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Central European Accents

The Homelessness of Gustav Machatý and Karel Lamač

> *Individual nations built their national theaters and had their national literature. But today, all citizens, from all corners of the earth want the same art and the same entertainment: they want their film.*
>
> Gustav Machatý[1)]

For directors, as with other groups of film professionals, the routes that linked Czech and German/Austrian cinema prior to 1945 were almost exclusively one-way streets. Very few German or Austrian directors found their way to Czechoslovak film production.[2)] Those that did generally came to work on Czech-German MLV [multiple-language version] films or to take part in the so-called "independent productions" after they were barred from working in the Reich.[3)] Thus, despite the production location, they remained invested in German-language cinema — films in German aimed at German-speaking audiences — and contributed in no way to Czechoslovak cinema per se.[4)] By contrast, nearly all of the best Czech directors of the 1920s–1940s spent some time working on German-language films intended for German audiences. Some of them, such as Karel Anton, were attracted to work in Germany for personal economic gain and career development. Others

1) Gustav Machaty, 'Des Filmes Größe und Not,' *Licht-Bild-Bühne*, 21 January 1935, p. 4.

2) The primary focus of this essay is the intersection of Czech and German identities. Thus, I do not take into account Slovakia as a separate cultural entity. The film industry in Czechoslovakia at this time was almost exclusively focused on the production of Czech-language films while Slovak themes were largely ignored. Therefore, the examination of "Czechoslovak" cinema in this period entails first and foremost an engagement with Czech cinema. In this essay, I use the term "Czechoslovak" to refer to the national film industry (which include Slovak-language films as well as MLVs) and "Czech" to refer to films made in the Czech language.

3) See Armin Loacker and Martin Prucha (eds.), *Unerwünschtes Kino: Der deutschsprachige Emigrantenfilm 1934–1937* (Wien: Filmarchiv Austria, 2001).

4) In economic terms, of course, these films brought much needed income to the Czechoslovak-based production companies. Furthermore, some of these films did play to German-speaking audiences in Czechoslovakia. Yet, these matters, particularly those related to multi-national spectatorship in Czechoslovakia, are beyond the scope of the current essay and must remain topics for another study.

were more reluctant to work on German projects, doing so only under the circumstances of the Nazi Protectorate.[5] These directors included Miroslav Cikán and Martin Frič, neither of whom ever left their home country to work on a German-language film.[6] Also, despite the blossoming of Prague-German literary culture (Kafka, Werfel, Kisch, Perutz, et al.), there were no German Bohemian film directors whose work is closely linked to the city or to Bohemia in general. The two best-known German Bohemians, Georg Wilhelm Pabst and Edgar Ulmer, never worked within the Czechoslovak industry and never made a specifically "Bohemian-themed" film — which I understand to mean a film set in Bohemia that explicitly deals with the culture of the German-speaking or Czech-speaking inhabitants there.[7] For this reason, most non-Czech film scholarship tends to quietly subsume these German-speaking Bohemians under the rubric of "German" (or with increasing frequency "Austrian") directors.

Among all of the directors that operated at the intersection of German, Austrian, Czech, and/or Bohemian cinema, Karel Lamač (known in Germany as Carl Lamac) and Gustav Machatý (typically written as Machaty in German and English texts) occupy a unique and important position. Both were" Czech directors" (in other words, Bohemians whose primary language was Czech and therefore are not generally considered "German" or "Austrian") who made significant contributions to German-language cinema and are important not only for understanding German and Austrian cinema in this period, but can also inform our conceptualization of "Central European" cinema culture more broadly. Both Lamač and Machatý were highly interstitial figures, who navigated the gray area at the intersection of various national cinemas throughout their careers. In many ways, their films fell between the cracks of purportedly clearly demarcated film cultures and in some cases have remained there, in relative obscurity, for decades. These directors and their films inhabit a conceptual "no man's land" beyond national cinema, which often confounds attempts to approach and conceptualize their body of work in a coherent way, particularly for those accustomed to thinking along national lines, or even within seemingly less restrictive ethnic categories.

Gustav Machatý and Karel Lamač were the two most internationally recognized Czech directors of the interwar period. Even a brief analysis of their careers reveals the close re-

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5) The present essay does not address those Czech directors who worked under duress for the German Prag-Film AG during the Nazi occupation (Vladimír Slavínský, Miroslav Cikán, Martin Frič) as the conditions for their contributions to German cinema are radically different than those of the directors examined here.

