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**MISFITS AND TROUBLED MEN. MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE IN
ROMANIAN SOCIALIST CINEMA**

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Abstract: This paper is part of an ongoing research project that aims at identifying types of masculinities in Romanian socialist cinema, by using gender studies and other contributions on the topic of masculinity in order to provide a sociological reading of Romanian films made during the communist regime. I will look at the way in which Western understandings of masculinity have been transferred to Eastern European categories of masculinity in cinema and I will establish a critical framework for my analysis, with an introduction to studies on masculinity, and expand on elements of sociological and psychoanalytical works, namely major contributions from Connell (1987), Segal (2007) and Horrocks (1994, 1995). Two defining concepts in masculinity studies are hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) and homosociality (Bird, 1996), theories which will constitute the basis for my case studies in order to see if male characters in Romanian socialist cinema fit into this categorization. The last part of this paper will be an analysis of three films, *Reenactment (Reconstituirea)*, Lucian Pintilie, 1968), *100 Lei (100 de lei)*, Mircea Săucan, 1973) and *At the End of the Line (La capătul liniei)*, Dinu Tănase), in which the male characters exist outside society, they cannot conform to what is being required of them as socialist subjects. The purpose is to see how gender performativity plays a role in the relationship between men, with a focus on violence and how it is connected to a search for a father figure and male friendships.

Keywords: Gender studies, Romanian cinema, masculinities, socialist cinema, hegemonic masculinity

This paper is part of an ongoing research project that aims at identifying types of masculinities in Romanian socialist cinema, by using different contributions from cultural, gender and film studies in order to provide a sociological reading of Romanian films made during the communist regime. The aim of this research is to look at the way in which Western understandings of masculinity have been transferred to Eastern European categories of masculinity in cinema, in particular the case of Czechoslovakian and Polish cinema. The first part of this paper is dedicated to a critical reading of Mazierska's typologies of masculinity (2017), followed by a review of major sociological and psychoanalytical accounts, namely contributions by Connell (1987), Segal (2007) and Horrocks (1994, 1995) in order to establish a solid methodological ground for my approach. In the second part, I explore two defining concepts in gender studies – hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987) and homosociality (Bird, 1996) – that will structure the path of my analysis regarding the dynamics of power relations and the diversity of masculinities in socialist audiovisual products. Finally, the third part consists of analyzing three Romanian feature films, namely *Reenactment (Reconstituirea)*, Lucian Pintilie, 1968), *100 Lei (100 de lei)*, Mircea Săucan, 1973) and *At the End of the Line (La capătul liniei)*, Dinu Tănase, 1982), in which the male characters exist outside the societal norms, they cannot conform to what is being required of them, such as being model citizens who work for the state and who do not cause any trouble. The main frame used in the analysis of the characters in the chosen films is influenced by the way in which men and women were judged by their contribution to society. My aim is to see how characters who do not fit these established norms can disrupt the order and to point out that relations of power and their gender identity as men and not simply as socialist subjects cannot be erased by Party politics and Romanian socialist ideology.

The topic of masculinity in Eastern European Cinema is underresearched. Many more articles have been focusing on the way women are depicted and on how that representation is heavily influenced by specific gender roles. As Steve Neale puts it, “masculinity, as an ideal, is implicitly known. Femininity is, by contrast, a mystery. This is one of the reasons why the representation of masculinity, both inside and outside of cinema, has so rarely been discussed” (Neale 19). But, in the particular case of Romanian cinema and in that of the national cinemas in former socialist countries of the Eastern European Bloc, it should be noted that men and women

alike have been seen as socialist subjects, theoretically equal and devoid of gender, as long as they do their part in serving the country. The socialist ideals and the people working towards them took center stage, despite the fact that, in reality, the gender inequality and traditional patriarchal views were still part of society at large.

