As people under the communist regime tended to reject its administrative and financial model, it was a natural consequence for them to also reject the official dialectic of the regime’s propaganda about the West (Lévesque, 1997). According to official state propaganda during the Cold War, the West was the source of all evil,¹ but in the collective moral sense this description was actually applied to the communist regime itself. As a result the conclusion reached by the majority of ordinary citizens of Eastern Europe (especially the young) was a unilateral idolisation of the West, capitalism and the free market. In this respect, there were psychological incentives in the choice of destination for would-be immigrants migrating from Eastern to Western Europe, as well as incentives in various

¹ For more on Eastern propaganda during the cold war see Peteri, 2010; Caure, 2005.

aspects of the personal lives of these soon-to-become immigrants (for example *From the Edge of the City* [Constantinos Giannaris, 1998], *LAmerica* [Gianni Amelio, 1994], *Lilya4Ever* [Lukas Moodysson, 2002]— full case study included in Chapter 2) that dictate an inner relation to a specific country of the West. Factors that motivate specific Eastern European migrants to gravitate towards specific Western European nations include: the ability to speak a specific Western European language (French, English, German, Spanish etc.); the ability or desire to study in the host nation; a family tradition, or long-forgotten ethnic tie, linking the migrant to a specific Western country; a vague idolization of the West; the perception (whether based on reality or rumour) of conditions of work and the possibility of long-term residency in the country of destination and, finally, the presumed tolerance of a given host nation towards “difference” (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion) (OECD, 2003). Moreover, since this new wave of immigration consisted, at its source, of citizens of non EU countries, it did not always take place through legal procedures. Additionally, the legislation gaps that were a result of there being no previous cases of immigration in certain countries, such as Greece or Italy, enabled (without ensuring) an easier point of entry into “Fortress Europe”. Consequently, and as the phenomenon enlarged, engulfing more people, subsequent waves of migration obtained another motivating feature: the prospect of joining family, friends or an already substantial subcommunity of compatriots established in a specific Western country. In this respect, during the 1990s and into the 2000s, specific patterns of immigration from East to West began to form across Europe between specific host and origin countries, such as the significant movement of Polish migrants to the UK, or Albanian immigrants to Italy. The basis of such patterns varied from geographical proximity to historical, cultural, religious or linguistic relations (Roos, 2013).

It is essential to underline here that this wave of migration was not the first to affect the European continent. The recovery of the European countries after WWII, besides creating a somewhat latent population displacement, also triggered an anticipated lawful wave of migration in order to mend and help

rebuild the European economies.² Nonetheless, technological improvement facilitated travel, expanding the movement from developing countries to the West, while a “Western” income motivated workers to relocate. Although the formation of the UN aimed to obliterate officially imperialistic and colonial relations between countries (Italy and Japan immediately lost their colonial territory as a penalty for submitting to the Axis alliance), large populations moved from ex-colonial countries to their imperial centre, including Indians and Pakistanis moving to England, and Vietnamese, Cambodians and Northern Africans relocating to France. Although the post-colonial population movement was not only enabled but also anticipated, Europe experienced a rather paradoxical circumstance in respect of population movements within the continent itself, as we will point out later on (Isaacs, 2007).

The Yalta conference of 1945³ drew Europe’s new borders decisively and finalised the distinction between East and West, as it would be used for the following decades (and in this thesis). In addition, it created the new framework of movement for the citizens of the European continent. The post-war European West, therefore, had to undergo a process of reconstruction. Immigration from Asian and African colonies was not only allowed but also encouraged in order to maintain and reinforce a cheap labour force in the West, while immigration

² This migration post 1945 not only included a movement from East to West but also involved migration from southern to northern Europe (e.g. from Spain to France and Germany) as well as the arrival of migrants from former colonial territories (e.g. from North Africa to France).

³ (4-11 February, 1945), held in the Russian resort in Crimea, concluded in the Yalta agreement and European division. W. Churchill and F. Roosevelt saw the strategic opportunity to succeed in convincing Stalin and the U.S.S.R. to enter the Pacific War, which at that point did not seem to be anywhere near an end. Stalin’s conditions, however, were that the U.S.S.R. should practically undertake the control of the rest of Eastern Europe. The closure of the conference granted the U.S.S.R. a sphere of influence in Manchuria but also ensured that Eastern European countries around U.S.S.R. borders remained “friendly” to the Soviet regime, till the time was appropriate for democratic elections (Young, 1991). Although there were opinions heard that the negotiations surrendered Eastern Europe to the influence of the U.S.S.R., the initial reactions mainly evolved as feelings of relief, especially throughout the US, that peace was ensured and the war-time Allies would remain such during the new peaceful era. The death of F. Roosevelt soon after (12 April, 1945) and his replacement by H. Truman changed public feeling and, possibly, the course of the relations between the participants of the Yalta conference, triggering the “Cold War”. After the surrender of a defeated Germany on the 8th of May 1945, the Big Three met in Potsdam during the summer of the same year in order to discuss and determine the fate of Germany and the finalisation of the post-war European borders. The Potsdam conference was the last collective meeting of the former allies on issues of post-war reconstruction. During the 1950s the division of Europe and the Cold War were facts and Eastern Europe found itself restricted behind the Iron Curtain, its countries members of the Warsaw Pact, as opposed to Western Europe, which included the members of NATO with the exception of Berlin, a dot on the map, a city divided by the Wall. All Soviet citizens found in the zones of the Western Allies were deported to the U.S.S.R., amongst whom were many anticomunist refugees (Mazower, 1998).

from the Eastern bloc was halted from 1950 until the 1990s, in order to maintain the sociopolitical communist structure, considered by its rulers as sustainable only under conditions of isolation. Nevertheless, the fact that migration from the East to the West was prohibited did not cause all population movement within the continent to cease. If most citizens in the Eastern bloc were prevented from travelling to the West, certain ethnic minorities were encouraged by the communist authorities to leave. During the four decades of communist rule after the Second World War, there were an estimated 135 million immigrants to the West on the basis of bilateral ethnic migration. Jews, for example, were allowed to leave the Soviet Union to join in the formation of Israel and the new reality of defection arose. Moreover, the fact that immigration from the East to the West was prohibited, did not cease all population movement within the continent. For example, Yugoslavia was not altogether isolated, Poland had a traditional wave of emigration towards the UK, and defection was not completely controllable. In this respect, there were migrant communities established in the European West prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 that played an important role in the East-to-West migration wave discussed in this thesis (Isaacs, 2007). We must note here that although the establishment of the communist regime followed the Russian Revolution, there is a very prominent notion that the regime was established as the aftermath of the World War II, a result of the Yalta conference, because it was precisely the Yalta treaty that made clear the division of the countries that would undergo the Soviet influence. It is apparent that the mode of the administration and, more importantly, the financial model that was inflicted on both sides of the Wall, was not a result of the war or the Yalta conference, but a prior condition that was now clarified and properly established. In this respect, capitalism was not a result of either the war or the Yalta conference. Actually many historians would argue that World War II was one of the maneuvers that capitalism had to come up with in order to overcome the great crisis of the depression years (1929-1939) that followed both the turbulences of World War I and the Russian Revolution. Hitler's rhetoric of hatred was practically based on the economic context of the time. Hitler persecuted the Jews as responsible for the financial situation, the unemployment and squalor of the German people. Moreover, he connected both the social Democrats and the Marxists to the Jews as he was convinced

that those in power who have signed the Armistice were responsible for the “Jewish” state of the Soviet Union and because they gave Lenin and his followers passage through Germany to Russia by train so that they could join the revolution.⁴ Equally it was the depression that followed World War I that caused the interference of the US to the war. The New Deal policies implemented by Franklin Roosevelt had been moderately successful but the US economy failed serious constraint, that consisted mainly by large numbers of unemployment. A dynamic boost of growth was provoked by the industrial production *for* the war and later on by the production for export. The US economy thus flourished in the Golden Age of post World War II capitalism. The Golden Age refers only to the conditions of capital accumulation from the 1940’s to the 1970’s and the rise of the “welfare state” in centralized economies within the capitalist sphere, mainly in Western Europe, the US and Japan. Labor productivity rose and capital productivity maintained solid rates of growth. Moreover, the technical change created more jobs than the war destroyed (Burke, Puty, 2004). In any case for the three decades that followed the war capitalism managed to maintain its growth and at the same time show a humanitarian face till the next depression era that would begin much later on.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the transition of the countries that lived under the communist regime to capitalism was not easy and in many cases was conducted under obscure circumstances (e.g. the commissioner of a public service was “promoted” to “owner” overnight). It is quite common to consider the soviet economy (and generally the economy of the Eastern bloc) as a uniform vacuum of some sort of continuity. The truth is that there were many financial reforms from the 40’s till 1989. The most important one occurred in 1965, known as the Kosigyn or Liberman reform that introduced profitability and sales as indicators of entrepreneurial success (Adam, 1989) and was succeeded by the 1979 soviet economic reform that concentrated on raising effectiveness and improving work quality (Whitefield, 1979). The financial hardship that followed was the main reason that Western capitalism seemed that appealing to the citizens of the former Eastern Bloc. The Western propaganda of the cold war era has focused on issues such as free speech, government violence

⁴ For more see Burke, 1939.

destruction of the traditional infrastructures of society. It turned out that consumerism played a very important role. In many cases (such as the case of the G.D.R.) the problem was not the lack of money but the lack of consumer goods. Even if people had the money, there was nothing to buy.⁵ The free market definitely solved that problem and the willing Eastern Europeans were easily lured by the abundance of products. Some of the most emblematic images of the time of change was the opening of the first McDonalds in Moscow, broadcasted all around the world. If the local economy couldn't support them, the Western probably could. Although in the case of this wave of immigration the West did not conduct a program officially demanding workers from the East (as the case of Germany in the 60's), in many cases that will be thoroughly examined further on, it definitely indulged the wave of immigration from East to West and many Eastern citizens embarked to pursue the long-sought freedom that Western capitalism annunciated. Freedom of speech and the free market were almost identical at the time. What the soon to be immigrants didn't realize, was that the free market does not guarantee equal working conditions and rights. And on top of that, working illegally doesn't allow protesting about the conditions. So this dual attraction to the West would soon transform to disillusionment in many cases.

Back on the West side of the Berlin Wall the enormous boom in the German economy in the late 1940s and early 1950s and rapid technological progress created a new demand for migrant labour to be imported into the country. Since the movement of East Germans to the West was restricted, the need was satisfied by the "guest workers", a term that described a new wave of intra-European immigration (and not only such) that soon expanded in other countries of the wealthy European North, which opened its gates to the guest workers of the European South. This new wave that started in the 1950s and escalated during the following two decades, even showing a relative consistency in the 1980s, consisted of "invited" workers, who were, at least initially, not motivated to stay in Germany for their lifetime (Buchholz, 2008). These workers mainly originated from Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Tunisia, Morocco and Turkey. The flourishing German economy

⁵ For more see Lipschitz, McDonald, 1990.

required workers who would remain in Germany for a designated period of work and in most cases industry was responsible for their placement and providing accommodation. Immigration agreements were signed by bilateral treaties with the countries involved. Naturally, the size of the population flow created unforeseen social issues related to the temporary settlement and integration of these migrant workers, which, as such, were not regulated by the treaties (Anja Burkhardt; Markus Seifert, 2012). Thus, while the European West's borders remained beyond reach for the Eastern Europeans, the South was evacuated, in some cases drained of its most productive forces and the North, and consequently the West, were rapidly crowded with various impacts and reactions⁶ on the part of the host nations. Meanwhile, population movement within Europe was due to reach a new dimension, quite different to that of economic migration, with the formation of the European Union.⁷

The monetary unification of Europe and the adoption of a common currency in 2002⁸ changed migration patterns from outside and across Europe once again. The counterbalance of working conditions and salaries throughout the countries of the EU, to the point that such a counterbalance was possible, seemed to slow down the flow of workforce and labour immigration. The funding by the European Community of regional development and legislation on the

⁶ Both positive and negative, this impact took various forms that ranged from mixed marriages, a bilingual second generation and cultural integration to hostility and the creation of neo-Nazi movements.

⁷ As Europe was recovering and in a process of integration there was the urgent necessity to avoid future conflicts. Extreme forces of nationalism had to be somehow removed in order to ensure future peace and collaboration between nations, so that the multi-level devastations of World War II never reoccurred. The Hague Conference, held in 1948, resulted in the creation of the European Movement International and the College of Europe, which aimed to gather future European leaders under a common “roof”, where they would be orientated towards mutual understanding and, thus, enhance the power of democracy and succeed in the creation of a supranational and inter-governmental model. With the founding members being Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany, who in 1957 signed the Treaty of Rome initiating the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Community (Euratom), the European Union soon expanded to common defence and financial aspirations and continued to enlarge, progressively including new members amongst the countries of the Western coalition and NATO. In 1973 Denmark (joined with Greenland, which exited the Union in 1985), Ireland and the United Kingdom entered the European Community, (while Norway rejected joining by public vote). Greece followed in 1981, to be followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986, after the Schengen Agreement that initiated open borders between the member countries and practically phased out passport control, consolidating, thus, European citizenship (Young, 1991).

⁸ The name Euro was officially adopted in 1995 and the Euro replaced the ECU in the world's financial markets as an accounting currency in 1999. It was not until 1 January 2002, though, that coins and banknotes entered circulation.

maintenance of common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries, industry and services seemed to create a proportional balance that eliminated the conditions that had in the past triggered economic intra-European migration. A different kind of population movement seemed now to arise. Western Europe now experienced a heterogenic, multi-directional movement of citizens across Europe. A new kind of what might be termed “Europe-trotters” (young, socially mobile, relatively affluent, educated European citizens) travelled through Europe: European nationals who benefited from the ability to travel easily between EU nations, as well as being able to reside within other member-countries of the EU, without having to apply for additional visas or permits to work or study (Balibar, 2004). This wave of migration did not consist of workers trying to relocate in order to better their living and economic conditions, nor were they motivated to settle in a country more prosperous than their own. Additionally, the stabilisation of democracy throughout Western Europe did not create a circumstance of European political asylum seekers moving from one European state to another.⁹

These new “Europe-trotters” share rather specific features.¹⁰ Many people, for a variety of reasons, profit from this freedom to circulate unimpeded around Europe: students who study abroad or benefit from student exchange programs; scientists and academics who expand their experience and engage in intra-European research; educators who participate in multi-cultural or inter-cultural schools and programs; professionals attending seminars; artists participating in festivals and other forms of artistic exchange and collaborating in intra-European artistic co-productions; mere tourists and travellers; activists attending the European conferences of European campaigns on common causes; people interested in expanding their cultural horizons; people with the

⁹ Again with the exception of Greece, where the Regime of the Colonels (1967-1974) took over after the coup d' état led by a group of colonels on the 21 April 1967. The political situation and the persecution of the members of the Greek Communist Party, which had been declared illegal, created a wave of asylum seekers who fled to the West in order to avoid persecution or in an attempt to join their peers behind the Iron Curtain, since visas to the Eastern bloc were not approved by the authorities and very often passport issue was denied to them (Young, 1991).

¹⁰ Cédric Klapische's *Auberge Espagnole* (2002): a Franco-Spanish comedy about Erasmus students in Barcelona describes these "Europe-trotters". It was a big hit in many countries across Europe but reinforces the idea that they were simply young students having fun, for whom moving across Europe was merely a rather privileged rite of passage, completely void of any of the dangers or pressures found by those migrating illegally due to economic necessity or seeking asylum.

need or disposition to learn a foreign language who are facilitated in remaining abroad by working treaties; professionals benefiting from getting advice from their colleagues in a country with greater progress in their own field. It is evident that this wave of heterogenic movement is not only individually self motivated but also encouraged and organised by the European Union itself through multiple programs collective organisations, policies and intra-European practices.

This heterogenic multi-movement is not of an intentionally permanent nature and that has had a rather positive impact. Apart from the obvious outcomes of cultural exchange, understanding and cohesion, enhanced by the fact that these people are not perceived as a threat by the local communities, there are additional benefits. Contrary to being considered an economic strain on the hosts or cheaper competitors in the job market, these travellers, constituting the above mentioned heterogenic multi-movement in Western Europe, naturally provoke an economic flow of the identical currency and consequently boost various aspects of the economy: transport, estate business, hospitality services, industry, education, commerce, entertainment, and so on. The European Union seems to have fulfilled the purposes of its formation and, on the surface, progress seems to have been established, while the hardships of the past seem like a distant memory unlikely to be re-endured.

THE FILMIC SELECTION OF THE THESIS

The range of films examined here differs from previous filmographies on the issues of immigration (e.g. the films on post-colonial migration or South to North migration during the 1950s-1970s) found in studies such as Tarr (2005), Higbee (2013), Thomas (2013), Durmelat and Swamy (2012), Ponzanesi (2014), on one hand because it concentrates specifically on immigrants from Eastern Europe who migrated to the West after the fall of communism but also because it consists of films made by Western European filmmakers who are not part of this immigrant community and have not shared in the experience of migration themselves. In this respect, the corpus of films studied in this thesis inevitably differs from earlier cinematic representations of (post-)colonial immigration, such as that of North African immigrants to France, or what is more broadly referred to by Naficy (2001) as accented (exilic, diasporic or post-colonial/ethnic) cinema. As discussed later, Naficy focuses solely on diasporic filmmakers but, as explained elsewhere in this introduction, some of the films of the thesis have also been examined by Loshitzky (2010). Loshitzky concentrates on the general immigrant experience of those moving to and within Europe, while this thesis focuses on the specific wave of immigration depicted in European cinema after 1989. The corpus of films studied in this thesis, therefore, reflects a shift in European cinema since the late 1980s away from post-colonial immigrant subjects as the nearly exclusive means of viewing the immigrant subject on screen. The representatives of post-colonial cinema in France and the UK (cinema Beur, Black British and British Asian cinema)¹¹ describe their own experience and function not only as representatives of the cinematic movement but also as representatives of their ethnic minority in varying autobiographical ways. In France, examples of Beur cinema include: *Le Thé à la menthe/Mint Tea* [Bahloul, 1984], *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède / Tea in the Harem*, [Charef, 1985], *Baton Rouge*, [Bouchareb, 1985], *Miss Mona* [Charef, 1987] and *Cheb* [Bouchareb, 1991]. In the UK, examples of Black British cinema include: *Pressure* [Ove, 1976], *Babylon* [Rosso, 1980], *Burning an Illusion* [Shabazz, 1981], *Handsworth Songs* (Akomfrah, 1984), *Playing*

¹¹ For more see Higbee, 2001, Kobena Mercer, 2008.

away [Ove, 1987] and *Bhaji on the Beach* [Chadha, 1993]). These same issues of integration and ethnic identity of the post-colonial immigrants and their descendants still constitute common themes of British and French cinema outside the framework of the post-colonial cinema of the 1960's-1980's (*Bye-Bye* [Karim Dridi, 1995], *La Haine* [Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995], *Ae Fond Kiss* [Ken Loach, 2004], *Bend it like Beckham* [Gurinder Chadha, 2002]).

Whilst they may not constitute a specific genre, films focusing on post-colonial immigrant narratives do have certain shared characteristics. This is especially true of films from Great Britain and France. Post-colonial immigrant cinema might, therefore, be "considered by and within a conceptual space" (Ponzanezi and Waller, 2012, 1) and is "strongly political and still concerned with authoritarian oppression" (Ponzanezi and Waller, 2012, 7). Such films thus challenge neo-colonial representations of the colonised other on screen, as marginal, stereotyped, hidden or even absent, by presenting their protagonists not as "ego ideals ... but as multidimensional figures ... whose subjectivities as well as subject positions are open to the unexpected, the unpredictable" (Ponzanezi and Waller, 2012, 7-8). This same element of the "multidimensional" post-colonial protagonist applies to the Eastern European protagonist of our selection as well, but it is precisely the different sociopolitical, demographic and cultural differences that constitute the initiation of the new type of immigrant protagonist from Eastern Europe. The difference between representations of post-colonial migrants and those from Eastern Europe are principally due to different modes of production, as well as the fact that the films examined in this thesis address a specific wave of immigration from Eastern Europe seen from the point of view of non-immigrant filmmakers themselves.

In contrast to those French and British films on post-colonial immigration that dominated cinematic representations of immigration in the 1970s and 1980s, there is no equivalent phenomenon in countries such as Italy, which contributes several films to the selection of this thesis. There are more recent but yet sporadic films on the issues of immigration from Asia and Africa (*Bell'Amico* [Luca D'Ascanio, 2003], *Terraferma* [Emanuele Crialese, 2011]) but they do not constitute a consistent and substantial film movement in the same way that we might speak of Beur or Post-beur cinema for French filmmakers of

North African immigrant origin, or of Black-British cinema in the UK.¹² It is interesting to note here, that parallel to the films on immigration in Italy, there has been a wave of films dealing with the issue of internal migration, from the Italian south to the Italian north. During the decades that followed WWII, the phenomenon known as the economic miracle, that consisted of the industrialisation of the North, led to mass population movement from the Italian south to the north where a job boom, evidently, occurred. Italian society was then divided by bigotry and prejudice against the *terrone*, the southern Italian immigrant, who soon became a synonym for the lazy roamer and was considered an obstacle to the general progress of the country. The opposite pole to the *terrone* is the *polentone*, a term used to refer to the northern Italian. The cultural conflict is depicted on screen, in the comic films, among others, of the trio “Aldo, Giovanni e Giacomo” (e.g. *Tu la conosci Claudia?* [Massimo Venier, 2004]) (Grace Russo Bularo, 2010, 14-40).

Spain is not included in the film selection of this thesis, precisely because the immigration depicted in the Spanish cinema consists of different conditions and deals, for the most part, with migrants from outside (Eastern) Europe, a more recent wave of films on immigration, which, although linked to Spain’s colonial past, occurred later than the post-colonial migration cinema of France and the UK. Because of its geographical position, there is a considerable wave of immigrants across the coastal borders that consists of a mainly African population. According to Garcia Roldan (2012, 195-200) this cinema emerged in the last couple of decades and focuses mainly on illegal immigration, integration and multiculturalism (e.g. *El viaje de Said* [Coke Rioboo, 2006], *Retorno a Hansala* [Chus Gutierrez, 2008]). These films together with the Italian films *Luna e l'altra*, (Maurizio Nichetti, 1996) (see Waller, 2012, 157-172), *Bell'amico* (Luca D’ Ascanio, 2002)¹³ represent different phenomena of immigration which occur simultaneously with the intra-European wave of immigration. It is apparent that countries, such as Greece, that are included in the thesis, had no colonial past and subsequently no such wave of immigration. In fact, a substantial wave of immigration from Asia and Africa started to

¹² The Italian empire's fall started in 1943 (Killinger, 2002).

¹³ For more see Bularo, 2010.

emerge after that depicted in the film selection of the thesis. Up to now, there is only one fiction film regarding the issue: *Man at Sea* (Constantinos Giannaris, 2011) though it is also touched on in *Indignados* (Gatlif, 2012), a non Greek production, where Betty, a West African illegal immigrant, who makes a symbolic journey across a European continent in economic crisis, is first washed ashore on the coast of Greece and spends some time at the start of the film in a centre for asylum seekers.

Films depicting the specific East to West wave of migration after the communist era initiate a different approach to the gender and age of the immigrant type, in comparison to the films of the post-colonial immigration narrative and those found in German, Italian or Greek cinema from the 1960s to the 1990s that portray the phenomenon of the “*gästarbeiter*” (*Bread and Chocolate* [Franco Brusati, 1974, Italy], *Katzelmacher* [Reiner Werner Fassbinder 1969, West Germany], *Giorgos aus Sotirianika* [L. Xanthopoulos, 1978, Greece]). Although the type of migration described here is external (i.e. moving beyond national borders), the limitation of the relocation within the same continent naturally diminishes the aspect of distance. Proximity often dictates the destination of the immigrant character. On the other hand, certain cultural elements, as well as the period of time in which the specific phenomenon of immigration takes place, change the features of the immigrant profile. While the post-colonial wave of immigration in Britain and France, as well the “*gästarbeiter*” found in German cinema, consists principally of young male economic migrants,¹⁴ the films analysed in this thesis offer a more diverse type of immigrant protagonist in terms of gender and age. Female emancipation, cultural and religious background and the absence of demand for a specific labour force, create the type of the young or middle-aged female immigrant type found in films such as *The Silence of Lorna* (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, 2008), *Lilya4Ever, Last Resort* (Pawel Pawlikowski, 2000), *Import/Export* (Ulrich Seidl, 2007). Protagonists in films such as these are often forced to migrate in

¹⁴ Geographer E. G. Ravenstein developed a series of migration “laws” in the 1880s that form the basis for modern migration theory. In simple language, these principles state: most migrants travel only a short distance; migrants travelling long distances usually settle in urban areas; most migration occurs in steps; most migration is rural to urban; each migration flow produces a movement in the opposite direction (“counterflow”); most migrants are adults and finally that most international migrants are young males, while more internal migrants are female (Ravenstein, 1885).

order to create a better life for themselves or for their children. The fact of modern human trafficking¹⁵ also creates a specific framework of exploited illegal female immigrants. Many of the films analysed in this thesis focus on single women, who migrate alone or accompanied by their children (e.g. *Revanche* [Götz Spielmann, 2008], *J' ai pas Sommeil* [Claire Denis, 1994], *Last Resort*, *Code Inconnu* [Michael Haneke, 2000]). This element has also another interesting aspect to it: besides being the response to a sociological shift, the depiction of women and child immigrants constitutes a type of narrative constructed by the filmmaker that could be perceived as having more emotional weight with the audience. In this respect Murray Smith's notion of the "structure of sympathy" (Smith, 1995, 75) is more easily achieved through characters that are more vulnerable and consequently more likely to be exploited¹⁶. On the other hand, the children's inefficiency in making their own decisions, the fact that they are effectively denied a normal childhood and the clear lack of responsibility for the choices made for them by adults, constitute the image of the immigrant child as the strongest representative of the victimized "alien".¹⁷

In analysing the cinematic representation of the more recent phenomenon of East to West migration in Europe, this study is specifically focused on narrative features and fiction films. As such, it does not include the analysis of documentary film. In contrast to the majority of documentaries on the subject from both TV and film, which view the phenomenon of immigration in broader historical and sociopolitical terms (e.g. *The truth about immigration in the UK*, BBC2, 2014), narrative feature films tend to "tell the story" of immigrants and immigration through highly personalised, dramatic narratives. In

¹⁵ Brown, Iordanova and Torchin in the introduction of *Moving People Moving Images* actually acknowledge the impact that the collapse of the former Soviet Union "has had on human trafficking, particularly within the European context" suggesting that trafficking is very much linked to the "profound social shifts that are happening in the former Soviet Republics" (2010, 6).

¹⁶ According to Murray Smith, the audience undergoes a process of identifying and consequently "caring" about certain characters. The Structure of Sympathy consists of three stages: Allegiance, Alignment and Recognition. For more on this concept, see Smith (1995).

¹⁷ It is interesting here to underline that contrary to all the waves of immigration that have found great on screen representation, the phenomenon of the "Europe trotter", the free-to-move European citizen, who was not subject to ordeals or sociopolitical problems, has had only two cases of cinematic depiction, and even then, this aspect of the narrative tended to be peripheral: *O Xenagos* (Zacharias Mavroeidhs, 2011) and *L'Auberge Espagnole*, Cedric Klapisch, 2002).

this respect, fiction films about immigration more readily achieve a heightened level of identification with an audience, eliciting an emotional response through Smith's notions of recognition, alignment and allegiance (1995, 74).

Of course, this does not mean that documentaries do not engage personalised stories and are not capable of having an emotional impact on the spectator. On the contrary, there are documentary films (e.g. *The Houses of Hristina* [Suzan Raes, 2007, Netherlands], *Vlada*, [Rudi Uran, 2009, Slovenia], *Bojan*, [Djuro Gavran, 2010, Croatia]) that follow the precise pattern of engaging a personal story to explore the issue of immigration. However, unlike narrative fiction films, documentary films tend to be considered as "minimally interventionist" (Winston, 1995, 208). Although this argument has been strongly challenged, most notably by Bruzzi (2006), it still constitutes a commonly accepted feature of such films, precisely because of the viewers' disposal towards documentaries. While fiction films can be viewed as reproductions of reality, documentaries are usually perceived as a representation of the world (Nichols, 2001, 20). The truth, though, remains that there is a very thin line (or, as Nichols [2001] describes it, "a blurred boundary") between narrative fiction and documentary films. In this respect there are even fiction films, constituting the separate genre of mockumentary, that engage documentary films' practices. For example, the talking heads in staged interviews, the minimal intervention of editing, the effect of sound and image bearing "the trace of what produced them" (Nichols, 2001, 35) (e.g. in *Visa* [S. Anagnostopoulou, 1997], *From the Edge of the City* [Constantinos Giannaris, 1998]) attempt to instill in the audience a sense of Brechtian alienation and therefore enhance the visibility of the social reality they depict "according to the acts of selection and arrangement carried out by the filmmaker". Stella Bruzzi also comments on genres such as cinéma-vérité (2006, 73-80), which pursue the documentary-like sense of observation and randomness captured by the camera, in an effort to make social commentary (camera-stylo). On the other hand, she also argues that the important "truth" that any documentary captures is, in fact, a performance in front of the camera (Bruzzi, 2006, 80). Documentaries, equally, often use the means of fiction films to achieve the emotional engagement of the audience: dramatised sequences (sometimes even performed by actors), music, elliptical editing. In this respect, a clear division between the two genres becomes rather

obscure. Nichols argues that “every film is a documentary” in the respect that “even the most whimsical of fictions gives evidence of the culture that produced it and reproduces the likeliness of the people who perform within it” (Nichols, 2001, 1). This claim applies in the filmic selection of the thesis. The films of our filmic selection consist of what Nichols refers to as “documentaries of wish fulfillment” as they “make the stuff of the imagination (we would rather say the filmmaker’s intellect) concrete— visible and audible” (Nichols, 2001, 1). It is precisely the filmmaker’s intellectual/artistic approach and his/her choice of a narrative convention that differentiates the commentary of our filmic corpus on the issue of immigration.

In this respect, fiction films can, as much as documentaries, represent a mass event or social phenomenon, such as immigration. In order to do so, though, it is essential to engage a specific narrative focus, unlike documentaries, which tend to concentrate on the immediate issues that they discuss. Although this focus is not necessarily one single individual, the fact remains that the average screenplay¹⁸ revolves around the story of the main character, the protagonist. Since the fiction film functions within the creative and perceptual framework of an art form, it mostly addresses emotion. Naturally the interaction of a fiction film and its audience is not unilateral, nor is it controlled by the intention of the filmmaker. On the other hand, it does have the tendency to re-adjust and modify in relation to its occasional audience itself. In any case, the average screenplay usually involves a protagonist or protagonists that the audience can concentrate on and identify with. In the procedure of script editing the main question asked in order to maintain the focus of the writer is: “Whose story is this?” In other words, which one of the filmic characters does the story concentrate on? Consequently, what part of the audience is more likely to identify with this specific character, thus forming the target audience of the film? This is the question posed by the script editor in order to guide

¹⁸ By “average” we mean the screenplay of a commercial narrative fiction film. The films of our selection, although not intended as blockbusters or box-office success, are not experimental. Although there is a variety of filmic expression and genre (from Dardene’s cinema-vérité to Frears’ *Dirty Pretty Things*’ determination as a thriller and *Eastern Promises*’ gangster film essence) they are not, for the most part, films that experiment with established conventions of screenplay and narrative nor are they made outside the mainstream of European production.

precisely the structure of the film.¹⁹ The flexibility of the narrative fiction then allows (or even forces) the filmmaker to engage further aspects of general human experience that the viewer can identify with, in contrast to documentary films, which engage in an immediate examination of the specific experience (on either a collective or personal level) of immigration. For example, as Lioret says about his film *Welcome* (2009), the story of Bilal, a 17 year old Kurdish boy from Iraq who is determined to swim from France to England in order to be reunited with his loved one, and the parallel story of his swimming instructor and his estranged wife: “Without these two love stories I wouldn’t have had a movie but a documentary about immigrants. I’ve seen many of these documentaries—and they have all been very good—but unfortunately I don’t think people are necessarily moved by them. If people are interested in my film, it’s because it speaks to them emotionally” (Lioret to Phillips, 2010).

In this respect, film follows a reverse path to the social sciences that mainly address, through general facts and observation, the phenomenon of immigration. It analyses the given social facts and statistics and manages to narrow the wave of immigration down to a personal story. This dual but inverse procedure creates a framework of fruitful dialogue of both political and cultural content between film and society, the members of the audience and the community of filmmakers itself. Film does not aim to be a substitute for scientific research but from the point of view of Nichols’ argument (2001, 32) that film is a representative product of the culture that produces it, there are certain conclusions not dictated but described by it. In this respect, through “imaginatively inventing alternatives” to the historical world (Nichols, 2001, 25), fiction films are able to tell the personal story of the immigrant protagonist within the framework of collective facts and events that triggered his or her relocation in the first place and the following consequences. It is apparent, then, that with the fiction film there is something of a dual intervention: on one hand the intervention of the filmmaker’s “imagination” in terms of the story that is narrated/created on screen and on the other hand the willingness of the viewer

¹⁹ A film can naturally follow the stories of different and more than one protagonist. In order though to maintain the audience’s identification with the on screen proceedings, the structure of the story telling must concentrate on one basic character and story around which the peripheral sub-stories evolve and can be added or removed even in the post production of the film.

to invest in this narrative and suspend their disbelief, since the spectator is more emotionally involved than with most documentaries but still included in the scheme of “captured” reality, merely because of the recorded “fidelity of the imprint of things” (Nichols, 2001, 35). The issue of immigration is, therefore, distilled through both the filmmaker’s and the spectator’s perception of this particular social phenomenon.

In addition to a focus on narrative film, this study concentrates exclusively on “insider” perspectives on this new wave of immigration offered by Western rather than émigré or diasporic filmmakers.²⁰ This focus on Western, “insider” filmmakers is a necessary choice. Since this wave of migration is historically very recent, the formation of Eastern European communities in the West has not yet been followed by a substantial diaspora of filmmakers having established themselves in their respective host nations. Moreover, unlike cases such as the movement of cinema beur, or those of individual filmmakers, such as Fatih Akin in Germany, there are still no filmmakers that have emerged from the “second generation” of this specific wave of migration i.e. the descendants of Eastern European migrants to the West. Naturally, there are films depicting the phenomenon made by Eastern Europeans who are resident in the East, for example, *Spare Parts*, (Kozole, 2003). The thesis does not include these films, not only for the purpose of restricting the corpus of films to a manageable size, but also because it intends to focus on the work of Western filmmakers who adopt the point of view of the immigrant in their films. In this respect, the films included in this thesis can be seen as an indicative framework of interaction between members of the host communities and the issues of immigration themselves. On the other hand this focus can also lead to substantial conclusions on the impact of the films and levels of awareness they can provoke amongst the respective host nations, addressing audiences that do not consist of immigrant populations themselves. For these reasons, the filmic spectrum examined here does not include films made by Eastern European filmmakers. Although in most cases the film is narrated from the immigrant’s point of view, the extra-filmic address is, by default, that of a Western filmmaker, precisely because of the lack of the essence of autobiographical or experiential

²⁰ For more on diasporic, exilic or accented filmmakers see Naficy (2001), Berghahn and Sternberg (2009).

elements; in order then to be recomposed and transferred to screen through a narrative form that, nevertheless, sets the immediate problem of the reunification of Europe, in terms of population merger. This clarification is of great importance precisely because the use of the terms East and West are not of geographical essence, but rather are employed in relation to the administrative, sociopolitical and economic model that has divided Europe. For example, Greek films are included in this study, even though Greece is not geographically a Western country. For the purposes of this thesis it is understood as Western, since politically it falls within the framework of the free market economy.

By focusing on cinematic representations of intra-European migration, this thesis will also engage with broader research questions, such as: what is the face of new Europe and how do we define movement within it; what are the characteristics of the most recent mass population movement from East to West; which countries are the prominent recipients of such immigration; how inevitable is it for a given national cinema to finally interact with any, let alone the specific, sociopolitical, historical, economic and collectively psychological reality of immigration? We shall return to some of these questions, which will be answered later in this introductory chapter.