6) Besides his work on German versions of MLV projects, Frič's only German language film of the 1930s was The Squeaker (Der Zinker, 1931), which he co-directed with Lamač in Prague.

7) Edgar Ulmer was born in Olomouc (Olmütz) in Moravia. So, in terms of strict geography, he was not "Bohemian," but Moravian. But, here and elsewhere in this essay, I use "German Bohemians" as a catchall term to describe all German-speakers who originated from those "Czech lands" that fell within the borders of Czechoslovakia after 1919 — this excludes Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, but includes Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and (if we choose to make the distinction) the territories of the so-called Sudetenland. This use of the term "German Bohemian" is consistent with cultural histories of the region written in English. See, for example, Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861–1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2006).; Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2005).; Scott Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley, LA, London: University of California Press, 2000).

lationship between the Czechoslovak film industry and its counterparts in Austria and Germany. Both operated within a multiplicity of national contexts, which led them to direct films in Italian (in the case of Machatý) and Dutch (in the case of Lamač) as well as in French and English (in both cases). However, their international (that is, non-Czech) careers were and continue to be most closely linked with German-language films. After a hugely influential period as one of the most outstanding pioneers of the nascent Czechoslovak national cinema in the 1920s, Lamač all but relocated to Germany during the sound era and the tally of his German-language films (36) outnumbers threefold that of his Czech productions (12).[8] Although he did not enjoy the same high public profile in Germany that he had in his home country, he was a well-known figure in the industry. From the beginning, Machatý's energies were equally divided between Vienna and Prague, resulting in a string of Czech-Austrian co-productions throughout the late 1920s. His first German-language sound film, Ecstasy (Extase, 1934), was his biggest worldwide success and remains the film for which he is most widely known. In other words, German-Austrian cinema plays an important, if not the dominant role, in defining the cinema of Lamač and Machatý.

Both Lamač and Machatý possessed distinctive authorial voices. The task of the current essay is to develop a framework for describing these voices that accurately accounts for the unique nuances in their films, which, on the whole, inhabit an interstitial space where categories of nation and ideas of home are fluid and unstable. In a number of significant ways, their work can be conceived in terms of what Hamid Naficy, writing in another context, has outlined with his concept of "accented cinema," which he describes as arising from an "interstitial" or "exilic" mode of production.[9] Naficy describes minor voices at work within a dominant cultural paradigm that is foreign to them, resulting in a recognizable accent — these are "exiled," "diasporic," or "postcolonial" voices; they are "homeless" yet still bear the accents of their homeland. Yet, the patterns of movement that marked the careers of Lamač and Machatý do not fall neatly into the categories of "exilic," "diasporic," or "postcolonial." For the majority of their productive years, Lamač and Machatý were willing nomads, each of whom cultivated his own personal cosmopolitan style, while also maintaining loyalties to certain regional and national patterns. Both directors consistently operated in an indistinct realm between regional specificity and extraterritorial generalities, which marks their films with a particular sense of "homelessness" similar to that found in Naficy's "accented cinema." As I argue, however, their accent is not the result of exilic conditions, but a distinctive feature of the Central European environment, as precipitated by the Habsburg Empire, which incorporated a patchwork of vastly different regional and ethnic cultural "accents" that nevertheless shared an overarching sense of unity.

8) These numbers exclude five features that were made in both German and Czech language versions as well as three German short films Lamač made with Karl Valentin in 1934.

9) Naficy understands the "interstitial" mode of production as occurring at the intersection of differing cultures and film practices as well as occupying a space between the local and the global. Thus, interstitial production is always heterogeneous and multiple in character. Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

