(p. 33–34) was established mainly by audiovisual means – such as the way the character is captured by the camera, the acting, the audio score, the editing, the lighting and the mise-en-scène; and fact that the end of the film grabbed Remsu's attention, not simply because of its lack of a clear conclusion, but because it ends suddenly with one of the most iconic freeze frame shots in the history of film. Although the author repeatedly states that the spectators are so accustomed to some of the conventions of cinema that they tend to miss their specific qualities entirely (p. 123), and he often reminds the reader that one can remember 90% of the visual information and only 25% of the dialogue one hears (p. 183), he somehow manages to overlook the significance of these statements, thereby highlighting the continuing value of Christian Metz's observation that a 'film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand' (Metz 1974: 69).

Nonetheless, *Techne of Film Drama* is clearly an essential addition to the corpus of Estonian-language film books. The author's great erudition allows him to effortlessly navigate from discussing the dramas of Sophocles to explaining the specifics of Molière's characters. *Techne of Film Drama*'s essayistic style, extensive use of the personal pronoun, and various film and book recommendations, which differentiate it from a typical textbook, also provide the book with a unique voice – one that eloquently discusses an impressive array of important cultural and philosophical topics. Because of the broad scope of *Techne of Film Drama*, it might be best suited for a more advanced reader, who wishes to flesh out the main principles of drama and narrative through a larger cultural context.

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Book Review

Ewa Mazierska, Lars Kristensen and Eva Näripea (eds.), *Postcolonial Approaches to Eastern European Cinema: Portraying Neighbours On-Screen*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2014, ISBN 978-1-78076-301-9, 342 pp.

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Many scholars have dismissed postcolonial approaches to the study of Eastern Europe and its cultural products. This rejection is borne of a number of mitigating factors. The dominant Three Worlds Theory, for example, positioned the second world, or the ex-Soviet bloc, as occupying a better socio-political position than that of the colonised Third World. Furthermore, left-wing intellectuals, such as Albert Camus, were often blind to the colonial machinations of the Soviet Union due to their staunch belief that the USSR operated under a less exploitative system than the Western

capitalist countries. In addition Eastern Europeans were often quick to dismiss the label of the 'colonised'. Many considered Russia to be less developed than the rest of Eastern Europe. It was, therefore, an issue of national pride to reject the idea of Russia as a colonial power. Nonetheless, postcolonialism is a concept that should be applied to the study of the former Eastern Bloc. This is an argument convincingly presented by Ewa Mazierska, Lars Kristensen and Eva Näripea, editors of *Post-colonial Approaches to Eastern European Cinema: Portraying Neighbours On-Screen*.

As the title suggests this volume is dedicated to examining the representation of neighbours in Eastern European cinema through a postcolonial lens. The book begins in a somewhat unorthodox manner. Rather than setting the scene for the reader, the introduction jumps immediately into a literature review. However, this is necessary since the theoretical frameworks employed throughout the book engage highly contentious concepts such as colonialism, postcolonialism and Eastern Europe. The editors first meticulously go through the Eastern European region, explaining why individual nations can be considered to be postcolonial. Then they demonstrate that the theoretical foundations of postcolonial theory stem from British colonialism, which in turn, shapes the general worldview of postcolonialism, universalising the concept. This shows that the term is ineffective, since it does not allow for geopolitical differences or specific experiences. They argue that the inclusion of Soviet colonialism would not only provide a more nuanced understanding of Eastern Europe and its cinemas, but also broaden the postcolonial discourse. Overall, the editors provide a sound argument

for Soviet colonialism and Eastern European postcolonialism, acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of both.