Key notions in the study of masculinity

One of the most important notions in the sociological area regarding gender is that of hegemonic masculinity and accentuated femininity, defined by R.W. Connell. Regarding masculinity, Connell considers the hegemonic definition to be a “certain type of masculinity to which different groups of individuals are subordinated, including young, effeminate, or homosexuals” (Connell 116). Sharon R. Bird (1996) mentions that hegemonic masculinity is maintained through homosocial heterosexual interactions, which, for Bird, not only makes “clear distinctions between women and men through segregation in social institutions”, but also between “hegemonic masculinities and nonhegemonic masculinities by the segregation of social groups” (Bird 121). In this case, the nonhegemonic types are those that do not conform to normative understandings of masculinity. Bird considers that homosociality supports hegemonic masculinity through three meanings: emotional detachment, competitiveness and sexual objectification of women (Bird 121). The films analyzed in this research are all situated within a homosocial environment, in which women are mostly part of the background, having the men at the forefront. The aim is to see if the meanings attributed to hegemonic masculinity can all be identified in the male characters and the relationship they have with each other and with the women surrounding them. Not conforming to aspects of hegemonic masculinity which create an ideal image of masculinity can lead to tensions in the understanding of gender identity and of the roles attributed to that identity, as Bird mentions that “when individual departures from dominant masculinity are experienced as private dissatisfactions rather than as a reason for contesting the social construction of masculinity, hegemonic patterns persist” (Bird 131).

Lynne Segal, who uses the sociological perspective to understand the types of masculinities, also focuses on Connell's understanding of gender relations through the use of psychoanalysis, sociology and sexual politics. Segal mentions that Connell identified three main structures of gender relations, which are interconnected. The

first would be the workforce and the distribution of labor in the public and private sphere, in which “men unemployment and the restructuring or dismantling of old industries create new crises in traditional patterns of male authority. Such disruption connects in turn with cultural struggles over the meanings of ‘masculinity’ – meanings which are embedded in the habitual authority, technical expertise, sexual assertiveness and economic advantage of men in the day-to-day functioning of institutions like the workplace and trade unions, as well as the family” (Segal 82). The second structure has to do with power and the institutions of authority, control and coercion, and the third structure focuses on desire and the psychodynamic of emotional life, which is explained as follows: “The construction of, and connections between, heterosexuality and homosexuality, the antagonisms of gender (man-hating, woman-hating and self-hatred), and the emotional dynamics of marriage, sexual relationships and childrearing. The patterning of desire concerns the prohibitions and incentives which surround it: the incest taboo, age of consent, sanctions against homosexuality and the laws on rape, on the one hand; the ideologies of family life, romance and pleasure, on the other” (Segal 84). Connell's three structures on gender relations can be used in researching how masculinity is depicted and represented in Romanian socialist cinema, as work and labor distribution was closely connected to institutions of authority, while aspects of the private sphere were regulated by the state.

Segal uses Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity and the structures on gender, as her approach on masculinity is feminist. Segal does not limit herself to pointing out the ways in which patriarchy and men in general have dominated women, but tries to look more closely at the issue of masculinity and how, in some instances, extreme forms of “pure” or “toxic” masculinity affect men and how they face their own masculinity. Segal outlines the main contemporary research on gender relations, in this case specifically masculinity, focusing mostly on the sociological and psychoanalytical approaches. As mentioned above, Connell's structure is a major approach, but Segal goes back to the theories that have been used beginning with the 1950s and 1960s. Segal mentions Role Theory, which originated from sociological and psychological studies and which had an influence on the studies of masculinity in the second half of the 20th century, although no well-defined consensus has been reached on what the role means: “Sociologist never fully agreed on their definition of roles. Were they what people actually did, or simply what people were expected to

do? (...) Adopting popularized psychoanalytic notions, sex roles in particular were considered to be internalized through identification with the same-sex parent” (Segal 55). Segal mentions Joseph Pleck (*Myth of Masculinity*, 1981) but brings her own critique of this theory because it is far too abstract and ignores the fact that gender identity is a dynamic construct in which power relations change and are influenced by social contexts (Segal 58). Segal also touches on the Freudian perspective, specifically the object relations school of psychoanalysis, which focuses on the pre-Oedipal stage, moving away from clinical psychoanalysis by also mentioning the symbolic connotations in regard to masculinity which have been developed in cultural studies, as was the case of Lacan and the symbolic representation of masculinity (Segal 74). Segal points out that there are limitations to Lacan's theory because it does not take into account the historical context; Lacan misinterprets the meanings that Saussure attributes to the signifier and the significant because they are equally important and does not take into account the transformations that may take place in the constructions of fixed concepts (Segal 76).