The thesis explores the levels of immigration from Eastern Europe as well as the way that this specific wave of immigration is different from the previous ones, specifically the waves of colonial and post-colonial migration to Europe since the 1950s. However, this does not mean that the specific wave of migration from East to West is defined by uniformity. How then do the multiple characteristics of this wave of immigration develop? This question inevitably leads to a classification of the individual immigrant within the migration phenomenon that reflects the variation of the status of the immigrant, the process of immigration and the characteristics of the relocated population at both the personal and community level. On the other hand, since this wave of immigration consists almost exclusively of “Europeans”, it lacks the obvious anthropological and significant cultural differences that characterise post-colonial migration. Therefore the thesis also examines to what extent the perceived lack of “difference” helps the integration of the new Eastern European immigrant protagonists of these films into the host community. The thesis will

also examine the role of nationality and ethnicity within “Europe” as a sociopolitical entity that is in constant transformation, changing and expanding, in particular with the arrival of the Eastern accession nations that joined the EU in the 2000s. It is therefore inevitable that the films studied in this thesis explore, to some extent, the relationship between these European countries, and the extent to which our understanding of what constitutes “Europe” (as a social, political, economic and cultural entity) is preserved, modified or expanded. These relations create patterns that are often used in the films and occasionally form various stereotypes within the narratives. The question of the immigrant stereotypes that emerge and the filmic representation of such is of interest here as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The cinematic representation of immigration has been the subject of an ongoing academic dialogue and has been elaborated on by many scholars in the past. Some of these scholars’ work will inform the methodology and arguments made in subsequent chapters of this thesis and so it is essential at this point to provide a short literature review.

One of these studies is Hamid Naficy’s *An accented cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001), an engaging overview on the work of post-colonial and émigré filmmakers. Although Naficy is dealing predominantly with post-colonial diasporas, he does include filmmakers from the former Eastern bloc, who are of interest to this thesis.²¹ His study does not focus intensively on filmmakers who deal with Eastern European immigrants without sharing the immigrant experience themselves (and by that we mean Western European filmmakers), but many elements of his approach can also be applied to the selected corpus of films for this thesis. The filmmakers of the thesis’ filmic spectrum may not belong in a diaspora themselves. In most cases though, the main narrative focus is on the immigrant. In this respect the storytelling adopts

²¹ Naficy uses the linguistic concept of accent as a trope that makes the distinction between standard dominant cinema and the alternatively produced cinema that derives from its artisanal and collective production model (Berghahn, 2010). The term also refers to the filmmaker’s and audiences’ deterritorialized locations.

the point of view of the immigrant and the story revolves around the immigrant's experience of displacement. Therefore, many of the motifs and themes that Naficy attributes to "accented" films, for example border crossing, and the way that such films "encode tensions of marginality and difference" (Naficy 2001: 10), as well as the use of accented style (Naficy 2001: 289-94) to represent the immigrant's experience of displacement, can be applied to the films and the characters analysed in this thesis. At the same time, however, we must be conscious of the specific differences, in terms of the sociopolitical, historical and geographical context, that there are between the majority of the films that Naficy includes in his corpus of "accented cinema" and the films analysed in this study. Most obviously, there is the focus on post-colonial migrants in Naficy's study (a point that has already been addressed earlier in this introduction).

As Naficy reminds us, diaspora, like exile, often begins with rupture and coercion and involves the scattering of populations outside their homelands. As in exile, people in a diaspora have an identity before their displacement but, unlike exile, that can be either individual or collective, diaspora is inevitably collective in both its origination and its destination. Moreover, in diaspora people maintain a long-term sense of ethnic consciousness that involves the homeland as long as the compatriot communities are elsewhere. As a result, diaspora is defined by plurality and multiplicity while, among political exiles, binarism and duality are dominant. These differences shape exilic and diasporic films differently. In spite of that and the fact that accented cinema is not described as a "genre", there are general characteristics that these films share and that are the main reason, besides the filmmakers, for their classification as "accented cinema". In this respect, common themes such as sadness, loneliness and alienation tend to appear in the accented films and, therefore, sad, lonely and alienated people seem to be the main characters. Accented films are personal and unique, because they are both authorial and autobiographical (Naficy 2001: 10-16). In many cases the author, the narrator and the protagonist are identical. Exile and epistolarity are constitutively linked, as they are both driven by distance, separation, absence and loss and by the desire to bridge the multiple gaps. Although technology has shaken the dominance of letters, epistle takes many forms such as an e-mail message, a video, a telephone conversation (Naficy 2001: 101-151).

In the case of this thesis the filmmakers do not derive from post-colonial displacement nor late modern scattering, but it is the main characters that are the products of another type of post-era disintegration. As in Naficy's accented cinema, the films of the thesis cannot, strictly speaking, be classified as a genre, but since they are focusing on the phenomenon of a specific wave of immigration triggered by common circumstances, the films do develop common characteristics, both on a level of sociopolitical commentary and their on screen representation. In the case of the thesis, it is the focus on Eastern European immigrant characters and the fact that they are directed almost without exception by Western filmmakers who have not themselves experienced the feelings of displacement, deterritorialization and exile associated with immigration or diaspora that distinguishes these filmmakers from Naficy's exilic or diasporic filmmaker. In this respect, the filmmakers here do not dramatise their personal experience but do adopt the point of view of the immigrant protagonist, identifying with him or her, and visualising their life-altering experience. Hence the films analysed in this thesis are not autobiographical (at least in the strict interpretation of the term). They are still authorial, though. The films examined here share the common characteristic of having filmmakers who are defined as auteurs (Bertucelli, Dardennes, Amelio). Even if they have not experienced themselves external exile or displacement, they do adopt the viewpoint of the displaced. Therefore, the characteristics of Naficy's filmmakers are here attributed to the protagonists of these films, rather than the filmmakers themselves. What is more, the motifs of sadness, loneliness and alienation, found in accented cinema are present and repeated in films depicting migration from East to Western Europe. Similarly, epistolarity (another key characteristic of Naficy's accented cinema²²) remains a common theme in these films, albeit adopting different forms. However, in the case of the films analysed in this thesis, epistolarity does not necessarily link the immigrant character to the physical entity of home. For example the letters in *Since Otar Left* (Julie Bertuccelli, 2003), are not sent by the immigrant Otar but by his niece, who

²² "As Derrida (1980) , Altman (1982) and Kauffman (1986, 1992) have demonstrated epistolarity involves the acts and events of sending and receiving, losing and finding, and writing and reading letters. It also involves the acts, events and institutions that facilitate, hinder, inhibit or prohibit such acts and events. In the classical fictional cinema, letters figured large, and a number of films can be classified as epistolary. Epistolarity is a chief contributor to the accented cinema's style" (Naficy, p.101).

finally replaces him in the attempt to break free in a new life in France. Lilya's imaginary letters to her dead friend (*Lilya4Ever*) do not connect her with home but with the abstract idea of a "basis", a root that she has been deprived of. Tanya's phone calls (*Last Resort*) are not made back home but to what she wishes to become "home", her absent fiancé.

In the films analysed, the relationship with place and homeland exists mainly in a rather reverse sense. In most cases this relationship does not refer to the nostalgia for a home left behind but to the immigrant's anticipation of an idolised West. Therefore, while Naficy describes accented cinema's motif of longing to return, the films we deal with rarely share this characteristic. The characters may often define themselves through an emblematic reminder of their former identity (such as Tanya's picture on the wall in *Last Resort*), but rarely think of returning. The films depict their struggle to reach the West (*71 Fragments* [Michael Haneke, 1994], *Blodsbånd/Mirush* [Marius Holst, 2007]), their desperate attempt to remain in the forbidden Western paradise despite the non idyllic conditions (*Illégal* [Olivier Masset-Depasse, 2010]) or their desire to reach their final destinations to which they usually attribute unrealistic characteristics and in which they invest all their hopes (*Last Resort*, *Vesna Goes Fast* [Carlo Mazzacurati, 1996]). On the other hand the homecoming journey is the theme of two films (*L' America* [Gianni Amelio, 1994], *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*), where the main characters are mistaken for immigrants and forced to endure and share the immigrants' hardship in order to return to a home that they have always considered a given. In this respect it is obvious that the lack of nostalgia or homesickness may well derive from the fact that, unlike Naficy's accented cinema, the films in this thesis are made by non-immigrant filmmakers.

The films we examine here share all the above characteristics, especially the ones that describe movement and all the aspects of its emblematic depiction. The filmmakers do inscribe themselves as the authors but in their films they do not dramatise themselves. The filmmakers become rather carriers of a triple gaze that involves themselves as authors, the point of view of the immigrant character and the perception of this point of view by an audience that inevitably consists, for the most part, of non-immigrant viewers. In this respect the choice of the filmic components may belong solely to the filmmaker but the

theme of immigration is defined through the attempt by the filmmaker to adopt the immigrants' point of view, offering a preferred reading to the audience. This aspect of the films examined here initiates a polymorphic interpretation that involves personal criteria combined with the intention to represent someone other than the filmmaker him/herself. Therefore the films may be the dramatisation of the filmmaker's perspective or worldview (to the extent that auteur cinema always is) but they are not based on personal experience of migration, nor do they function as (semi-) autobiographical texts, both approaches that are characteristic of Naficy's notion of accented cinema.

Another key study that deals with themes and films similar to those analysed in this thesis is *Screening Strangers* by Josefa Loshitzky (2010). In this study Loshitzky deals with films that articulate the tensions between a utopian notion of a post-national Europe and the contemporary reality of "Fortress Europe" (the practical, logistical and legislative structures that have been put in place to prevent "illegal" migrants from outside of the European Union entering and remaining within the EU). Loshitzky also considers how such films can evoke and even challenge the supposed "threat" to European identity posed by the immigrant, discussing the cinematic patterns of representation and negotiation with European identity. As in this thesis (and unlike Naficy) Loshitzky also deals with films about immigration made by Western filmmakers. However, her study only includes five films from the much broader range of films focusing on migration from Eastern Europe to the West studied in this thesis. Although *Dirty Pretty Things* (Stephen Frears, 2003), *Last Resort*, *Nordrand* (Werner Herzog, 1999) and *Beautiful People* (Jasmin Dizdar, 1999) are examined in Loshitzky's study, the rest of *Screening Strangers* differs from our focus. On one hand Loshitzky focuses on various aspects of immigration including the post-colonial wave of immigration and therefore dealing with issues such as the banlieues, the Muslim element in Europe and inter-racial love stories. On the other, although, according to Loshitzky, the standard motifs that follow the theme of immigration (journey, dehumanisation of the alien, the European capital as a place of allure for the immigrants etc) are common across European films dealing with this theme, once again her study offers a more general overview of the phenomenon of immigration to Europe

throughout the 20th century (with a particular focus on films that represent contemporary immigration in relation to the penetration of “Fortress Europe”). In this respect, Loshitzky elaborates on various waves of immigration and not on specific intra-European population movement. Clearly this differentiates this thesis from Loshitzky’s work, as well as the fact that this thesis does not focus on various aspects of immigration issues but only on the new stereotypes of the immigrant protagonists of specifically Eastern European origin and their interaction in the various host nations.

The final study with a direct relevance to this thesis is *Moving People Moving Images* by William Brown, Dina Iordanova and Lesha Torchin (2010). *Moving People Moving Images* is focused exclusively on the issue of human trafficking and the modern slave trade that can result from the exploitation of such illegal migrants. In this respect it engages with a selection of films that includes documentaries, both European and American films as well as films made by immigrant filmmakers. Since the study’s concern is the array of people trafficking for various purposes, it is inevitable that it concentrates on all historical periods of mass waves of immigration, including post-colonial immigration and trafficking as a result of conflict all around the world. Consequently it elaborates on examples of films depicting human trafficking that do not necessarily have Western Europe as a final destination. In the case of the focus in this thesis, trafficking is only one of the effects of the European East to West wave of immigration. In this respect the topic of trafficking is discussed, but the elements of immigration, labor and sexual exploitation are only some of the components of a more general picture that elaborates on a specific flow of immigration. The selection of films in *Moving People, Moving Images* does inevitably include some common case studies, such as *Import/Export*, *The Silence of Lorna*, and *Lilya4Ever*, but it still offers significant differences because of the content of the study. *Moving People, Moving Images* is also concerned with the issues of awareness, impact and the relationship between film and activism in relation to the subject of human trafficking. The impact of the films and awareness raised in the audiences on the issues of trafficking and exploitation are also dealt with in this thesis but the argument here is that whether films can be used as parts of larger campaigns or as tools

for activism is a rather collateral result and it cannot, in any case, be the preliminary end in itself of the process of filmmaking nor can it dictate the content of a film in the case of fiction.

THE CORPUS OF FILMS TO BE STUDIED

The selection of the films included in the thesis meets two basic criteria: first of all, as mentioned earlier, it only includes feature films. Having previously established the use of the term “Western” here, it is clear that the thesis engages with feature films produced in the countries that received the specific wave of immigration. Therefore it can produce some safe conclusions on how the host nations deal with the issue of migration and the processing of the phenomenon by their filmic production. This is not only a means to limit the length and scope of the research, but also an inevitable choice in order to determine the aspect of the phenomenon of immigration and its filmic representation examined here. The choice of Western European filmmakers does not limit the research to a unilateral point of view on the phenomenon, as the filmmaker undertakes here a triple task. Since in most films the narrative is experienced predominantly from the point of view of the immigrant (and in some exceptions, that of a potential immigrant e.g. *Since Otar Left* [Julie Bertuccelli, 2003], or a person related to and identifying with the immigrant e.g. *Revanche* [Götz Spielmann, 2008]), the filmmaker becomes the carrier of multiple viewpoints: that of the immigrant, or at least a simulation of the immigrant’s position, the perspective of members of the host community as well as the position of the target audience, in the sense that the filmmaker is able to use narration as a means to guide the viewer to a specific reading of the narrative and to encourage a specific identification with particular characters in the diegesis.

The selection of films for this thesis is intended to reflect the range of Western productions that have addressed the issue of intra-European migration since the early 1990s, stopping at the end of the first decade of the 21st century when the economic crisis hit the European south, once again transforming the face of modern Europe. The corpus of selected films is also intended to include

as many Western European countries and filmmakers as possible, in order to have a clear image of how the issue of intra-European immigration is addressed throughout Western Europe and which countries seem to be largely affected by this interaction.

In the first chapter of the thesis, we examine the various depictions of the different types of immigration that appear in the selected corpus of films. The characteristics of immigration from Eastern Europe to the West in these films follow a pattern of uniformity but there are certain levels of differentiation both on an individual level as well as a collective one. Differences mainly derive from issues of the variety of immigrant situations that depend on a variation in individual features and choices. This variation ranges from the way a person enters a specific country, the existence of an established subcommunity of the same origin, the choice of means of survival and the degree to which this choice is one of free will, and the person's motivation, to age, gender and psychology. Inevitably this differentiation creates, broadly speaking, "types" of immigrant on screen: the legal or illegal immigrant; the loner or member of a subcommunity; the economic or psychological immigrant (in reference to the motivation of the relocation); the working or criminal immigrant; the immigrant who is still linked to his own country or detached from it; the exploited immigrant; the asylum seeker; the trafficked immigrant. The immigrant types depicted in the films under analysis also differ as to the stage of the immigration procedure. There are people that we see on their journey or their border crossing, people returning to their home land, people already in the country of destination, but also people who are exploring the option of immigration in their own country. In some cases immigration is not the equivalent of a journey or movement, but that of an inner psychological process (*Since Otar Left*). In other cases the immigration procedure is a synonym for confronting bureaucracy. Naturally the gender and age of the immigrant create different circumstances and profiles, especially in terms of vulnerability in the cases of women or children. All these features of immigration procedures and filmic characters create a mosaic that constitutes the filmic "map" of intra-European immigration, which is viewed from the point of view of narrative and constructive filmic components, such as storytelling, casting, locations etc. In order to better illustrate these issues, Chapter 1 will focus on three extended case studies: *Mirush* (Marius Holst, 2007,

Norway/Denmark), *Eastern Promises* (David Cronenberg, 2007, UK/Canada/USA) and *Since Otar Left* (Julie Bertuccelli, 2003, France/Belgium/Georgia).

These three films are selected here, precisely because they manage to depict a wide range of themes associated with established and newly-arrived immigrants, second generation or potential immigrants, and immigrants from the East of Europe as opposed to immigrants of the previous post-colonial flow. *Mirush* revolves around the story of a young Kosovan boy, who decides to travel across Europe to Norway, in order to be reunited with his father, who has abandoned the family. The father is now a restaurant owner and is about to marry a local woman. However, the father is also involved with the Albanian mafia. The film is an excellent example of various status, process and personal features of the immigrant type and includes a rather interesting element: that of two different immigrant characters not only coming from the same country, but also being members of the same family.

Eastern Promises, on the other hand, depicts multiple waves of Russian immigration (including both from Russia and the USSR and some of the republics that were ruled by it in the communist era). The film depicts the total mosaic of Russian immigration, representing all different types of established, new, and trafficked immigrants, combined with the elements of personal data such as gender or age.

Since Otar Left is a film that, unlike most of the films examined here, takes place in the country of origin and not the host nation. It is the story of three generations of Georgian women, mother, daughter and granddaughter, whose daily struggle for survival is centred around the anticipated letters from Otar, the family's son who has emigrated to France. When the daughter and granddaughter discover that Otar has died, they decide to conceal the truth from the grandmother. Ada, the young, well-educated granddaughter replaces her uncle in the correspondence and soon takes his place in Paris as a new immigrant. *Since Otar Left* also depicts the variation of immigrant status through individual characteristics such as age, gender, level of education and the aspirations that these differences create in each immigrant.

The second chapter focuses on the relationship between host and home nation and the interaction between settled immigrants and local communities.

Again we examine both the cases of the immigrants as individuals and as representatives of their ethnic minority group or substantial subcommunity, when these are present. We explore the labour status of the immigrant and the immigrant's status in terms of the law, not in relation to the act of illegally crossing borders to enter "Fortress Europe" but to crime, either as a choice of free will or as a result of victimisation of the immigrant. We also take a look at the level of integration with the local host nation and the formation of interpersonal relationships between the immigrant and individuals. How often do they occur and what are their characteristics? Is the common use of the "love story" narrative intended as a universal vehicle that all audiences can relate to? What are the usual dynamics of the relationships and the co-existence of immigrants and local communities? How often are these depicted at a more personal level and how often, if ever, are they representative in a more collective way? These questions will be answered not only on a pragmatic level from the point of view of the storytelling (Smith, 1995), but also from the point of view of clearly filmic structure. In this chapter it is inevitable that specific attention is paid to the issues of the impact and awareness raised by the films. The chapter is concluded with extended case studies of *The Silence of Lorna* (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, 2008), *Last Resort* (Pawel Pawlikowski, 2000) and *Lilya4Ever* (Lukas Moodysson, 2002).

The Silence of Lorna is the story of Albanian, Lorna, who decides to collaborate with a gang and marry a local drug addict in order to get the money she needs to open a snack bar with her compatriot boyfriend. *Last Resort* is the story of Tanya, a Russian woman, who leaves Moscow with her son and arrives in the UK in order to meet her British fiancé, who never shows up. Uncertain as to what to do next, Tanya seeks political asylum and soon finds herself confined in a refugee camp. In *Lilya4Ever* Lilya and Volodya live in Estonia dreaming of a better life elsewhere. One day Lilya falls in love with Andrej and follows him to Sweden, only to find herself trapped in a network of traffickers. All three films describe multiple relationship patterns between the locals and the Eastern immigrants. These relationships vary from the levels of work and opportunities, interpersonal relationships (both *Last Resort* and *The Silence of Lorna* engage the element of a love story), relationships between established communities of Eastern immigrants and local people (through either interaction or isolation such

as the refugee camp in *Last Resort*) to the level of integration or alienation and criminalisation of the foreign other, and the dynamics of relationships between immigrants of different ethnic origins. It is rather interesting that, although these films depict the socio-political, economic and cultural realities of immigration, at the same time they have prominent characteristics of their respective genre or of the style of their filmmaker. *Lilya4Ever* combines the realistic style of the Scandinavian Dogme with the director's tendency toward the metaphysical element. *Last Resort* is the most mainstream of the three following the pattern of linear narrative. *The Silence of Lorna* is a typical sample of the Dardenne brothers' cinema.

CHAPTER 1

The new wave of immigration. The new types of immigrant and emerging stereotypes.

As a socio-economic, political and cultural phenomenon, immigration, is generally defined by the events or conditions that trigger it, as well as the circumstances in which it occurs and the way in which specific patterns of immigration evolve over time. The components which determine why a specific wave of migration from one country to another emerges are also governed by legislation in both the home and host nation concerning immigration and labour, border crossing policies and economic conditions, as well as the perceived cultural, social and economic impact of these specific waves of immigration on the relevant host nation and country of origin.

In the selection of films examined in this thesis (as described in the introduction) a mosaic of immigrant types emerges, allowing an on screen classification of people depicted within the general framework of migration to be seen across the corpus of films. This differentiation of the immigrant protagonist does not lead unilaterally to the personalisation of the immigrant. The story presented in the film may be a personal one but at the same time it is representative of the immigrant's status. It also allows the classification of the person in the smaller subgroups that comprise the total of the wave of

immigration in question. It is obvious that this dual analysis of both personal stories and groups of immigrant characters on screen has a very important impact: on one hand, it enables non-immigrant audiences to identify with the immigrant other in a sort of simulation of a potential interaction. On the other hand, it provides insight into the immigrant experience (albeit one that is presented in a fictional narrative) instead of relying solely on a strict table of the statistics of patterns of migration and settlement as they relate to a given immigrant minority.

The characteristics of this dual function of the story structure within the fiction film lead to both a differentiation and a classification of the filmic immigrant that are of an intrinsic as well as an extrinsic nature. In this respect, the intrinsic features refer to all those factors that define the individual, while the extrinsic ones are the characteristics of the circumstances of the immigration procedure that define the immigrant's status within the host community and the process of relocation itself.

As will be argued later in this chapter, in this specific wave of intra-European immigration from the East to the West of the continent, these characteristics are more evident than in any previous wave of immigration, (especially the post-colonial wave of immigration depicted in films during the 1970s and 1980s). This fact is inevitably an aspect of the filmic representation of immigrant protagonists and their experience that is found in this more recent wave of films depicting East to West migration within Europe since the early 1990s. Thus, whereas in the past the immigrant was commonly seen as a working-class male who migrated to the host nation for economic reasons, this is no longer the case. A more diverse range of immigrant types emerges, as do the reasons for these migrants to arrive in the host nation. The stereotypical image of the immigrant during the previous waves of immigration to and within the European continent was established, and, therefore filmically reproduced, because, to an extent, it was based on broadly accepted sociopolitical reality. Since the previous migration waves lacked the diversity of the one under examination here, it is obvious that some of the characteristics of the immigrant individual were initiated during the two decades of the intra-European, post-communist population movement.

In the past (after WWII and until the 1980s), previous waves of immigration were seen as responding to the demand for cheap, mostly unskilled labour to service the recovering or flourishing economies of the European West. After WWII, the initial wave of immigrants to countries such as France and the UK consisted of post-colonial workers who relocated in order to contribute to the financial recovery and literally rebuild the damaged West. In the case of the divided Germany, the “brain drain” followed a parallel pattern that constituted the scientific equivalent of a cheap labour force. During the 1960s, the European South (especially Spain and Portugal) became the source of a cheap labour force that served the purpose of accomplishing the technological wonder of the economic boom. This wave of intra-European immigration that preceded the one discussed here, in specific national cinemas, such as Greece, was followed by an overwhelming filmic representation of very specific characteristics. The wave of films that were produced simultaneously with the phenomenon of immigration, consisted of popular films, often technically inferior due to the speed and budget of productions. Their most prominent protagonists (N. Xanthopoulos, M. Vourtsi) soon became popular heroes. The songs sung by them were instant hits. The pair later obtained the status of cult personae whilst the films were outdated in time. Later on there were some more artistic films dealing with the issue (e.g. *Lefteris Dimakopoulos* [Sotiris Goritsas, 1993]). All these aspects are depicted by the cinematic representation of the phenomenon of immigration. Therefore it is true that the usual immigrant character on screen is a young male, immigrating for financial reasons. It is very common for families to separate and for relocation to be viewed as a temporary situation in a person’s life (e.g. *Black Dju* [Pol Cruchten, 1997], *Bread and Chocolate* [Franco Brusati, 1973]). When the previous phenomena of immigration are settled, their filmic representation consists mainly of films focusing on the immigrant family, or, more specifically the integration (or exclusion) of the descendants of these immigrants, who have been born or raised in Europe (e.g. *Ae Fond Kiss*, [Ken Loach, 2004], *La Haine*, [M. Kassovitz, 1995]). These films are focused on second and third generation descendants of immigrants (born or raised in the host nation) and explore issues such as cultural and ethnic identity and integration. This group of films are obviously distinct from those that deal with newly arrived first generation immigrants, who have experienced the trauma of

displacement from the homeland and whose relationship to the host nation is different. They will be further examined in Chapter 2.

As we have already argued in the introduction, the range of films studied in this thesis differs from the previous filmography on the issues of immigration for two key reasons: firstly because it concentrates on the specific wave of immigration that includes solely immigrants from the East to the West of Europe after the decline of the communist regime; secondly, because it consists of films made by Western European filmmakers who do not share the experience of migration with the real or fictional characters that they depict on screen. In contrast, the earlier wave of post-colonial immigration depicted in European cinema since the 1970s focused on immigrant protagonists from former European colonies and tended to be directed by filmmakers who were themselves immigrants or the descendants of immigrants from these former European colonial territories.²³ This differentiation will recur during the whole body of the thesis, but it is essential to take a look here at how it affects the introduction of the new type of immigrant in the films.

We have already presented a short review of the depiction of previous waves of immigration in European cinema, in the introductory chapter. Here we will see the difference in the depiction of this new wave of intra-European immigrants who develop different and rather versatile characteristics on screen, in relation to age, gender, educational level and psychological factors, which will be analysed in detail later in this chapter.

As mentioned earlier, alongside these “intrinsic/internal” characteristics there are also external causes that inform the immigrant types associated with the migration from former Eastern Europe represented on screen in European cinema since the 1990s. These include causes, procedures, geographical and political changes, the formation of respective demands in human resources in the hosting countries, financial need and economic structures, legislation and policies, the progressive formation of established immigrant communities and war.

²³ Naficy (2001) focuses solely on diasporic filmmakers but, as explained in the introduction, some of the films of the thesis are also examined by Loshitzky (2010). Loshitzky concentrates on the general immigrant experience to and within Europe, while this thesis concentrates on the specific wave of immigration as depicted in European cinema after 1989.

These extrinsic/external characteristics are common throughout the corpus of films examined in this thesis, linked as they are to the shared sociopolitical conditions (and their consequences) that triggered the specific waves of immigration from various countries and communities from Eastern to Western Europe in the years following 1989. However, the narrative focus of these films is also on the specific, localised politics affecting specific nations and (immigrant) communities after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the break-up of the former Soviet bloc. In this respect some of the films refer to the disintegration of the USSR and the breaking-up of the Soviet Union into separate and independent states, but do so with immigration to the West as the direct consequence (e.g. *Lilya4Ever* [Lukas Moodysson, 2002], *Since Otar Left* [Julie Bertuccelli, 2003], *La Sconosciuta* [Giuseppe Tornatore, 2006]). Some of these films focus on the equivalent procedure of democratisation in Eastern European countries under the immediate influence of the Soviet regime (e.g. *71 Fragments* [Michael Haneke, 1994], *Code Inconnu* [Michael Haneke, 2000], *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide* [Marco Tullio Giordana, 2005]). Others concentrate on the wave of immigration triggered fundamentally, on one hand, by the failure of the communist administrative structure of countries that have maintained a relative independence from the soviet influence, such as Tito's Yugoslavia (e.g. *Das Fraulein* [Andrea Staka, 2006]) or, on the other, underwent even harder isolation, such as Enver Hoxha's Albania (e.g. *LAmerica* [Gianni Amelio, 1994]). Finally there are films depicting the results of the multiple wars in Yugoslavia and the waves of relocated population that emerged (e.g. *Mirush* [Marius Holst, 2007], *Nordrand* [Barbara Albert, 1999]). It is apparent that the choice of the specific instant of the historical turbulence of the circumstances mentioned above also creates a varying framework for the story telling in film. The way that change is being established in the respective Eastern European countries and the peaceful or unstable circumstances of the disintegration of the regime also inevitably dictate different narrative frames. In this respect, the filmic representation of specifically intra-European immigration obtains equally varying extrinsic characteristics surrounding the story of each character.

Types of migration and migrants.

The corpus of films selected for this thesis depicts a variation of both types of migration as well as types of migrants (as individuals). These variations fall within the conditions that triggered the specific wave of immigration from Eastern to Western Europe, but differ in many ways. Although immigration here refers solely to external immigration, it is limited to migration within the European continent.

The phenomenon of immigration depicted in the films in question, although not involuntary or forced, can be classified as “reluctant” or “imposed” migration, due to the unfavourable situations (mainly financial ones) created by the end of the communist era. In this respect most of the immigrant characters in the films migrate in search of improvement to their living conditions. In films such as *71 Fragments*, *Import Export* (Ulrich Seidl, 2007), *Take Care of your Scarf*, *Tatjana* (Aki Kaurismaki, 1994) and *Illégal* (Olivier Masset-Depasse, 2010), it is clear that financial hardship is the main motivation for the immigrant protagonists. On the other hand, some of the films actually depict the phenomenon of chain migration, meaning a series of migrations within a family that aims to reunite family members. Films like *Tickets* (Abbas Kiarostami, Ken Loach, Ermanno Olmi, 2005) or *Mirush* depict this aspect of migration.

Although the main motivation for the immigrant characters is survival, migration motivated by psychological, emotional and sentimental reasons is a prominent motif throughout the films studied in this thesis. In *Last Resort* (Pawel Pawlikowski, 2000), Tanya decides to migrate from Russia in order to be united with her English fiancé, in her quest to find true love. In *Das Fräulein*, Ana acts more like a traveller, running away from sickness rather than an immigrant or an asylum seeker, forced to relocate because of war or political violence. However, in most cases, the line between practical and psychological motives remains quite obscure. In *Since Otar Left*, financial hardship may be the main trigger for Otar to emigrate from Georgia, but when Ada takes his place in Paris, it is apparent that her reasons for not returning home are more complex than simply improving her economic conditions. What she finds in Paris has more to do with finding true satisfaction in life and exploring her potential, than being able to

financially support her struggling family, as Otar had wanted to do. It is thus evident that these three films reconstruct migration both as an inevitable process aiming for survival, and as an “inner” process that satisfies a psychological need in the protagonists. While immigration for financial reasons naturally has an aspect of psychologically-oriented consequences (Brody, 1969, Olmedo, 1979) for the immigrant (as with Ada in *Since Otar Left*) there is also the case of conscious or subconscious negotiation with the idea of migration. Ada does not leave to improve the financial conditions themselves but to avoid dealing with the limitations they impose on her life and, ultimately, what the audience witnesses in this film is her inner process of negotiation with the idea.²⁴

Besides being a process of personal choice or a collective phenomenon, patterns of immigration are also driven by or occur in response to specific laws and policies on both a national, regional and transnational level. In this respect, the collective phenomenon of immigration creates groups of legal or illegal immigrants, according to the procedure each individual follows in order to relocate. The classification of the immigrant character as “legal” or “illegal” is an essential element of these narratives. In this respect, while films concentrating on legal immigrants focus on the hardships of relocation and integration, illegality forms the main “theme” of the films that depict the pattern of illegal immigration. For example, *From the Edge of the City* (Constantinos Giannaris, 1998) comments on the isolation and marginalisation of the immigrant protagonists, whilst in a film such as *Illégal* (Olivier Masset-Depasse, 2010) the choice of immigration through unlawful procedures is itself the main theme of the film. Tania lives illegally in Belgium with forged documents. However, her decision to reside illegally in the country on false papers is not the basis for further illegal activity. She is prepared to break the law so that she, and above all her son, can stay in Belgium. The threat of deportation is constantly pending until her arrest and during her placement in a detention centre.

Although legality in most cases refers to the process of migrating (i.e. border crossing) and the immigrant’s legal status in the host nation, there is also

²⁴ For migration psychology and behavioural models see Fawcett, 1986.

a different aspect to it, referring to the activities of the immigrant who is already relocated. In *The Silence of Lorna* (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, 2008), Lorna lives and works legally as an immigrant in Belgium. However, the film depicts her decision to break the host nation's laws for personal gain. In many of the films that form the focus of this thesis the theme of confronting bureaucracy is quite prominent, either in the form of an immigrant trying to fight the imposed policies of migration themselves (*Last Resort*, *Illégal*), or in the effort to bend the existing rules in order to benefit (*The Silence of Lorna*, 71 *Fragments*) or succeed in relocating (*Lilya4Ever*, *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*). This distinction between legal and illegal immigrants leads to the formation of a different type of immigrant, making the distinction between the immigrant who engages in criminal activities and the immigrant who decides to flout or break laws that refer specifically to immigration and residency in the host nation. However, due to this precarious legal position, the illegal or undocumented immigrant is depicted as more vulnerable and, therefore, more likely to be exploited. In this respect, illegality is not only a choice of the immigrant character but also a pattern encouraged by the host society. In *Dirty Pretty Things* (Stephen Frears, 2003) there is a whole mechanism of exploiting labour. The Baltic Hotel is run on the basis of hidden, expendable workers. In *Lilya4Ever* (analysed in detail in Chapter 2) Lilya agrees to migrate with a fake passport only to find herself contributing to what seems a silent and sinister agreement of human trade.

The relationship between immigration and breaking the law takes other forms as well. It is inevitable that the films also comment on the interaction of immigrant characters and crime. This interaction takes place within the framework of organised crime, as well as within the fabric of a personal choice of the immigrant character. Enforced or voluntary, or from the point of view of actual criminal action or petty crime, this aspect of breaking the law is a prominent motif in the filmic corpus. Since the films reconstruct the reality of the specific wave of immigration, they do develop around certain facts of the phenomenon. (For migration waves following WWII see introduction.) Contrary to the previous waves of post-colonial and economic migration, this specific flow of immigrants was not officially encouraged, anticipated or co-ordinated by the

host nation. In this respect it is rather common and inevitable for a small percentage of the immigrant population to turn to crime, not only as victims of exploitation and human trafficking, but also by mere choice, within the framework of delinquency, as well as it being the only available means of survival. (For the debate on the relation of Eastern European immigration and crime see articles by Boot [2012], Hignett, [2012], Weenink, [2007], Feige [1999]). Therefore, the type of the immigrant criminal often emerges. *Eastern Promises* (David Cronenberg, 2007) and *Mirush* (Marius Holst, 2007) recreate the action of the Russian and Albanian mafia respectively. In these films, the filmmakers portray the immigrant criminal who acts within the framework of organised crime, which functions as a subcommunity with specific features, hierarchy and rules. In other films, such as *Last Resort* or *From the Edge of the City*, the isolated immigrant turns to petty crime as the only outlet from their entrapment and marginalisation, an answer to their need to belong. The small “gangs” provide them with precisely that sense of belonging. *Hostage* (Constantinos Giannaris, 2005) on the other hand, depicts an act of crime as a spontaneous act of revenge and the protagonist’s only way to claim his rightful demands.

It is evident that these variations of storytelling introduce the protagonist types of the exploited victimised immigrant and the purely criminal immigrant, as opposed to the working immigrant. Murray Smith proposes that fictional narrations “elicit three levels of engagement with characters, distinct types of responses normally conflated under the term ‘identification’. Together these levels of engagement comprise the ‘structure of sympathy’. In this system, spectators construct characters” (recognition) (Smith: 1995, 75). In this respect, through identifying the types of immigrants initiated by the films, we can see the relation formed between the characters and the audiences.²⁵ In this chapter we see how the first level of Smith’s “structure of sympathy” unfolds through “recognition”, generated by the narration, as the “ultimate organizer of the text” (Smith: 1995, 75).

²⁵ “Spectators are ... provided with visual and aural information more or less congruent with that available to characters and are placed in a certain structure of alignment with characters” (Smith, 1995, 75).

Since all the films deal with the phenomenon of immigration after the disintegration of the communist bloc and while the Eastern European countries undergo the process of democratisation, there are no characters who actually defect to the West. In this respect, the asylum seeker is not a prominent type, with the exception of Tanya in *Last Resort*, who falsely declares herself as such. We can only assume that supporting characters who are members of an established community of Eastern Europeans may have derived from such a process,²⁶ for example Anna's father and Semyon in *Eastern Promises* (see case study later in this chapter) or Daiga's great aunt in *J'ai Pas Sommeil* (Claire Denis, 1994) (see complete case study in Chapter 2).

The immigrant character is commonly portrayed either as a loner or as a member of an established community.²⁷ In some cases the immigrant character is reunited with family members without assimilating into a larger immigrant community. In *Nordrand*, Tamara is a second generation immigrant who remains in Austria after the rest of her family is repatriated. On the other hand, she represents the "established community" of the same origin for her compatriot Senad who is driven to Austria due to the Yugoslav wars. In *Code Inconnu*, the Romanian woman, Maria, is a member of a larger subcommunity of illegal, seasonal immigrants who move back and forth between France and Romania, keep being deported and then returning for as long as they can remain in France and usually survive by begging. In *Das Fräulein*, Ruza is the owner of a diner with an immigrant clientele, who preserves her isolation by choice. *Last Resort's* Tanya, followed by her son Artyom, is a loner who is relocated within the immigrant detention centre (a disused amusement park called "Dreamland") but is not shown to share any cultural, linguistic or ethnic connection with other immigrants detained in the centre. The only common characteristic of the inhabitants of "Dreamland" is the fact that they are all

²⁶ For population movement within Europe after WWII, see introduction.