The Artist versus the Showman

Whereas Machatý can be considered within the ranks of other artistic professionals of Austro-Hungarian origin such as G. W. Pabst, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Michael Curtiz, and others, Lamač occupies the other end of the artistic spectrum, as a producer of fast and straightforward entertainment. Machatý often spent years crafting his projects: working on film scripts, spending long periods of time shooting on location, and meticulously editing the final product to achieve the desired effect. In contrast, Lamač produced films on the cheap, in a rapid, factory-line style, working with minimal resources and shoestring budgets. Machatý was a technical and stylistic innovator who experimented with different formal elements and constantly tested the boundaries of filmic expression. His first sound feature, FROM SATURDAY TO SUNDAY (Ze soboty na neděli, 1931), stands together with Fritz Lang's M (1931) and Robert Siodmak's FAREWELL (Abschied, 1930) as one of the most innovative and intriguing explorations of the new sound film medium that emerged from Central Europe.[10] Likewise, the return in ECSTASY to a "silent film aesthetic" that relied on images to communicate the story while reducing dialogue to a bare minimum is reminiscent of Chaplin's films of the early 1930s. In comparison, Lamač's films appear much more superficial and "conservative," relying on (indeed imitating) well-worn generic conventions and filmic techniques. One biographer admits: "Lamač the film director was much more skilled at arranging action before the camera than at active artistic creation."[11] To a great extent, Lamač was an "invisible director" whose input was eclipsed by the spectacle and star appeal of his performers. In general terms, Machatý's work tends more towards the psychological complexities of "art cinema," whereas Lamač's films are inauspicious entertainment without grand aesthetic aspirations. No two directors could be further apart — or so it seems.

As a result of the diverging "artistic" value of their works, nearly all of Lamač's films from the 1930s and 1940s have been completely forgotten outside of the present day Czech Republic, whereas Machatý is remembered as an internationally relevant film artist with a particular significance for film history (both in the German/Austrian context and internationally).[12] Machatý is best known today for ECSTASY, which is remarkable for its innovative use of sound, symbolism, and montage. ECSTASY relies almost entirely on images to convey the story and emotions; there is no extended dialogue in the entire film. ECSTASY's

10) For a synopsis of the film's plot and comparisons with several early German sound productions, see Daniela Sannwald, 'Ton-Bilder,' in Christian Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty: Ein Filmregisseur zwischen Prag und Hollywood* (Vienna: SYNEMA, 2005), pp. 164–173.

11) Luboš Bartošek, *Karel Lamač* (Praha: Český filmový ústav, 1972), p. 1.

12) Recent works of note include the Christian Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty: Ein Filmregisseur zwischen Prag und Hollywood* ; Armin Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase* (Wien: Filmarchiv Austria, 2001); Michal Bregant, 'Příběh živlů se třemi mezihrami (Extase)/ Eine Geschichte der Elemente mit drei Zwischenspielen (Ekstase),' in Gernot Heiss and Ivan Klimeš (eds.), *Obrazy časů: Český a rakouský film 30. let/ Bilder der Zeit: Tschechischer und österreichischer Film der 30er Jahre* (Praha: Národní filmový archiv, 2003), pp. 15–64. In addition, the first major German retrospective of Machatý's films in 2001 also spurned a number of biographical essays such as Olaf Möller, 'Der Lust ergeben,' *Film-Dienst*, vol. 54, no.16 (2001), pp. 39–41. See also Lucy Fischer's study of *Ecstasy* in the context of U.S. censorship: Lucy Fischer, 'Ecstasy: Female Sexual, Social, and Cinematic Scandal,' in Adrienne L. McLean and David A. Cook (eds.), *Headline Hollywood* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001), pp. 129–142.

indebtedness to the formal innovations of expressionism and Soviet Montage as well as its experimentation with sound are testament to Machatý's ambition to mobilize the elements of cinema in the communication of inner emotions, intellectual ideas, and deep psychological states. By contrast, Lamač's films are marvelously superficial and aim for little more than simple entertainment in their presentation of bodies in motion, fantastic illusions, and catchy melodies. For the most part, these two speak in utterly different film languages. Nevertheless, from the perspective of (or rather to the ears of) German cinema, they share a highly similar accent — that of the Austria-Hungary. In other words, these two creative voices both operated within a mode of "accented cinema" that was a direct factor of their regional origins.

Willing Nomads

Lamač and Machatý emerged within a distinctly hybrid and multinational context in which they could be identified equally as "Czech," "Bohemian," as well as "Austrian." Here, the former term refers to an ethnic or linguistic allegiance, the middle marks out geographical boundaries, and the last describes inclusion within a political entity. However, whereas the directors themselves share qualities of the "split," "hybridized," or "multiple" identity belonging to what Naficy calls "postcolonial ethnic" filmmakers, they do not directly translate or engage with their unique outsider status within their German films. In other words, neither Lamač nor Machatý produced a German-language film that in any way thematized any aspect of Czech culture — indeed, with the possible exception of Ecstasy, their German films are conspicuously devoid of Czech characters and references to Bohemian geography or culture.