Roger Horrocks's work is influenced by Lynne Segal's approach, the difference being that he combines the sociological approach with the psychoanalytical one. Horrocks tries to identify the issues of fragile and hypermasculinity. For him, the lack of power or fragile masculinity indicates the strict gender roles that have been imposed, the need for a so-called pure masculinity that must be differentiated from any deviation from the norm, which leads to anxiety. In that case, masculinity must be constantly asserted, it must follow codes established by each culture, which in fact makes it restrictive: “It is the masculinities that are cultural artifices, constructs, and each culture produces the masculinities that it needs. Thus, there appears to be a spectrum of masculine roles and attitudes. (...) We can tentatively conclude that hypermasculinity in men is 'unnatural' and has to be forced. Both men and women contain both masculine and feminine elements: but men are constantly vigilant about and repressive towards their own femininity” (Horrocks 91). Horrocks comes up with the concept of *male autism*, in which men have to reject their feelings and expressiveness, they have to conform to the society's expectations of masculinity (rational, reticent, ...), thus creating a persona that conforms to the public sphere, but it reaches a certain point in which the artificial image becomes part of their own being, including in the personal private sphere (Horrocks 110). Horrocks's term of male autism can be equated with the understanding of hegemonic masculinity,

particularly the aspect of emotional detachment which Bird mentioned as one of the central meanings that contribute to normative masculinity.

Horrocks uses the concept of male autism in his analysis of male myths and icons in pop culture by utilizing the notion of the patriarchal unconscious, influenced by his psychoanalytical approach. Horrocks raises the question whether the unconscious of the patriarchal society would not be just “masculinist”, but would include images of female power and male degradation: “These images may be repressed, but they are not obliterated. (...) This is where we will find unconscious or contradictory messages if they exist. In my view they do exist, in plenitude. For example, the image of the macho male in 'action films' is not simply an over-the-top assertion of male white might: it is also a roar of despair, hysteria and panic” (Horrocks 52-53). Elaborating on the transformation of the male body into an object to be looked at, Horrocks mentions Steve Neale's contribution on the relation between masculinity and spectacle, which challenges Laura Mulvey's position on the male gaze, conducting an analysis of the portrayal of male characters in Hollywood films, particularly in the genres of Western, gangster and action films. Because the target audience is predominantly male, they are put in a position to focus on the male body, but in order not to reach a homoerotic instance, the body on screen must be in action, or the nudity must be justified: “The notions of 'having' and 'being' can be applied again, for on the surface men look at women in order to 'have' them; and look at men in order to 'be' them, that is, identify with them. But one can suggest that unconsciously the relations are also reversed: at times, the male wants to 'be' a woman and 'have' a man” (Horrocks 55). Kenneth MacKinnon, in his work that focuses on Hollywood cinema in the 1980s and 1990s, specifically the male dominated genres, also makes use of Mulvey's theory in order to understand the mechanisms of identification when the male character in a film is in a passive position. He talks about disavowal, which allows the male spectator to not assume the responsibility of an active gaze: “we are allowed by this sort of cinema not to take responsibility for our gaze. Men can shift it on to the female spectator and her presumed desires – or else to homosexual males, from whom 'real men' take pains to distance themselves psychologically. We may be in the presence of disavowal. That is, something which is manifestly happening is disavowed, treated as if it were not happening – or treated with a different significance to that which it seems to have” (MacKinnon 29).