²⁷ This was also the case in the depiction of the post-colonial wave of immigration. But in that case there was the prominent element of broader family already relocated in the country of destination. On the other hand the element of an established community in the case of the films examined here, bears yet another interesting feature. Since the specific wave of immigration is historically recent and not settled yet, and due to the conditions of seclusion and division of Europe during the communist era, the established communities refer to earlier and different conditions of fleeing to the West (e.g. defection).

seeking asylum. Her son Artyom, on the other hand, soon becomes a member of a small gang of local children, who are united not by language or origin, but simply by the delinquent activities they undertake. *From the Edge of the City* depicts a group of delinquent teenagers and youngsters who come into the city almost as a pack of strays, and live in the suburbs of Athens in a ghetto of former Soviet citizens of Greek origin. Olga in *Import/Export* is a loner, forced to separate from her family to live a life of solitude in Austria in order to be able to provide for her family who have been left behind in Ukraine. In *J'ai pas Sommeil*, Daiga is reunited with a great-aunt, who belongs to a well established Lithuanian immigrant community in Paris. In this respect, although the act of migration often results in solitude and isolation, since the immigrant characters are detached from everything they have known as everyday life, the immigrant protagonists experience, nevertheless, different degrees of integration in the host nation. Consequently, there is a varying approach in these films to the immigrant character's perspective towards "home". Some of the relocated characters seem to have a strong bond with their homeland, usually linked to family left behind. In this case, their migration is perceived as a temporary situation and the main goal is to gain enough money to improve their living conditions and eventually return, but there are other immigrant characters who consider relocation a permanent choice and are determined to rebuild their life in their new home. Lorna in *The Silence of Lorna* will stop at nothing to reach her goal to open a diner and remain in Belgium. The young Romanian boy in *71 Fragments* is determined to stay in Austria and actually puts himself up for adoption, using the media attention he manages to attract.

In many of these films, the character's return becomes inevitable. The homecoming journey, whether voluntary or involuntary, is almost as prominent in these narratives as the initial border-crossing journey that leads to the host nation. *Code Inconnu*'s Romanian beggar builds a new house in her Romanian village, in order to return and continue her life after her temporary stay in Paris. The narrative of *Last Resort* is based, almost from the very first moments of the film, around Tanya's attempts to leave the UK and return to Russia. For *Illéga!*'s Tania and *La Sconosciuta*'s Irena, however, deportation is nothing but a nightmarish threat.

Code Inconnu, *Take Care of your Scarf Tatjana*, *Das Fräulein*, *The Silence of Lorna*, *Illégal*, *Once* (John Carney, 2006), *Last Resort*, *Ondine* (Neil Jordan, 2009), and *The Tree and the Swing* (Maria Douza, 2013), all portray female immigrant protagonists. Additionally *Lilya4Ever*, *La Sconosciuta*, *Eastern Promises* and *Revanche* (Götz Spielmann, 2008) depict the dimensions and multiple aspects of exploited women, trafficked for sexual purposes.

Proximity of destination, as well as the disintegration of the core family and the lack of state infrastructure for child welfare also introduce another common thread running through the filmic spectrum of immigrant types on offer in these films: that of the child or teenage immigrant, who relocates alone, adding to the percentage of children following their parents in the process of migration. *Last Resort*, *Correction* (Thanos Anastopoulos, 2007), *Tickets*, *From the Edge of the City* depict the reality of immigrant children. On the other hand *Mirush* and *71 Fragments* portray children who undergo the process of border crossing on their own. *La Sconosciuta* introduces a different aspect of trafficking: the trafficking of children.

It is apparent that all these films draw an extended picture of the characteristics of the new type of immigrant. These characteristics constitute a mosaic of intra-filmic components (such as casting and accented speech) that will be examined in the following case studies.

Whilst all the central protagonists in the films that we are examining in this thesis are obviously united by their status as immigrants in the host nation (be they legal or illegal), there are other differences that distinguish them from one another: national identity, linguistic difference, ethnic origins as well as social class and the level of education received prior to migration. European films dealing with the “alien other” prior to the wave of films studied in this thesis, appear largely to focus on the mere fact of the outsider and the marginalised foreigner (*Otobüs* [Tunç Okan, 1977],²⁸ *Le Thé à la Menthe* [Abdelkrim Bahloul, 1984]).²⁹ However, in European films focusing on migration from East to

²⁸ See Naficy, 2001, 257.

²⁹ For more on *Le Thé à la Menthe* and *Hexagone* (Malik Chibane, 1994) see Tarr, 1995, pp 415-425.

Western Europe since the 1990s a different stereotype emerges: that of an educated person who is forced to compromise with a “lesser” profession or social status, precisely because of the fact of his immigration (See *Since Otar Left*, the complete case study below in this chapter). This new model of the immigrant stereotype is enhanced by two specific elements that are main features of the new type of immigrant. First of all, the intra-European immigrant tends to share common anthropological, cultural and religious characteristics with the citizens of the host nations. In this respect, while still clearly identified as outsiders in the host nation, the new immigrants emerge from a closer origin in geographical terms and do not appear as “alien” as many of the immigrant protagonists associated with the post-colonial wave of immigration. (There is, for example, the focus on both everyday and institutionalised racism experienced by Maghrebi immigrants and their French-born descendants from former French colonies in North Africa in French films dealing with immigration from the 1970s and 1980s: *Voyage en capital* [Akika, 1977], *Les Ambassadeurs* [Ktari, 1977], *Dupont Lajoie* [Boisset, 1974], *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède* [Charef, 1985]). The host communities that constitute the audience of these specific films find it easier to identify with the Eastern co-European and accept the similarities. The fact that the filmic immigrant is a fellow European who comes from a formerly isolated country but which is still within the same continent, and which has cultural and scientific achievements that they are familiar with, makes it easier to comprehend social and educational similarities. On the other hand, the availability of education offered by the state in these countries during the communist era not only creates a framework for acceptance of the well-educated Eastern immigrant but also imposes a stereotype. In this respect, although European films since the 1980s that focus on postcolonial immigrant minorities like *My Beautiful Launderette* (Stephen Frears, 1985)³⁰ or *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (Stephen Frears, 1987)³¹ do introduce the issue of a social class loss and compromise, this topic usually

³⁰ In the case of *My Beautiful Launderette* the intergenerational conflict is also a result of questions of sexuality and the rejection of the older generation in the choices of the younger and not only a result of displacement and the level of cultural integration.

³¹ These largely successful films were written by Pakistani-British writer Hanif Kureishi. In this respect they engage the element of autobiographical narrative motifs that is absent from the films examined here.

appears as an exception and not as a common motif. In contrast, in the filmic corpus selected in this thesis, there is the prominent leitmotif of the educated, middle-class citizen who, due to financial hardship, has to settle with conditions inferior to the ones this immigrant protagonist has created for him/herself in his/her homeland. Tanya in *Last Resort* is a middle-class woman, who used to work as a children's book illustrator back home. When she declares herself an asylum seeker, she finds herself trapped in the classless community of the reservation facility, deprived of her social class characteristics and ways of life. In *Import/Export*, Olga is a trained nurse who has to settle for working as a cleaner in a nursing home. The Romanian woman in *Code Inconnu* becomes a beggar in order to complete the building of a new house in her Romanian village, where she appears as a well-respected member of the local community. Ivan, the doorman of the Baltic Hotel, speaks like a poet and appears to have a rather philosophical attitude towards life, that implies a higher educational level, which, although not clearly mentioned by the story telling, does not match his current working position as a doorman. Their fluency in the languages of their chosen destination countries enhances the impression of the new educated immigrants, since it has not been imposed by colonial relations of the past. Additionally, the fact that this specific wave of immigration has been dictated by the disintegration of a political and financial administrative model and not by mere financial inequality and the need for a cheaper labour force, as in the wave of South to North intra-European immigration, underlines the same conviction: that the new wave of immigration does not consist of working class immigrants who are forced to relocate to escape poverty as a given factor, but rather those who are motivated by a failure of the system.

Emerging stereotypes.

The differentiation between and individual classification of the new immigrants has a dual relationship with stereotypes and mythification, developing the notion of mythification first set out by James Snead (1994) in his research on representations of race and blackness in Hollywood cinema. On one hand, by depicting personal stories the filmmaker creates on screen

characters that are not defined by the mere fact of their migrant status. On the other hand, the types of films and filmmakers that are being examined here and their clear intention to assume the point of view of the immigrant and therefore represent them to a Western European audience in the light of their human nature, inevitably creates what can be perceived as a reverse kind of stereotype. In this respect if we accept that the filmmaker creates “not merely spectators but ideal spectators” (Snead, 1994, 133)³² by the various means and tools at his/her disposal, then it is obvious that the film itself “selects what is out before the camera” (Snead, 1994, 134), but this is a selection that the viewer tends to believe as true. According to James Snead, films:

elevate themselves as a privileged kind of truth, photographic truth, which can seem as believable as (and often more believable than) reality itself. Secondly, film can accurately record everyday events, but this is more likely to serve as a selection of those events, tending in the hands of skilled filmmakers either towards accuracy or distortion. The third element here is the notion of belief: do you believe it? Does an audience believe that this distortion is truly reality? (Snead 1994: 135)

This fact is clearly inextricably linked to the filmmaker’s intention of depicting this chosen “reality”. In the case of the films selected in this thesis, the intention is different from the ones in, for example, early Hollywood films depicting African-American protagonists (such as those found in Snead’s analysis) or popular films depicting the post-colonial immigrant. The films discussed here are mainly art house, decidedly political films and by “political” we do not mean the inevitable political essence of any work of art but the intended political character of films that aim to be social commentary. Additionally there is a prominent criterion of the selection of the specific body of films. The films examined in this thesis have been made by Western European filmmakers who have chosen to assume the perspective of the Eastern immigrant. The theme of the films evolves commonly around immigration and

³² Snead’s work in *White Screens, Black Images* concentrates on the code of the filmic representation of blacks in Hollywood films from 1915 to 1985. He presents the methods through which the racist ideology functions within film. Although the framework of his study is completely different from the one of this thesis, many of his claims and conclusions apply here, as they can be seen and filtered through multiple aspects of the representation of the alien other.

the immigrant character is not secondary or peripheral but the main protagonist. The aim is to portray the immigrant person as someone caught in the turbulence of history and sociopolitical change. Thus, he is someone whose situation is actually random and could occur on either side of the European continent and therefore to anyone. In this respect, the immigrant character has similar characteristics to any Western European citizen and, further, any person. The immigrant character is not represented within the framework of stereotypical roles, such as that of the black servant in early Hollywood films (*Gone With The Wind* [Victor Fleming, 1939], *The Birth of a Nation* [D. W. Griffith, 1915]), the caricature of an accented “Alice in Wonderland” of the 1960s post-colonial immigrant (*The Party* [Blake Edwards, 1968]) or the villain intruder of the Cold War Hollywood films. The new immigrant character is a fellow European with almost identical anthropological and cultural characteristics.

In this effort to depict the Eastern immigrants within “realistic” schemes, it is interesting to also mention social characteristics. Although the Eastern immigrant comes from a theoretically classless society, the filmmakers often represent them in the light of a very clear social identity that corresponds to the Western European equivalent. *Last Resort*’s Tanya, *Das Fräulein*’s Anna, *Since Otar Left*’s women, are presented as clearly middle-class people, while in *Tickets or Somers Town* (Shane Meadows, 2008) the element that prevails is the solidarity among the European (Western and Eastern) working class. On the other hand, this effort to detach the on screen immigrant or alien other from the negative or stereotypical depictions of the past, although successful towards this specific direction, inevitably traps the representation of the new immigrant character within a framework of political correctness that becomes stereotypical. Trying to present the immigrant as a victim of historical and sociopolitical conditions, often instead of portraying a multi-dimensional person, limits the filmmaker to one aspect of the migrant character alone: the vulnerability caused by displacement itself. In this respect, there is the common motif of the basically “good” immigrant, who is constantly victimised, wronged and exploited. Although this element of the filmic representation of the immigrant reflects a common reality, it very often becomes unilateral and an obstacle to a more complex handling of the phenomenon of immigration and its components. The

films in some cases describe an inescapable reality. For example, *Lilya4Ever* indeed portrays the story of abandoned children, left to be exploited by predators without having any other choice or the opportunity to find shelter. On the other hand, it is a rather common pattern for the filmmakers of our range of films to detach the immigrant characters from their past and their personal characteristics, and depict all their bad choices or qualities as a result of their relocation. In this respect, these films are caught up in a reverse stereotype to that of the past on screen alien. For example, and to return once again to Snead's analysis, in Hollywood films of the past the black "alien" protagonist:

is being portrayed as something static, enduring, and unchangeable, unrelated to the history that whites have trapped them in. Blacks are seen as ahistorical. The African films corroborate this notion. In the notorious African films —say *Tarzan's Peril* (1951), or *King Kong* (1933)— we can see that even before slavery, Africans have always acted as they do in America ... therefore three hundred years of slavery and oppression made no difference! They must be that way by nature, because they were that way in Africa! (Snead: 1994, 139)

The Eastern European immigrant depicted in the corpus of films examined here is the product of a specific historical moment of political upheaval and change. His or her actions and choices are deprived of the personal element and are merely a result of conditions. This way a new stereotype emerges: that of a relocated person who enters crime, delinquency, breaking the law, prostitution only through immigration and not because of his/her evil nature or own choice, but forced precisely because he/she has no other option as an immigrant. It is interesting to underline that this is only the case in the films of social and political commentary that evolve around and focus on the theme of immigration. In contrast, in Hollywood films of the same period but of a different theme, where the alien other is a peripheral character, the motif of the criminal foreigner still prevails (for example, the *Taken* series). In the selection of films analysed in this thesis the motivation for crime is either clearly presented as or implied to be the result of hardship. *Import/Export's* Olga and *Last Resort's* Tanya resort to prostitution as a means of survival. In *Mirush* (which will feature in an extended case study later in this chapter) the central

immigrant protagonist's father interacts with the Mafia but the conditions of life back home depicted earlier in the film serve as an excuse. Similarly the young protagonists of *From The Edge of the City* turn to petty crime as their only outlet from the isolation they are condemned to. The young Albanian immigrant in *Hostage* is wronged by his Greek employers and tortured by the police, before he decides to abduct the passengers of a bus. In *The Silence of Lorna*, Lorna appears amoral but she finally achieves redemption (by being trapped and punished by the same evil she previously chose) when she changes her mind and tries to reverse the result of her choices and actions. The only film of our selection that depicts the brutal reality of organised crime is not only one that does not directly deal with the issue of immigration, but also one that is only partly a European production, directed by a non-European filmmaker and which contains Hollywood production values, stars and dialectics: *Eastern Promises*.

Three films are selected here, precisely because they manage to depict all the aspects of established or new immigrants, second generation or potential immigrants, and immigrants from the East of Europe as opposed to immigrants of the previous post-colonial flow. These three films provide a wide range of the new on screen immigrants, not only through the protagonists but also through the supporting characters. On the other hand, these protagonists are carriers of a variety of the new immigrant characteristics described earlier in this chapter.

CASE STUDIES

SINCE OTAR LEFT

Since Otar Left is the story of three generations of women in post-Soviet Georgia. The film unravels the everyday lives of Eka, her daughter, Marina and her granddaughter, Ada, in a decaying neighborhood of Tbilisi, as the three women try to survive in the ruins of the post-communist era. Eka is a strongly opinionated, old woman. Marina, a widower, undertakes the role of the provider of the family, selling their own household items, as well as objects she collects from the garbage, in a flea market. Ada is a studious and solitary young girl who attends classes at the university and at the same time helps her mother take care of Eka. She shares an intimate relationship and a love for French culture and literature with her grandmother but struggles to maintain the balance of the tense relationship between her mother and her grandmother. The three women live their lives between a deteriorating apartment in Tbilisi and their “dacha” somewhere in the countryside. The lives of the three women revolve around the letters of Otar, Eka’s son, Marina’s brother and Ada’s uncle, a doctor who has migrated to France. The family’s apartment is covered with wall-to-wall shelves full of books of French literature, Eka’s inheritance from her grandfather, that have survived the communist era hidden by the family. The intimate connection of the family with France is very prominent and they often speak to each other in French, as a means of maintaining their connection to Otar, whose letters are also written in French. Otar describes his life in Paris, a life of hardship and compromise, as he doesn’t work as a doctor but as a construction worker instead. He tries to send his family what little money he manages to save. When news of Otar’s death arrives, Marina’s grief is overshadowed by her anxiety that her ageing mother will not be able to cope and survive the tragedy. She decides to conceal the truth of Otar’s death from Eka and persuades the reluctant Ada to replace her uncle in the act of letter writing to the family. Ada takes up forging the émigré tale of Otar, writing the letters and reading them to Eka. Gradually she starts improvising what she presumes to be Otar’s life in Paris. She “gives” him a better job in a restaurant, forges pictures of him in Paris and engages him

in intellectual conversations with the local people and activities such as going to the opera. By creating an idealised image of life in Paris for her immigrant uncle, Ada is also describing the life in Paris that she would wish for herself. Months go by and while Marina, her partner Tengiz and Ada take a trip to the “dacha” in order to find more objects they can sell in the flea market, Eka decides to sell her only possessions, the books, to buy tickets for the three of them to visit Otar in Paris. When Ada and Marina return to Tbilisi, they are faced with Eka’s decision and the fact that they have to make a choice of their own on whether they should reveal the truth. The roles are now reversed, and Marina wants to tell Eka the truth, while Ada believes that they should let her take the trip to Paris, to find closure, even if it is the last thing that Eka does. Soon the three women find themselves in Paris. A troubled Marina, an ecstatic Ada and a confident Eka lodge in a cheap inn, ready to face their respective anticipations surrounding Otar. While Eka is still asleep and with no decisive plan on how they are going to handle the situation, Ada and Marina sneak out of the hotel to visit Otar’s grave. While they are gone, Eka herself goes to find Otar in the working-class tenements where she believes him to be still living. The truth is finally revealed to Eka by Otar’s neighbors. Although Eka is broken by the tragic news, she decides to offer Ada and Marina a gracious way out of their deceit. When she returns to meet them she says that she found out that Otar, unable to make a decent living in France, had moved to America, fulfilling his lifelong dream but without wanting to tell his family, to avoid admitting his failure in France. The three women get to the airport to return to Tbilisi. Ada tells Marina and Eka to go on through the checkpoint while she goes to get some French magazines but Eka already knows what Marina does not, that Ada has decided to actually replace her uncle in his émigré tale and will stay in Paris to try to make a life for herself. The film ends with the family’s tearful but silent goodbye through the window of the departure gate.

Winner of the “Grand Jury Prize” at Cannes (Critics’ Week 2003) as well as the “César” for best debut film in 2003, *Since Otar Left* is a French/Belgian production, directed by Julie Bertuccelli, daughter of filmmaker Jean-Louis Bertuccelli. Julie Bertuccelli started her career in film as an assistant director to acclaimed filmmakers Otar Ioselliani, Rithy Pahn, Emmanuel Finkiel, Krzysztof Kieslowski and Bertrand Tavernier. Bertuccelli directed numerous documentary

films before moving on to fiction, with *Since Otar Left* being her first feature film, which she directed as well as co-authored as a screenwriter. It was precisely her past in documentaries that impelled Bertuccelli to deal with the theme of *Since Otar Left*. As she underlines herself, she “wanted to go on working with this freedom, only applying to a dramatic situation ... pushing [her] limits and finding a different way of filming characters” (Bertuccelli, 2004). As Bertuccelli explains in her interview for *Zeitgeist* films, her intentions were not that different to her previous work in documentaries:

I shot my actors with the same curiosity that I shoot people in my documentaries, except I was less afraid that I might be manipulating them, that I might be transgressing the taboo on intimacy... when I sensed that an actor was acting as such, all the emotion was gone.
 (Bertuccelli, 2004)

Bertuccelli also mentions that she enjoyed shooting written dialogue. In this respect, as a filmmaker of both documentary and fiction films, Bertuccelli identifies narrative intervention and the written dialogue as the main difference between documentary and fiction, thus enhancing Murray Smith’s claim (Smith 1995, 75) that it is the story that functions as the ultimate organiser of the components of the fiction film. In the case of *Since Otar Left*, then, the story unfolds mainly through emotions communicated through dialogue (as will be argued later in this chapter). Bertuccelli herself underlines that “in any case, it was a story that could not be told as a documentary —it was too intimate” (Bertuccelli, 2004), indicating intimacy as a goal accomplished more successfully through fiction films, adding strength in practice to Smith’s theory on the structure of sympathy (Smith 1995, 75).

The story of *Since Otar Left* is based on a true story told to the director. Bertuccelli chose Georgia after having spent six months in the country working on a film by Otar Iosseliani. She claims that it is “a very attractive country, a cross-roads between Europe and Asia, with Caucasian and Russian and European and Middle Eastern influence” (Bertuccelli, 2004) where things are less harsh than Russia and people are warmer. Because of her Mediterranean origins, she found it easier to adjust to and identify with this location and its people. So when the story came up, she knew that it would be made there. On

the other hand, as Bertuccelli explains, “I am not interested in talking about France so much as in talking about how one falls in love with a foreign land one knows only from one’s imagination, with all the potential disillusionment that that contains”. There is a very long tradition of links with France, a long history of exchange that is rather prominent in many countries under the Russian influence, creating the perfect setting for the story.³³

Since Otar Left is one of the exceptions in the filmic selection in that the storytelling mainly unfolds within the country of origin of the immigrant character. The film also has another particularity. The immigrant protagonist who appears at the beginning of the film (Otar) is later replaced by another one (Ada), who is not in the actual process of consciously considering migration while at home. On the other hand the film is quite representative of the new type of on screen immigrant characters and their classification, examined in this chapter, for reasons that will be outlined below.

Although the film does not provide solid information on the legality of the immigrant status of Otar, (nor does it deal with the issue of illegal immigration) there is the very dominant issue of illegal labour and the hardship this condition creates for the immigrant character. Otar is a doctor who has to compromise in obtaining employment that does not correspond to or fit his educational and professional background. Otar left Georgia in order to better his financial situation and provide for his family back home, but whether Otar is a legal immigrant or not, his working status is definitely illegal and leads his employers to be prosecuted for his death in a work accident on a construction site. This element, without being a thematic one in the film, definitely depicts the exploitation of an immigrant worker, hired illegally as a cheaper source of labour. Without portraying the hardship of an exploited workforce in its on screen narrative, the film manages to present the issue in its most tragic dimension and result: death. This is achieved in the narrative due to the motif of “epistolarity” (Naficy, 2001, 100-146). What we know about Otar’s life is what he chooses to share with his family, and not what we, as viewers, actually see on screen. In this respect many aspects of the immigrant life are exposed through

³³ In this respect, *Since Otar Left* works as a good example of the psychological link between countries of migration and destination countries (see Introduction).

elements extrinsic, to the main body of narrative, leaving the film to tell a dual story: the one of the absent Otar but, most importantly, the one of the three women left behind.

Instead of depicting the immigrant life and its condition, the film mostly engages in depicting the hardship of life in a deteriorating city, Tbilisi. The apartment of the family is decaying, electricity and water are often cut off and everyday life seems like a constant struggle for mere survival. It is evident that the main motivation for Otar to migrate was financial, but when Ada undertakes the role of writing the letters, another very prominent factor emerges: the psychological need of a young, educated person to live and not just survive. Ada describes fictional encounters between Otar and Parisians, intellectual conversations and visits to the opera. Ada describes not what Otar's life would actually consist of, but what she would have wished it to be, as well as articulating her need to escape what is (for her) the culturally and intellectually barren environment of her everyday life in Tbilisi.

Since Otar's immigrant life in Paris is only described by his letters, the information we, as viewers, receive is isolated and filtered. Since Eka is confronted with bureaucracy in order to obtain a visa to travel to Paris, it is evident that moving is not a carefree procedure. The film was produced in 2003, but we have no information on whether the story takes place earlier or at the same period. Therefore, our speculations on the exact conditions at the time cannot be definite, nor, ultimately, are they important. Although we can ignore details that relate to the issue of border crossing, the procedures of remaining in Paris, asylum seeking and so on, there are other elements implied by the film regarding the immigrant life. Otar has had to compromise with the working-class life that he leads, unable to engage with his actual profession as a doctor. The film implies a connection between Georgia and France, but we don't know if Otar is a member of an established immigrant or extended diasporic community. In Paris, his only connection with his origins is his compatriot and fellow immigrant Niko, who Otar mentions in his letters. When Niko visits Eka, he cannot give real information and details of what Otar's life was, since he is forced by Ada to join their deceit. Otar, though, appears constantly linked to his past life and his home through the dual motif of epistolarity in the film: letters and phone calls. In this respect it is obvious that Otar is not detached from his

past and his country. He is not the immigrant loner who is determined to cut all ties and start over. Whether there are intentions to be reunited with his family by returning or by bringing them to Paris, remains obscure. Immigration and migration are both processes that are present in the film, followed by the motif of nostalgia. Otar is already an immigrant in Paris, enduring (so it would appear from what we learn about his life second hand; from his letters and the conversations between the family) the hardship of his displacement but also hoping for a better future. On the other hand, Ada is still in Tbilisi, not consciously wishing to migrate but with a utopian nostalgia for a life full of potential that she has never lived.

The issue of gender is presented in the film through a very interesting dual perspective. Although Otar, a middle-aged man, is the initial immigrant character, in the lives of the female members of his family left behind the male is either absent or peripheral. This absence is immediately linked to the sociopolitical and historical circumstances, and the phenomena that emerge through them, enhancing the sense of the powerless individual who is unable to take control of life and confront the collective conditions. Marina's husband has been killed in a war in Afghanistan. The boys in the neighborhood are all intending to leave and return rich, always planning hopeless journeys they never realise. The only male presence is that of Tengiz who seems defeated by life and has very little to offer Marina. In this respect, while Otar and Ada are both immigrants, or potential immigrants in the case of Ada, within this historical and sociopolitical framework there is yet another interaction between the two characters regarding migration. Otar, a typical economic immigrant, is replaced by Ada, the new type of immigrant, whose relocation is motivated basically by psychological reasons: the long cherished dream that she has held to live in Paris. Julie Bertuccelli describes Marina as "a product of the past [who] yet belongs fully to the present with its violence" (Bertuccelli, 2004) and this pretty much applies to every other character. Eka, on the other hand, who is the eldest, seems to have been confronted with change twice, suffering from a dual, contradictory nostalgia. On one hand she praises her educated family, who had to hide the books from the Bolsheviks, and her cosmopolitan past and links to Paris, but in some cases, when confronted with the difficult conditions of the present, she says she is a Stalin follower and praises his virtues as a leader.

Another stereotype that emerges is that of the “middle class” depiction in what was considered to be a class-less society. The book cases full of French literature, and Eka, Ada and Otar’s fluency in French, besides underlining the intimate connection between Georgia and France, also establish the family’s social status. In combination with Otar’s as well as Ada’s educational level, the fact that even Marina and Tergiz have to compromise with less than they were prepared and trained for, creates a framework of middle class people hit hard by change.

The visual style of the film, as in many cases of our filmic selection, is less driven by action and more by words and emotions (Naficy, 2001, 289). The film consists of long takes (known in French as *plan séquence*) with minimal editing intervention, enhancing the sense of not guiding the spectator but rather leaving an open window on the lives of the protagonists. The camera follows the three women around in their everyday activities but filmic action is almost absent. Emotions are emphasised by the sort of activities the women are involved with, which are almost exclusively focused on survival. Eka is trying to maintain a small garden of vegetables to provide food. Marina sells all sorts of motley objects in the flea market surrounded by a crowd of local people who engage in the same activity. It is therefore evident that the conditions the family live in are not specific but rather a general and common situation that affects many of the inhabitants of Tbilisi. The same applies to the disruption of electric power in the family apartment. Marina is shown carrying bottles of water that they even use to take a bath. The time they have to connect with the world through radio or television is limited. Ada goes to the university, as if investing in a better future that seems to escape and always be out of reach. When she takes a temporary job as an interpreter in a china factory, the payment is so little that she steals a figurine to compensate. So, although the film does not consist of action that synthesises major events, and the characters, with the exception of the extrovert Marina, do not verbally analyse their emotions, it is the depiction of everyday life that delivers the true emotions of the three women.³⁴ Most of all, it is the letters of Otar that verbalise the non-visual

³⁴ The use of the *plan séquence* is key here, precisely because it allows the characters to be captured and contextualised in their sociocultural environment.

element of the film, not only what Otar says about his life in Paris but also what Otar conceals or embellishes but the women understand. When Ada replaces her uncle in the letter writing, the reality of the immigrant life changes and is actually elevated to the point of an imaginary, almost idealised life that Ada, without realising, is wishing for herself.

The film's setting consists of real locations, claustrophobic interiors juxtaposed with immense exteriors, which Naficy identifies more generally with "accented" (diasporic, exilic and post-colonial) filmmakers (Naficy, 2001, 289). The film opens in a café with a close-up of a piece of cake that Eka inspects, like a child in a candy shop. The cake seems like a rare luxury, allowed only to the senior Eka, while Marina and Ada sit in front of two glasses of juice. When Marina "steals" a bit, she is confronted by Eka who safeguards this unique piece of luxury. The café itself is empty and somehow grandiose, a reminder of the past, a monument to the past splendour imposed by a failed era that needed to emphasise its own grandeur with pomposity, in order to merely underline its supposed superiority. Juxtaposing the sense of the café, the monumental emblem of the past, is the exterior of a decaying Tbilisi and the interior of all venues used by the family: their deteriorating apartment where space is limited (Ada has to sleep in the same bed as Marina); the tiny dacha that is ransacked by Marina to provide more objects fit to sell at the flea market; the decaying halls of the university that Ada attends; the state buildings that seem abandoned through a transition of what was and what will be. The city of Tbilisi seems equally to be going through a transition. The architecture is an amalgam of the imposing buildings of the past and the improvised construction site of the present. Even the parks inside the city do not seem a place of leisure or relaxation. They are turned into endless flea markets, where the impoverished inhabitants of Tbilisi sell the remains of their past, objects that add local colour for the tourists. These objects, as well as the books in Eka's bookcases, represent here Naficy's motivated props (what Naficy describes as fetishised objects that function as icons of the past) (Naficy, 2001, 290). In this respect, the books constitute a fetishised emblem of the family's past, a past that goes far back, before the communist era, when the interaction of the middle class with Western culture was not only allowed but also encouraged. The books represent the family's educational status, their cosmopolitan way of life (Eka

has travelled to Paris with her husband), but also symbolise the very social class of the family, when such a classification even existed. The books also constitute a sign of the resistance of the family (although Eka occasionally praises Stalin in a comparison with the current situation) to the communist regime. The family preserved the books, hiding them from the Bolsheviks, as an act of preserving their own identity and undermining the regime, despite the risk they were taking. It is important that it is these very books that finally give Eka the ticket to Paris to see Otar and have a contemporary glimpse of a “careless” life, but also finally set Ada free. On the other hand, the items sold in the flea markets, not only by Marina and Tengiz, but by what seems like a large group of the inhabitants of Tbilisi, also become icons of the past (Naficy, 2001, 152-171). These are objects from people’s houses that they sell in order to get some money. They also seem like souvenirs, sustaining the collective memory of an era that is forever gone: the European communist era. It is as if the tourists receive communion in a life they have never lived.

Contrary to expectations, the setting in Paris does not juxtapose the decay and poverty of Tbilisi. The film does not depict a glamorous, picture-postcard version of Paris. The family stays in a shabby hotel and what they visit are not the usual tourist sites and attractions. Ada and Marina visit the grave of Otar, in a cemetery for the underprivileged, and Eka goes to the deteriorating neighbourhoods of working-class and clandestine immigrants in search of her son. The blocks of flats she visits are no better than their own apartment. When Ada arrives at the cheap hotel, she stands in the rain, on what seems a remote little street, ecstatically exulting in her arrival in Paris, not because of the difference she sees in Paris, but because of her mere idea of what Paris represents. Indeed, this is the very same idea of Paris that she reconstructed in her forged letters. Essentially, what Bertuccelli underlines here is that, for the newly arrived immigrant there is little difference between Tbilisi and Paris, a comment that summarises not only the essence of this film, but also that of many others of our filmic selection. There is only the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged, the difference of sides that historical and political turbulence throw people on with no choice of their own. The life of the flamboyant Paris is only seen and experienced by the women through the windows of a taxi, a Paris full of Christmas lights and ornaments that is out of

reach for them, as it must have been for Otar, Nico or anyone who shares their fate. It is characteristic that when Ada manages to forge “recent photos” of Otar, he is seen smiling in front of the emblematic Moulin Rouge, a tourist icon of Paris that on one hand potentially represents joy for Ada, but on the other depicts her vague image of life in the French capital. It is remarkable that the only place where Eka seems truly happy and carefree is on the wheel of a Luna Park where she goes to celebrate her decision to visit Otar in Paris. It is in this very moment, up in the air, liberated from Tbilisi (and, to an extent, Paris), from everyday life, from the past of Stalin as well as from the past of the books, in this no man’s land, that Eka is momentarily free.

The airport here is presented as a transitional border space (Naficy, 2001, 243-248). It is a space that signals the transition of the family when they first arrive in Paris but also gives closure to Ada’s inner and subconscious negotiation with her life and her future. In the airport Ada decides to remain in Paris, somehow replacing Otar. The family, whose journey to Paris was motivated by Eka’s desire to reunite the family, is broken up again, once more with Eka’s consent, as if the past (Eka) has released the future (Ada). In this respect the airport (as a transitional space of arrival and departure) provides the symbolic backdrop for a multilayered transition for Ada into becoming a new type of migrant. Eka knows the truth and now becomes the one to carry out a comforting lie. The older generation gives its place to the younger (Ada replaces Otar) and the family members who represent the past era and seem unable to adjust and comprehend a new world, return to the everyday life they know. Throughout the whole film there is prominent reference to France and French culture. The language and the culture are the main link to the country where Otar currently lives but also represent the strong bond between Eka and Ada and constitute the symbol of the family history, a past that was transformed by the interruption of the communist regime. Although Otar’s life in France is far from being intellectually satisfactory and the plot takes place in Georgia, the main cultural reference remains that of France. It is as if the family has created an idolised utopia of what constitutes life in France, in part to insulate themselves from both the reality of Otar’s situation in Paris and the desperation of their own lives in Tbilisi. The local culture seems persistently neglected in an effort on behalf of the family to escape not the country itself or its culture, but

rather its reality. The only moment of disruption of this absence of local culture is native music. Native music is not used in the film as a leitmotif of identity; it is used diegetically twice: first, as a connection to the outer world when the power reconnects and then during Eka's birthday party. In this respect, the only reference to the native culture is linked either to stability or to the past. When the power is connected, the house is full of music. Elsewhere in the narrative, when Eka celebrates her birthday, the family dances to some folk music.

Since Otar Left, in common with the other films examined in this thesis, is not classified as part of Naficy's accented cinema since it is not made by filmmakers of a diaspora nor within exilic cinema's modes of production. Nevertheless, it does share many of the characteristics of accented cinema. For example, accented speech, defined by Naficy as consisting of multilingual characters speaking the dominant language with an accent (Naficy, 2001, 290) is used in a reverse way. What we have here are multilingual characters who speak with an accent, but the language is not the dominant one of their current environment. According to Naficy "one of the greatest deprivations of exile is the gradual deterioration in and potential loss of one's original language, for language serves to shape not only individual identity but also regional and national identities prior to displacement" (Naficy, 2001, 24). In this respect there is a multiple detachment from the national identity and the hardship it represents in *Since Otar Left*. French is not only used by the displaced Otar (who undergoes this process of losing personal as well as national identity, through displacement) but also by the three women who remain back home, in a manner that actually demonstrates their involvement with the everyday life in Tbilisi, on both a practical and a psychological level. On the other hand, the use of French in Otar's letters elevates French to the level of a mystical dialect, used between the family, that both enhances their detachment from Tbilisi and endorses their constructed utopia of Paris. Ada and Eka speak French in their effort to maintain their connection with Otar but also with a utopia of a different, better life that they have identified as France. On the other hand, Marina, who is more involved with the everyday struggle to provide for her family within the conditions of Tbilisi and consequently more linked to its harsh reality, speaks French less often. This use of the language also serves Bertuccelli as a stratagem to solve the problem of actresses who are not native speakers in

Georgian. The three characters speak Georgian, Russian and French. The only Georgian actress, though, is Nino Khomassouridze who plays Marina and who, as Bertuccelli explains (Bertuccelli, 2004) was reluctant to speak Russian because to her Russian is a language of oppression. Dinara Droukarova (Ada) is a Russian actress of Mongolian extraction who currently lives in Paris, while the part of Eka is played by Esther Gorintin. Gorintin was born in Sololka, Poland in 1913. At that time the area was a part of the Russian empire and the Russian language was spoken by the locals. At the end of her life Gorintin also lived in Paris. The multilinguality of the film, besides being used to either show or cover the linguistic gaps and differences of the cast, also portrays a very interesting triple psychological symbolism. Russian represents the past, the continuity of oppression from the Russian empire to the Soviet Union, Georgian is the language of independence but also of the country's present struggle for a transition to stability and French is the language of the sustained illusion of a better life in an ideal "elsewhere".