The primary problem we encounter when attempting to apply Naficy's categories of accented cinema to Lamač and Machatý lies in the relationship between space and motion. While the movement across space, from one racial/ethnic/national context to another, is a prerequisite for establishing the conditions for accented or exilic films, the cinematic dialect that Naficy describes arises from conditions of relative fixity. In other words, accented cinema comes into being when the exiled-diasporic-postcolonial subject speaks from a situated position within the dominant, "foreign" culture. In the cases of both Lamač and Machatý, however, we are dealing with profoundly unfixed subjects, constantly in flux, wandering back and forth across national boundaries from one film industry to another. Their films do not fall neatly into chronologically ordered geographic phases, as is the case with other well known transnational figures such as Fritz Lang or Ernst Lubitsch (whose careers were marked by a period of great productivity in Germany followed by a prolonged stint in Hollywood). With Lamač and Machatý, there is no clear division between a "Czech period" and a "German" or "Austrian" period — instead, both directors were in a state of constant motion between these countries (and others), working within various national contexts more or less simultaneously. More fitting terms for their more capricious and unfixed mode of cinema might thus be "transient" or "nomadic."

Machatý was a cinematic nomad from his very first years in the industry. Hot on the heels of his enormous contributions to the fledgling Czechoslovak cinema in 1919, he de-

parted for the United States in 1920, where he spent several years in Hollywood learning film craft at the sides of some of the most important filmmakers of the period, including Erich von Stroheim, Tod Browning, and D. W. Griffith.[13] Upon returning to Europe in 1924, he spent several years in Vienna film studios acquiring more international filmmaking experience (again, however, without being credited for work on any specific film). His 1927 "debut" film THE KREUTZER SONATA (Kreutzerova sonáta, 1927, made after nearly a decade absence from directing) was shot between studios and locations in Prague and the famous Schönbrunn studios in Vienna. As Machatý's career peaked in the late 1920s and early 1930s, it progressed along an uneven path of international travel. His best-known films from this period occupy an interstitial position between Austrian and Czechoslovak cinema. When the rise of Nazism forced him to leave Central Europe in the mid-1930s, he spent some time in Italy, where he made the one-off local film BALLERINE (1936), before moving on to Hollywood a year later.

Even though he maintained a production company in Berlin throughout most of the 1930s, Karel Lamač was no less nomadic than Machatý — indeed, his travels far exceed Machatý's in terms of both range and frequency. A great number of films produced by Lamač's Berlin company, Ondra-Lamač-Film GmbH, were international co-productions and/or MLVs, which saw the director shuttling between a multiplicity of filming locations around Europe, mostly in Austria, France, and throughout Germany, but also in Switzerland and Hungary. At the same time, Lamač made regular visits to Prague to direct or act in Czech films. If we also consider that Lamač directed on average over six films each year (compared to Machatý's average of one film per year) his restless pace was remarkable. One evocative account of Lamač's transient mode of existence in the 1930s stems from his colleague and friend, Jan S. Kolár:

> Like the forever-nomadic Ahasuerus, Lamač rides and flies from city to city across the whole of Europe. Hotels and sleeping wagons are his home [*domov*, the equivalent of the German "Heimat" — author's note] … In the metropoles of Europe he is as well known in the studios and artist cafes as he is in the patent offices and lawyers' offices. He orders a suit at a tailor shop in Berlin, pays off a debt to another tailor in Prague, and then at his hotel in Vienna receives a suit that he had tailored the previous year, but forgot to pick up — and now it is too tight. He has friends everywhere and everywhere creditors … He finishes one film and then dozes in a sleeping wagon over a script that he is under contract to shoot at the train's final stop — and he hasn't even had time to read its title yet … Every once in a while, he has the inclinationto act in a Czech film and begins to fast at the spa in Dolní Lipová in or-