Eastern European Men, Masculinity and Gender Relations

Most studies on masculinity in popular culture have focused on Western cinema, predominantly Hollywood films. In the case of Eastern Europe, Ewa Mazierska correctly points out that there is a lack of interest in studies of masculinities and research on men's issues and a reason for this particular situation is that “the lack of sources about men from this part of Europe is reflected in Western thinking about men” (Mazierska 2). Mazierska's strategy is to use Western concepts and terminology in order to classify types of masculinities that have been established in Western studies and apply them to East-Central European cases, like the soldier, the father figure, the heterosexual lover and the man who does not conform to the heterosexual norm. The reason for choosing these five categories is specified by Mazierska in the following terms: “The division of men into these categories is heuristic, not ontological. I assume that these roles are not mutually exclusive; we can even imagine some men playing all these roles in their lives” (Mazierska 3). Given the scope of Mazierska's research, the analysis takes into account the political history, national cinemas and traditional cultures because, as it is the case with a study on gender identity in specific spaces, the types of masculinity are also influenced by national, political and economic factors. As opposed to Mazierska's approach of classifying men into preestablished categories, my research method will be to analyze Romanian socialist films through a sociological and psychoanalytical lens, also based on Western thinking on masculinity but, given the specificity of a national socialist cinema, I will concentrate on the tensions between the public sphere and the private life, in which the “new socialist man” has to conform to certain rules and behaviors and to see if it aligns with an understanding of hegemonic masculinity.

In the context of socialist Romania and gender relations, Mihaela Miroiu surmises that Romanian socialist feminism was achieved through work emancipation, while the patriarchal system was still intact, naming it state patriarchy, one that affected both men and women and their role in connection to the state (Miroiu 187). Miroiu expanded on the notion that women and men were devoid of gender in official understanding, but only up to a certain point: “Men were subjects to the state as generic ‘people’, while women were subjects as women, because of the state control over their reproductive rights. The autonomy of both was severely violated by the fact that neither of them could make personal life plans outside official politics. Only women were subjected to a ‘double destiny’, the

political and the natural”¹ (Miroiu 188). Gender equality was stipulated in the Constitution of 1948, but in terms of women being freed from patriarchy, which in socialist terms was understood as part of a bourgeois system, while gender differences were still intact. As Luciana Jinga mentions: “According to the egalitarian principles enunciated by the Romanian communist state, socialism does not build a type of political personality in two variants, depending on gender, but a single type that refers strictly to the professional, political and cultural training of the individual. The socialist system places these characteristics, which are more related to the factor of education and social development, under the broader corollary of moral conduct”² (Jinga 205). In her work on gender and representation in communist Romania, Jinga uses Nicolae Ceaușescu's statements on how he understands gender roles. In 1973 Ceaușescu still mentions that gender differences in the case of labor have an impact, by saying that “of course we have to admit that there are certain areas of activity which are more suited for men. Instead of having men do light jobs, we should direct them to more physically demanding work. In turn, we should provide working conditions for women in areas where no special effort is required”³ (Ceaușescu 1973, in Jinga 230). This perspective is in line with biological determinism, which focuses on the differences between men and women that would naturally lead to inequalities, regardless of the influence of social and economic factors (Kimmel, 2011). By 1980, Ceaușescu's official position on gender equality encompasses the way in which gender relations, particularities and gender differences are theoretically simply non-existent, since the focus is not on men and women, but on them as socialist subjects: “If we talk about creating conditions of full equality between the sexes, this means that we must treat all people not as men and women, but in their capacity as party members, as citizens, whom we judge

¹ „Bărbații erau doar supușii statului ca „oameni generici”, femeile erau supuse și ca femei, căci nu facultățile reproductive ale bărbaților au fost controlate de către stat, ci cele ale femeilor. În comun, autonomia ambilor a fost grav încălcată prin aceea că nici unii, nici alții nu puteau să își facă planuri personale de viață în afara politicii oficiale”. My translation.

² „Conform principiilor egalitare enunțate de statul comunist român, socialismul nu construiește un tip de personalitate politică în două variante, în funcție de sex, ci un singur tip care se referă strict la pregătirea profesională, politică și culturală a individului. Sistemul de tip socialist plasează aceste însușiri, care țin mai mult de factorul educație și devenire socială, sub corolarul mai larg al ținutei morale”. My translation.