The choice of actresses and the work on speech and language here is, therefore, indicative of a different kind of extra-filmic stereotype. It is apparent that a Western European filmmaker cannot be familiar with the variations of Eastern European appearance or sound, related to specific ethnic origin. In this respect the Eastern European is perceived generally as of Slavic origin and the differentiation of his/her accent in the dominant language of the film cannot be "heard" by a Western European audience. This element emerges in the rest of the case studies included here, and although it will be thoroughly examined later on in the thesis, it must also be noted here.

EASTERN PROMISES

If the narrative of *Since Otar Left* is concerned with idealising the immigrant experience from a perspective in the country of origin, the next film we shall be analysing, *Eastern Promises*, is based very much on immigrant narratives set in the here and now of the host nation. The plot of the film is set in London, where the pregnant Russian teenager Tatjana arrives bleeding and barefoot in a chemist's. She is transferred to a hospital, where the doctors succeed in saving her baby's life but not her own. In the same hospital, involved in the case of Tatjana, is the midwife Anna Khitrova (Naomi Watts), a British citizen whose father was a Russian immigrant. Anna finds Tatjana's diary, written in Russian, and, determined to locate her family in order to deliver the baby, she takes it home with the intention of having her uncle Stepan translate it. Stepan refuses to do so, as he senses danger, and Anna seeks further leads on Tatjana's identity. She soon discovers her next clue, the card of a Russian restaurant, owned by Semyon (Armin Mueller-Stahl). Anna visits Semyon, hoping he can assist her in her effort to contact Tatjana's family. Semyon offers to translate the diary and get back to her. What Anna doesn't know is that Semyon is using the restaurant as a façade, while he is actually the head of the Russian mafia family "Vory V Zakone", which he commands with the assistance of his naive, irresponsible and obscene son Kyrill (Vincent Cassel) and his mysterious yet effective driver Nikolai (Viggo Mortensen), who seems to be the one "cleaning up after Kyrill's occasional mess". Soon Anna finds her life as well as her family's lives in jeopardy, caught up in the war between the "Vory V Zakone" and the Turkish and Chechen mafia. Meanwhile, she takes care of the baby, whom she has named Christine and who appears to undertake the role of replacing the baby that Anna herself lost. Although Semyon tries to eliminate all clues that could link him to Tatjana, even by indicating Kyrill's involvement in her death, Anna accidentally overhears Stepan reading the diary out loud to her mother and discovers that Christine was born as a result of Tatjana's rape by Semyon himself. In the meantime, the audience witnesses several activities such as smuggling, trafficking, executions held by Semyon and "Vory V Zakony", including the enigmatic Nikolai, who, on the other hand, appears quite protective of Anna, and advises her to stay "away from bad people". The police

demand a DNA test from Semyon, in order to establish the paternity of the baby, and Semyon orders the reluctant Kyrill to kill Christine. Nikolai, who turns out to be an undercover agent assigned by Scotland Yard and the KGB/FSB to investigate Semyon's business, helps Anna rescue Christine. Semyon is arrested for the rape of Tatjana and the last shot of the film shows Nikolai sitting alone in the restaurant, giving ambiguous closure. Is his job as an agent done or has he gone too far undercover, succeeding Semyon in the leadership of "Vory V Zakone"?

Eastern Promises is not an entirely European film. And that is not only because the production is two-thirds North American (US, Canada) and only in one third European (UK), and the all star cast consists predominantly of Hollywood actors, but mainly because the director, unlike the other filmmakers analysed in this thesis, is not European. David Cronenberg does not come from either side of the Wall, neither does he live, and more importantly, work in Europe (with the exception of a period spent working on *A Dangerous Method*, his next feature after *Eastern Promises*). However, the inclusion of this film (and its director) in this thesis can be justified because the film takes place in a European metropolis, London. It therefore depicts events that actually take place in Europe. On the other hand the film is written by an English screenwriter, Steven Knight, is a co-production between Canada, the USA and the UK and the majority of the cast are European actors.

Born in Toronto, Canada, David Cronenberg began writing at a very early age, while his interest in science, especially botany and lepidopterology, led him to the Honors Science Program of the University of Toronto in 1963, where he did switch, though, to Honors English and Literature later on in his first year. Fascinated by classmate David Secter's film *Winter Kept us Warm* (1966), he taught himself how to make film with his two 16mm films *Transfer* and *From the Drain*. The New York underground film scene inspired the foundation of the Toronto Film Co-op, where he joined forces with Iain Ewig and later Ivan Reitman. Cronenberg's keen interest in science, influenced his films to the extent that he is commonly acknowledged as one of the principal originators of body horror, or venereal horror, a wave of films ultimately forming a genre of filmmaking that explores the human fear of bodily transformation and infection, and depicts the interference of the psychological with the physical. Cronenberg

has elaborated on such problematic themes mainly through horror and science fiction, genres that to many members of the audience his name is identified with. His work seems to follow an inside route from the social world (*Shivers*, *Rabid*) to a more personal view (*The Brood*, *Scanners*, *Videodrome*) and finally to an almost claustrophobic approach, set in a private microcosm (*The Fly*, *Dead Ringers*). After a series of films that move, more or less, within this frame of reflection (*Naked Lunch*, 1991, *M. Butterfly*, 1993, *Crush*, 1996, *eXistenZ*, 1999, *Spider*, 2002), Cronenberg had his first on screen encounter with Viggo Mortensen (a frequent collaborator since) for the making of *The End of Violence* (2005). This allegorical drama on violence, its potential and instinctively impulsive nature, the inescapability of interacting with it, and therefore participating in it, and the hidden aspect of every human being, shows some of the elements that we come across in *Eastern Promises*. Cronenberg's earlier theme of the invasion of the human body is in these two films transformed and transferred to a social level. The human body is here the small community of *The End of Violence* and English society in *Eastern Promises*. In this respect, there is a dual intruder in *Eastern Promises*: on one hand British society is invaded by the "alien", the foreigner, and on the other the society of lawful citizens is invaded by the sinister subcommunity of the mafia. Actually, the allegory of body invasion of earlier Cronenberg films is here "translated" into its literal dimension: the invasion by an unknown body, alien to what we have known up to now and been familiar with and the fear of that invasion. The same motif of the outsider penetrating the closed circle of a secluded community is also present in Mortensen's character, Nikolaj, who enters the mafia's underworld in order to destroy it. *The End of Violence*, also opens what now seems an almost a permanent collaboration between Cronenberg and actor, painter, photographer, poet, musician, publisher and Hollywood star Viggo Mortensen (also cast in *A Dangerous Method*, 2011, and nominated for a Golden Globe as Best Supporting Actor). Mortensen earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for *Eastern Promises*, but he is not the only Hollywood-recognised actor to participate in the film. In contrast to the casts of the majority of the line of films examined here, the cast of *Eastern Promises* includes a group of "stars": Naomi Watts, Vincent Cassel and Armin Mueller-Stahl. Although none of the above is American (Naomi Watts is an English-

Australian actress, Vincent Cassel is French and Armin Mueller-Stahl is a German actor of Prussian origin), they all have a constant presence in Hollywood productions. Therefore their naturalisation as Hollywood stars is safe enough. While in the rest of the films studied in this thesis, most actors are European with a differentiation that goes from debutants and actors in breakthrough roles (such as Oksana Akinshina, Arta Dobroshi, Enrico Lo Verso) to well established European stars (such as Juliette Binoche, Daniel Auteuil, Audrey Tautou), some of them do occasionally flirt with Hollywood but are far from being considered Hollywood stars.

Apart from Naomi Watts, the rest of the cast of *Eastern Promises* are non-native speakers both in English and Russian. They have the double challenge of portraying their characters in two languages other than their own. Their accented speech, as a characteristic of multilingual characters, speaking the dominant language with an accent (Naficy, 2001) is not composed of the vocal elements of their own language but of a third one they also have to engage in their acting.

Throughout the body of films of this thesis, there is an effort detected on behalf of the filmmakers to achieve plausibility, in terms of casting. The actors selected to play the alien characters are either of the identical origin (to the role), or of one considered “similar”. Although “similarity” usually does not apply in certain characteristics, such as gender or ethnicity, there seems to be a flexibility in appearance and accent, the emblematic features of “origin”. In this respect, the filmmakers tend to use actors of the filmic origin of the character (Dobroshi in *The Silence of Lorna* is Kossovan Albanian, Akinshina of *Lilya4Ever* is a Ukrainian); of the appearance anticipated by the character’s origin (Theodora Tzimou in *From the Edge of the City* looks Russian and was actually born in the USSR to Greek parents, but is voiced over by a native speaker Tamilla Kulieva, who looks “less Russian”); on the grounds of a general impression of the character’s descent based on accented speech and physical characteristics (Enrico Lo Verso in *Mirush*, Zlatko Buric in *Dirty Pretty Things*); or on the sole basis of accent and appearance’s flexibility (Audrey Tautou in *Dirty Pretty Things*). The procedure of casting, in cases of co-productions, can generally be motivated by the film’s claim to national identity. Films do participate in festivals as national products, a fact that can be balanced by crew

selection, proportion of language used in the dialogues, etc. In the case of a production such as *Eastern Promises*, where the selection narrows down to an all-star cast, the criteria become more obvious. Naomi Watts was cast as an English woman who did not need to speak with an accent, nor spoke any Russian in the film. However, given that she was born and raised in Australia, Watts did have some Australian influences in her speech. In big productions, such as *Eastern Promises*, there is a very important element that some smaller European productions lack: the preparation time and the finance to budget it. Watts, Mortensen, Mueller-Stahl and Cassel were all coached by Andrew Jack.³⁵ Jack's job with Naomi Watts was to eliminate all Australian sounds from her speech and replace them with other solely "London" ones. Viggo Mortensen travelled to Russia himself, in order to conduct some character research. According to Andrew Jack *himself*, when Mortensen returned, "his Russian accent was already well established" but then he "needed to spend more time with Oleg Fedoro, to learn the Russian language dialogue, and this provided him with an excellent opportunity to listen to English spoken with a Russian accent all the time, and to learn the Russian as well" (Jack, 2006). Jack was then flown to Germany to work with Armin Mueller-Stahl. The process there was different, as they had to concentrate on and select sounds in his speech that were those of an older generation, in order to deliver authenticity. Voice over was used in some scenes only to familiarise Cronenberg with what the scenes would be like if performed by native speakers, and Esin Harvey was recruited to help with the Turkish lines of Mina E. Mina and Joseph Altin, while the two actors in the pharmacy scene in the beginning of the film, improvised in Urdu and then translated their dialogue to the crew. This practice of well-budgeted film production ensures a flexibility that allows the filmmaker to select from a range of actors that is not limited as to accent and original language and, therefore, adds to the film's potential or box office success. On the other hand the history of film includes many language or accent detached actors as well as the opposite case, where the accent becomes a sort of trade mark. The work that has been done regarding actors and speech (particularly accent) enhances the thesis' argument that since the racial or ethnic difference of these

³⁵ Andrew Jack appears as one of the steam bath house bathers in the film.

protagonists is less pronounced (e.g. in terms of skin colour), the way that the immigrant protagonist "sounds", in the case of the filmic depiction of the specific wave of intra-European immigration, is what attributes to him/her, the identity of the alien. In this respect the "other-ness" of the past (the fact that the immigrant looked and sounded foreign) is now limited to the sound (accent).

Eastern Promises, although not immediately handling the issue of immigration, does insinuate the subject of different "types" of immigration, unfolding, somehow, a map, or better yet a timetable, of different periods of immigration from Russia, which have resulted in a variety of social structures within the Russian community in London, deconstructing, thus, the stereotype of the uniformity and coherence of the immigrant community. In that sense, *Eastern Promises* achieves, albeit rather unintentionally, what some of the films on immigration fail to: pointing out that the country of origin or ethnicity does not qualify as a criterion for a realistic classification of the migrant citizens, and that, as in any other type of community, an immigrant subcommunity has various levels of substructures, with legality and illegality being not an aspect of the immigration procedure itself, but a result of an individual choice of life. What we have here is an established community of Russian (and other former Soviet) immigrants. The status of their citizenship is not under dispute or processing. It is a given fact, which allows reflection on the issue of immigration, under a different light and in completely different directions. We must underline here that this is not a problem of the film itself, but one seen from the point of view of a research study, which cannot ignore a film in which the plot evolves exclusively within the microcosm of an immigrant community with established infrastructures that (unlike the unseen sub-world of illegal immigrants, such as the one in *Dirty Pretty Things*) shares the main scene with the local community. It is exactly the film's genre, classified as a thriller/gangster movie, its "Godfather-like" quality that allows us to focus on the given fact of an ambiguous reality, with substructures which do not necessarily meet in the everyday lives of its members.

Although the film does not give any information on the time, the process or the circumstances under which the characters found themselves in London, we can come to certain conclusions, based on several elements of their status and identity, as given in the story and its on screen enactment. Anna is of Russian

descent, the child of a mixed marriage between a British woman and a Russian man. Raised in the UK (the story does not refer to the period or the conditions of her father's death. Therefore we cannot know whether the Russian father was present in her upbringing) she seems the representative of her gender, class and generation. She does not speak any Russian³⁶ and does not seem engaged in any aspects of Russian religion or tradition. The only element of attachment to her origin, is of a rather psychological nature: it is the old motorcycle that she rides, which she inherited from her father. On the basis of her approximate age we can conclude that her father himself ended up in London during the peak of the population movement after World War II. The only clear clue given is that Stepan is a former KGB official. This forestalls the conclusion that his brother, Anna's father, already lived in the UK during the cold war, in which case Stepan not only would not have been recruited as a KGB agent, given the era's fear of Western espionage, but would normally live under surveillance. This leads to the assumption that Anna's father was a defector, one of the many who rejected the regime and managed to seek political asylum, frequently provided by the West at the time. (Many officials managed to flee to the West, as they were the only ones with permits to exit the Iron Curtain, as well as internationally acclaimed artists. Perhaps Stepan's claim to have worked for the KGB, explains his brother's and his own presence in the UK.) Furthermore, Anna's distance from her paternal culture, tradition and language can be considered to stem from her father's rejection of a regime that back then was identified with his motherland. Cronenberg does not give any relevant information, apparently because such issues are not important in terms of the narrative. The immigrant community constitutes here the backdrop of a gangster film and not its subject. The Russian mafia could easily be replaced by any other. The choice of ethnicity seems to be rather random, based mainly on the Western fascination with what was hidden behind the Iron Curtain, the

³⁶ When a child grows up in a bilingual family, the language that prevails in the child's mind until it becomes three years old, is the language of the mother. But afterwards, when the child starts to socialise more by going to the kindergarten or by playing with other children in the playground etc., then the stronger becomes the language of the environment. In any case, though, it is extremely difficult for the child to conquer successfully any of the languages of its environment. This is an extremely rare case. (Βασιλική Τριάρχη-Hermann, Πολύγλωσσα παιδιά, Εκδόσεις Αφοί Κυριακίδη, 2005 Βασιλική Τριάρχη-Hermann, Η διγλωσσία στην παιδική ηλικία, Gutenberg-Γιώργος και Κώστας Δαρδανός, 2000).

mystery of a more proximate East, and possibly the remains of the Cold War. What Cronenberg focuses on here is his repeated motif (in a multilayered manner) of the invaded body (in this case the body of society). In this respect there is a rather paradoxical scheme in *Eastern Promises*. On one hand there is a dominant persistence in plausibility in speech and accent but on the other hand a disregard of the historical and political circumstances that have led to the formation of the immigrant community the film depicts. This oxymoronic element can be seen within the framework of the generalisation of the European East, often present in our filmic selection and, evidently, common amongst Western (especially non-European) filmmakers.

In direct contrast to Anna, the middle-class midwife, there is Tatjana. Tatjana (as well as the rest of the girls “imported” by Kyrill and his father) is not an established, second generation immigrant, but rather, the typical victim of the disintegration of the soviet model, brought to London in the vortex of the new wave of immigration or more accurately the modern-day slavery of human trafficking from the East to the West, the mass abandonment of what formed the Eastern bloc, globalisation and its darkest side, where human life and entity become a hidden trade. Tatjana leaves behind her own testimony, describing her journey from her village in Russia towards the hope of a better life, London, and, eventually, a tragic death. Tatjana, a member of the church choir, had a dream of becoming a singer in the West. Like many others, she dreamt of escaping the poverty of her village and that is what she did, after the death of her father in a mining accident. Instead of redemption, Tatjana finds horror and finally death, at the hands of her traffickers.³⁷ Imprisoned in a building with sealed windows, she becomes a victim of rape, injected with heroin and unable to react. Tatjana fled to meet her dreams, only to find herself once again “buried in soil”, only a different one from that of her father. The content of Tatjana’s diary, not only triggers the plot, but unexpectedly, probably unintentionally, serves as a means to give a face to the anonymous (albeit fictional) victim of trafficking, in a plot where trafficking is not a dominant component, but only a small part that underlines the obscenity of “Vory V Zakone” and Semyon. The

³⁷ In 2011 the authorities in the UK learned of 946 victims of human trafficking, compared with 710 in 2010. Officials said 712 adult victims and 234 child victims were reported in 2011. Of the victims referred to in 2010, 524 were adults and 186 were children.

diary gives a voice to the rest of the women, for example the girl that Nikolai rapes on the orders of Kyrill, that remain in the storytelling in shadow and it also sketches a dark side of immigration that crawls under the normality of the immigrant community surface, implying another fact of that life that we will comment further on.

Semyon on the other hand, and subsequently Kyrill, are the main characters whose journey remains in the dark, as if subconsciously, in this aspect of the story's inner structure, Semyon, Kyrill and their physical as well as their conventional family, in terms of mafia hierarchy, hide even from their own audience, obeying their own rules and ignoring all common ones. Semyon leads the "Vory V Zakone", a branch of the Russian mafia that is currently at war with Turkish and Chechen crime organisations. Kyrill, as his son, is his natural successor, although he does not seem to be living up to his father's expectations. In this case, thus, the how or when of their coming to London is irrelevant and, therefore, that sort of hint is ignored by the storytelling.

Nikolai's presence is explained by his recruitment as an undercover agent. But Nikolai is clearly the embodiment of more than one aspect of alienation, infiltration, adjustment and, finally, acceptance or rejection. This procedure, that constitutes the basic storyline of most films on immigration and certainly the majority of the films under examination here, is, in the case of Nikolai, differentiated in a very interesting way, as a parallel act, in a parallel world, unknown and mystic to the majority of the audience. In that, there is no claim to the detection of intentional symbolism, but rather a suggestion of intriguing coincidence, as Nikolai's effort to fit into Semyon's "family" bears many similarities to an immigrant's attempt to fit into the new community. Nikolai, the stranger, undertakes a task that is clearly below his potential, as he has to prove his loyalty and obedience and, until his talent is recognised, he compromises with assisting Kyrill, who is obviously much less capable but imposed by default. Nikolai, like any "stranger", faces suspicion and doubt, and is obliged to try harder to win his way into Semyon's trust. He even agrees to play the role of Kyrill's body double in a lethal attack, in danger of being murdered instead of Kyrill. Nikolai's character is, moreover, the main reference in the film that links it to a previous period of Cronenberg's filmography, that of a body-centric problem, where bodily change is a prominent element seen as a

physical situation that interacts directly with the psychological factor. Nikolai submits to the tattooist's needle to receive the all-important star signs that denote his new status. His body becomes a map, a guide, to his previous life that qualifies him as member of the "Vory V Zakone". In the scene of the steam bath house, Nikolai fights naked and barehanded, almost as if it is these tattoos that serve him as a weapon. In a different scene, where Nikolai is examined, to be confirmed as a member of the mob organisation by the leadership of the "Vory V Zakone", Nikolai is naked once more. The tattoos, his map, are the only legitimate proof of his identity, or, even better, his identity itself. Does this body alteration leave Nikolai's state of mind intact? Throughout the whole film, there is an ambiguity regarding whether Nikolai is becoming fascinated by the object of his investigation, drawn to the life of Semyon's "family", exceeding his duty, willing to give in to it. When asked by Kyrill to rape one of the trafficked girls, he does so, not without reluctance, but still he submits to Kyrill's commands. The girl is rescued by the police the next day. He does protect Anna and the baby Christine, but commits murders himself. When ordered to quit his task as an undercover agent, he declines, with an equivocal insistence. Does he really want to uncover the "Vory V Zakone" or is what he is really interested in replacing Semyon, setting his own rules? The final sequence leaves that ambiguity pending, and it is up to the viewer to determine its closure.

Most of the films examined in this thesis have the element of social commentary, merely by the fact that they focus on the issue of the wave of immigration triggered by the collapse of the socialist model. In this aspect, all the films deal with the phenomenon of immigration from one side of the European continent to the other, and the transition of one era to another. Undoubtedly this does not mean that what we have here is a selection of filmic manifestos. On the contrary, all the films concentrate on depicting personal stories: the individualised journey of the protagonist towards a new life. These are narrative films that through personal stories succeed in enacting the history of Europe, the mass population movement, the changing geographical, social and cultural make-up of the European Union, the dual potential of historical change but also the personal aspects of immigration that can be summed up as displacement, infiltration, alienation, and acceptance or rejection.

Since the selection in question is not one of documentary films, it is inevitably one consisting of a variety of filmic genres, with different narrative tools and storytelling vehicles. The range of films examined in this thesis includes those of Doric realism such as the Dardennian style of *The Silence of Lorna*, the documentary essence of *From the Edge of the City*, the rigorous, even stern, political allegory of M. Haneke, the playful video clip aesthetics of Moodysson, the prominent British social realism of Loach, but also films that are classified as police/crime or thriller movies such as *Dirty Pretty Things*, *J'ai Pas Sommeil*, and *Revanche*. *Eastern Promises* introduces a different genre, that of the mobster/gangster film. The element of social transgression or breaking the law is very often present in the corpus of films examined here, and has a rather dual nature. It either refers to the status of an immigrant in the host country (*Illégal*, *Code Inconnu*) or the activities an immigrant him/herself or the members of the immigrant community choose to get involved with, either because of mere survival instinct or by clear choice (*Mirush*, *The Silence of Lorna*). Immigration and crime link to each other in the sense that a sudden population increase leaves behind a number of people seeking a means of survival, and many times in history, this has become a basic argument of anti-immigration dialectics, as well as a source of terror on the part of the host community that ignores or fears the socioeconomic changes that a new wave of immigration can bring about in both the short and the long term. The stereotype of the immigrant-criminal repeats itself throughout the group of films dealt with in this thesis, sourced from realistic bases, but nevertheless, following the filmmakers' argument on the fortuitousness of the phenomenon or, in some cases, the inescapability of such a choice, when it is one found under specific and inclement circumstances. *Eastern Promises* is one of the few films in this thesis that focuses on the reality of organised crime (the Mafia) and not crime as a random choice when there is a lack of any other potential. Although ethnic organised crime does appear as a peripheral element in other films (*Mirush*, *The Silence of Lorna*), it is *Eastern Promises* that brings it to the forefront. Organised crime and ethnic/immigrant minorities seem to go hand in hand (Erens, 2004) in the history of the genre, which naturally originates from the first (and only at the time) "melting pot" of the US. Kracauer (1957) claimed correctly that images of national types derive both from objective information gained

through fact, and subjective bases perceived from environmental influences. There is a thin line between the objective determination of stereotypical tendencies and the interaction between those and reality. In this respect, most mobster films include both a negative and a positive description of an ethnic minority, but most importantly, depict the recognition of such a minority in a constructed “ethnos”, such as the US. Viewed from this angle, these mafia-related films depict both the emblematic traditional elements of each ethnic minority (from the hierarchy of the family, religion, food and music to the status of women within them and their code of honour) and the illegal activities undertaken by the specific group in the parallel law and order of crime. Although the genre often repeats patterns of description, their reproduction creates reliable references. In this respect, these films form a map of either deliberate or random reality linked to the audience by default, both in the minority’s real essence and in its perception by the outside common mind. According to Patricia Erens (2004) it wasn’t until the 1960s that “the melting pot boiled”. Therefore “analysts began to reassess the ‘melting pot’ theory noting the failure of some groups to assimilate into the greater mass”. Since then a whole new filmography “from *Gidget goes to Rome* [Paul Wendkos, 1963] to *The Godfather* [Francis Ford Coppola, 1972] and from *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* [Robert Stevenson, 1959] to the *Last Hurrah* [John Ford, 1958]” has emerged in order to represent “a good cross section of how the US has portrayed its ethnic minorities and foreigners”.

After the formation of the EU, and, moreover, the mass population movement from the East to the West not dictated by a dominant economy nor a post colonial reality, Europe became the new “melting pot”, obtaining equivalent characteristics, and thus developing similar conditions. The procedure of acceptance of certain former “Eastern” countries as candidates to the EU, only enhanced Europe’s new face. In these conditions, *Eastern Promises* is a film of a European *novus ordo*, depicting a sociopolitical, economic and cultural reality. The ingredients of this enactment do not differ from the respective ones of the American/Hollywood films of the past and, thus, the pattern appears inescapable. The Russian minority, from the point of view of organised crime, has all the stereotypes that have appeared before in films such as *The Godfather* and the somewhat controversial *Little Odessa*. Semyon has a family

of traditional values. The same rigour he shows in his natural family, is enforced on his crime family. His rules don't even spare his own son when necessary and his choices are dictated by his status as leader. Tradition, honour and obscenity come together in a "melting pot" different from the commonly perceptible one. Naturally, the film uses all of its genre's ingredients: violence, battle, blood, murder and redemption, which in this case has an ambiguous anticipation.³⁸ The audience never gets to know Nikolai's or the "Vory V Zakone"s ending.

The story is once again set in London. Although unlike *Dirty Pretty Things*, here we have more open air shots and action, there is still the sense that the city is used as a sample of the European Metropolis and could easily be replaced by another as long as it maintained certain characteristics such as the multicultural essence and the anonymity of the crowd that allows crime to flourish. Although the destination, the immigrant's Ithaca, is blown in to a disproportionate symbol of freedom, new beginning and, finally, happiness, the truth is that its choice usually seems random and the reality of what the city of destination has to offer (whether it is *Somers Town's* London, *Nordrand's* Vienna or *The Silence of Lorna's Liege*) is completely different than the one hoped for by the immigrant. In any case, the cities could be re-dealt like cards and the result would pretty much remain the same. In the case of *Eastern Promises*, though, the protagonist is not Tatjana or the rest of the trafficked girls, drawn to London in hope of a better life, but organised crime itself, and the choice of a big multicultural metropolis seems appropriate even if not needed. London is one of the few choices as the Western European capitals tend to be rather small, leaving London and Paris (the biggest in numbers), the only ones with the metropolitan characteristics of the American equivalent (e.g. New York) where a gangster film is traditionally set. On the other hand the truth remains that, once again, there are no establishing shots that determine London in an non-negotiable way (such as in *The Beautiful People* [Jasmin Dizdar, 1999]).

The film opens with a vertical shot of a street where we can see the sign of a Turkish barber's shop. The rain only implies London, as one of its emblematic characteristics (the scene with the football fans serving once more the same purpose). Soon the barber's shop becomes a crime scene, where one

³⁸ See Neale, 2000.

of the Russian mobsters has his throat sliced by the Turks, Ekrem and Azim, signalling the ongoing war between the crime organisations. From that point on, the city of London takes on a double signification, where every place serves as a façade that hides something dark, and where crime thrives uncontrollably, as if untouchable by the law. There is a constant sense of something sinister lurking beneath the surface in each location. The pharmacy and the hospital, normally linked to protection, wellbeing and healing, are the scenes where the tragic story of Tatjana begins to unfold and where the teenage mother meets the end of her journey, death. In the barber's shop the tools of a barber's craft are used for slaughter. The steam bath house becomes the foggy scene of Nikolai's lethal battle as if the steam forms a protective curtain to hide behind, while the rest of the bathers avoid interfering. Most of all, it is Semyon's restaurant, that serves as the deceiving nest of crime and the "Vory V Zakone". Beneath the façade of a well-organised family business, serving to maintain the Russian community's traditions and culture, the *pater familias* runs his actual, horrific business. Semyon is seen cooking a traditional borscht and teaching his granddaughter to play the violin and the family celebrates with a restaurant full of guests singing the "Occi Cornije", an emblematic song related to Anton Chekhov's *The Lady With the Pet Dog* (transferred to the screen in 1987 under the title *Dark Eyes*) depicting the story of a 19th century married Italian (Marcello Mastroianni) who falls in love with a Russian woman (Yelena Safonova). Under this surface of sophistication and family harmony, lurks the criminal and bloodstained "Vory V Zakone". Cronenberg's choice to just have Nikolai sitting silent in Semyon's restaurant in the last scene of the film is eloquent. Nikolai could just be sitting there as his job is done, but there is another, darker concluding version. Nikolai has taken over the "restaurant". Or is it the "restaurant" that has taken over Nikolai?

MIRUSH

The next film also portrays the relationship between immigration and crime, only this time on a smaller scale and as a backdrop to its main narrative. *Mirush*, originally titled *Blodsbånd* (*Bloodbond*), follows the story of a young Albanian boy from Kosovo. Mirush lives with his mother and brother Armend in a decaying impoverished village in Kosovo. The family has not had news from their father, who has migrated a long time ago, without leaving a trace. Their life is a constant struggle for survival and the father's absence seems to be haunting for the two boys. Mirush's mother works as a cleaner, undertaking the cleaning of Mirush's school and several local shops. Armend seems to be replacing the father figure for Mirush, who is constantly in trouble with the other kids, cheating them through rigged bets and stealing their money over basketball games. Mirush wonders where his father is and what his reactions would be in various circumstances: since he has never lived with his father and has no memory of him, he always asks Armend about him, depending on his brother's memories of their father. This way Mirush reconstructs the idea of his father whom he has eventually idolised without wondering about the conditions of his disappearance. On the other hand, Mirush seems very judgemental of his mother and her behaviour towards him. Returning home early one day, chased by the father of one of the boys he has cheated with his betting scam, Mirush discovers his mother's affair with one of her employers, a TV shop owner. Mirush tells Armend about the affair. In a fit of rage Armend picks up a new TV set, given to their mother as a gift from her lover, and heads to the shop to return it. On the way he is hit by a car and dies. With Armend gone and blaming his mother for his death, Mirush's idolised image of his father is blown out of proportion. Going through Armend's things, Mirush retrieves a box containing a family photo, money, a ticket to Norway and information regarding the whereabouts of their father who Amend had secretly located and obviously planned to join. In the box Mirush also finds the photo of a café-restaurant in Norway named "Kalabria". Feeling abandoned by a father figure for the second time in his life, betrayed and rejected by his mother, Mirush decides with no hesitation to replace Armend in his journey. Finally pursuing his dream to meet his father, Mirush makes contact with the local traffickers, declares his intention

to migrate instead of Armend and pays them the fee to be smuggled out of Kosovo. Mirush is taken by car through the borders and is picked up by a truck, where he shares the back with a group of other kids, and finally arrives in Norway in a container. Mirush manages to locate the café-restaurant “Kalabria”, actually owned by his father, Bekim (Enrico Lo Verso). Mirush sneaks in the back yard, cleans it and stays for the night. This way he manages to impose himself as an “employee”, the “hired help”, in return for shelter and food. Now Mirush begins, at last, to reconstruct a more realistic image of his father. He realises that his father has abandoned them, with no intention of returning. Additionally he has declared himself an asylum seeker and claims that his family is dead. Bekim is actually planning to get married to a local woman, Hannah. On top of everything Mirush discovers that his father is involved with a local branch of the Albanian mafia, (a group that does not share the complex characteristics of organized crime as depicted in *Eastern Promises*) run by Vulkan and his son Ismet, who use the restaurant as a façade for their illegal activities. Mirush does not reveal his true identity but joins the circle of lies and deceit, giving false information about himself and his family. He soon manages to build a father and son relationship with Bekim and finally enjoys sharing the moments that he anticipated, such as dinner or a day at the beach. Meanwhile, Mirush befriends a co-worker, Frode, a local young man. One day Mirush steals Ismet’s Rolex, which he finds lying by the restaurant’s sink, and decides to perform one of his old basketball tricks to raise money to help his father with the restaurant. Mirush and Frode go to the park and challenge a group of boys to a basketball game. Pulling his old tricks, Mirush manages to collect a big amount, betting the Rolex. Returning to the restaurant, they are confronted by Ismet. Ismet blames Frode for stealing his watch and breaks his fingers. The same night, Mirush goes into his father’s office and puts his winnings in his pocket. He also pins the family photo from Armend’s box on the wall. His true identity is now revealed. So when Ismet returns to punish the real thief, Bekim has to defend his own flesh and blood, and eventually accidentally murders Ismet. He hides the body and later makes Mirush help him to dispose of it in the river. Ismet’s body is soon retrieved and Vulkan seeks revenge for his son’s death. Certain that Frode is responsible for it, he plots with Bekim to trap Frode with the help of Mirush. Mirush reluctantly follows the plan. After his part of the plot is

complete, Bekim puts him in a car to send him back to Kosovo. Mirush betrayed by his father once again, and having now a clear image of him, manages to escape and returns to save Frode. He arrives at the “Kalabria” during the feast for Bekim and Hannah’s wedding, and tells Vulkan the truth in exchange for Frode’s life. Bekim manages to flee, leaving the restaurant and Hannah behind. Mirush is devastated by who his father really is, but agrees to follow him to Germany now that Bekim needs him. On their way, Bekim hears for the first time that Armend is dead and stops the car. Vulkan and his men catch up with them and abduct Bekim to kill him. Mirush returns to Kosovo to be reunited with the only family he ever had, his mother.

Mirush is not a film that deals directly with the theme of immigration. It is not a film that is defined by its intentions for social or political commentary but in many ways the issue of immigration is featured through the protagonists and the nature of the narrative. However, precisely because of the unintentional portrait of an immigrant subcommunity, where the element of immigration is of peripheral or secondary importance, it is interesting to examine the types of immigrant that emerge and that bear many pragmatic characteristics, often disregarded even by the films that focus on the issue of migration itself.

Bekim is an established immigrant who has now managed to build a new life for himself in Norway. In this respect, Bekim is a legal immigrant. On the surface he has gone through the legal procedure of seeking asylum and makes a living through his legal business. His marriage to Hannah guarantees his citizenship in Norway. He is working, a member of an established community of immigrants (the guests at his wedding are his compatriots) but also a respected member of the local community, in a position to even employ locals (Frode). Bekim himself declares that there is nothing to link him back to his homeland. He says to Mirush: “This is where I live now”. He has no intention of returning and does not seem to suffer from any kind of nostalgia. The film does not share any kind of information about the conditions of his border-crossing journey, but the viewer is informed that Norway, whether an intentional final destination or not, is not the only place Bekim has relocated to, since he tells Mirush that in his years of absence he used to live in Germany. However, what is interesting and unique about Bekim is precisely the character’s duality and ambiguity. The character’s features that draw the picture for his classification within the

framework of the immigrant types described previously in this chapter are, at the same time, undermined by a lurking and very different reality, that automatically alters this very classification and Bekim's representation of an immigrant type. In this respect, Bekim presents us with a double filmic representation of an immigrant. He may have presented himself as a war refugee, which is true in the respect of actual events, but he has lied about his family. He has declared them dead. In this respect, both Bekim's motive for migrating from Kosovo and his pretence in order to remain in Norway have been falsely presented to his family (who expected him to support them) as well as the Norwegian authorities. Bekim's legality is, thus, a result of bending the law and exploiting his family's trust, instead of the outcome of lawfulness. Was financial hardship the true motive for Bekim's migration? If so, it was then definitely combined with changing his life entirely, including his family. Bekim does actually work in and for his restaurant but the restaurant is also used as a façade for other illegal activities by Vulkan's gang. Bekim may have been coerced but still follows their rules and does not hesitate to take action within these rules. It seems like an ironic wink of the eye to the audience that Bekim's restaurant is called "Kalabria" and the music playing inside is opera, as yet another proof of Bekim's deceitful nature, which offers to the clientele of the restaurant, a bit of local colour that does not correspond to his own cultural roots and origin. Bekim is a survivor and he will stop at nothing to remain one. Replacing Snead's "Blacks" in early American film, can we then argue that *Mirush* is a film of "defamation of (...) minority groups (...) propagating racial caricatures (who) (...) came to be linked with (...) marginal status"? (Snead, 1994, 107). The answer to such an argument would be "no", since the film does not use Bekim to portray the sinister, deceitful and law-breaking foreigner. Bekim is not here used as a representative of a clear "immigrant type" although he does have all the above mentioned characteristics, but he is a "sui generis" character, whose ambiguity serves the intentions and needs of the storytelling, precisely because the focus of the film is not that of examining the issue of immigration, but of telling a story of betrayal and refuted anticipation. On the other hand, it is precisely Bekim's ambiguity that attributes a degree of authenticity to the character, sometimes missing from films of sociopolitical orientation that aim to exculpate the immigrants. In this respect, Bekim's

character is more defined by his personal morals than by his status as an immigrant, a fact that makes an equally clear statement.