The volume is divided into four sections, each focusing on a specific geographical sub-area of Eastern Europe. The first three chapters examine the relationship that Germany has with its neighbouring countries of Poland and the Czech Republic, and how this has manifested in film. In Chapter 1, Kristin Kopp explores how Poles and Poland have been represented in German films since the 1990s. She argues that the 1990s saw the return of a colonial-diffusionist discourse in Germany, reflecting the narrative tropes in German literature from the 1890s to the 1940s, when the nation was undertaking an active colonisation of Poland. Ewa Mazierska then examines how Germans, Germanness and Germany are represented in communist and post-communist Polish cinema. Mazierska avoids framing her analysis through narratives of victimhood by acknowledging the complexity of the power relationships between coloniser and the colonised in the region. She argues that in the communist period Germans were often vilified, but as the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia became the new enemy and, therefore, representations of Germany and Germans became more ambiguous and subversive. The final chapter in this section is written by Petra Hanáková, who looks at the under-examined Sudeten Germans in the Czech Republic. She argues that post-communist Czech cinema attempts to question the stereotypical portrayals of Sudeten German characters, by realigning the traditional attribution of guilt and revenge between the two ethnic groups in the nation.

The second section of the book remains geographically

close to the Czech Republic, and the next two chapters examine the Czech, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian and Romanian cinemas, as well as the complex relationships between these countries. In Chapter 4, Peter Hames provides an interesting analysis of the re-appropriation of the myth of Juraj Jánošík in Polish, Czech and Slovakian films. Hames' fascinating approach highlights how this cross-border hero has embodied the representation of neighbours in this geopolitical area. John Cunningham then examines how Hungary and Romania are represented in each other's cinemas, especially after Transylvania became part of Romania. Cunningham is the only author in this volume who is openly sceptical about the application of a postcolonial approach to the two cinemas, and therefore, his chapter is structured more as a discussion of the usefulness of the concept. While the chapter provides an exhaustive exploration of Hungarian-Romanian relations, he presents no conclusions in regards to the utility of the post-colonial framework.

The book then moves on to examine the southern countries in the former Eastern Bloc, which are often called the Balkans. In Chapter 6, Elzbieta Ostrowska employs the concept of 'nesting orientalism' to examine how Balkan characters operate as the 'other' in Polish cinema and help to define both an individual and collective Polish identity. Špela Zajec then explores how neighbours have changed in the post-Yugoslavia Serbian cinema, providing both an historical overview of the changing relationships between Serbia and neighbouring countries and how that is manifested in cinematic trends. Vlastimir Sudar takes a slightly different approach, examining a specific film, *No One's Son* (*Ničiji sin*, Croatia/Slovenia, 2008,

directed by Arsen Anton Ostojić), as a literal and metaphorical representation of the distrust of Yugoslavs toward their internal and external neighbours. In the next chapter, Bruce Williams adopts a similar approach in his examination of the Albanian film *Kolonel Bunker* (*Koloneli Bunker*, Albania/France/Poland, 1998, directed by Kujtim Çashku). Williams argues that Çashku combines personal stories with the national history to demonstrate the inherent contradictions in the Enver Hoxha regime, vis-à-vis neighbours and international relations.

Finally, Chapters 10 and 11 explore the representations of Russia and Russians, Eastern Europe's largest neighbour and most recent coloniser. Lars Kristensen continues with the aforementioned trend, focusing on only one film. He argues that the film *Urga* (*Урга*, France/Russia, 1991, directed by Nikita Mikhalkov) subverts the idea of a Soviet hierarchy. It raises concerns about the position of the Russians living in the satellite states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In a similar vein, Eva Näripea examines the relationships between the Russians and Estonians who live side by side in Estonia. She approaches this relationship with more complexity than other Baltic scholars have, arguing that both sides are victims of colonisation. She shows how certain Estonian films demonstrate that the bonds of solidarity between the underprivileged bridge ethnic divides and bring a sense of commonality to the coloniser and the colonised.

Overall the chapters work together to substantiate the claim made by the editors in the introduction. The complex colonial history, and often neo-colonial present, of a number of Eastern European countries is revealed, and each author

has convincingly argued for a postcolonial characterisation of Eastern European cultures. The differences in colonial and post-colonial experiences, highlighted throughout the collection, are important for the re-evaluation of postcolonialism as a framework. This work has paved the way for further postcolonial research on Eastern Europe. It is an important step in the development of this emergent, yet crucial, field.