³ „Trebuie să recunoaștem, desigur, că sunt și anumite domenii de activitate unde este mai bine să lucreze bărbați. În loc să-i trimitem pe bărbați în munci ușoare, să-i îndreptăm spre muncile mai grele, unde se cere un efort fizic mai mare. În schimb să asigurăm condiții ca femeile să ocupe locurile de muncă unde, din punct de vedere fizic, nu se cer eforturi deosebite”. My translation.

exclusively by the work they do”⁴ (Ceaușescu 1980 in Jinga 202). This is a statement that was in contradiction with the actual socio-political situation, as women's reproductive rights were controlled by the state, by banning abortion in 1968 and their emancipation was limited to the workforce, but did not extend to the private sphere. In the case of men, they cannot be seen only as generic “people” as Miroiu stated, since we have established that their role in society and behavioral norms are part of hegemonic masculinity, aspects influenced by socialization and ideological factors. Men and women alike were not just party members characterized only by their work, but also by their gender identity and performativity within the context of being socialist subjects.

Relationships between men: friendship, violence and father figures

By analyzing Lucian Pintilie's film, *Reenactment* (1968), I will closely look at the relationship between the two boys, Vuică and Nicu, who got in a fight and who were made part of an educational film in order to be taught a lesson. But each of the men in the film reflects the type of power one has at a certain level, given their professional status. Vuică and Nicu are at the bottom of the pyramid, which means they are both at the hands of everyone else, ordered around and forced to act in certain ways. They are being shouted at and humiliated by the police officer Dumitrescu, but they also act defiant towards him, mocking him during the first attempt at reenactment. The prosecutor is there just to do his job, acting as if everything is just a formality and also a waste of his time, since he does not actually believe the ordeal is necessary, being more preoccupied with his personal life issues. Meanwhile, the police officer, lower in rank, is taking his job seriously. He knows the film is made with the state's money, so he believes the boys cannot fake their fight by acting, they need to reenact it exactly as it happened. Dumitrescu plays the good cop/bad cop strategy. First, he makes Vuică and Nicu exercise as if they were in the military in order to discipline them because he needs to tire them before having another attempt at a conversation in which he wants to come across as a reasonable man. Dumitrescu needs to break them in order for the two boys to do what they are told. It is a form of psychological violence, which is seen as a reasonable method when it comes to men like them, who disrupt the order, who get drunk in bars and

⁴„Dacă vorbim de crearea condițiilor de deplină egalitate între sexe aceasta înseamnă că trebuie să-i tratăm pe toți oamenii nu ca bărbați și femei, ci în calitatea lor de membri de partid, de cetățeni, pe care îi judecăm exclusiv după munca pe care o depun”. My translation.

start a fight. It is seen as unacceptable behavior, bound to become a lesson in order for the society to know what the consequences are. Both Vuică and Nicu have just finished high school, they do not seem to have any prospect or plans, which is another reason why they are treated in such a way. Their relationship in the film is defined by violence, which comes across differently, depending on the situation. They genuinely had a drunken fight the night of the incident, but which now they regret. There is the fake violence which they must reenact, but it needs to be believable for the camera. They cannot do it, especially Nicu, who refuses multiple times and is reluctant to hit Vuică again. He starts crying and he wants to take the blame onto himself, to protect his friend. Then there is another type of violence which takes the form of playfighting between the two, usually started by Vuică. He slaps Nicu, he starts hitting him, always when they are just the two of them, always under the pretext of playing. This “violence” between them never comes across as real violence, but it almost looks like a form of bonding through physical touch, as it is more about touching in order to deflect the tension and the situation in which they both find themselves. Of course, it would turn out that, by accident, Nicu will be the one who causes Vuică's death in the final reenactment, when the violence becomes real again, for the camera and for everyone watching. In the last fighting scene, Vuică takes everything as a joke, just as he does when he playfights with Nicu, who usually, even in those situations, rejects him. Vuică puts on an exaggerated performance, tries to rile up Nicu in order to actually transform his act of violence into something real because that is how it is supposed to look on camera. Bogdan Popa writes about the violence in *Reenactment*, saying that Nicu “has a hidden violence, explosive, which he cannot rationalize”. Popa considers that violence comes full circle and encompasses the way in which it is endorsed and used by everyone else as he writes that “in the last frames, Pintilie establishes a connection between the violence of the mob, the uncivilized people and police violence. Both the mob and the police are unjust; both guilty of the death of young people like Vuică”⁵ (2007, 245-246).