The antipode to Bekim's character's ambiguity is Mirush. Mirush represents a type of immigrant who is common in our selection of films. Many of the films examined in this thesis feature the issue of children who migrate, either following their mothers (*Last Resort*, *Illégal*), sold to childless families of the West (*La Sconosciuta*) or migrating unaccompanied (*71 Fragments*, *Mirush*, *Lilya4Ever*, *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*). The version of an immigrant child following their mother permits a depiction of intergenerational differences, in terms of both the attitude towards and experience of, migration. Moreover, unaccompanied children who are depicted migrating on their own, reveal on screen the harsh reality of illegal or undocumented child migration. On the other hand, the cases of immigrant children who relocate on their own in these films, also depict the lack of social infrastructure and parental guidance and the desensitisation (or even outright denial) on the part of the authorities towards the phenomenon of immigrant children.³⁹ Additionally, this on screen motif establishes the fact of the seemingly uncontrollable structures of human trafficking within the EU.

Unlike the cases of *71 Fragments*, *Lilya4Ever* and *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*, Mirush is not driven by his desire for and anticipation of a better life in a utopian "elsewhere". Mirush has only one goal: to be reunited with his father. In this respect, it is precisely the presence of his father in this other land and Mirush's expectations of him that constitute the "elsewhere", a utopian land, and not the opportunities for a better life offered by the host nation. This element of his relocation automatically classifies him according to his motivation regarding his migration. Precisely because of his age and the lack of an adult supervision, Mirush's migration is illegal. It is very unsettling for spectators that the smugglers show no surprise and have no hesitation in assisting an unaccompanied child cross the borders. The scene where Mirush is seen sharing the back of a truck with a group of other children underlines the apparent frequency of this specific pattern of immigration. The scenes of Mirush's border crossing journey are only a small part of the film. The casual

³⁹ For more see Kanics, Senovilla Hernández, Touzenis, 2010.

way in which the whole procedure is depicted in the film makes a very strong comment on the situation itself, depicting eloquently the social dimensions of the phenomenon. The fact that there seems to be no substantial border control, no fear of the consequences for trafficking a child, no real obstacles to Mirush's decision to relocate on his own, creates the sense of a lack of actual structures that would prevent such a situation. It is as if there is a silent agreement to not only allow but actually facilitate this trade in children and their disposal to undertake whatever task a civilised and adult world has to appoint them to. It is again interesting how a film where migration constitutes a narrative framework and not the theme of the story manages to point out relevant facts. As William Brown argues "Europe needs disposable people as much as these people need —for whatever reason— to flee their country of origin" (Brown, 2010, 18) to the extent that matters such as age become insignificant details.

Mirush continues to be exploited by adults when he reaches his destination. He works in exchange for shelter and food and no one reacts to the idea and image of a working child. The clientele of the "Kalabria" restaurant are not shocked to see a child serving them, when he replaces Frode. Mirush is "invisible" (Brown, 2010) not only to the customers of the restaurant but also to the country's authorities. In this respect, the film engages the rhetoric of exploitation of the trafficked people that runs through the whole filmic corpus of the thesis (*Illégal, Lilya4Ever, When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide, Dirty Pretty Things*). The argument on the issue of exploitation of the trafficked people is enhanced by Mirush's age. "Physical labour" does persist in Western Europe, only it is now "devolved" to Europeans from the Eastern bloc who are exploited (Brown, 2010, 32) and this functions within the framework of a somewhat silent agreement that is supported by the trafficked people's invisibility to the rest of the body of the society. The fact that Mirush is exploited by his own father, who at that moment is unaware of his real identity, underlines the issue of the morals of the exploiter, who functions within a circuit of providing his services to a system that is irrelevant and indifferent to his/her ethnicity. Undertaking the task of human trafficking is a choice that may be made by a person outside "Fortress Europe" which does not automatically

classify the person as a stalwart criminal.⁴⁰ Morals, in this respect, are seen more as a collective and flexible quality, directly linked to general social conditions. In effect the exploiter is “a slave to the system, while the trafficked person is a slave for the system” and this motif is maintained so that the privileged “European can remain in their safe bondage” (Brown, 2010, 33). The general framework within which human trafficking exists and functions is the division (even within Europe) between the privileged and the underprivileged, and the latter are necessary in order for the former to maintain their standards.

Children relate to their environment both physically and intuitively, which tends to transform their environment into a playground. In this respect, when children play adults, they produce a version of adulthood that misinterprets adult reality. The child protagonists in the films studied in this thesis (Lilya in *Lilya4Ever*, Artyom in *Last Resort*, Mirush in *Mirush*) very often have to engage in “adult” behaviour; but this does not mean that they understand such behaviour. Walter Benjamin has argued that children “produce their own small world within the greater one” (Benjamin 1985: 52-53). In this respect, children in the films analysed in this thesis do in fact create a community or micro-environment of their own that very often functions as a simulation of the adult world, only with an essence of playfulness. Lilya and Volodja’s world is their abandoned factory playground, Artyom’s a community of children involved with theft and abuse, copying the adult behavior they are surrounded with, while Mirush uses the basketball court as the site of his betting scam. Mirush is, moreover, surrounded by his mother’s struggle for survival. It is her acceptance that he seeks by delivering money at home. On the other hand, he believes that his father’s absence is also related to their financial hardship, which he himself tries to overcome through (rigged) betting on basketball games. In this respect, children imitate adults without being able to sense or understand the dimensions of the adult world. According to Graeme Gilloch “the adult seeks a position of superiority from which to view the world” (Gilloch 1996: 83). Mirush does the same. He is seen often standing on a rooftop, trying to change his perspective on the world, possibly gaining a bigger picture, large enough to include the image of his father. (Interestingly enough, Lilya and Volodja in

⁴⁰ See *Spare Parts*, Damjan Kozole, 2003, Slovenia.

Lilya4Ever are also pictured standing on a rooftop, as if trying to change their own position within the world.)

Although the children in the selection of films examined here try to assume an adult position of superiority towards the world, it is inevitable that they maintain their own perspective. Gilloch claims that a child “enjoys a privileged proximity” to the world (Gilloch, 1996, 83). This proximity is here reversed from a privilege to a misinterpretation. It is this childish proximity and the lack of fear it brings that does not prohibit Mirush (or Lilya in *Lilya4Ever*) from deciding to get out into the world. Danger is not something that Mirush considers at any point. It is the urge to find his father that prevails. Mirush (very much like Ada in *Since Otar Left*) does not plan his migration. He spontaneously replaces his adult brother, Armend, and takes up his journey. However, that said, like the rest of the child protagonists in the films analysed in this thesis, Mirush relocates only to find himself trapped again, in even more cruel conditions. Similarly in *Last Resort*, Atyom effectively becomes a prisoner in the refugee camp, whilst, in *Lilya4Ever*, Lilya is a slave to her pimp and Mirush is trapped in the “Kalabria” restaurant, involved in the sinister “games” of his father and Vulkan’s gang. The disillusionment that awaits at the end of their journey of hope (as Loshitzky [2010: 15-44] defines all journeys of migration) becomes a repeated motif. The depiction of children becomes a distorted image of the narrative in children’s stories (Gulliver, Hop-o’-My Thumb, Little Red Riding Hood), only in this case the wolf is very real. The narrative of the lost child goes back to myths and folklore, and many times “premodern tales of children lost functioned as warnings to other youth to stay on the right path (Little Red Riding Hood, Wizard of Oz), or not to trust strangers (Pinocchio) or even family members (Snow White, Hansel and Grete)” (Olson; Scahill, 2012, 2). The depiction of children examined here does not ensure a happy ending. It is precisely through depriving the children of the features of their childhood that the child characters become tragic. This other-ed child “challenges deeply held convictions about the naturalness of childhood, particularly as childlike bodies are defined as “vulnerable”, “dependent” and simultaneously asexual/heterosexual (Olson, Scahill, 2012, 2). In this respect, the depiction of children victimised through labour exploitation (Mirush), forced prostitution and/or abuse (Lilya, Volodya) underlines above all, the visualisation of the

marginalised and victimised alien. If the immigrant other is a victim of historical and political turbulence, the version of the child immigrant becomes its more emblematic aspect.

Although Mirush appears fearless to the limitless world and he decides to travel across the continent, in terms of the representation of the cinematic space that he inhabits, he is (with the exception of the basketball court) consistently depicted as inhabiting restrictive, cramped, indoor spaces. The family house in Kosovo is very small and crowded. Even in Armend's funeral the casket is put in a corridor and the people attending the funeral are standing outside. When Mirush finally reaches his destination, the "Kalabria" restaurant, his relation to space does not change. His living space is the small back yard and a tiny room in the back of the restaurant. This space "out the back" underlines Mirush's invisibility. He lives as if "hidden out the back". Juxtaposing the scarcity of the indoor space is the sequence of Mirush's journey where he is seen in broad open spaces. Even when he rides on the back of the truck, this truck is shot in the wilderness, in a bird's-eye shot, enhancing the sense of the limitless "unknown" where Mirush is headed. The spatial scarcity of the indoors setting of Mirush's home is also prominent in the outdoors depiction of his hometown in Kosovo. The town is always crowded, doors are very close to one another and the view from the rooftop is blocked by other roofs, antennae and what seems like an architectural anarchy. This scarcity of living space appears symbolic of the oppression imposed on Mirush, who on the edge of adolescence seems deprived of space to grow in. Mirush does not blossom when he finds his father. He is forced to join adulthood through his father's criminal acts, but again, what we see is a child oppressed, unable to develop in a natural way. There is an interesting opposition in the sequence when Mirush visits Frode. Frode, although an adult, lives with his mother in a tiny apartment. However, in this case, the limited internal, domestic space inhabited by Frode symbolises warmth, parental care and protection. Frode is seen in his adolescent room playing a game on his computer, while his mother prepares dinner. Juxtaposing the haste of Mirush's transition to adulthood is the sheltered life of Frode, in a reversal of roles: Frode, exploring the spaces of childhood/adolescence, while the underprivileged alien, Mirush, is deprived of his. The only time Mirush is seen in a normal child-like situation is on the day he

follows his father and Hannah to the beach, the only reward of his quest to find his father.

As Loshitzky claims (2010: 32), the “migration fantasy” in such films “is fed and nurtured by different means of manufacturing dreams and desires, from traditional postcards, posters, and amusement parks to images in cyber space”. Mirush’s migration is uniquely motivated by his desire to find his father. His quest is nurtured by the only family picture he finds in Armend’s box (akin to Naficy’s notion of the fetishised prop in accented cinema [2001, 261]). Mirush is seen carrying a bag both on his way to Norway and during his homecoming journey. Naficy classifies the suitcase as “a multilayered key symbol” (Naficy 2001, 261) that contains all the elements that constitute a person’s life before relocating but also “connotes wanderlust, freedom to roam and a provisional life” (Naficy 2001, 261). In the case of Mirush, his bag also depicts his baggage of premature wisdom when he finally returns home to meet his mother. The most motivational object in his possession though, which serves as an encouragement to his initial quest, remains this picture. It is the very same picture that will reveal his identity to Bekim, his only document of identification. Precisely because of his motivation for migrating, Mirush is never seen in the city of Oslo, in monumental surroundings that would reveal the city’s identity. We only know he is flying to Oslo because of the cover of a map he finds in Armend’s box, reading Oslo. For both Mirush and the viewer, Oslo is just a word. It could be replaced with any other European city. When Bekim tries to flee from Oslo, he tells Mirush they are going to Germany, to Baden-Württemberg. He pronounces the name of the city with an effort to make it sound a desirable destination but Mirush now knows that the image of his father is forever gone. It is evident that the motivation for Bekim and Mirush to relocate, answers completely different needs. In this respect, Bekim, although initially forced to relocate for financial reasons, has no specific target destination as long as he manages to reinvent himself. Mirush, on the other hand, has only one intention, to reinvent not his own identity, but the image of his father.

Crime is present in *Mirush* as it is in *Eastern Promises* and though the film implies a form of organized crime, run by Vulkan and his people, the scale is reduced. The film does not engage the element of organised crime as an immigrant’s outlet or only source of survival, nor as an entity invading the social

corpus. Although the film implies that Bekim is coerced into Vulkan's activities in order to maintain the restaurant, crime and its structure here function as a vehicle for Bekim's betrayal and as a narrative tool to dramatise Mirush's rush into adulthood. Several tactics of organised crime such as revenge and punishment in order to maintain order are depicted, but clearly as an element of enabling the dramatic unfolding of the story rather than a comment on the relationship between alienation, marginalisation and crime.

As in *Since Otar Left*, Naficy's notion of accented speech (Naficy, 2001, 22-26), discussed earlier, is once again engaged in *Mirush*. The characters are multilingual and engage more than one language. The filmmaker adds, towards the direction of realism, a third language (besides Albanian and Norwegian): Mirush and Frode communicate in elementary English. It is interesting that the roles of Bekim and Mirush's mother are played by non-native speakers, Italian Enrico Lo Verso and Serbian Mirjana Karanovic respectively. Once again there is the element of a generalisation of the East from the point of view of the Western filmmaker. The element of Naficy's accented speech is essential in the case of the films studied in the thesis, precisely because it is the main external component of the structure of characters that identifies them as Eastern European immigrants. Although some of the characters are played by actors of (ethnically) relevant or identical origin (Mirjana Karannovic, Nazif Muarremi), others are not (Enrico Lo Verso, Viggo Mortensen). In order for the film to make a statement regarding the ethnicity of the character besides the plot itself, there must be a coherence of physical (in many cases stereotypical) features and the component of language. In this respect essential as it is for a character to "look" Eastern European, it is equally important for them to "sound" Eastern European. The homogeneity of the linguistic group of the European East (with the exception of Albanian and Romanian), constitutes the Eastern "sound" and its variations detectable only by Eastern European audiences but not by the Western viewer. In this respect it is easier for the Western European filmmaker to achieve a certain level of plausibility, attributing general characteristics to the accented speech.

In conclusion, the three films analysed in detail in this chapter portray the image of the new immigrant in various and distinctive ways: the legal immigrant

(*Eastern Promises*, *Mirush*), the illegal or trafficked immigrant (*Mirush*), the economic immigrant or the person who migrates for psychological reasons (*Since Otar Left*), the loner (*Since Otar Left*), the member of an established community (*Mirush*, *Eastern Promises*), the working immigrant (*Since Otar Left*, *Mirush*), the criminal immigrant (*Eastern Promises*, *Mirush*), the asylum seeker (*Mirush*), the exploited immigrant (*Mirush*, *Eastern Promises*), the educated immigrant (*Since Otar Left*), the female immigrant (*Since Otar Left*, *Eastern Promises*), the unaccompanied child (*Mirush*), the already relocated immigrant (*Eastern Promises*, *Mirush*, *Since Otar Left*), the migrant (*Since Otar Left*, *Mirush*). However, there are also two other interesting elements that run through these representations. On one hand all three films engage the element of a family quest. Anna in *Eastern Promises* finds herself involved in Tatjana's story as a result of the recurring memory of her father. Mirush leaves to find his father. The three women and especially, Ada who is finally the one to relocate, are in a constant dialogue with the absent Otar. It is evident that the insight into the issue of immigration offered by all three films emerges through the issue of family. This very element enhances the argument made at the beginning of the chapter on the personalisation of the immigrant experience in fiction films. In this respect the immigrant story emerges through other, more personal stories without being the central discussion of the film. A Western European spectator may not have a personal view on the issues of immigration but can definitely identify with the narrative component of family and the relations within its core. (In this respect family becomes the "emotional hook" in the narrative, to use Lloret's previously evoked description of his own film, *Welcome*.) On the other hand, the image of the new immigrant in these three films is constantly reconstructed. Otar is not only reconstructed in his letters, but also "impersonated" by Ada after his death. Tatjana is absent after her death in the opening of *Eastern Promises*, but remains not only present but also links the events of the film through her diary. Mirush tries to reinvent the figure of his father while he is away and reconstructs his fragmental image when he finally meets him. This constant reconstruction expands extra-filmically. The film, and consequently the non-immigrant filmmaker, through this precise character reconstruction, achieves his/her intra-filmic recomposition of the immigrant other. In this respect the immigrant protagonist undergoes a dual process of

elaboration of the features he/she represents, and then is recomposed not only inside the film itself but also in the filmmaker's intellect.

CHAPTER 2

The Eastern European immigrant within the host nation. Integration of the new immigrant protagonist.

In the first chapter we have established and examined the new type of immigrant as represented in the films depicting the specific intra-European wave of immigration since the early 1990s. We have also elaborated on the stereotypical imagery provided by such representations. In this chapter our main concern is to examine the East European immigrant's situation within the host nations of Western Europe. We will explore how the integration of the new immigrant protagonist and the relationship of the immigrant to the host nation is depicted in a series of case study films.

In Chapter 1 it was argued that new immigrant types (whatever the extent of the stereotypical approach may be) constitute a new kind of immigrant protagonist in contemporary European cinema. Following on from this analysis, Chapter 2 will argue that the interaction between the immigrant and the local communities of the host nation along with the possibility (or not) of the integration of the immigrant into the host nation forms the main framework of the narrative of the films under examination in this thesis. What is more, these two elements of interaction and integration between the immigrant and host society constitute the filmmaker's interpretation of the issues of immigration. In this respect, interaction and integration become the attempt in these films to depict the immigrant experience regardless of whether the issue of immigration is the theme or a peripheral component in the narrative of the films under examination. The exploration of these two elements thus leads these films to an examination of the way the filmmakers engage the immigrant character. The first step will be to determine the common motifs of such relationships, social status and descriptions of the immigrant's position within the host societies in these films.

Love and Marriage.

Love between an immigrant character and a member of a local society is one of the most common motifs surrounding contact between the immigrant and host nation found in contemporary European films depicting the migration of Eastern European immigrants to the West.⁴¹ Romance or even marriage between the immigrant and a member of the host nation is therefore a recurring narrative feature in many of these films. The reason such narratives are employed has much to do with their universal appeal and the possibility of identification on the part of both filmmaker and audience with the immigrant protagonist/character (regardless of their own personal experience in relation to immigration). According to the French director Philip Lioret when discussing his own film, *Welcome* (Lioret, 2009) the love story can serve as the humanitarian “hook” that attracts the sympathy of the average viewer towards an immigrant protagonist. The theme of romance thus provides a strong tool in the hands of the filmmaker to subsume the film in the further category of “love story” (Lioret to Philips, 2010). On the one hand, then, love, relationships and marriage create an optimal background in these films for describing the interaction between locals and immigrants. Assuming that the majority of the audience for these films consists of non-immigrant viewers, the component of love assists in their ability to relate to the local protagonist/character, who seems sympathetic to the immigrant protagonist/character. On the other hand the element of marriage, when and where it occurs, provides an appropriate framework for raising completely different issues regarding both the collective and official attitudes towards integration (such as laws, benefits, procedures) and potential issues of deceit, bending the respective laws and exploitation on behalf of the immigrant character. In films such as *The Silence of Lorna* and *Mirush* there are the cases of marriage being used as a “ticket” by the immigrant character to easily access a legal status in the hosting nation and, consequently, these cases often create an established stereotype that can form a collective prejudice.

⁴¹ This is found in the following films *Revanche* (Götz Spielmann, 2008), *The Silence of Lorna* (Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, 2008), *Nordrand* (Werner Herzog, 1999), *Das Fräulein* (Andrea Staka, 2006), *Once* (John Carney, 2006), *Dirty Pretty Things* (Stephen Frears, 2003), *Ondine* (Neil Jordan, 2009), *Take Care of your Scarf Tatiana* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1994).

The use of love as a “humanitarian hook” leads us to a rather interesting phenomenon. According to Smith the term *alignment* “describes the process by which spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions and to what they know and feel” (Smith, 1995, 83). In this respect, the basic alignment in the films included in the thesis occurs between the audience and the non-immigrant protagonist rather than with the immigrant themselves (eg. Alfie in *Last Resort*, Alex in *Revanche*). However, as Smith goes on to argue, alignment is developed in the way that the “narratives feed story information” to the spectator through the “lens of a particular character” (Smith, 1995, 83). So, it is the way that the non-immigrant character who falls in love with the immigrant character feels and deals with the immigrant he or she comes into contact with that regulates the viewer’s identification with both the immigrant protagonist themselves and the issues of immigration and integration that are played out through the on-screen narrative. Having thus created a positive and appealing environment for the narrative to unfold, the filmmaker may proceed to provide a basic or secondary commentary on issues regarding the theme of immigration itself, presenting them to an audience that is already more predisposed towards (or to use Smith’s term already “aligned” with) the immigrant protagonist. The motif of love appears broadly in this thesis’ selection of films but it is both versatile and tends to vary regarding its motives and outcome as explained earlier. In each case though, it does add the element of personalising the story. At this point we should explore these ideas further with specific reference to a range of case study films.

In *Last Resort* (Pawel Pawlikowski, 2000), love plays the role of the trigger for the immigrant story. Although the film clearly deals with the issues of immigration and the problems of the reception of immigrants in Western Europe (UK) and the policies introduced by the state to deal with this influx of “new” immigrants, it is, in fact, love (or the promise of love), not persecution or economic hardship, that triggers Tanya’s initial displacement from Russia to the UK. According to David Walsa, the film fails to offer “some kind of exposure of the mistreatment meted out to immigrants and refugees in Britain and Europe generally” (Walsa cited in Loshitzky, 2010, 34). Instead it focuses on personal drama “aiming its polemic against Tanya herself. She is the author of her own difficulties” (cited in Loshitzky, 2010, p.34). For his part, the director,

Pawlikowski, argues precisely in favour of the love story: “A social realist drama about the misery of refugees would be much more dull. With a love story, you can hook the audience in —everyone can relate to falling in love...” (a.c. in Loshitzky, 2010, 34). Though Tanya (Dina Korzun) initially leaves her homeland to pursue what she believes is her “true love”, her journey finally becomes one of self-discovery. The narrative begins with Tanya arriving in the UK to meet her British fiancé, who fails to arrive at the airport, effectively rejecting her. Although Tanya never meets her fiancé, she does find platonic love in the shape of a local, Alfie (Paddy Considine), who could, ultimately, offer her the rescue she seeks, but, as Tanya finds herself confined to the refugee camp, sharing the hardships of much more desperate people, she chooses to reject Alfie’s love, denying the help and comfort he offers and, instead, choosing to return home. Although Loshitzky argues that “the ending is therefore an additional indication that the film is a disavowal of the issues of forced migration” (Loshitzky, 2010, 35), there is another way of interpreting this narrative. Although her co-dependency, “love” and the possibility of marriage are what encouraged Tanya to emigrate, she does not make that choice to remain in the UK. *Last Resort* is therefore one of the most clear examples of the thesis’ films to support the argument of love being used as a personalising framework for the immigrant story to unfold.

A rather different way of combining the themes of love and immigration is found in *Ondine* (Neil Jordan, 2009). While *Last Resort* takes place in the refugee detention centre and depicts all the bureaucratic procedures of immigration, the set up of *Ondine* has the appearance of a folk fairytale, a “dreamlike tone” which will soon be shattered when reality comes “as a jarring shock (...) crashing in on the captivating world Jordan has constructed” (Concannon, 2010). Set in a small fishing port on the West coast of Ireland, *Ondine* tells the story of Syracuse (Colin Farrell), an ex-alcoholic fisherman, who discovers a young woman in his nets, Ondine (Alicja Bachleda). She asks for a place to hide and Syracuse puts her up in an abandoned cottage. Syracuse’s daughter believes that Ondine is a selkie, a seal who becomes human while on land. Through Ondine’s presence, Syracuse thus regains his belief in life only to find out that Ondine is actually a victim of human trafficking, and is seeking refuge from her traffickers. As in *Last Resort*, the dual theme of

“love” and “rescue” appears here, though this time the person who becomes the rescuer and the one who is being rescued are reversed, in the sense of a metaphorical redemption of the male character. If immigration is the starting point of Tanya’s story with the element of “love” joining in to explain and urge the plot, in *Ondine* the features of a “love story” are dominant with the element of the trafficking issue appearing only as the twist.

In contrast to this romantic dual narrative of “love” and “rescue”, are two other films that use the motif of marriage as a plan, a deliberate and deceitful effort to obtain legal citizenship status on behalf of the immigrant protagonist. In *The Silence of Lorna* (Jean-Pierre & Luc Dardenne, 2008) and *Mirush* (Holst, 2007) what we have are two controversial immigrant protagonists. Smith’s notion of alignment does not necessarily apply here, or, in the case of Lorna at least, not until the point where Lorna (Arta Dobroshi) becomes a victim of her actions herself. Equally, in *Mirush*, Bekim (Enrico Lo Verso) is neither the protagonist around which the narrative revolves, nor is he the character that the audience identifies with.

In *The Silence of Lorna*, Lorna decides to pursue her dream of running a snack-bar with her partner, Sokol (Alban Ukaj), through marrying Claudy (Jérémie Renier), a local junky, whose death she does not hesitate to regard as a meaningless necessity. Lorna does not expect to be rescued by love, but takes matters into her own hands in order to achieve her goals. In contrast, in *Mirush*, Bekim, an Albanian refugee, is portrayed as a devious character, who will stop at nothing to obtain what he wants. Having declared his family dead in order to claim refugee status in Norway, he does not hesitate to then marry a local woman, thus committing bigamy. The film gives no information of the relationship between Bekim and his Norwegian wife but the implication offered by the general portrayal of Bekim in the film is that this marriage is part of his plan to make it in the new country.⁴² In this respect, Bekim introduces here the notion of the foreign intrusion to the host nation, the “non national” body, the foreigner who disrupts the construction of national identity (Dunkan, 2009).⁴³

⁴² The lack of such information is only justified since the matter of Bekim’s marriage is quite peripheral, while in *The Silence of Lorna* it is the main plot component.

⁴³ The sequence of Bekim’s Albanian wedding is very characteristic of this intrusion.

The same element of being rescued by love is reversed in *Take Care of Your Scarf, Tatiana* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1994). Valto and Reino wander in a quest for coffee and vodka. Their quest is interrupted by the arrival of Russian Klavdia and Estonian Tatiana who are looking for a ride to the port. In this film the issue of immigration is secondary and not quite dealt with within its realistic dimensions, precisely because it is used as a premise for the filmmaker to comment on the difficulty of forming relationships. Klavdia's and Tatiana's immigrant status is the source here of the language barrier that serves the particular purpose of depicting the hardship of communication and interaction, in the strange Kaurismäki universe. Jonathan White describes the film, correctly in our opinion, as "a road movie fueled by coffee and vodka." (White, 2013). On the other hand, the homecoming journey of Russian Klavdia (Kirsi Tykkyläinen) and Estonian Tatiana (Kati Outinen) is what gives Valto's (Mato Valtonen) and Reino's (Matti Pellonpää) ride a clear focus and final point of destination. While Klavdia seems ready to manipulate and take advantage of the bizarre Finn duo in order to manage to return home, it is the quieter character of Tatiana that wins Reino's heart, but not in order for her to remain in Finland. It is finally Reino who decides to stay in Estonia with her, in his own quest for love and a purpose in life. Here the negative stereotypical notion of the immigrant entering into an arranged marriage is challenged by the narrative, since the couple appear genuinely to marry for love and to remain in the immigrant's homeland rather than the host nation. The dual motif of love and rescue thus appears again, only this time it is totally reversed. It is Tatiana who rescues Reino. Furthermore the destination is Estonia, a fact that transposes the immigrant status from Eastern Tatiana to Western Reino.

In *Das Fräulein* (Andrea Staka, 2006), love has the role of portraying Ruza's acceptance and endorsement of life. Ruza (Mirjana Karanovic) has lived a secluded, restricted life in Zurich for almost 25 years. Her status is legal and she does not appear to have any problems emerging from the fact of her immigrant status.⁴⁴ Instead, Ruza's problems stem from her reluctance and

⁴⁴ This is a case of a film (joined by others of our thesis' selection) that provides historic-political reference to the differences of migration policies in Eastern Europe during the communist era. Tito's Yugoslavia did not undergo the strict isolation that the rest of Eastern European regimes imposed (for more see Mazower, 2000). Therefore, there was liberty to travel and emigrate.

refusal to embrace life more generally. After her interaction with Ana (Marija Skaricic), a newcomer who fled Sarajevo after the war, Ruza opens up to life and the love of Franz (Andrea Zogg), a local who has been amorously pursuing her for a while. In this case the relationship functions as evidence of Ruza accepting her life not necessarily in the “new” country but in her here and now and, thus, her ability to negotiate with a long forgotten past, her identity and her relationship with everything that she has left behind. The element of love is prominent regarding the character of Ana but doesn’t really relate to her displacement, nor can we actually view Ana as an immigrant by choice or cohesion.

One of the most interesting applications of the component of love as a narrative tool is that of bridging the gap between different generations of immigrants who emigrated under different conditions. What we have in this case is not the interaction of immigrants with locals, but the interaction of immigrants alone. This is neither a new element nor exclusive to the thesis’ filmic selection. It is actually a very common motif, continually coming back in the depiction of all waves of immigration with films ranging from *America America* (Elia Kazan, 1963) to *Ein Augenblick Freiheit* (Arash T. Riahi, 2008). In this respect, it is perhaps inevitable that the films selected for this chapter repeat this form of engagement to some extent. This motif appears both as a relationship between immigrants of the same origin (*Nordrand* [Barbara Albert, 1999], *Eastern Promises* [David Cronenberg, 2007]) and as a relationship between immigrants of different origin who represent different waves of immigration (*Kurz und Schmerzlos* [Fatih Akin, 1998]). In the first example, love appears almost as an inevitable consequence of the established immigrant’s need to connect with her ethnic identity and a sort of recognition and alignment on behalf of the newcomer in his need to identify with a culture and a situation he somehow becomes familiar with. With reference to *Nordrand*, Loshitzsky’s (2010, 46) argument that the protagonists’ “emotions, hopes and anxieties are shaped in one way or another by the sociopolitical realities of the time”, can also apply to *Eastern Promises*. The difference, however, is the specific historical, and geographic context in which this unfolds, as in the first film this is linked directly to the consequences of the Yugoslavian civil war, while in *Eastern Promises*, the action unfolds against the backdrop of a Russian mafia war being fought on

the streets of London. In both cases though, it is undoubtedly the fact of the socialist regimes disintegration that creates the sociopolitical framework. In the second case it is a component of the actual dialectics of the film that “focuses on the identity crisis faced by German youth from various ethnic backgrounds” (Teksoy, 2008, 108).

Young “love” also appears in the thesis’ film selection in a quite interesting mode, that of a coming of age story in the Italian film *Once You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide* (Giordana, 2005). The persistent love of Sandro (Matteo Gadola) for Alina (Ester Hazan), reveals the identity of her alleged brother, who turns out to be her trafficker. This revelation introduces the issues of child trafficking and sex exploitation to the already versatile narrative of the film, which focuses on various aspects of immigration and its randomness as a condition of life. Sandro’s persistence brings in the issue of trafficking only at the end of the film, managing in this way to create a framework for reflection without posing the issue as one of the main themes of the rest of the film. In this respect *Once You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide* manages to expose the invisible trade, in one of its rather unusual forms. The film thus challenges the argument of Brown that films on trafficking do not actually raise awareness as they are made by non-victims allowing European society to rely upon “their” (the victims’) invisibility to persist in its own bourgeois luxury guilt-free” (Brown, Iordanova, Torchin, 2010, p. 43).

The film that entirely conforms to the genre of the love story is *Once* (Carney, 2006). Guy (Glen Hansard), a Dublin busker, meets a fellow musician who has migrated to Ireland from the Czech Republic. They fall in love, but their relationship is doomed to have an unhappy ending, since the girl is already married back home. Again the course of love remains unrealised very much as in the case of *Last Resort*. *Once* is also similar to *Last Resort* in the sense that the central coupling is between a young female immigrant and a local man. Although *Once* is basically a film about love and music, it does manage to elaborate on many issues related to immigration, the depiction of which will be the subject of our approach later on in this chapter. The film manages, on the periphery of the main love story, to point to matters such as work, female immigration, family and reunification with family, while maintaining the main narrative line of the average love story. *Once* is a film that clearly approaches

the theme of love and relationship from a romantic point of view and not through the lens of expediency, enhancing its classification as a “love story”, in contrast to films such as *The Silence of Lorna* or *Mirush*.

The biggest difference between the films depicting the specific wave of immigration from East to West within Europe and the ones representing different examples of migration, when they engage the element of love, is undoubtedly the lack of the element of visible “racial” issues and unbridgeable cultural differences. Although the phenomenon of this wave of intra-European immigration is new and what we have here is immigrant protagonists of the first generation, the issue of such confrontation is absent. The motif of interracial love (present in films such as *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* [Stephen Frears, 1987], *Ae Fond Kiss* [Ken Loach, 2004], *The New World* [Terrence Malick, 2005]) does not apply. Whatever the motivation for a relationship between an immigrant and a local character in our filmic selection, there is no evident racial or cultural obstacle. In the selection of films analysed in this thesis, the obstacle for the on screen romance, when present, is the mere fact of the displacement or the motivation to form the relationship in the first place. Tanya in *Last Resort* decides to return home, Lorna has ulterior motives, the Czech girl in *Once* is already married back home and Ondine is on the run from her traffickers. However none of these narrative twists are based on racial and cultural confrontation. In *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, the marriage of Sammy (Ayub Khan-Din) and Rosie (Frances Barber) and the radical “Western” mentality they share and have established their relationship on, are what trigger the confrontation with a previous more traditional generation when Sammy’s father, Rafi (Shashi Kapoor), decides to visit. A relevant confrontation with a more traditional outlook from a previous generation appears also in *Ae Fond Kiss*. Casim (Atta Yaqub) may be in love with Roisin (Eva Birthistle), but his first generation Pakistani Muslim immigrant family is determined that he should follow the rules of an arranged marriage with someone not only of the same ethnic origin, but, even more importantly, with someone of the same religion. It is interesting to note here that while both these films are influential and quite representative of the issues they deal with, the main obstacle of racial and cultural conflict is not raised by the host community itself, as could be expected, but by the immigrants themselves who, holding on to their different mentality,

fail to adjust to the reality of the new homeland. The field that such an observation creates for discussion is quite wide and varied, regarding the issues of marginalisation and maintaining cultural and religious identity: is it the “newcomers” who fail to adjust to the mentality of the new homeland or is it the new homeland that fails to ensure a level of viable integration and adjustment? Most probably the answer lies within the lines of an inevitable confrontation between utterly different cultures that need time to compromise and become reconciled in order to come to terms. It is evident that in the case of these films the source of confrontation does not only derive from the typical cultural or religious differences (e.g. Islam). The legacy of a colonial past between the UK and Pakistan and its influence on the post-colonial present of modern-day British society also enhances this confrontation. It is a past relationship of oppressed and oppressor that is transposed to the new premise of the relationship between immigrant and host. This aspect of the relationship is absent in the depiction of intra-European immigration. The failure of the communist administrative model has evoked cold war suspiciousness in both sides (East and West), leaving only plain reluctance in the face of the unknown.

Work.

If the narrative element of love creates a fruitful framework for the filmic plot to unfold, it is evident that the issue of work becomes itself a very strong narrative component. On one hand the issues of work are indissolubly linked to the phenomena of migration, affecting massively not only the lives of immigrants in the new homeland, but also the economies of both the host and the countries of migration. In this respect, we could conclude that work and all related issues are one of the main reasons that politics and immigration policies throughout the world are somehow ostensibly obliged to deal with the phenomenon of the variant waves of immigration, especially the ones that do not correspond directly to procedures such as asylum seeking. On the other hand work as a wheel of economic structures (both Western capitalism and former real socialism whose disintegration triggered the specific intra-European wave of immigration under examination here) is not altogether an impersonal element or a statistic. Work and professional classification is one of the most

dominant (if not the ruling element) of the social identity a person has. In other words, “we are what we do” and professional identity is the one that defines the person within his or her social environment. In this respect, the representation of migrant work appears in the films analysed in this thesis in various ways and within various parameters. The films often deal with the themes of work as a mere means of survival and/or support of family back home; work as an end in itself; deprivation of the right to work or of professional identity; child labour laws and their bending; the forming of new types of labour directly linked to the phenomena of migration; people as productive units; the post capitalist view of the working class and inevitably the relation between working issues and crime.

In most cases the conditions of work for an immigrant dictate the status of the immigrant in the host country. In this respect, an illegal worker is often an illegal, undocumented immigrant. *Illégal* (Olivier Masset-Depasse, 2010) describes the absurdity of the dual phenomenon in the story of Tania (Anne Coesens), who lives and work illegally in Belgium with her son until the day she gets arrested and put in a detention centre. Lorna, on the other hand, in *The Silence of Lorna* works legally in Belgium. In this respect Lorna is not one of the immigrant protagonists that are struggling to enter what Loshitsky describes as "Fortress Europe" (Loshitzky, 2010, 1). The film does not follow the path of explaining the status of Lorna in Belgium, since it concentrates for the most part on Lorna's illegal activities and her manipulation of existing laws and policies. We do not know how Lorna got to be in Belgium and how she obtained her current status. What we see is how Lorna, while already being there and having an everyday life that appears natural and far from criminal, identifies with illegality in a completely different way. She does not break the law but she manipulates it. The issue of illegal work and, moreover, the formation of a whole organised circuit of illegal workers is one of the themes that appears in *Dirty Pretty Things* (Fears, 2003). In the film it is evident that an underground economy flourishes at the expense of the immigrant workers of the Baltic Hotel. The film, through this secondary element of the narrative, manages to underline a very important issue: that of the essence of a “common secret” created by such phenomena. How is it possible for this whole subcommunity to exist and work but still to reside illegally in the country as clandestine immigrants? Such a condition can be viewed and dealt with by Loshitzky's “labor-market-driven

approach" (Loshitzky, 2010, 73). As Loshitzky argues "migration is viewed in economic terms rather than in terms of universal rights, and celebration of ethnic identity and multiculturalism" (Loshitzky, 73). The hidden workers of the Baltic hotel depict this precise condition.

Import/Export (Ulrich Seidl, 2007) and *Since Otar Left* (Julie Bertuccelli, 2003) describe the phenomenon of the loss of the immigrant's professional identity. Olga (Ekateryna Rak), a Ukrainian nurse, after a very short career in cyber porn, becomes a cleaner in a nursing home in Austria. Although the film basically concentrates on the parallel yet reverse courses of Olga and an unemployed Austrian security guard, the fact that Olga is deprived of the opportunity to practise her profession is dominant. Olga works in the nursing home, but as a cleaner and not the nurse she has trained to be back in the Ukraine. She is, therefore, unable to apply her professional training, skills and knowledge to the host nation's economy. Equally, Otar, in *Since Otar Left*, has to change professions. He is no longer a doctor but an illegal construction worker. Indeed, Otar finally pays for this change of jobs with his life, since his inexperience in construction leads to the accident that causes his death. As a result of the illegal status of his work, Otar's family cannot find a way to legally pursue a conviction for negligence against his employers. Otar is the perfect example of the immigrant's social exclusion resulting from the loss of professional identity. A well-educated man, who lived a life of cultural orientation surrounded by literature and science, he becomes merely one more illegal, undocumented labourer when he arrives in France. In this respect Otar describes powerfully this silent agreement between the East and the West and the inevitable course of this specific wave of immigration. The West asks for an unskilled, therefore cheap, workforce. The East without regulation provides it. This trend is repeated in the filmic representation of migrant workers of all waves of immigration (e.g. *Baran*, [Majid Majidi, 2001]; *Black Dju*, [Pol Cruchten, 1996]; *Black Girl*, [Ousmane Sembene, 1966]). In the case of the films studied in this thesis, the premise differs by substituting Eastern Europe for colonies and the South. In this respect the filmic motif is an actual representation of the historical pattern.

Other films, such as *Das Fräulein* choose not to address the issue of work directly and in its realistic dimensions. However, this does not mean that

the theme of work is not indirectly present in the narrative. It is obvious that Ruza (an immigrant from former Yugoslavia) is legally in Zurich and runs her business legally. Ana (also a citizen of former Yugoslavia) arrives as a customer in Ruza's restaurant with no intention of getting a job. The issue of work in *Das Fräulein*, is, therefore, not only secondary but is used for the sole purpose of creating the imagery of Ruza's world. In this respect, while the element of work is not relevant to the immigrant protagonist's status in the host nation, it does provide some information to the spectator: the difference of Tito's communist regime in Yugoslavia which, unlike the isolation imposed on the rest of Eastern Europe at the time, allowed its citizens to migrate.

Mirush (a film analysed in detail in Chapter 1) introduces the issue of child labour. Although again this is a peripheral theme as it appears in the film, in combination with the fact that Mirush migrates on his own, it does point out the gap in legislation. The child seems not to exist in the eyes of official authorities. In a Western country where children's welfare is (in theory at least) taken as given, the immigrant child appears invisible. *Lilya4Ever* (Moodysson, 2002) is a film that deals with the same issue, foregrounding the theme of trafficking and the (sex-)trafficking of underage women on the false pretences of legal work. In this respect, the film does show the liaison between work and crime. Lilya (Oksana Akinshina) is promised legal work but ends up committing crime with no such intention of her own. This forms a very serious argument for the film. The relationship between crime and immigration has not only been a topic of discussion since previous waves of immigration; it has also been a permanent deterrent used in official policies not to mention the most dominant argument of extreme right wing politics. In this respect, fiction films, by personalising the immigrant experience through narrative and storytelling, provide a prominent field for discussion of the issue and function towards the direction of raising awareness.

Interaction with other immigrant characters.

In most of the films analysed in this thesis the immigrant protagonists interact with other immigrant characters. This element of the immigrant experience takes the role of providing the imagery of various aspects of the immigrant's life as it is portrayed on screen. Simultaneously it provides vivid

information on the various waves of immigration, usually regarding such phenomena related with the past of a displaced population of the same ethnic origin. On the other hand, the use of such relationships by the filmmaker, allows him/her to create the framework of an immigrant subcommunity. In this respect, the personalised story of the immigrant “other” obtains an aspect of collective experience. Therefore, the films achieve an interesting and very essential duality. They manage to underline that, on one hand, the specific story that the audience is watching is a unique, personal story, once again engaging with Murray Smith’s concepts of “recognition” and “alliance” that he uses to describe the process of narrative engagement of audiences with the on screen protagonist (Smith, 1995, 110-181). On the other hand, and at the same time, this precise uniqueness of each immigrant’s story is somewhat obscured, since the personal story becomes situated in a more general framework within the narrative, dealing with immigration as a mass socioeconomic phenomenon. In other words, what is represented on screen is not the isolated incident of the individual immigrant’s displacement but, rather, the collective phenomenon of a specific wave of intra-European immigration. In rare cases, the depicted relations between immigrants manage to even link the phenomenon to previous waves of immigration such as the post colonial one or the South to North wave of intra-European immigration through the 1960’s and 1970’s (*Kurz und Schmerzlos*, *Dirty Pretty Things*, *The Silence of Lorna*). In this respect, Europe maintains its whiteness. It seems that Europe is more anxious to maintain a racial uniformity and less worried about the idea of the “intruder” or the “newcomer”. The new European immigrant may not be welcomed but he/she does not suffer the same prejudice as those immigrants who display different racial, ethnic and religious characteristics.

In *Code Inconnu* (Michael Haneke, 2000), the Romanian woman shown begging on the streets is not the only immigrant protagonist. She appears to be a member of a larger network of Romanian immigrants who systematically beg since it is impossible for them to work due to their illegal status in France. This network seems to have an organised system to support others in the Romanian immigrant “community”, through exchanging green cards and manipulating their way back to France when deported.

It is rather interesting how the differentiation of the Eastern country of origin, regarding its specific communist regime, appears here again. Romania suffered an extremely strict regime: it was one of the countries that, after the fall of Ceausescu, was left with some of the most severe economic consequences. That reflects immediately on the Romanian immigrants in *Code Inconnu*. Not only is the money from begging enough to build a house in the Romanian provinces, but the conditions of profound squalor in which the network of Romanian immigrants in France live are also highlighted by the film. They live in the streets and use bum barrels for heating, conditions that rarely appear in other films portraying the life of Eastern European immigrants. The element of an immigrant subcommunity is here used to evoke the extreme isolation and marginalisation of Romanian immigrants in France.

Equally, the issue of marginalisation is emphasised in *Dirty Pretty Things*, through the subcommunity of illegal workers in the Baltic Hotel. Only here it has a different role and quality. What we have here is a multicultural subcommunity, who become a community not due to any shared origins but due to their shared immigrant status and association with the hotel itself. This loosely formed immigrant “community” thus combines different waves of immigration both in historical, ethnic, linguistic and qualitative terms. The legal and illegal economy of the Baltic Hotel is supported by the exploited labour of a whole hidden underworld that consists of new and old immigrants, Europeans, Asians and Africans, refugees and asylum seekers. The depiction of their world, in the heart of the global, cosmopolitan city of London, enhances the film’s introspective reflection of the silent agreement. The film suggests that a cheap labour force is required and the West is willing to obtain it under any circumstances, even by disregarding its own official laws on immigration and work for the newcomers. The underworld occupied by this immigrant subcommunity lacks even the quality of solidarity, since it seems to be profoundly corroded, forming infrastructures where new immigrants are exploited by the old immigrants, an arrangement and social dynamic that is vividly portrayed in the sweatshop scene where Senay is sexually abused by an old immigrant and not a local employer. This scene describes clearly the corrosion of a heterogeneous immigrant community.

The issues of the heterogeneousness of the immigrant population and whiteness are also present in *J'ai Pas Sommeil* (Claire Denis, 1994). In this film, there is a dual approach to the interaction of the immigrant protagonist with precedent immigrant characters. On the one hand Daiga (Katerina Golubeva) arrives in Paris where she is reunited with her great aunt. This aunt is part of an established Lithuanian community, the members of which are mostly of a certain age, an element that implies their possible defection. In this case the Lithuanian community functions as a net of safety and protection for Daiga who does not share the difficulties of other newcomers in other films. The Lithuanian community, though, is not the only minority community in the film. It is seen in disaffiliation with the black community where Theo and Camille belong. Although they are part of an older, post-colonial wave of immigrants, they appear even more marginalised and isolated, especially Camille due to his identity as a transvestite dancer. The contrast between the portrayals of the two immigrant communities makes a clear comment on the differentiation between the two minority groups: the newcomers who, nevertheless, are white and European and the group of French citizens of different ethnic origin who, no matter how long they have lived in France, are still evidently black, and thus alien. In this respect the film points out one of the arguments of the thesis: that although the first element of immigrant identity is that of the immigrant status itself, there is a different approach by the hosting nation to which they can more easily relate, precisely because of the lack of "visible" differences.

Equally a subcommunity of Russian immigrants appears in *Eastern Promises*. What we have here is an expanded community of immigrants of first and second generation, implying specific circumstances of migration, as we have argued previously in the case study of the first chapter. This specific community bears all the characteristics of any other, presented as a mosaic of lawful or criminal citizens. The differentiation is that the criminal world is here presented as a subgroup or a subculture, where ethnic origin defines a gang to which the criminal part of the community belongs. Similarly a subcommunity of crime, based on ethnic origin criteria, appears in *Mirush*. The world of Mirush's father consists of a subcommunity of criminal action with its own hierarchy.

If these two subcommunities consist of immigrants of the same ethnic origin and are, nevertheless, included in society, the immigrant communities in

Illégal and *Last Resort* are very different. They consist of immigrants who are held in detention centres and thus cut off from the rest of society. Ethnic origin and the conditions that led them to emigrate are of less importance here, nor are the members of the isolated community allowed to interact with the local “host” community in any meaningful sense. They are held on the sole ground of immigration itself, creating a panspermia of ethnicities in a micrography of the outside world. In other words the heterogeneousness of the world is mirrored in the detention centres. While diversity is normal outside, in the detention centres it becomes the reason for being restricted from circulating in the outside world and interacting with the members of the host nation. A very vivid paradox is created here. The detention centres are very close to or even located within the “global cities” of Europe, bearing the same multicultural characteristic and yet, they are actually a dead zone, a no-man’s-land, where no condition or liberty of the outside world applies.

In *Nordrand* (Werner Herzog, 1999) Tamara (Edita Malovcic), Roman (Michael Tanczos) and Senad (Astrit Alihajdaraj), a second generation immigrant, a first generation immigrant and an asylum seeker, intersect and drift apart, having in common only the mere fact of displacement, whether real or rather psychological. The relationships between this group of illegal “aliens”, that even includes an Austrian outcast, portray the alienation and the overwhelming feeling of the immigrant inhabiting a temporary environment. The difference here is that the film does not deal with the structures of an alien community. Instead it depicts alienated individuals who come together precisely in order to achieve a sense of belonging.

In *LAmerica* (Gianni Amelio, 1994) and *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*, the filmmakers deal with the very interesting form of a subcommunity on the move. In *LAmerica*, stranded in a disintegrating Albania, Gino (Enrico Lo Verso) soon finds himself sharing the fate of what seem like hundreds of locals actually evacuating the country. Again, the conditions under which the willing migrants are determined to “escape”, gives vivid evidence of what they must have endured in a country that, in many respects, appears to have been transformed to a mass prison: Hoxha’s Albania. What we have here are not dislocated people who have already reached their target country but the idea of a community evolves on the trucks they are trying to escape on. Their

communities have characteristics such as ethnic origin, goal, organisation (even within the chaos of the era), compassion, solidarity or hostility. These groups consist of compatriots who share a common goal: to escape the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in their country of origin. The members of the group are organised around this goal but show different volition. These characteristics, thus, transform the groups into small subcommunities.

The trucks of *LAmerica* become the boat of *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*. The sense of existing in close proximity to “fortress Europe” and yet “a world apart” is constant, regarding the immigrants, throughout the film. The immigrants are always limited either in the boat or the detention centre. The criterion for such isolation is once again the mere fact of immigration, regardless of origin, conditions or goals.

The idea of an immigrant community with common goals or fate is present in *It's A Free World* (Ken Loach, 2007) and *From the Edge of the City* (Constantinos Giannaris, 1998). In *It's A Free World*, again different waves of immigration intersect, this time under a common need and goal, work. In the welfare offices, the work agencies, the camp, different people interact in their common need to find a job. Again all their individual characteristics are irrelevant and what forms the spine of these crowd-groups, rather than communities, is a mass quest.

The immigrant community in quest of a job transforms into a marginalised community of repatriated former political refugees in *From The Edge Of The City*. The filmmaker here introduces a marginalised but complete community of supposedly repatriated refugees. In spite of this identity that seems to exist only in theory, the protagonists feel the alienation and seclusion on the outskirts of the city. The conflict between older and younger generations is always present and mostly portrayed with the youths' urge to break the barriers that divide them from the city. In this respect, what holds the immigrant subcommunity is, on one hand, isolation itself, and on the other their alleged Greek origin that does not offer them any real link to the local community. Despite the same conditions of life, two generations of immigrants, the group of youngsters and their parents, interact through their different mentality and view of the world. The difference here is the paradox of the dual marginalisation this

community has to overcome. They were aliens in the USSR and remain immigrants in Greece.

The idea of a criminal network that rules the life of the immigrants is also present in films such as *Illégal* and *The Silence of Lorna*. In *Illégal*, as well as in *Since Otar Left* there is also the element of the protagonist's companion, a character of the same ethnic origin. In this respect, the immigrant experience is generalised: there is a witness (*Since Otar Left*) of the hardship the protagonist endures, and this enhances another practical issue. The presence of secondary characters of the same origin allows the use of language. Language undertakes, in the case of our filmic selection, the role of the main carrier of the immigrant identity, since there are no other obvious/visible characteristic of the alien identity.

Movement / Journey.

The immigrant condition often appears in the films analysed in the thesis, not as a static situation, the depiction of the immigrant's life in the new country. In many cases the presentation of the immigrant experience and the milestone of migrating appear on screen through movement. There is constant movement in the films under examination here. In some cases the movement is depicted by the imagery of a journey while in others it is implied by the signifier of the journey (Naficy, 2010, 222-266).

In *71 Fragments* we witness the journey of the Romanian boy in the opening sequence of the film, and then his constant movement in the city. The child is seen passing into Austria on foot. In *Import/Export*, Olga is seen leaving her house on foot as well. Here, the whole plot is based on the idea of a parallel but reverse movement. The Ukrainian immigrant and the Austrian unemployed security guard move in reverse directions within the European continent in search of a common goal: a better life. The depiction of their journey is used here to imply the relationship between the two parts of Europe, the exploitation of the impoverished East by a dominant West.

The idea of an immigrant network on constant move is present both in *Code Inconnu* and *The Silence of Lorna*. Only, in the first case, what we have is a network of self-supporting Romanian immigrants who keep getting deported and then returning to Paris. In contrast, *The Silence of Lorna* presents a

transnational criminal who operates across Europe, gaining whatever is possible through immigrants who are either willing participants or else are exploited or forced to take part in illegal activities.

In other cases, the journey itself is one of the themes that actually appears on screen (*Mirush*, *LAmerica*, *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*). In the last two examples, though, there is a dual essence of this journey. For the immigrant characters it is the journey of displacement, while for the Western Europeans in *LAmerica* and *When You are Born You can no Longer Hide*, who accidentally share the immigrants' fate, it is a journey of empathy, realisation and awareness. The motif of the homecoming journey regarding immigrant characters is also present in the filmic selection of the thesis, in *Illégal*, *Last Resort*, *Hostage*, *Since Otar Left*, and *Take Care Of Your Scarf*, *Tatiana*. This element of returning appears interestingly versatile. It takes the form of deportation (*Illégal*, *Code Inconnu*), or willing return (*Last Resort*, *Mirush*, *Take Care Of Your Scarf Tatiana*) where the willing return of the immigrant characters to their homeland triggers the journey of the non-immigrant protagonist duo). In *Since Otar Left*, the journey bears a contradictory duality. We watch on screen both the journey of the protagonist trio to Paris, which signifies Ada's migration, and the return of Eka and Marina home. An interesting aspect of the homecoming journey appears in *Hostage* (Constantinos Giannaris, 2005), where the Albanian protagonist hijacks a bus with Greek passengers in order to return home and have his demands to his former employers satisfied.

In other cases the idea of movement is present and at the same time put on hold as in the films that depict detention centres. This element of the move on hold is most apparent in *Last Resort*, precisely because Tanya is put there immediately when she arrives in the UK and we watch her efforts to escape. It also appears, more peripherally, in *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide* and *Illégal*. In *From the Edge of the City*, the detention centre is replaced by the ghetto where the protagonists live. In theory the immigrant or "repatriated" characters of the film, are free to move, but the main issue that the film deals with is precisely the marginalisation and the isolation of the protagonists at "the edge of the city".

In any case, Naficy's argument on borders and border crossing is constantly present and dominant in the films analysed here. As Naficy points out these journeys are mainly and primarily "journeys of identity", that displaced people undergo when they arrive in the new lands (Naficy, 237). We could add that this argument includes the depiction of the journey itself not only in its "internal" essence (Naficy, 237) but it takes both the form of physical movement as well as the "psychological" aspect of "multiple motivations and evolutions" (Naficy, 237) that Naficy attributes to it. Seaport and airport are the two most prominent signifiers of the displaced protagonist's journey here, as in Naficy's case studies that describe accented films (Naficy, 243-246).

Shifting the immigrant experience.

There are two films in the thesis where the immigrant experience and situation is shifted to a non-immigrant protagonist. Interestingly, both films, made by different filmmakers, come from Italy, formerly a country of emigration but now one of immigration. In *LAmerica*, Gino, an Italian racketeer who is in Albania right after the fall of the communist regime in order to set up a bogus firm, finds himself stranded with no identification documents in deepest Albania. There is no other choice for him but to share the fate and journey of the local migrants who also try to flee to Italy at any cost. In *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*,⁴⁵ Sandro, a young boy, has an accident during a sailing trip to Greece with his father and a family friend. He falls in the sea at night and is rescued by a boat illegally trafficking refugees and immigrants to Italy. Sandro finds himself sharing their misfortune and fate while on board, as well as for a short time when they finally reach the Italian coast. What happens here is the shifting of the audience's identification and alliance (Smith, 1995). The non-immigrant viewer identifies with the non-immigrant protagonist. In this respect, when the non-immigrant on screen character identifies with the immigrant on screen characters, the film achieves a dual level of identification. Here,

⁴⁵ *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide* "is the first Italian feature film to visualize conditions experienced by clandestine migrants who are ferried across the Mediterranean" (O'Healy, 2010, p.15). But although it "elicits an attitude of compassion toward clandestine immigration, its concluding scenario appears to confirm Italian citizens' worst fears about this issue... (offering) a particularly compelling example of the contradictory mechanisms through which Italian cinema attempts to conjure up a sympathetic response to the needs of Italy's new migrants" (O'Healy, 2010, p.16).

recognition applies to the non-immigrant protagonist, leading, in a way, to the identification with the immigrant characters. The element of this shift of the immigrant experience also manages to enhance the nuance of the apparent randomness of such a situation. In this respect the two films manage to promote the idea that immigration is a life-changing experience that can (depending on chance and individual circumstance) happen to anyone.

Crime.

Crime is almost always linked to immigration, either as a preconception often supported, spread and engaged within the dialectics of right wing political propaganda, or as an inevitable fact caused by the consequent poverty, marginalisation and uncontrollable flow of migrant waves.⁴⁶ In this respect it is almost inevitable for the films analysed here to include the element of crime, though of course one of the key questions for the researcher into these films is to distinguish in such representations when the depiction of a given social reality (criminal activity within the immigrant community) is simply replaced with a reductive stereotype of the immigrant as criminalised other. On the other hand, in terms of genre, storytelling and engagement, crime as a narrative component provides a stimulating and suitable framework for the plot to unfold,—a different form of Lioret's notion of the emotional "hook" used in *Welcome* to draw audiences into an immigrant narrative. Additionally it is an element that facilitates the classification of the films in a genre recognisable by large audiences. In many cases the element of crime is not only presented as a consequence of immigration in the thesis' filmic selection but the films introduce the idea of crime actually using immigration as a new field for expansion. In this respect, criminals of different ethnic origins do not simply derive from within the displaced population. Instead, criminal elements from within a given immigrant minority, or indeed criminal gangs who remain based in part in the homeland, are more likely to use the wave of immigrants as a trade of various aspects and run their business through extortion and exploitation. Many of the immigrant protagonists, thus, find themselves unwillingly forced into criminal activities where they are actually the victims. This is particularly true of films that explore

⁴⁶ For more see Gallighan G., 2003, 2004.

human and sex trafficking, either as a main theme or as a peripheral narrative element: *Eastern Promises*, *Lilia4Ever*, and *Import/Export*. Human trafficking is depicted in *When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide* and *Dirty Pretty Things* but also implied in other films. In *Illégal* and *The Silence of Lorna* the filmmakers present a criminal network built around immigration. These networks are based on extortion and act within a framework of the illegal documentation trade. Although Lorna makes this choice of her own free will, it is evident that she cannot escape her situation when and if she wants to. On the other hand there are films in the thesis that deal with the issues of organized crime. In *Eastern Promises* there is an ongoing war between mafia organisations of various Eastern ethnic origins, the “organised crime workers”.⁴⁷ In *Mirush* the restaurant is used as a façade for the criminal activities of the Albanian mobsters on a smaller scale. Illegal activities often take the form of petty crime. Interestingly, petty crime, as depicted in our filmic selection, is usually linked to childhood. From the stolen ticket in *Tickets* to Artyom’s theft and trade in *Last Resort* and the youngsters’ drug abuse and prostitution in *From The Edge Of The City*, these smaller scale criminal activities are attributed to children and teenagers. In this respect the filmmakers manage to introduce issues such as the disintegration of family (with children appearing unsupervised) but also the deprivation of childhood itself. Children who are forced to follow the fate of adults with no consent of their own, inevitably suffer the consequences. They, themselves, fall victim to marginalisation, isolation and preconceptions. In this respect, there is a dual projection in the depiction of petty crime by children and youth. The adult experience and coercion into crime is projected onto the immigrant offspring. At the same time, underage crime and delinquency project into the future: that of future immigrant generations that eventually will be forced into crime through an evident lack of options.

In other cases, crime is not necessarily presented through objective criminal activities, but through merely bending the laws regarding immigration.⁴⁸ In this respect, some of Lorna’s activities in *The Silence of Lorna*, the work of the Baltic Hotel in *Dirty Pretty Things*, and Mirush’s entry into Norway are all

⁴⁷ For more see Mihailovic, 2013.

⁴⁸ For more see Aliverti, 2013.

officially illegal but the films do not comment on the “delinquency” caused by or following the phenomenon of immigration. On the contrary the filmmakers deal with the hypocrisy of the advanced Western society in controlling the flow and status of immigrants in its own interest. Unable or unwilling to provide legal and humane conditions for the immigrant population, but at the same time eager to take advantage of such a “hidden” population, the Western world allows illegal entry but denies all benefits that normally a person would have if legally living and working in an organised society. In this respect armies of illegal workers with minimum demands are engulfed in Western societies in a “silent” agreement. The West exchanges the “safety” and a minimum financial gain for an illegal and therefore cheap workforce, turning a blind eye to the rest. In any case it is evident that in our filmic selection, consisting of auteur films of social commentary, the depiction of the alien criminal is very different to that of the past (e.g. Hollywood as described by Snead). On the other hand, the issue of crime is very often not only linked but actually used to introduce the issue of the female as a sex object. It is inevitable that this concludes in the frequent depiction of the phenomenon of sex trafficking (Brown, Iordanova, Torchin, 2010).

CASE STUDIES

THE SILENCE OF LORNA

The Silence of Lorna is a film that provides an appropriate framework within which to examine some of the issues identified earlier in this chapter regarding the immigrant experience and the engagement of the immigrant protagonist with these elements. The issues of relationships and marriage, crime and its relationship to immigration, criminal subcommunities and interaction between immigrants of the same or different origin as well as immigrants of previous waves of migration are all themes that are present here, allowing us to examine their significance in the film's narrative.

The idea for the character and, consequently, the film *The Silence of Lorna* came from a real acquaintance of the Dardenne brothers, a woman whose brother was a drug addict and who was approached by the Albanian mob to participate in an arranged marriage. This woman worked with street people and knew that drug addicts who interfered with such activities had died (Cardullo, 2009).

The Silence of Lorna won Best Screenplay in the Cannes Film Festival, the Lumiere Award for best French language Film, the 2008 Lux Prize and was nominated for Best Foreign Film in the Cezar Awards. Arta Dobroshi was nominated for Best actress in the European film Awards.

Jean Pierre and Luc Dardenne were born and raised in Seraing (Liège), in Wallonia, a French speaking part of Belgium. Jean Pierre studied drama while Luc studied philosophy. In 1975 they founded Derives, the production company that produced their documentaries, which all covered topics of social importance, such as Polish immigration, World War II and resistance, and a general strike in 1960. The thematic of their documentaries was passed on to their feature films. Their first two features, *Falsch* (1987) and *Je pense à vous* (1992) failed to catch the attention of either the critics or the audience. It was not until the mid 1990s with *La Promesse* (*The Promise*), that they came to international attention, a success that was followed with *Rosetta* winning the Palm D'Or at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival. *L' Enfant/The Child* (2005) was also awarded the Palm D'Or, completing the only pair of Belgian films ever to

earn the honour. *The Kid with the Bike* won the Grand Prix at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival and Jean Pierre was announced as the jury president for the Cine foundation and Short film sections of the 2012 film festival.

The Silence of Lorna follows the story of Lorna, a young Albanian, who lives in Belgium. Lorna has a very specific goal, which is to settle permanently in Belgium and open a snack bar with her life partner, Sokol, a fellow Albanian, who travels around Europe, taking up occasional jobs. In order to gather the working capital for their business as quickly as possible, Lorna becomes an accomplice to Fabio, a local crook, who runs a passport scam. Fabio's scam is based on successive marriages: Lorna marries Claudy, a local drug addict who is paid for his services, so that she can obtain Belgian citizenship, which she will then pass on to a Russian mobster, by marrying him. Although Claudy believes that they are getting divorced, Fabio's plan is to kill him, staging his death by overdose, in order both to speed up the marriage to the Russian mobster and ensure Claudy's silence, thus preventing the authorities' suspicion. Lorna initially consents to the plan but she gradually changes her mind. Claudy becomes more and more attached to her and asks for her help to overcome his drug addiction. Soon, a sort of mutual attachment is formed between the pair. Lorna asks Fabio to change the plan and file for a quick divorce on the grounds of physical abuse, hurts herself in order to persuade the authorities and agrees to help Claudy overcome his addiction. Fabio tricks Lorna into believing that he will follow her new plan but kills Claudy instead, as originally intended. Lorna is devastated but, having no other choice in order to realize her dream, and in fear of losing Sokol, she goes on with the arranged marriage as planned. Nevertheless, her regret over the murder becomes stronger and stronger, to the extent that she finally persuades herself that she is pregnant with Claudy's baby, as a result of one single night they spent together in her attempt to keep him from returning to taking drugs. Fabio notifies Sokol and they both decide to get rid of Lorna, since she is no longer of any use and, moreover, Fabio has to return the money to the disgruntled Russian mobster. They pretend to be transferring Lorna back to Albania, while they are actually taking her outside the city to kill her. Lorna realises their real intentions and escapes into the woods, where she entrenches herself in a wooden cabin determined to save herself and Claudy's imaginary baby.

The film is set in a city in Belgium, possibly Liege, that is not specifically named. What we have here is not the process of immigration, in the sense of physical movement, a journey, but rather the consequences of that initial movement for Lorna in the host country, where she already has a relatively settled life. The film thus approaches the sedentary nature of immigration and the relationship between the immigrant and the host nation. However, this becomes complicated since Lorna appears surrounded by outsider/criminalised others (drug addicts, petty criminals and gang members potentially linked to the mob). Nevertheless, Lorna has a house, a job and a plan to improve her living conditions. She is on her way to applying for Belgian citizenship, based on her marriage of convenience to Claudy. Unlike Tanya in *Last Resort*, Senay in *Dirty Pretty Things*, or Lilya in *Lilya4Ever*, Lorna is a legal immigrant, not a clandestine, with a legal job and no problems with the authorities. Soon, we discover the twist, the dark side of what seems a well-orchestrated life for the immigrant. Although we have no information about Lorna's previous life, we realise that she is involved in a fraud that goes as far as involving murder. So, although Lorna may appear at first glance to be a law abiding citizen who happens to be an immigrant, it is this character who brings to the film the aspect of the immigrant as an intentional offender. In other films (e.g. *Last Resort*, *Dirty Pretty Things*, *Since Otar Left*) the illegality of the main characters, is presented as an almost inevitable consequence of their displacement, the official framework within which population movement is restricted or facilitated, and the status of immigrants in the country of migration. Their interaction with the law stems from their citizenship in countries that are not members of the European Union. The victimised immigrant in these films may also be coerced into breaking the law as means of earning money or simply surviving (see, for example, *Lilya4Ever*, the immigrant children in *Last Resort*, the Albanian boy in *Tickets*, Ivan in *Last Resort*). Lorna is an adult who consents to committing criminal acts, although she does not have to in order to survive at the point of her life that the film depicts. Whether she has done this before in order to survive is not commented upon by the filmmakers. Therefore, we could conclude that it is of no importance. Whereas the Dardenne brothers usually engage the element of the "central character [facing] a stark existential choice" (Scullion, 2014, 67), the film does not deal with Lorna's personal morals, nor

does it represent a battle between good and evil, in a conventional way. Lorna's choice is not made within the framework of personal ethics but it is seen through the lens of an ethos linked to the "greed is good" ideology of our liberal age (Scullion, 2014, 68). In this respect, what we have here is once again, as often in the Dardenne brothers' opus, a film that, as Scullion points out, "engages the conditions of our historical present (...) dramatizing the dire consequences of abandoning (...) population to be pushed to the brink of economic and social inability" (2104, 68). As in *Rosetta*, Lorna also "takes to heart the ideology of self reliance which gives her sole responsibility for surviving the material rigors she must brave" (Scullion, 2104, 68). In this respect the filmmakers do not deal with portraying Lorna as "moral" or "immoral" but, rather, they present her actions as the common moral procedure that describes the contemporary person within the social process. On the basis of the prominent Dardennian realism (their constant concern with social issues in their films, seen through the lens of the everyday as a continuation of the lineage of British kitchen sink realism and Italian neo-realism) we can assume that this is a vision of the world as it is, in the Aristotelian definition of dramaturgy. Lorna decides to waste no time, so she persuades herself that the life of a junky is expendable, only to find that her conscience or feeling is stronger than her will. Following a prominent pattern in the Dardenne films, Lorna, moves in a world of debt, performance and evaluation. Knowing she is largely "on her own [she] seek[s] to create a place for [her]self by conforming the new ruthless norms, treating people as obstacles or objects in the process (O'Shaughnessy, 2014, 83). "She is multiply indebted and her debts necessarily govern her conduct" (O'Shaughnessy, 2014, 84).

What is interesting though, is that (very much as in *Dirty Pretty Things*) the film seems to follow the lives of a subcommunity living on the outskirts of urban life as we know it: that of crooks, drug dealers and abusers, illegal immigrants (Sokol), and, of course, Lorna, as a very important cog in the machinery of Fabio's business. So in this respect it is very similar to earlier representations of immigrants in European cinema of the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. representations of post-colonial migrants in French cinema) where the immigrant population is characterised as part of a criminalised underclass (Tarr, 1997). There is a legal façade that ensures the illusion of legitimacy and

normality. Fabio runs a snack bar as a front for his illegal activities, which take place on the upper floor of the business premises (symbolically divided by a chain that runs across the entrance to the stairs). This is the secret office from which he runs his real business, the passport scam. In contrast, Lorna works in a launderette as a diligent employee who never misses a day of work. Even Claudy is on welfare, benefiting from the state. The filmmakers manage to imply that such a hidden sub-life may also be quite a common phenomenon. Sokol may not be a permanent member of Lorna's subcommunity but his way of life, illegally travelling across Europe in trucks, reveals this subworld's mobility and diversity. The true essence of their subworld is always present. The film does not concentrate on the interaction of this subcommunity with the members of the "normal" society that surrounds them. The only glimpses of such interaction are Lorna's co-workers and the scene depicting Claudy's funeral, when Lorna meets his family. Although this underclass seems distanced on a personal level from the rest of society, there is a constant interaction with other conventional social structures, and more importantly, the Law and the State. As very often in the Dardenne films, the state and its mechanisms are very much present here as well. O'Shaughnessy (2014, 84-94) engages the work of Lazzarato to support the framework of the economy-based notion of the human "in debt" as he claims that it is the main element that defines the Dardenne filmic characters as "creatures of the new". It is within this framework that we can approach Lorna's interaction with authorities and social infrastructures. In this respect, Lorna balances her relationship to such schemes, using them in order to benefit and achieve her goals. Every action of the people is filtered, observed and ruled by official structures/bodies of some kind and level. Claudy, a drug abuser with ostensibly no potential for social mobility, is not excluded or isolated under the law. He enjoys governmental welfare and has the right to public health schemes. When he decides to quit his addiction, the state is present and willing to support and provide for him. Lorna herself, as a working-class immigrant and, having recently acquired Belgian citizenship, shares the same rights as Claudy. Lorna's interaction with the state is, though, much more complicated. Throughout the whole film, we witness a paradoxical process of using the law in order to break it. Fabio's scam is clearly based on that very contradiction and so is Lorna's struggle to eventually save Claudy's life. Fabio uses the law on

gaining citizenship through marriage to legalise the Russian mobster and Lorna uses the different legal aspects of divorce in order to speed-up the procedure and in an attempt to convince Fabio to spare Claudy's life. This transaction between people and the state and its diverse aspects is rather prominent in films of (so-called) social realism by European auteurs such as those of Mike Leigh, Ken Loach and the Dardenne brothers. As they are dealing with such themes as the citizen's status within society, immigration and human rights, and within the framework of social commentary, it is inevitable for the filmmakers to examine and expose the duality of the laws and measures taken, on one hand, to enhance the uniformity that protects the very existence of the European Union and, on the other, to shield "Fortress Europe" from what is routinely present, an unwanted or unsupportable "invasion" of foreign migrants. Presumably this technique is used by the Dardenne brothers because it allows an exploration of the immigrant experience and potentially controversial issues but using a narrative form that is engaging and produces tension or alignment (as Smith would put it) with the characters (Smith, 1995, pp. 142-186). This is very much one of the thematic ingredients of *The Silence of Lorna*. The filmmakers succeed in making a just and sober point, not by raging against the injustice found in existing social structures. Rather, what we have in *The Silence of Lorna*, is an accurate commentary on the ambiguity of any such social scheme. The law can and should work for the people but can also be used against the people, in ways that are not, by default, legible. What is rather impressive in the case of *The Silence of Lorna*, though, is that at no point of the film does this dialectic take the form of an infertile essay (from the point of view of cinematics and storytelling), but it constantly serves to propel the narrative forward, precisely because the interaction of Lorna with the law and the state is the integral framework of her actions. The characters and their actions deliver every component of the filmmakers' reflection, without ever becoming one dimensional or losing their "real life" essence.