Vuică is the one character who is not able to do what he is told, as he defies the men and what he is supposed to do. He runs around, he cannot stick to one place and do his job. He is seen as a lunatic, but Nicu defends him, saying that Vuică is a good boy, despite what people are thinking of him, he is his only friend. Of course, Vuică's

⁵ „În ultimele cadre, Pintilie stabilește o legătură directă între violența gloatei, a poporului necivilizat, și cea a miliției. Atât gloata, cât și miliția judecă pe nedrept; ambele sunt, în cele din urmă, vinovate de moartea unor tineri ca Vuică”. My translation.

background comes in as a clue which would explain his behavior as he talks with Nicu about his dead father who used to beat him when he got drunk. The connection between alcohol and violence is made throughout the film and it is used as one of the main reasons why these boys act like that. During the last scenes of the film, after Nicu realizes what he did, he tries to move away, but he is met by the large group of people who had just left the nearby stadium. The mob looks at him, while accusing him of being a drunk. As a reason for violence, this is seen as unacceptable, while the violence exercised by the authorities is necessary for education.

At the End of the Line (Dinu Tănase, 1982) also focuses on the relationship and the friendship between two men, ex-convicts who move to a provincial town in order to start a new life. After they were released from prison, Crișan and Cicea are trying to integrate back into society. Cicea is defiant, intrusive, harasses a waitress in a restaurant, trying to constantly bring attention to himself. He messes with other people's business, and it looks as if he cannot help himself.

After they have to leave the hotel because their room was previously booked by someone else, they find lodging at a woman's house who usually rents one of the rooms. She lives there with her mother-in-law, while her husband is away. She is ambushed by the men's presence, especially Cicea, and, if at first she refuses to let them in, she accepts after Cicea gets insistent. He tries to sleep with her, but Crișan criticizes him. Cicea justifies his behavior by saying he is free to do how he pleases, only for Crișan to tell him that "freedom doesn't mean to live however you want". Cicea is out of the prison and the lack of confinement gives him the possibility to think that now, when he is back in society, freedom allows him to do what he wants, with no regard for anyone. His first instinct is to fight whenever something inconvenient happens. Cicea acts out in front of Crișan, screaming about his freedom, but also his loneliness, ending up crying. Everything he does is an act, crying for attention.

As opposed to Cicea, Crișan is a more quiet, calculated man. He went to prison for accidentally killing someone at the factory where he used to work, while Cicea claims to have been in prison for driving without a license. Crișan is looking to integrate back into society quietly, looking for a job for which he is overqualified, but he wants a simpler life, while also feeling guilty. He is troubled and his attitude is clearly influenced by the time he was imprisoned. The waitress takes an interest in him, even takes Crișan to her mother's house in the countryside where he is visibly

relaxed, but he is unable to start a new life with her. He feels like a lesser man and he wants to run away because his past will always haunt him and influence the others' opinion of him. He cannot forgive himself for the accident he caused and his guilty conscience does not let him start a new life, despite having the opportunity. He puts up with Cicea because he sees him more like a son, they only have each other and his instinct is to protect him, despite the fact that Cicea always gets in trouble. The younger man has no family left, as they died during the earthquake in 1977. Crișan feels responsible for Cicea, but when the younger man humiliates him during a demonstration in a new factory where they want to take a job, Crișan hits him, only resorting to violence when there is an attempt at his dignity.