Many times in other films analysed in this thesis we have commented upon a common coupling that also appears in *The Silence of Lorna*: the emerging relationship between the displaced foreigner and the local outcast. In *Last Resort* it is the confused Tanya that teams up with regretful Alfie; in *Somers Town* Tomo, local but nonetheless displaced, finds comfort in Polish

Marek's companionship; and here we have yet another pair involved in such a co-dependent relationship. Claudy is a Belgian who struggles with his personal demons of drug abuse; Lorna is an immigrant, the eternal victim of sociopolitical process (in this case the disintegration of the communist regime in Albania), who was forced to seek her "elsewhere", in order to survive. What dissociates Lorna from the stereotype of the victimised economic immigrant is her determination to obtain a life, rather than settling for mere survival. In this common motif that runs through our case studies, we come upon a repeated subversion. It is not the foreigner, the immigrant, who appears weaker, but the local outcast who, in various ways, finds support, or even redemption, in the form of the immigrant "other". Alfie transfers his own need to deal with the past to his effort to offer Tanya salvation. Tomo, deprived of any sense of belonging, finds a family in Marek. Claudy is the one who gradually replaces his addiction to drugs with his co-dependence on the strong, even cynical, Lorna, who, despite her displacement and all the difficulties that usually follow, appears healthy and (mentally) strong. This element provides the filmmakers with an appropriate framework to point out that "need" and "weakness" are not disputable results solely of immigration itself. At the same time it allows the filmmakers to portray substantial interaction between the local and the foreigner, based on common truths about human nature. In this respect "what is interesting about Lorna (...) is that the traffickers embody precisely this attitude of regarding people as disposable, while the trafficked and the 'innocent' Belgian (...) can develop some sense of kinship, albeit short lived, because they come to develop emotional rather than financial ties." Therefore the power struggle "is transferred on to middleman Fabio" (Brown, Irdanova, Torchin 2010, 207).

Even if we exclude the friendship between two teenage boys in *Somers Town* from the list of films above, the correct term would still remain "pair" and not "couple", although there is the hint of a romantic involvement between the two protagonists. Here yet another similarity arises between *Last Resort* and *The Silence of Lorna*. Both the protagonists, Tanya and Lorna, are already in relationships, with someone other than the man from the host society whom they befriend. Love is a popular motif, a "hook" universally perceived and easy to relate to. Although Lorna is in love with Sokol, it is her relationship with

Claudy that is foregrounded in the narrative. A relationship that starts as a mutual agreement based on financial gain, soon evolves into something else. Claudy sees a “saviour” in the face of Lorna, simply because she is around. Lorna on the other hand, gradually embraces the role that Claudy imposes on her, motivated mainly by remorse and guilt. The way that she refers to him is characteristic of this evolution. When talking to Sokol about Claudy in the beginning of the film, she refers to him as “the junky”. After Claudy’s death, Lorna’s devastation and remorse lead her to believe that she is pregnant with his child. She then objects to Fabio calling him “the junky” and says: “his name is Claudy”. Very much like the relationship between Tanya and Alfie in *Last Resort*, what we have here is a platonic relationship, not a romantic love affair, but the story of two people who share a social reality and common fate. Although apparently reluctant, at first, to show any compassion towards a person she considers weak and unworthy, Lorna’s conscience progressively becomes “louder” than her will, as she develops a protective love for Claudy. Because of the very essence of the story in *The Silence of Lorna*, as well as the fact that the film employs an approach to narrative, character and representation that we could define as social realism, this final transition, which culminates in Lorna’s monologue in the woods, seems somehow unexpected. One potential reading of the film is that the protagonist’s change functions as a manufactured refuge for the filmmakers, a way to vindicate their heroine and lead her to redemption. In other words, is Lorna’s metaphysical transition dictated by the filmmakers’ need to somehow exonerate the protagonist by the end of the narrative? If so, the only way to seal the viewer’s alignment and, therefore, consideration and empathy for Lorna’s fate is arguably to proceed to an “honourable” final representation of Lorna, such as the one we find in the film.

The truth is that, in the context of this study, *The Silence of Lorna* presents us with a rather unusual female character. There is a very specific stereotype moulded in films on immigration, especially the films that deal with the issue of intra-European population movement after the fall of the Eastern bloc. It is very often that we come upon female protagonists in such films. The choice of gender opens a wide field of commentary for the filmmakers, on topics such as sexual exploitation, immigration and motherhood, social inequality and

discrimination and it promotes reflection on a more vulnerable group that consists partly of the immigrant body. Under no circumstances, though, does this choice result in uniformity, as there is a vast variation of shades in the way these films negotiate the facts of female immigration. To limit the examples within the confines of this specific study, we have already encountered the theme of sexual exploitation in *Lilya4Ever*, of immigration and motherhood, in *Last Resort*, the scheme of social protest and gender migration in the case of Senay in *Dirty Pretty Things*, the problem of premature adulthood in the case of *Tickets* with the Albanian girl who, poised between womanhood and childhood, takes the lead over the rest of her family (another motif that runs through the corpus of these films). In most of the cases, the theme of sexual exploitation is key to the narrative of these films. In *The Silence of Lorna*, it is the protagonist herself, despite the fact that she inevitably realises the impossibility of escaping from Fabio's control. She maintains her "day" job and her personal life, but her trade is still herself, although in a completely different manner, as a willing bride. Lorna also preserves her illusion of independence within this transaction, but this illusion hardly negates her intention and disposition towards herself. Lorna is not seeking a male "saviour". On the contrary, she undertakes such a role herself. She agrees to help Claudy and carries out her mission, even in ways that Claudy ignores. She struggles to save his life, attempting to protect him from both his addiction and from Fabio's plans to kill him. In this respect, Lorna's final transformation seems like an extreme but natural development in the narrative. Deprived of her protégé, betrayed by Sokol, haunted by her desire to make amends, she becomes the "saviour" of an imaginary baby, which for her represents the reincarnation of Claudy. The male characters in the film are weak, frustrated or oppressive. Fabio is a ruthless criminal. Sokol expects Lorna to do all the dirty work and finally betrays her, while Claudy is weak and lost, although Lorna sees a hidden quality in him. In contrast Lorna's inner strength, her ability to deal with all the demands of life (in a way that the male protagonists are unable to) is partly reflected in her continual movement within the city. Lorna is rarely still. She goes to work, she works her way between procedures, she deals with hospitals, banks and authorities, in a routine that is never static. This is a very interesting aspect of the immigrant protagonist's interaction with the host country, perfectly integrated in the film's narrative. If the

relationship between Lorna and Claudy portrays the interaction with the host nation on an individual level, Lorna's constant interaction with authority infrastructures seems to depict a direct interaction between the immigrant protagonist and the state.

In *The Silence of Lorna* the Dardenne brothers create an impressive ethnic mosaic that, we could argue, reflects the makeup of contemporary European society. Although they have dealt with the problem of immigration before (*The Promise* [1996]), in the case of this film they have put aside a focus on "post-colonial" migrants in favour of portraying a Belgian society that is characterised by migration within and across Europe (including from East to West). With the exception of Claudy, no other character in *The Silence of Lorna* is originally from the local region. Fabio (of Italian origin) and Spirou (presumably of Greek origin on accounts of his name) represent the first wave of European immigration from South to North (with Central Europe as a destination). This wave, provoked by economic circumstances, actually started before World War II, was interrupted by the war and its consequences, and then went on to peak in the 1960s, Germany being the main destination, followed by Belgium, originally because of the availability of employment in the mines. Lorna and Sokol, on the other hand, both Albanians, represent the second wave of mass movement within Europe, from the East to the West, caused by the decline of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc and the socioeconomic results of this transformation that started in the early 1990s. Through the choice of these different immigrant protagonists, the film also poses questions about the make-up and identity of a modern European nation such as Belgium. Although *The Silence of Lorna* was released in a period when the European public could only start to suspect the economic depression that was to come, beginning in 2008 in Iceland, Ireland and the European south, it does imply Europe's ongoing transformation on multiple levels and in multiple ways. In this respect, the film provokes a reflection on whether the EU is a versatile and adjustable entity or a static scheme that is there without any reconsideration of the principles that presumably created it.

The variety of immigrant protagonists found in *The Silence of Lorna*, is also reflected in the film's linguistic polyphony. In the film we hear French, Italian and Albanian. Language is not used here within Naficy's approach of an

"accented cinema", as a differentiation to the dominant accent to flag up the speaker's status (Naficy, 2001, 22). The different languages as argued before in this thesis, function here as carriers of the mere "alien" identity that is otherwise visually undetectable, due to the characters' whiteness. The variety of languages reflects the ethnic diversity of European society, very much as in the way that Belgium is "depicted more as 'space' than as 'place' or 'nation', mainly because of the amalgam of people living there" (Mosley cited in Brown, Irdanova, Torchin, 2010, 208). Lorna is played by Arta Dobroshi and Sokol by Alban Ukaj. Both actors are Albanians who do not originally come from Albania, but from Kosovo in the former Yugoslavia. Sokol and Fabio communicate in Italian, a language that many Albanians are fluent in because of the two countries frequent interaction and their proximity. Fabio is actually played by Fabricio Rongione, an actor of Italian origin, born in Belgium. The choice of actors obviously facilitates the correct use of languages, while declaring the need for cultural interaction in order to accomplish such dialectic through film and art in general. In this respect the film somehow reflects the immigrant interaction and integration within the narrative as well as an extra filmic need for such interaction in European cinema itself.

Although *The Silence of Lorna* deals with aspects of immigration different from the more obvious ones that we have come upon in the rest of our case studies so far, the usual patterns of the films that elaborate the issues of displacement are also present here on the periphery of the narrative. The film starts with Lorna already settled. The opening sequence shows Lorna in a bank, applying for a loan, but the film does follow a constant double journey: that of Lorna trying to reach her goals and start what seems to be a postponed real life and that of Lorna's transition and state of mind. It is clear that Lorna's present engagement in Fabio's business is not her intention for the future. It is a stepping-stone to achieving her own ambition: to open the snack bar and to live a more conventional life in her newly adopted country (Belgium), based on financial success and not cultural, emotional or social integration. The most prominent notion of journey, though, is Lorna's passage from self-importance to self-awareness, from cynical determination to succeed at all costs to fairness. The present as ephemeral, waiting to be replaced by the anticipated future, is also a common element in films on immigration (so far we have encountered it

in *Last Resort*, *Dirty Pretty Things*, *Tickets* [Abbas Kiarostami, Ken Loach, Ermanno Olmi, 2005], *Lilya4Ever*). It constitutes a basic ingredient of the narrative of *The Silence of Lorna*. The sense of the ephemeral, the sense of marginalisation, displacement and hardship, all the consequences of immigration that are usually seen as the main vehicle of the storytelling, function in this film as the implicit framework of the narrative.

Equally the urban landscape serves as a signal of location, the set of an urban drama. There are no specific references to the city and most of the locations seem randomly selected only to stage the action of the actors and the story, the real protagonist of the film. There are no bizarre angles, no frequent alternations of the point of view (POV), no music unless it comes from a natural source (e.g. in bars), only long takes that include and give prominence to what is going on. *The Silence of Lorna* is a film that relies not only on the “how” of its cinematography, but also on the content of the narrative. The inquiring immediacy and neutral gaze are typical characteristics of the social realism of the Dardenne brothers. Only in *The Silence of Lorna* is their visual style simplified, in comparison, for example, with its predecessor *The Child* (2005), where it consisted of successive close-ups and frenetic movement of the camera. “We wanted to watch Lorna, watch Lorna, watch Lorna. You have to watch her because she is mysterious, and to understand her we had to distance ourselves. That’s why the camera is further out than usual and moves much less” said Luc Dardenne (Dardennes to Calhoun, 2008). In this film the filmmakers maintain their keen eye for the character but the camera moves off the shoulder and stands still in order to observe one of their most enigmatic heroines, a combination of victim and villain. It is common for the Dardennes’ films not to address the audience’s pity or need to identify with the protagonists and Lorna, their first character with an international dimension, does exactly what she is created to do. She provokes thought instead of feeling, attempts to comprehend instead of sympathy. It is the revelation of Lorna’s human essence that eventually transforms her, that is the core of her story. What is interesting is that this transformation is not followed by a respective alternation of the cinematographic style. The visual form remains uniform. The film does not force the audience to sympathise with the protagonist, as a reward for her moral change. The distance and the sobriety of the gaze remain intact. The only

obvious change in the components of the imagery comes in the last sequence, where Lorna escapes in the woods and the notion of a breakthrough is underlined by the scenery. While the whole film is shot in an urban environment, the final shots of Lorna are set in a rural environment, depicting her irreversible change. While talking to her imaginary foetus, she plans "their" next step, and reassures the unborn that they will find a house and ask for food and help. The ruthless Lorna now counts on the kindness of strangers. In this respect the Dardennes "manage to confer on to Lorna, even through cinematic conventions that are not normally within their repertoire (...) a humanity that sees her 'fantasy' emerge as significantly more 'human' than the 'humans as meat' attitude of those around her" (Brown, Iordanova, Torchin, 2010, p.210).

LILYA4EVER

The Silence of Lorna is a film that allows us to examine many of the issues regarding the immigrant protagonist's integration within the host nation. *Lilya4Ever* is a rather special case, for while the plot takes place in the country of origin and not the host nation, it nonetheless provides the framework to deal with the themes of trafficking and the exploitation of the migrant more generally (including the false hope given to potential migrants wishing to escape the perceived "misery" of the Eastern bloc after the fall of communism).

Moodysson was born in Lund, Sweden, growing up in what he once described as "an average, normal, Ikea kind of family" (O'Hagan, 2003). Today he has settled with his wife and two sons in the suburbs of Malmö. Living in Åkarp, Skåne County, expressing himself through poetry, he very much developed his "anti-elitist" character. By the time he was 23 he had written five poetry collections and a novel published by Wahlström & Widstrand. Having the "feeling of being limited by poetry", he decided to move to film in order to produce works that were less introverted and could be enjoyed by a wider audience than poetry. After studying at what was then Sweden's only film school, the Dramatiska Institutet, he directed three short films before moving to features. *Lilya4Ever* was his first "dark", brutal movie that followed the first sunny, cheerfully optimistic films, *Show Me Love/Fucking Åmål* (1998) and *Together/Tillsammans* (2000). At the time of the film's release, the *New York Times* declared him to be "Sweden's most praised filmmaker since Ingmar Bergman" (Kehr, 2003). Moodysson himself has said he could not have made the film without his strong Christian beliefs. "I believe in God, and God is present in the film. I do believe that someone will take care of me when I die, just like he takes care of Lilya. I honestly don't think I could have made this film without that belief" (O'Hagan, 2003). The frequent religious fantasies that Lilya has are the only tender spots in the bleak world he presents. Moodysson sees cinema always as a means of conveying a message. In his first film (*Show me Love*) the message was the triumph of hope over adversity in the lives of two sexually confused teenage girls in small-town Sweden. In *Together* he provided a gentle satire on the hippie values of his parents' generation, laying bare the absurdities of life in a Seventies commune. In his interview with Sean O'Hagan

for *The Observer* (2003) he confessed he had been “radicalized” by the anti-capitalist riots in Gothenberg in 2001. “I always felt that I fitted into society until that moment”, he says. “The sight of Social Democratic Party members handing out red roses to the police who had beaten people, and harassed people, and almost killed one person made me realize that I was in opposition. Maybe I was blind before but, suddenly, I felt once again like the outsider I was at 16.” This experience is crucial in understanding Moodysson’s shift away from the satirical, but essentially soft-centred filmmaking of his first two features, to a more political style in *Lilya4Ever*. With *Lilya4Ever* he seems determined to display his acknowledged influence of Ken Loach, together with a socialist soul and a strong Christian sentiment. For him, “it was as if the film had to resort to Christian spirituality for its only glimpse of redemption” (Moodysson to O’Hagan, 2003). Moodysson seems to adhere to the traditionally Christian notion that “we are put on this earth to suffer, and that everything will be all right in the next life” (Moodysson to O’Hagan, 2003). Meanwhile, his undoubtedly excellent capacity to combine being both a Christian and a radical filmmaker finds a free field to unfold every time a need arises to deal with the world and the ideas growing in his head.

Lilya is a 16 year old girl, living somewhere in the former Soviet Union. Her mother emigrates to the United States and Lilya is waiting to be sent for. After a while, she realises that she has been abandoned. Helpless, alone and evicted from her apartment by her aunt, Lilya wanders around aimlessly, trying to survive, like many other children around her, in a muddy, hostile suburb of a city that in the film remains unnamed. Soon she befriends a local 11-year-old boy, Volodya, himself an outcast, with whom she shares fantasies of emigrating to a better life elsewhere. Broke and starving, Lilya and her friends wander around smoking, drinking, sniffing glue and taking the pills that Lilya finds in the medicine cabinet of the apartment she squats in. As her situation becomes increasingly desperate, Lilya follows the example of her friend Natasha and becomes a prostitute in order to survive. She rides the night trains to the city, where she meets her clients in a club. The rest of the neighborhood kids soon isolate her because of Natasha spreading rumours and Lilya’s need to escape becomes even more compelling. She thinks she sees salvation in the form of Andrei, a 20-something who asks her to move with him to Sweden, to live and

work. Andrei turns out to be a pimp and Lilya is sent alone to Malmö, Sweden, where she is kept captive and forced to work as a prostitute. Abused and in despair, Lilya manages to escape and seeks redemption in suicide, while back home, Volodya is already dead.

Lilya4Ever is one of the few films in this thesis, that take place mostly in the country of immigration and not the host country. Thus the primary language is Russian and not Swedish or English. The film opens with the sequence of Lilya's escape in Malmö, closing the film in a cyclical motif, a rather popular filmic pattern, where the film begins and ends with the same sequence. We see Lilya for the first time in a desperate race towards freedom, dressed as a tomboy and looking like a damaged doll, with bruises on her face, her hair chopped in a clumsy way. The camera follows her in a violent, dogme-like manner and the music (Rammstein's "Mein Herz Brennt"), enhances the unsettling feeling of an explosion, an imperative sense of urgency, while the last shot (Lilya standing on a bridge) portends the ending.

Oddly enough, it is the first shot of the second sequence that functions as the establishing shot for the film's narrative. Following the route from the inside of a car, the film introduces a nameless suburb of a nameless city of the former Soviet Union. The film was actually shot in Paldiski, Estonia, but the filmmaker chose not to specifically identify the location of the film, presumably in order to underline the universality of the story. The name of the city is irrelevant. What is more important are the conditions of the environment the characters live in. What we see is a muddy, windy, decaying suburb, with crumbling dirty buildings and leafless trees. The space itself exhales despair before we even get a glimpse of the people.⁴⁹ Though Lilya lives in a very modest apartment by western standards, it is considered attractive enough to be stolen by her aunt, Anna, who tricks Lilya out of it so that she can live there herself. Evicted from her home, Lilya soon finds herself living in one of the dens or sheds near the apartments, alternative accommodation for the town's (young) homeless population. Kicked out by an alcoholic father, Volodya practically lives on the streets, until Lilya offers him the chance to stay with her. The motif of

⁴⁹ As Baldan points out "for viewers who know little about Russia and Eastern Europe, films such as *Lilya4Ever* may bear a reassuring message, convincing them that they are just terribly lucky to have been born in the West" (Baldan, 2007, p.100).

abandoned and unsupervised children that we have come upon several times so far in the corpus of films examined for this thesis is thus explicitly foregrounded in *Lilya4Ever*.

The apparent breakdown of the social bond that we see on screen in *Lilya4Ever*, a community where families abandon their children, reflects the director's observations of the social consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the Soviet bloc fractured in the years following the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was not only social and individual state structures that deteriorated. In some instances, as *Lilya4Ever* suggests, the institution of family soon followed. The shift from the communist era naturally was followed by changes in values and behaviour, as well as the way people related to each other (Swader, 2007; Trepper, 2004). The problems that had been lurking in the isolated Soviet social structures were exposed, exacerbating the results of the social fracture and the breakdown of both social and familial bonds. For decades, family was not valued as much as dedication to the communist party and its leader. It was a matter of time for poverty, alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental and physical disease that had remained untreated because of the lack of proper infrastructures to give the final blow. As a result, many children were forced onto the streets, living on their own, or in small groups, deprived of any social or family care.⁵⁰ Unicef, for example, estimates that there were an estimated 100,000 street children in Ukraine, and 16,000 in St. Petersburg; it is not possible to provide a definite number, since these children have no documents and naturally do not report to the police or any social services.⁵¹ Living in unbearable conditions of cold and starvation, these children soon turn to crime, alcohol and drugs and are exploited by the mafia or sexual predators. The drug abuse and sexual exploitation leave the children exposed to all related diseases: syphilis, hepatitis, and HIV/Aids have taken the form of an epidemic wave. The sexual exploitation of these children goes back even before 1991,

⁵⁰ For more on the relationship between human development and situational factors see Berger (2008) and Bronfenbrenner (2005).

⁵¹ The issue of abandoned children is depicted in many documentaries (e.g. *Children Underground* [Belzberg, 2001], *Swer Kids* [Woodruff, Roma, Effron, 2014]) as well as children being neglected within state care (e.g. *Bulgaria's Abandoned Children* [Blewett, 2007] for the BBC). For more on the subject see, Ananin, 1999, Svir, 1965, Human Rights Watch, 1998, Shecter, 2000. For more on the issue of street children in the former Soviet Union see Hope, 2012.

the official year of the Soviet Union's disintegration. As the currency was devalued, many foreign businessmen saw the opportunity to invest in a collapsing economy. The door was left open to sex tourism as well and the result was the "1987 scandal" of the discovery of almost 300 cases of HIV among children in the cities of Elista, Volgograd, Krosnodar and Rostov-na-Donu. Previous to that there had been no awareness campaign, as the epidemic was considered a "western" problem, that didn't affect the USSR (Stachowiak, 1998). After the fall of the Soviet Union, children's sexual exploitation and trafficking, specially through countries acceding to the EU, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, became a profitable business that still flourishes, without much being done by the international community.⁵²

These are pretty much the conditions that Lilya, Volodya and the rest of the wandering children live in, although the film doesn't follow the form of documentary-like *cinema-vérité*, and besides having certain such characteristics, it is definitely focused on a personal story and has a metaphysical touch. In any case, Lilya, Volodya and the rest of the teenagers live in oblivion. Natasha is the only one who has a family but even the presence of the extended family unit fails to provide her with guidance, supervision or support. Lilya is abandoned physically and emotionally by her mother, who goes as far as renouncing her parenthood. Volodya is not only neglected but also attacked by his alcoholic father, who even destroys his only possession, a basket ball given to him by Lilya as a birthday present, paid for with the money she has earned as a prostitute. Generally the adult presence in the film is either absent or hostile. There are no social services, no teachers, no parents or guardians preoccupied with the fate of these children. It is almost as if a sick adult society, self-absorbed and morbid, has become too egocentric to care. As a result, children themselves become hostile, violent, insolent and promiscuous. Alcohol, drugs and prostitution soon become Lilya's lifestyle.

In contrast to the absence of state or social structure, the remains of the former Soviet regime are present and dominant, juxtaposing the previous iron-sovereignty to the present laxity and chaos. In the flat where Lilya squats, they discover a box of honorary decorations of the red army. The submarine base

⁵² For the filmic representation of trafficking and the global sex slave see Balesteros, 2015.

where Lilya and Volodya pass some time is full of images of former Soviet leaders and official documents, and Lilya fails to sell some cheap household items, the belongings of the deceased previous owner of her flat, souvenirs of the past life in a country that no longer exists. This gap between past and present describes a political process which neglects these children's lives.

On the outskirts of the city and life, children have to survive and make a choice either to turn against each other (like Natasha and the gang of boys who rape Lilya) or towards each other to find comfort, like Volodya and Lilya, who form an unlikely but sharing couple. Here, there is not a subcommunity of immigrants as in other films in this thesis but an alternative community of children who seem to struggle alone. Fantasy is their escape, and, while sitting in a cold, dark room eating chips, Volodya fantasizes about being part of a real family with Lilya, where he returns from work as she bakes bread and tends to the home. When they lie down in the submarine base after sniffing glue, freezing, he builds a hut with a piece of cloth. It is this warmth that Lilya, abused, betrayed, desperate and alone in her prison in Malmö, tries to recapture by throwing a blanket over a coffee table, and talking to her dead friend who is now her guardian angel. This hut becomes a symbolic shelter, what Lilya and Volodya miss the most. Since there are no homes for them, they need something to turn to, something they can carry around and they can call their own, a link to their inner self, a portable root. For Volodya it is the basketball, his most precious possession. At the beginning of the film, we see Volodya playing basketball with a tin can, and when he describes paradise he says it is a place where you can do whatever you want, like playing video games or basketball. When he finally obtains a real basketball, they become inseparable, until his father stabs it with a pair of scissors. Still, Volodya keeps carrying it around and when he commits suicide, paradise does become a place where he can play basketball, and his ball is intact again. For Lilya, it is a picture of a guardian angel that she prays to. This image of her guardian angel is the first thing Lilya packs, protectively wrapped in clothes, every time she moves (or thinks she will, as at the beginning of the film when she is excited about following her mother to the States) and the very first thing she unpacks whenever she finds temporary shelter. Hanging the picture on the wall, defines her space. Ironically this image of a guardian angel, guiding a little girl, is the

exact thing Lilya is deprived of by her mother's abandonment. In contrast to the image of the guardian angel and Lilya's reverence towards it, is the photo of Lilya's mother. The condition of this picture changes throughout the narrative as Lilya "negotiates" her own feelings towards her mother. When her mother leaves, Lilya tears the picture. Later on, trying to forgive and comprehend her mother, as well as reconstruct an idealised image of the mother-daughter relationship, Lilya glues the pieces back together. Finally, when she finds out the cruel truth of how her mother has rejected her, Lilya burns the photo as an act creating irreversible chaos.

What we are seeing here is not the alienation of an immigrant protagonist in the host nation, since the narrative, as mentioned before, takes place largely in the home nation, before any act of migration has taken place. We do witness, though, the desperation of the homeland that provides us with a better understanding of why individuals and groups would choose to leave everything behind and migrate to Western Europe, even if their existence there is precarious and often alienating. This urge to relocate at any cost also helps to explain the reasons why young and vulnerable would-be migrants, such as Lilya, can easily become victims of trafficking. There is an agonising desire for an existence "elsewhere" throughout the whole film. When Lilya thinks she is following her mother, she is thrilled and eager to share the news with her friends, enthusiastic and proud. In a scene later on, gazing out of the window, she even appears to momentarily comprehend her mother's own reasons for abandoning her. Sweden replaces the States as her desired destination and offers a vision of escape even though she has no clear idea of where Sweden actually is. In her idealised vision of it, she believes that growing vegetables in the Swedish winter is possible. When trying to persuade her not to follow Andrei, Volodya asks her if she knows where Sweden is. To which Lilya answers: "somewhere in the EU or whatever it is called". "Elsewhere" in *Lilya4Ever* is identified with the West, and subsequently the West means capitalism and its sirens. Escaping to the West is not just Lilya's desire. There seems to be a mass illusion of a Western paradise (Loshitzky, 2010, 14-44), based mainly on a deification of possessions and consumerism, very common in the countries of the communist regime, and a perception of an idealised interrelationship between free economy structures and wellbeing through

private ownership. This admiration for and desire to move to the West is expressed in various ways throughout the film. In the supermarket where Lilya buys junk food and cigarettes, the wallpaper carries the image of an exotic sunset (almost identical to the wall paper of Tanya's apartment in *Last Resort*), an image that doesn't exhibit a local Russian landscape, but a seductive portrait of an "elsewhere", a poster that could easily hang in any Western travel agency.

As well as the guardian angel picture, Lilya has photos of Western pop stars on the walls of her apartment, even stuck on her clock; she reads magazines about Western pop culture and she is proud to share her birthday with Britney Spears. Once again here, the migration fantasy is fed and nurtured by different means of manufacturing dreams and desire (Loshitzky, 2010, 32). All the teenagers in the film admire Western consumer goods and brands, like Nike, and the music they listen to is Western-like trance and pop. Their perception of their own unification with the rest of the world that they have been isolated from, is embracing an MTV-like subculture and its merchandise. It is not the East and the West reunited, but the East gone West, not necessarily the European West but any West, precisely because it juxtaposes East and is its signified "other". When Lilya thinks she has found true love in Andrei, her first real date is in a McDonalds restaurant, where junk food is becoming a gourmet experience, and the amusement park, where Andrei takes her to play video games, depicts Volodya's paradise. As she awaits her flight to Sweden, Lilya touches the Jean Paul Gaultier bottle in the duty free shop of the airport with such care, almost devoutly, manifesting the glorious victory of capitalism over the new European migrant. Ironically it is in a mall in Malmo, that the mirror reverses and she fully comprehends the monstrous reality of her captivity as an enslaved sex-worker. Lilya is dragged there by her Swedish pimp, to buy a hat that will hide her chopped up hair from the clients. Ironically, in the luxurious environment of the shopping mall, a shrine to neo-liberal consumerism, among hundreds of happy shoppers, Lilya is more isolated than ever. She cannot escape and no one seems to notice the trapped girl, dragged around violently, obviously against her will. In the supposedly "civilised" West, where according to Andrei "even people are polite, not like here", no one realises the tragedy that is unfolding before their eyes, or offers to help. In a country (Sweden) known for social care and benefits, Lilya is invisible, an inconvenient secret. What Lilya

finally realises is that she herself, along with the other girls in the Russian club, are goods exposed on the shelves of the market, just like the woman-shaped Gaultier bottle, only cheaper. Lilya is not European, but a “lesser European”, whose right as Loshitzky points out “to settle even temporarily in Europe to (...) better [her] life (to buy ‘their own slice of paradise’, to use the language of the television shows seducing Britons to buy property and live abroad) is constantly challenged, questioned, and ultimately delegitimized” (Loshitzky, 2010, 149).

The human market in Lilya’s town seems like a perfectly working mechanism, almost inescapable. Lilya disapproves of Natasha’s decision to join, but her own resistance weakens when she is deprived of any other means of earning money simply to survive. It is as though there is no other option. Natasha, who has a family to provide for her, does it in order to buy things for herself. Lilya’s aunt suggests that Lilya must give in, and there is no law enforcement against it. The girls are not only not prevented from entering into prostitution, they are actually encouraged. Their entrance to the club is free, as they are the club’s best selling products. The clients wander around, picking the girl of their preference without any hesitation. There are no girls there on a night out. This is how the club operates. A driver passing through proposes an amount of Swedish crowns to Lilya while she is just walking in the street, an action that to any Western girl walking with a friend would seem absurd and would be considered harassment by law. In Lilya’s town, it is reality, giving extremity a mask of normality. It is characteristic of Lilya’s reluctance to give in to this degrading interaction, that she uses a form of disguise. In her real life, Lilya does not dress in a feminine way and does not wear make-up. We see her dressed in sweat pants and athletic footwear. When she decides to sell what she has left, her own body, she embraces a role. This role is what is expected of her, but also it is a way to distance herself from the whole procedure. She is no longer her tomboy self, the 16-year-old teenager, but a grown woman in heavy make-up, high heels, miniskirt and a hairpiece. The first shot of Lilya being alone with a client marks a transition: it is in slow motion and silent, as if the moment is detached from the pragmatic timeline and from what was known to her as reality till this very moment.

As much as Lilya seems determined to maintain her emotional and psychological withdrawal from the trade, there is a moment when she seems to

have conformed to its rules. When Andrei appears as a decent, sentimental young man, a knight in shining armour, making no sexual demands on her, she asks: "Do you think I am ugly then?", following the logic that anything that does not sell, is justifiably rejected. She also succumbs to her rape by Natasha's boyfriend and his gang, as an accident, a small price to pay for her upcoming escape and freedom.

Very often the phenomenon of trafficking, or at least the victimisation of the girls, is doubted because of the supposed "choice" of teenage girls to prostitute themselves. There has been such an abundance of information and awareness campaigns (both in the East and West), especially during the last decade, that it seems impossible for teenage girls such as Lilya not to be suspicious of the outcome of their decision to follow an organised, illegal expedition that transports them to a foreign country with the promise of legal work being sexual and economic exploitation. In *Lilya4Ever*, even 11-year-old Volodya is suspicious of Andrei's intentions. How can Lilya be that naïve and ignorant? It is obvious that this becomes an option for girls "probably thinking that nothing can be worse than what they are already living through" (Brown, Iordanova, Torchin, 2010, 106). Beside the non-negotiable need that urges Lilya and women in real life to put aside their hesitations, the facts are clear and relentless.⁵³

⁵³ According to the Harvard Journal of Law and Gender (April Riegel, vol.30) "estimates of the total number of people trafficked across international borders each year vary from 700,000 to 2 million. Of those people, an estimated 80% are female, and 70% are trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation The illegal sex industry is the third largest criminal enterprise in the world behind the trades in drugs and arms ... Many women voluntarily come to work in the sex industry only to find themselves in unanticipated slave-like conditions". Usually the victims are either forced or deceived into believing a certain job awaits, but in any case, anyone who is forced or coerced to work under slavery is a victim of trafficking under the law. This applies by default to anyone who is under 18 years of age. It is estimated that 200,000 women and children are trafficked from Eastern Europe every year (HEUNI, The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, Finland) and the profit from worldwide trafficking reaches 42 billion US dollars per year. UNODC is the United Nations entity focusing on the criminal justice element of these crimes and its work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling. In 1999, though, some extremely shocking information saw daylight, through Kathryn Bolcovac, a U.S police officer, who was assigned to the U.N peace force in Bosnia and exposed a trafficking operation and the horrors of sexual enslavement of young women, mainly from Russia and Ukraine. According to a report provided by Human Rights Watch, the "clientele" in Bosnia consisted of International Police Task Force (IPTF) members, SFOR(Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina) staff, local police and international employees. (Huff Post, Politics, March , 2013) (Kathy Bolcovac is the author of the book *The Whistleblower*, which was transferred to screen (2010) by Larisa Kondracki, starring Rachel Weisz). Belgium, The Netherlands and Spain provide temporary residence permits to the victims of trafficking. Italy has taken measures to protect the victims of trafficking regardless of their co-operation with the police. The Italian government has since reported a

Redemption in *Lilya4Ever* comes eventually in some form of “elsewhere”: paradise. Lukas Moodysson has been accused of not proposing a solution to Lilya’s situation and of giving the film a very dark and pessimistic end: both Volodya and Lilya commit suicide. In the screening of the film at the London Film Festival, though, the audience gave Moodysson an ovation and many attested how the film made them feel sad and helpless (O’Hagan 2003, *The Observer*). Lilya’s paradise is a parallel universe where she and Volodya have “transformed into a Wim Wenders-like angel, and seem to have shuffled off this mortal coil for a life of weightless wonder (...) where goodness is an end in itself, where [Lilya’s] acts of kindness light up the dreary lives of those around her” (O’Hagan, 2003). This paradise does not appear as a space between life and absence but oddly enough takes the form of Lilya’s home and the roof of the submarine base. Having decided that she does not approve of the world (“it is not such a good place”), she also rejects her idealised notion of the West. Lilya thus joins Volodya in his “paradise”. It is in this same ruin of a former symbol of the power and dominance of the USSR that Volodya and Lilya confided in each other as to their beliefs on the afterlife and spirituality. Although continuing to pray to her guardian angel, Lilya expresses disbelief and doubt. For his part, Volodya describes a rather naïve version of paradise and one that is, in fact, closer to Moodysson’s own beliefs: “I believe in God and God is present in the film. I do believe that someone will take care of me when I die, just like he takes care of Lilya. I honestly don’t think I could have made this film without that belief” (Moodysson, quoted in *The Observer*, 2003). So is *Lilya4Ever* a film about Christian spirituality or is it a political film? Or is it both? Interestingly, the metaphysical element of the film is not irrelevant here, nor does it necessarily run counter to any political dimensions that the film might have. Taking into consideration that religion and worship was restricted during the communist regime, the newborn relationship of the Eastern European to the metaphysical element is clearly a consequence of the communist regime’s demise, yet another aspect of their liberation from the previously imposed restrictions, and a manifestation of an almost unanimous rejection of the

significant increase in the incrimination of traffickers. In other European countries the victims can apply for a residence permit on humanitarian grounds (see Territo, Kirkham, 2010).

communist past (Rosenthal, 2002).⁵⁴ Moodysson himself denies the contradiction of these two aspects: "I honestly think a film can be intensely personal even to the point of mysterious, and still be overtly political. Like Tarkovsky (...) in this instance, though, I do not really care if people understand the religious aspects or not, but I really do want them to understand the political one. I would like people to leave the cinema angry and let that anger lead to some kind of action. Then I would know that I was a political filmmaker" (Moodysson to O'Hagan, 2003).