Both Crișan and Cicea are men in transition, in between places, with no possessions, no security, refusing help from others, if they cannot make it on their own. Crișan knows that their criminal past will always be a mark and they cannot settle down anywhere because they will be judged, always the guilty ones when something bad happens. They escape again and moving to another place seems to be the only solution. They take different trains by mistake and, in an attempt to catch up with his friend, Cicea runs and then falls, hitting his head, presumably dead. Just as in *Reenactment*, it seems that when it comes to men who cause problems or who are unable to integrate, there is no place for them. It is better if they just disappear, in death.

Similar to the character Cicea, Petru in *100 Lei* (Mircea Săucan, 1973) is another type of rebel, who looks for his step-brother's love and acceptance, while trying to figure out his life. He is a thief and it looks like everything he does is just for the sake of it, not because he actually needs to. He steals from stores, despite having his brother with him to pay. Petru acts on a whim, with no specific purpose: he bathes in a river with his clothes on, runs after a girl and follows her down the street, lies just because he can. His brother Andrei, an actor, takes him in and offers Petru a place to stay until he figures out his business. He says he failed his architecture exam and now he does not know what to do. During the multiple talks the brothers have, it is revealed that they have not seen each other in ten years and now Petru ran away from home because of his father. He calls him a beast and resents the fact that he refuses to help him financially. In front of his brother Andrei, Petru acts like a small child, who needs care and attention, the kind that he did not receive at home. He is a young man who is trying to figure out his life, but too dependent on the help of

others, despite acting like he does not need it. With the money stolen from his father, he travels the country aimlessly. He has no job, no idea of what he wants to do. He lives his life with no apparent purpose. Petru makes empty promises to his brother, who is trying to look out for him. Of course, the conflict is caused by a young girl, with whom both brothers get involved, which causes them to fight. There is clearly a lack of understanding between the two of them. Both brothers are in different places in their lives. One is accomplished, while the younger one does not seem to be interested in being a good citizen. Petru does not care about money, he steals because it is the only way to do whatever he wants immediately, but this is also a cry for attention. The lack of parental love and apparent mistreatment from his father makes Petru eager to have a loving relationship with his brother.

It seems once again that when it comes to men such as Petru, who do not make an effort to integrate, who live on other people's back, as he is just another man who defies the rules, their fate once again ends in death. Petru is hit by a car, and it looks like he threw himself in front of it. He was never 'any good' and, once again, similar with the last scene in *Reenactment*, his body is surrounded by a large group of people, looking at him. Just as he was judged by them when he stole from the store, being followed outside with the crowd slowly closing in on him, now the same crowd is there to act as a witness to the consequences of how a man like Petru lived his life.

Conclusion

While the analyzed characters are not part of a clearly established nonhegemonic type of masculinity, they are still defying one particular norm, namely emotional detachment, one of the defining aspects presented by Bird. Emotional detachment is used in order to maintain gender hierarchy, because emotions are seen as a feminine trait. The male characters in these three particular films seem to be looking for emotional connections in the form of friendship or family or romantic relationships. They reveal their feelings and frustrations, but mostly to the men around them, asking for help in a non-explicit way. They do not seek comfort or understanding from the women around them, as the space in which they exist is not dominated or balanced by female characters. They are usually in the background, trying to take a peek in but, mostly, we have a homosocial environment in which men can control other men through their power given by the state or in which the characters, being

social outcasts, are trying to find a way to live. The outcasts are filtered and judged as socialist subjects given that their contribution to the state is minimal or non-existent, but the relations of power reveal that the underlying issue is still influenced by gender relations between men. In theory, they may be socialist subjects in the eyes of the state and, consequently, the institutions and the authority that enables it, but the dynamics of the relationships go beyond party politics and ideology.

The burden of being socialist subjects enables the male characters to resort to violence, which seems a natural occurrence, a means through which they can exercise control, take a stand for themselves or use it as a way to get close to one another. Their social situation has turned them into men that question their assigned identity devoid of gender which, in turn, allows the rising to the surface of their identity as men. But, given their status as outcasts, as people who either have done harm or who do not have any kind of contribution, they are of no use to society, which has to get rid of them definitively through death.

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