The pop subculture is enhanced in the film in a bipolar duality. Not only is it the carrier of the characters' culture, a protest related to their eagerness to go west, either physically, mentally or economically, but also the manifestation of an increasing desire for Western lifestyle and values in Eastern Europe that is most fervently advocated by young people. This could lead us to conclude that *Lilya4Ever* is aimed, precisely, at this demographic. However, while *Lilya4Ever* is definitely not an exclusively youth-orientated film, it does have elements that communicate with a young audience, such as the music used in the film. The soundtrack of *Lilya4Ever* features many popular Western as well as Eastern bands, such as t.A.t.u, Ballerin, Bia Gra, Antiloop, Maarja and Da Buzz. The opening sequence song is "Mein Herz Brennt" ("My Heart Burns") by Rammstein. The song's lyrics involve a narrator describing the horrors of nightmare. The opening line of the song's intro ("Nun, liebe Kinder, gebt fein Acht, ich habe euch etwas mitgebracht", "Now, dear children, pay attention, I have brought something for you) is taken from the East German children's show *Das Sandmännchen* (*The Little Sandman*), where the Sandman would tell bedtime stories. Because of the origin of the broadcast, the song has been interpreted as a description of the "communist nightmare" that divided Germany. Rammstein have been included and promoted by the emblematic soundtrack of David Lynch's *Lost Highway*. Moodysson says that he had not seen the film or heard of the band before, but saw some graffiti with the band's name on a wall in Tallinn and decided to include the song (Moodysson to Michael, 2014). The

⁵⁴ Religion was not entirely banished from the life of Eastern Europeans during the communist era, but it was certainly and officially restricted under the legacy of Karl Marx describing it as the "opium of the masses". After the fall of the communist regime, religion was again embraced enthusiastically by the Eastern people. In the case of Yugoslavia it was even used as a means for the fanaticism that triggered the Yugoslav Wars. (For more on religion during the cold war, see Kirby, 2003).

use of this specific song with its political implication, although presumably not obvious to a large audience, underlines a very essential element regarding the filmmaker's intention. Making this choice, Moodysson apparently links the sociopolitical facts of the Soviet regime's disintegration to the boost of trafficking. In this respect he links the phenomenon of an elevation of the sex trade to this specific wave of intra-European immigration that emerged from this precise sociopolitical fracture. This is a rather important argument, since *Lilya4Ever* is the only film that deals with the specific sex trade phenomenon as its main theme.

There is a constant movement in *Lilya4Ever*. A movement within the frame or a movement of the camera itself: stable frames that show wandering, or an on-the-shoulder camera positioning that follows the action or movement of the protagonists. The film either shows or follows successive routes: Lilya and Volodya walking in the street, Lilya riding the night train to the city, routes from the inside of a car, Lilya on the back seat of the Swedish pimp's car, Lilya dragged in the mall, and Lilya running in the streets of Malmo trying to find a way out. This sense of movement does not express or depict progress or change, though. All of these potential routes for Lilya and Volodya ultimately seem to lead nowhere, enhancing the feeling of captivity for the protagonists. Indeed, even when Lilya finally "escapes" to Europe, she is not free but simply substitutes one form of marginalisation, alienation and exploitation for another. In this respect the movement actually enhances Naficy's idea of homeland as prison (Naficy, 2001, p.181). When Lilya thinks she is finally leaving life in the suburb behind, the POV of the camera is through the back window of Andrei's car. The promise of freedom is soon broken, and Lilya finds herself in the back seat of another car, more of a captive than ever, driven to her "clients", against her will. Although there is the metaphysical element of paradise, mainly appearing in the rooftop scene and Volodya's transformation to an angel, the film generally follows the rules of social realist filmmaking and there is no use of effects, not even the use of lenses to alter the image. The paradise scene itself is shot in a realistic way, at a slightly low angle with the sky as background. The only touch of a surrealistic, playful mood is the toy-like little wings of Volodya's and Lilya's angel-selves.

Lilya4Ever, as is evident from the film analysis above, covers many of the issues that we elaborated on previously in this chapter: the phenomenon of trafficking as a result of the specific wave of immigration; the formation of sub-communities (here taking the form of a community of deprived children, potential or eager migrants); the expanding of crime through the sex trade (it is rather characteristic that Andrej is a local, used as a bait to recruit the girls). Although the immigrant experience and the relationship of the immigrant protagonist to the host nation does not appear until the end of the film, including this film as a case study in this chapter is still justifiable, since *Lilya4Ever* deals with a different aspect of these respective experiences and relationships. Most importantly in the context of this chapter, the film deals with the psychological relationship of the potential migrant to the West (a relationship that is, in this film, imagined and idealised more than it is lived and experienced). This relationship portrayed through the migrant's aspirations and notion of the West before relocation, after the journey, is intensely disillusioned. This notion of disillusioned aspirations, is also a prominent theme in the final case study of this chapter: *Last Resort*.

LAST RESORT

A young Russian woman, Tanya, arrives with her son, Artyom, in London where she expects to meet her English fiancé. When he does not show up, the immigration office threatens to deport her back to Russia, as she does not meet the criteria for a long-term stay in the UK. Reacting out of panic, Tanya declares herself and her son refugees and asks for political asylum. She is unaware of the fact that her action consigns them for at least a year to a detention centre, a fenced “ghost town” near an abandoned seaside amusement park, ironically called “Dreamland”. After being taken there by the authorities, she realises that she is trapped with no possibility of getting out and with no civil rights. Artyom and Tanya soon find out that her fiancé has no intention of helping them, but help does come in the form of Alfie, a working class man, who befriends them and eventually falls in love with Tanya.

Tanya starts thinking about returning to Russia but withdrawing the petition for asylum takes as much time as having it approved. Meanwhile, Artyom, who, ironically, seems to be more of a parental figure to his mother and disapproved of her decision to move to England in the first place, joins a gang of teenage delinquents, who break into stores to steal cigarettes, liquor or money and sell various goods to the desperate refugees of the detention centre. Tanya and Artyom try to escape, unsuccessfully, while Alfie tries to improve their living conditions. When he finds out that Tanya has been approached by the local cyber pornographer and that she almost gave in, he decides to help them escape “Dreamland” and try to return to Russia.

Pawel Pawlikowski is the only filmmaker in this study who is not entirely “Western”. He was born in Poland in 1957, but at the age of 14 he moved to Germany and Italy, before settling in Britain for a long time (although he is currently based in Poland)⁵⁵. His life and educational background do not classify him as an Eastern director, since he studied in Oxford and started his career in documentaries in the UK, although he often worked on “Eastern” themes, such as the work of Russian writer Venedikt Erofeev *Moscow-Petuski* (awarded an Emmy, RTS, Prix Italia, etc.) (Kuc, 2003-2014), *Dostoyevski's Travels*, a road

⁵⁵ Pawlikowski to Seymour, 2014.

movie with a St. Petersburg tram driver who is the only living descendant of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and the *Serbian Epics*, made at the height of the Bosnian war and nearly banned by MP. Set in Bosnia, the *Serbian Epics* give a rather anthropological perspective, based on the power of image: a mass baptism before a battle, an inquiry of the remaining members of the Karadjordje dynasty, the tribal chants of Serbian peasant soldiers at the front. According to the usual clichés of war reporting, the *Serbian Epics* were considered clearly pro-Serbian, at a time when public opinion (with the exception of Russia and Greece), the international mainstream media and the intelligentsia (with a few exceptions such as Peter Handke) were firmly anti-Serbian.

Pawlikowski moved to fiction in 1998. His third feature, *Last Resort*, shot on 16mm, earned international critical acclaim and a remarkable reception in numerous festivals such as Sundance and Toronto, and garnered Pawlikowski the 2001 BAFTA award for “Most Promising Newcomer in British Film”. It is apparent that Pawlikowski is rather a transnational filmmaker. His documentary work seems to draw themes and inspiration from Eastern Europe (interestingly enough not from Poland) but his fiction can be clearly classified as Western cinema (*My summer of love*, 2004, *La femme du Vème*, 2011) with the exception of his latest film *Ida*, which marks a return to and identifies him squarely with his Polish origin. Although Pawlikowski can be considered a second generation immigrant, neither he nor his film (in question here) qualify as diasporic. *Last Resort* may describe a migrant journey but it is not an autobiographical film. The main character is of different sex and origin and the circumstances under which Tanya is relocated are completely different. Pawlikowski’s family left Poland while the country was under the communist regime and there was no prediction of the time or way that the regime would be overthrown or replaced. Moreover the conditions that Tanya has to face in the UK (the refugee camp) are completely new and definitely not similar to Pawlikowski’s arrival to Western Europe. Pawlikowski cannot be included into Naficy’s accented filmmakers (contrarily to what Bardan argues [Bardan 2007, p.95]) precisely because of his elaborate educational background. Pawlikowski migrated as a child and grew up as a Western European exposed in Western European culture and thought. His film is not a product of the accented cinema’s mode of production, that Naficy defines as “undergirded by

rhizomatically interlinked independent, nonprofit, political, and ethnoreligious organizations and by a variety of mediating cultural institutions" (Naficy 2001, p. 43). In the extended case study that follows the analysis of the film shows more arguments emerging towards this direction. On the other hand Tanya's choice to return home, rejecting what the West has to offer, could relate to Pawlikowski's own process of returning to his homeland many years after the production of *Last Resort*.

Last Resort follows the story of an Eastern woman and her son, travelling alone, without the presence and the protection of a male/father figure. This is not an uncommon motif in film narrative in general. There are multiple reasons for such a choice. On one hand it serves the plot: a single mother can fall in love. Love can be a positive and easy merging of "foreigners and locals". Moreover, a mother and a child, unprotected, vulnerable, are the perfect protagonists for a story about victimised immigrants and their need to pursue a better life in the "promised land".⁵⁶ After years of extended wars, persecutions, the banishment of divorce⁵⁷ or the reality of immigration, crime, drug and alcohol abuse⁵⁸ that followed the end of the communist era, men seem to be absent. If not, it is usually their story being told. Tanya confides in Alfie that she was raised in a house crowded with four generations of women who made the wrong choice of husband.

Generally, *Last Resort* focuses more on personal choices than economic or political circumstances. Tanya does not claim to seek a better life in the Western world, but migrates for love (or, at least, what she thought was love). She did not come looking for a job, which is what apparently makes it easier for her to return to her homeland and start her life as an independent person.

Artyom is the real victim. Obliged to follow his mother's personal needs, he finds himself in a foreign country, imprisoned in "Dreamland", playing the parental role and speaking the words of reason, claiming that grown-ups are rather "neurotic". Children appear to be the answer to the issue of personal

⁵⁶ Especially for the mother, it is obvious that the "promised land" will be not only the "construction of a new world" but also "a new self" (Cooke a.c. in Loshitzky, 2010, 37).

⁵⁷ For more see Schlesinger, 1998.

⁵⁸ For more see Joyce, 1990.

choice regarding the process of immigration. The audience can be sceptical about the adults' decisions and motivation, but the children do not make their own choices. Children in *Last Resort* seem abandoned, imprisoned with no excuse in an unsuitable environment, deprived of any form of care either from the authorities or their families, with no parental supervision, engaging in activities that are both inappropriate and self-destructive. Artyom soon adopts a "grown up" lifestyle, participating in the business of his gang, easily fitting into the multi-ethnic group of minors who inhabit the spaces in and around "Dreamland". Most of the residents of the detention centre are of either African or Asian origin, specially the men. It is characteristic that a Caucasian boy of Artyom's gang shouts at a group of immigrants while peeping through their window: "Go back to your countries", while he seems completely tolerant of the colour of the gang's girl and of Artyom's Russian singing as they "hang out", drinking and smoking. The racial issue is dominant throughout the whole film.

Alfie says to Tanya: "You don't look like refugees", clearly referring to their skin colour and looks, and somehow it is true. Tanya is not an underprivileged woman seeking a better paid job. She was a children's book illustrator back home, which obviously classifies her as superior, in socioeconomic and educational terms, to Alfie, her "working class hero", who has spent time in prison. The social status is here reversed merely by the fact of displacement, but even so, Tanya's superiority remains intact in comparison to the rest of the inhabitants of "Dreamland". Not only is she white and a "refugee by mistake" but she also has a strong link to the local life in Alfie, a representative of the local community, who generally seems to be an authority figure, since he runs the only store the refugees have access to, and is the supplier of a very essential thing: the phone card. While the other refugees, male in the majority, wait in line to make the precious phone call home, Alfie helps Tanya to get first to the phone booth, the ultimate place where the refugees can get in touch with the world. Loshitzky argues that "the film projects deep ambivalence toward contemporary migrants, sometimes even tainted by covert racism tones" (Loshitzky, 2010, 33). According to Loshitzky the choice of Tanya implies such intentions on behalf of the filmmaker: "She is a white woman in the midst of a faceless mass of dark-skinned asylum seekers (Loshitzky, 2010, 33). On the other hand, we would argue that, first of all, as

mentioned before, *Last Resort* is a film that primarily deals with personal choices. A middle class woman is the ideal choice. The asylum seekers are not displaced by their own choice. Moreover, as Loshitzky herself notes later on: "Tanya is used by Pawlikowski as a mediator for the spectator's gaze precisely because she is white and middle class and seems not to fit into the stereotypical image, deeply rooted in the European popular consciousness, of the dark, poor, uneducated asylum seeker. This is presumably based on the assumption that it is easier for a white audience to identify with her ordeal because, after all, she is 'one of us'". Although Loshitzky comments rather negatively on this choice, it can be quite an effective one since it does enhance the identification with the target audience of the film: privileged, white Europeans. On the other hand, it allows the relationship between Tanya and the locals to be exempt from elements of racial, cultural and other profound differences and to explore the mere interaction between someone who is randomly foreign or local.

Alfie becomes a provider for Tanya and Artyom's small family. He brings food, he paints their apartment, he gives Artyom a watch as a present and even brings home "company", as he says, in the form of a TV set. Alfie is the one taking Tanya out, to the bingo club where he works as an announcer, where the bingo players are all locals, and where the rest of the refugees would not have access. Alfie becomes what Tanya has apparently been looking for her entire life: a saviour. The only piece of her work that Tanya has carried with her is a picture of Noah's ark, a ship full of animals where the human presence is that of a couple and child, depicting her need for salvation by a man. Even Tanya herself admits to her co-dependence, as she claims to be always looking for love. She came to the UK to put her life in the hands of a fiancé. When she leaves a message on his answering machine, she says: "Come and save us". Naturally, when Alfie offers salvation she takes it, this time in order to become independent and start a life of her own, back home. The notion of rescue is reversed though. Tanya does not want to stay in the UK any more but to create "a new self" back home. This element, on one hand, gives an interesting aspect to Tanya and Alfie's relationship. Alfie helps Tanya to do something she wants but he would not wish for. On the other hand, it does imply that Pawlikowski

seems to be suggesting that the Eastern European immigrant does not “need” the West as desperately as we might think.

The element of “salvation” or “rescue” is intensively present throughout *Last Resort*, but also seems to be a general characteristic of the whole corpus of films examined in this study. (e.g. *Correction* [Th. Anastopoulos, 2007], *LAmerica* [G. Amelio, 1994], *Beautiful People* [J. Dizdar, 1999], *Dirty Pretty Things* [Stephen Frears, 2003], *Tickets* [Olmi/Kiarostami/Loach, 2005], *Once* [John Carney, 2006], *The Hostage* [K. Giannaris, 2005], *J.A.C.E.* [M. Karamagiolis, 2011]). With a closer look, it appears to extend into many films within the area of immigration (*La promesse* by the Dardennes brothers, *Spare Parts* by D. Kozole etc.).

In the case of *Last Resort*, this idea of salvation involves Alfie’s effort to help and finally smuggle Tanya and Artyom out of the detention centre, as an act of self-sacrifice: although he wants them to stay with him, he comprehends Tanya’s need for independence and self determination and goes through with the escape. At the same time, it is a reverse of the smuggling in of the immigrants to “Fortress Europe”. Again the filmmaker suggests that there are people as eager to get out of “Europe” as much as there are those wishing to enter.

Furthermore his action to “punish” the local pornographers by destroying their “studio” is an act of vengeance on behalf of Tanya and, possibly, a means of rescuing the rest of the women that are being sexually exploited.

Rescue can come in many forms that will be further elaborated in this study. Here we can only concentrate on the way it is structured as a plot ingredient in *Last Resort*, as a result of love and identification between the three protagonists: two immigrants and one from the host nation.

Alfie falls in love with Tanya and grows fond of Artyom. But he also sympathises with Tanya because he is equally in exile. Without unnecessary details, we find out that Alfie himself has made wrong choices and mistakes that have led him to Stonehaven. In the same way that Tanya feels that “Dreamland” is a punishment for her choices, Alfie punishes himself for having destroyed his own life, by isolating himself in a detention centre, in an act of self conviction. Alfie also identifies with Artyom, the innocent victim, with whom he shares the enduring of childhood hardship, since they both grew up without a father. It is

clear that by rescuing them, Alfie seizes the opportunity he sees to liberate himself. Being an outcast and a marginal himself, he seeks redemption in helping Tanya escape her mistake and the detention centre, and mostly the innocent Artyom who is there without any say.

Are there further psychological motives? Would Alfie offer so unconditionally to help and practically save a local woman and her child? Are we dealing here with some sort of deformation of a Florence Nightingale Effect, where a person is inclined to engage in romances with people in need and provide help and care? Something like that cannot, of course, be lightly and altogether rejected as an idea. But there is a better path to follow that falls more within the frame of this study and outlines the actions of Alfie as much as the filmmaker's choice.

In *Last Resort*, as in many of the films included in the thesis, there is a triple parallel point of the view of the protagonist, the filmmaker and the community of the host country that the filmmaker represents. In this respect, although the filmmaker usually takes the point of view of the immigrant protagonist, it is inevitable for the film to reach its audience through their own (usually nonimmigrant) perspective. Equally, it is inevitable for the filmmaker to include elements of his own perspective, which represents the community of people where he lives and works, and which is usually the one of the host nation. We can, therefore, only conclude that guilt could be a motive for this triad: the protagonist, the filmmaker and, in our case, the Western audience. Naturally, this is not personal guilt but rather a mass, subconscious feeling of guilt towards the part of the world that has been long oppressed and the people whose lives have been destroyed by decisions made by others. Such a conviction is enhanced by the choice of local "saviours". What we have here is not solidarity amongst the underprivileged but practical help and care for the "foreigner", the unfortunate, the historical "victim". Alfie separates himself from the evil, exploiting "local", represented by the pornographers and offers what Tanya, Artyom and the extra filmic triad cannot offer themselves: justice and redemption.

In *Last Resort*, journey and displacement (both voluntary and inadvertent) amalgamate, creating movement on a realistic as well as a symbolic level. *Last Resort* follows the pattern of journey narratives based on

the "direction of journey, motivation for journeying and reference to actual historical precedence" (Stout as cited in Naficy, 2001, 222). According to Naficy "depending on motivations may take the form of exploration, pilgrimage, emigration or return" (Naficy, 2001, 222). In this respect Tanya's journey continually transforms the film. A journey of emigration that aims to explore her potential in a new relationship becomes a journey of return. Equally, in its dual, metaphorical essence, a journey that involves the quest for love, that in reality marks a need for co-dependency, becomes a journey of self-realisation and empowerment. Tanya and Artyom move from Russia to London. After Tanya declares them refugees, they are transferred to Stonehaven and "Dreamland", from where they try to escape and are eventually sneaked out by Alfie, in order to travel back to London and move back to Russia but the whole journey is also that of self-realisation and change for Tanya, who finally becomes self aware and faces the mistakes of her past.

The route of Tanya and Artyom's journey corresponds directly to Tanya's mentality, weakness and attitude towards life. The first journey, to London, is based on a false promise. The second, to "Dreamland" is decided by the authorities and not herself, and the last journey we see, back to London is the realisation of Alfie's and not her own plan, at least in its execution. The film opens and closes in a circular motif: we see Tanya and Artyom travelling on what is obviously the monorail between Heathrow's terminals, never actually shown. They seem to be floating in a tunnel towards the light. The monorail is here used to serve as Naficy's "luminal space" (Naficy, 2001, 243) between the two lands and the two realities. When in the airport, an employee asks Artyom to stand behind his desk, somehow this desk depicts the first obstacle between them and the new home, a dead end to their expectations. After the airport, the journey lacks the passengers' intention. Artyom asks his mother while her picture is being taken: "Are we arrested?". And it looks very much as if they are. They are transferred to the detention centre by a police vehicle.

During the whole film, every means of transportation appears on screen or is implied: plane, train, car, boat, truck. What is interesting here is that all the cars we see in the detention centre are patrol cars, underlining the sense of "Dreamland" as a prison. The one exception is the truck that brings Tanya and Artyom back to London, the vehicle that marks their freedom. Boats are a kind

of visual leitmotif. Yet on the way to Dreamland, Artyom sees, through the window of the patrol car, boats withdrawn to land. Alfie takes them out to the beach where they get on the very same boat that will, eventually, be their way out of imprisonment.

Even within the limits of the detention centre, movement seems constant. Artyom and Tanya move around trying to find a way to free themselves either by seeking outlets to their entrapment, or by actually searching for a lawful or illegal exit.

They try to escape twice, struggling to find a path undetectable by the observation cameras, that serve as invincible eyes for the hand of the law, very much like the machine where Artyom tries to “fish” a watch.

Redemption, here, comes not by settling into the new home, but by choosing to return to the old one. The last journey is that of homecoming. At the end we see the travelling duo, floating again towards the end of the tunnel, to what now seems like the solid reality they inevitably have to face.

The sense of insular life is persistently present and intense in *Last Resort*. Besides the fact that the UK is itself an island, Stonehaven is situated by the sea. The visual and audio motifs of the sea, waves crashing onto the coast, the seagulls and their squawking, the abandoned boats, amplify this sense to an extent. The fenced town of “Dreamland” functions as the prolonged image of a further island within the natural limitation of a geographical island. Sea is the natural border but equally a natural obstacle one should overcome in order to escape. Interestingly, the sea was not a barrier for Tanya upon her initial arrival in the UK. It is a barrier to her journey home. What we have here is the opposite of other films with relevant narrative (e.g. *Welcome* [Lioret, 2009]).

Islands, throughout history have been used as places of exile for political reasons, religious persecution or criminal convictions. The Greek islands of Patmos and Gyaros respectively served as prisons for St. John the Theologian, persecuted for his faith by the Romans, and for the communists who refused to renounce their beliefs (1947-1974).⁵⁹ St. Marguerite Island was the exile destination of an enigmatic prisoner who was believed to be Louis XIV’s older brother and inspired A. Dumas’ *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Devil’s Island in

⁵⁹ For more see Τζαβάλας, 1974.

French Guiana, history's most notorious penal colony of all time, was also known as the "Dry Guillotine", due to the high rate of mortality from disease. Alcatraz (1934-1963), the most feared penalty in the US, is a synonym for imprisonment, though today it is no longer in use as a prison but is included in the New Golden Gate National Recreational Area and attracts over a million visitors a year. Even Napoleon the Great was finally sent into exile on the island of St Helena.⁶⁰ Although in most of the films depicting migration to the UK, the island represents freedom and the anticipated final destination, in *Last Resort* the coasts of "Dreamland" take on precisely this aspect of the sea as a barrier that stands between Tanya and freedom in a reverse way to Lioret's sea that links the hero to his desired final destination. In other films that deal with similar issues, the sea is usually the barrier between the immigrant protagonist and the new home-seeking journey of migration towards the "promised land" (*L'America, When You Are Born You Can No Longer Hide*), with the seaport depicting the "luminal space between sea and land" (Naficy, 2001, 243).

"Dreamland" used to be an amusement park and seaside resort. The abandoned equipment of the amusement park marks what used to be a place of joy. Now it is dirty, a home to human misery, a prison. The cinematography collaborates with the scenery to dramatise the hardship of "Dreamland" life, with a variation of grey. The hostile land and water unite in a solid grey surface. Abandonment gives the impression of a haunted town but alternates with crowded spaces to impose the sense of individuality being diminished. A visual motif is repeated: a bird's-eye shot, revealing a square atrium. The empty space is framed by four buildings and within them litter is blown by the wind, a micrography of "Dreamland" itself.

The only colourful details that emerge from the palette of grey, are the clothes of the protagonists: the remains of another life, their way of distancing themselves from "Dreamland". Tanya dresses like any other European woman, not in ethnic costume. It is characteristic that Artyom is dressed identically to the other members of his gang, which could be suggesting his youthful ease in adjusting.

⁶⁰ For more see Larkins, 2010.

“Dreamland” is the refugees' exile and Tanya's penalty, as she claims, for her mistakes, a fenced, man-made “island”, under the alert eye of the authorities, that no one can escape. Ironically, or as expected one might say, the sea becomes Tanya and Artyom' s passage to freedom. The long medium shot of Tanya breathing the sea air among huge waves in the open sea is the only instant we see her carefree. But Tanya and Artyom are not abandoned like the rest of the refugees. Their story is not followed here but their condition is being used as a frame to the main narrative. If Tanya perceives her exile as penalty for the “crimes” she committed against herself and her son (by being naïve and co-dependent), there is no reason for the imprisonment of the real asylum seekers except the cruelty of reality itself.

“Dreamland” is even structured as a prison. It serves to isolate the inmates from the local community: food is provided with vouchers by the state; there are constant patrols by police vehicles and a closed circuit of observation cameras; petty crime flourishes; and the store that Alfie runs is the main source of what the state cannot supply. The fact that the refugees are not treated with cruelty only enhances the sense of the unintended necessity that is the detention centre. On the other hand, the inescapability of the detention centre links to a narrative of the criminalisation of the immigrant/asylum seeker. The asylum seekers are restricted for no other reason than their mere identity as such. “Dreamland”, as in many other films included in the thesis, creates a subcommunity of immigrants, a marginalised and secluded community that lives separately from the locals, and which is created precisely on the basis of immigration. The pornographers' network and Artyom's gang, on the other hand, are smaller under-classes within the subcommunity that are formed by different criteria, those of their actions.

“Dreamland” is the fenced antechamber to the fortress that is England and by extension the West, and the life that it represents to the refugees: a safe life with civil and human rights. This expectation is what brings defeat. Instead of a new beginning they find themselves trapped in detention. The film does not deal with whether this procedure is known to the refugees or acceptable. In the case of Tanya, who seems ignorant in every aspect of adult life, it is clear that she is unaware of the two sides of the fence. She cannot cope with the side of

"here" and she has a vague idea of "there". All her expectations can be summed up in finding "love", which is her condition, her utopia.

There is an ambience of false or unkept promises penetrating *Last Resort*, an illusion that reveals its true face within the limits of "Dreamland", the illusion of the "promised land", whatever that means to each and every one of the refugees and Tanya. The disillusionment and the film start simultaneously. Tanya's fiancé promised to pick her up from the airport but he never showed up. When she asks for political asylum, she thinks that she and Artyom will automatically be released. Every time she calls her fiancé, she only gets through to an answering-machine but still keeps her faith, until she is clearly told that she is on her own. When she decides to go back to Russia, she believes that this involves no official procedure. The new home is a dirty ghost town with a very promising name. On the wall of the apartment designated to her, there is wallpaper with the image of some tropical paradise at sunset (very much like that in *Lilya4Ever*). The wallpaper is old and ready to fall off, making visual once more what was never there or hers to lose. When Alfie and Artyom paint the walls, it is like putting an end to the mourning for a lost paradise and taking action to ameliorate the "here and now". Whether finally Tanya embraces real life, we never find out. Her return home may suggest so, but whether it is a growing process or an illusion is vague. Why does she not give in to love when she finds it in Alfie? Artyom asks his mother: "Why can't you love him?" and she answers that you cannot tell your heart who to love. This could be translated into the universal quest for a chimera that might be extended to the refugees as well. Do people ever find happiness or is it the pursuit of happiness that actually constitutes happiness itself? In the case of "Dreamland", the rest of the refugees are mostly Asians or Africans, from troubled parts of the world, who chose immigration aiming for mere survival, but this is not Tanya's case.

An important issue that has become the object of much discussion, thought and concern in Europe, especially in the last couple of decades, appears in *Last Resort* as an aspect of life in the detention centre: female sexual exploitation. As analysed in the previous case study of this chapter, the phenomenon has taken on such enormous dimensions that although governments and the UN were naturally obliged to establish separate legislation regarding human rights, it seems that the international community still fails to

confront the trafficking and sexual exploitation networks with success. It is characteristic that the pornographers in *Last Resort* act within the limits of a government institution where the presence of law is mighty when it comes to the refugees, but overall absent in the crime that take place there. Tanya is approached by the pornographers and almost gives in due to financial difficulties. Poverty is the main motive of such decisions by the women who eventually make this choice. However, in *Last Resort*, sexual exploitation is not the subject of the film, so the filmmaker chooses wisely not to push this part of the plot to the limit. There is space for choice. Tanya has an option and violence or abduction, the usual practices of such networks in real life and in other films discussed in this thesis, are not reenacted here. It seems the pornography is followed by the pattern of “choice”, unlike trafficking, as the same motif appears in *Import/Export*. Unlike in *Lilya4Ever* where female sexual exploitation is the main theme, what we have here is a brief allusion to the issue of female sexual exploitation, used as a boost for the plot to develop.

We deal here with pornography and not prostitution. There is an obvious contradiction between the scenery of “Dreamland” and the scenery of the pornographers’ studio and their use of video is a way of bringing image into image, that is different to that of the observation cameras. It does, though, share a common goal: control over people. The detention centre controls people to ensure that they remain within “Dreamland”, while the pornographers control the women to ensure the continuation of their business. Unlike Lilya, who is trapped, moved and then imprisoned by the traffickers, Tanya moves of her own free will, gets imprisoned by the state and then is obliged to give in to the pornographers in order to gain some money. It is apparent that the two on screen characters follow a rather reverse path to sexual exploitation.

In *Last Resort* to capture people’s image is to dominate. Either in the sense of controlling their physical presence within “Dreamland” in order to discourage and prevent escape, or in the sense of violating their personality by “peeping” into the women’s sexual privacy. Video is used both by the law and the outlaws and has one target: the people who are trapped in detention. And if surveillance is an inevitable necessity, sexual exploitation is criminal and should be fought by the law, which does not seem to apply for everyone, enhancing the feeling of injustice that rules Stonehaven.

While video works against people, the use of phones is one of the minimal outlets that the inmates have. The phone booth, situated by the sea, is always crowded and phone cards are an essential good. We never hear any of the refugees' calls, except Tanya's. But it is obvious that the phone is their main link to their homeland and the world outside of the detention centre. Whether they use the phone to contact home, or people expecting them in the new country they wish to start a life in, is of no interest. What is important is their struggle to reach that phone booth just to make a simple phone call that for the rest of the world, behind the fence, is trivial.

The queues outside the phone booth, in the restaurant, outside Alfie's store or the crowded corridors of the labyrinthine complexes of buildings create a visual and linguistic motif. The puzzle of ethnicities comes with a polyphony of languages. The film does not concentrate on the dialogues of the refugees, so that this Babel effect serves more like an audio background to the story of Artyom and Tanya. When they speak Russian to each other there are subtitles. There is information there that the filmmaker intends to reach the audience. Therefore the Russian language is not just an element of ethnicity that differentiates them from the locals and the rest of the refugees, but also a part of who they are and consequently a part of the story.

Tanya and Artyom never meet compatriots from Russia in "Dreamland". Obviously this cannot be perceived as a statistical fact. The composition of the detention centre's population serves as a means to distinguish Tanya and Artyom as the central protagonists of the film, accentuating their difference in relation to the other refugees in order to concentrate on their story as well as the specificity of their experience.

What can, though, be examined as a fact and used by future researchers from the point of the reception of refugees, is the very existence of "Dreamland". It will be interesting to compare the presence or absence of official structures of refugee and immigrant reception as well as their essence and necessity amongst the European countries. *Last Resort* is not a political film, and, therefore, it does not examine official policies regarding immigration and the level to which they are inevitable or could be reformed. There is a clear humanitarian view on the human suffering of the refugee expressed in the film

and not a manifesto of what should be followed by suggestions. The film is not a complaint but a look, and the detention centre is the scenery, not the story.

It is evident that although ambivalent regarding the depiction of the alien other, *Last Resort* does concentrate on many elements, both intrinsic (e.g. integration, relationships between immigrants and locals, immigrant sub-communities, female exploitation) as well as extrinsic, that mostly concern the filmmaker's choices that underline the differentiation of the new immigrant and the issues of integration that this new immigrant experiences.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction of the thesis we established the sociopolitical and historical conditions that triggered the specific intra-European immigration from the East to the West of Europe. Setting 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall as the milestone of the change that occurred in Europe and consequently led to what was considered a unification, we explored how the change and the transition from the communist regime created the framework for the population movement in the years that followed. In this respect we gave a short survey of the versatile characteristics of this wave of immigration. Financial and psychological motivation for immigration were detected and pointed out as a result of the disintegration of the communist regime. We also identified how the wave of immigration triggered a respective wave of films depicting the phenomenon.

Regarding the filmic representation of this specific wave of intra-European immigration, we established the criteria that formed the filmic corpus of the thesis, which consists of solely fiction films made by Western European filmmakers who do not share the immigrant experience themselves. As we elaborated on the differentiation of this specific wave of immigration from past equivalent phenomena, we presented and analysed the new type of immigrant protagonist/on screen character that emerges in the filmic representation of Eastern European migrants in the West. Inevitably, in order to reconstruct this immigrant protagonist, we explained how he/she differs from the ones in the

filmic approach to the previous waves of immigrants, only to the extent that this was essential for the thesis, since this is not a comparative study.

The new type of immigrant protagonist on screen is an amalgam of reality, perception and already existing stereotypes. In other words the new immigrant protagonist as addressed by the filmmaker is based partly on a real life immigrant type emerging from the characteristic features of the specific wave of intra-European immigration. This real life character is inevitably filtered through the perception of the filmmaker him/herself and formed in the best possible way to serve the film's narrative. Finally the new on screen immigrant type interacts with the already existing stereotypes in a bidirectional process of enhancing or eliminating each other. Naturally, the repetition of an on screen character (e.g. the Russian mail order bride, a type not distinctly included in the filmic selection of the thesis) enhances, contributes to or even creates a real life stereotype and vice versa. On the other hand having dealt here with auteur films that examine the issues of immigration in a certain light, sweeping generalisations are usually not that apparent and, if there, they usually take the role of exploring the filmmaker's perception (as carriers of the forementioned triple gaze) rather than serving the purpose of deliberately inflaming social bigotry.

We have established that although the main motivation for the immigrant characters to relocate is survival, the motif of relocation due to psychological, emotional or even sentimental reasons is also prominent here. Immigration is nonetheless ruled by laws and policies. All these aspects create a variety of immigrant types presented here: the loner or the member of an established community, the immigrant character who is reunited with family without being a legal or illegal immigrant, the well-educated immigrant, the criminal immigrant, the working immigrant, the immigrant as a product of historical precedence, the exploited female or the lonely female, the mother, or the child on his/her own.

Having established the ways the new type of on screen immigrant has been represented in contemporary European cinema both in a stereotypical as well as a multidimensional way, we proceeded to elaborating on the representation of the immigrant experience, the interaction of the new immigrant with host nations and integration in the films in question.

Naturally integration and interaction are depicted as multidimensional processes that occur both on a personal as well as a collective level. Various patterns of the relationship between the immigrant other and host nation keep recurring in the selection of films analysed in the thesis: love, crime, employment and work, interaction with subcommunities, detention and marginalisation, prejudice exploitation.

This thesis concentrated on solely intra-European immigration in Western European films. Naturally the filmic depiction of this contemporary sociological phenomenon has other aspects left to be examined, as the phenomenon itself declines. Parallel to that, there is a new wave of immigration emerging in Europe due to the economic crisis in the European South. There are already films depicting the crisis (*Ayer no termina nunca* [Isabel Coixet, 2013, Spain], *Tungsten* [Giorgos Georgopoulos, 2011, Greece], *Boy Eating the Bird's Food* [Ektoras Lygizos, 2012, Greece], *The Daughter* [Thanos Anastopoulos, 2012, Greece/Italy]) but at the moment these films deal with the crisis within the countries hardest hit by it and not with the related wave of immigration. Naturally whether the films that will occur dealing with the issue of such a wave of immigration will produce different filmic types and narratives is to be examined and will possibly provide the framework to explore the similarities with the East to West wave of immigration under examination here.

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