13) See C. Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty: Ein Filmregisseur zwischen Prag und Hollywood*, pp. 12–14; and A. Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase*, pp. 356–357. Just as with his subsequent time in Vienna, there is little concrete information about the specific projects he was involved with in Hollywood, since his name does not turn up in any film credits from that period. According to IMDb.com, Machatý worked as Erich von Stroheim's assistant for FOOLISH WIVES (1922). Also, a 1929 German article claims that Machatý assisted Tod Browning and Stuart Paton: 'Einneuer Mann,' *Reichsfilmblatt*, 18 May 1929 (cited in Jeanpaul Goergen, 'Gustav Machaty's frühe Regiearbeiten für den deutschen und internationalen Markt,' in C. Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty: Ein Filmregisseur zwischen Prag und Hollywood*, p. 79).

> der to shed excess pounds so that he can once again charm his admirers. He smokes cigars and the whole world is his ashtray.[14]

In this passage, Kolár likens Lamač to the mythical "Wandering Jew," Ahasuerus, condemned to eternally meander across the globe, homeless. He is at home all over the world, but has no fixed living space. His lifestyle is characterized by constant motion and marked by a multiplicity of geographic locations. Any sense of national or regional orientation disintegrates from one film to the next as the "homeland" of Lamač's cinema becomes impossible to pin down. According to this picture, Lamač's true home is not a geographic space at all, but a compilation of interstitial "non-places": hotels, trains, and film studios.

Images of Transience

There are a number of specific thematic motifs that reflect Lamač's and Machatý's interstitial mode of production. Their accented idiom can be identified in the particular ways that both directors directly engage with themes of wandering and homelessness and consistently feature nomadic, transient figures. Many of Machatý's main characters are lost in a sort of existential search for meaning. Both Ecstasy and Nocturno (1932) feature "straying" women who leave their husbands to seek happiness elsewhere, while the female lead in Erotikon (1929) leaves her father to pursue a lover in the big city. Thus liberated from their male caretakers, these women all become metaphorical orphans, lost girls in search of a place to fit in. This motif is later overtly thematized in Orphan Child 312 (Suchkind 312, 1955): the title refers to the young girl Martina, who was separated from her biological mother at the end of the war, and now stands at the center of a complex custody battle between her foster parents, an orphanage, her biological mother, and multiple would-be mothers. In the process, Martina is shuttled between Hamburg, Hannover, and her rural "home" in the country. At one point, she becomes a runaway, spending several days hiding out on board a cargo ship at harbor. In some cases, Machatý's wanderer is male; for example, the main narrator of The Kreutzer Sonata, who lives in a state of perpetual travel, riding in trains and relating his tragic tale in search of redemption. Perhaps the most notable homeless figure in Machatý's oeuvre appears in his quasi-autobiographical film Jealousy: Peter Urban, an emigrant from Prague who is "lost" in Hollywood.

In contrast to Machatý's existential "lost ones," Lamač displays a penchant for carnival performers, itinerant actors, and carefree vagabonds of all kinds. The motif of travelers runs throughout his work in the 1930s and is even evident in the film titles, for example Fair People (Die vom Rummelplatz, 1930) or The Tramps (Die Landstreicher, 1937). The former, Lamač's first German-language sound film, revolves around a familial crisis within a nomadic entertainment troupe. It stars Anny Ondra as a sort of prodigal daughter, who initially denies her carnie background, but eventually realizes her place with her family, joining them on tour as the highlight of their show. In one of the film's musical

14) Originally in Václav Wasserman (ed.), *Karel Lamač, filmový režisér herec a technik* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1958), p. 11.

numbers, one member of the troupe sings "Wir sind überall zu Haus..." (We're at Home all across the World), a reflexive piece about the transnational and transient existence of the entertainers:

My good father,
My beloved father,
Was born an Eskimo,
And my mother,
My beloved mother,
Was from Italy, right on the Po!
We speak Spanish and French,
English and German and even Chinese!

Refrain:
We are everywhere at home,
Our homeland is everywhere!
We travel out in the world,
We are at home everywhere!
Today in Spain,
Tomorrow in Rome!
Yes! We are everywhere at home,
Our homeland is everywhere![15]

The lyrics invoke the restless life of travel practices by those in the carnival profession, itinerant performers, which in German evocatively labels as "fahrendes Volk": literally, "traveling people." The song also explicitly describes the de-territorialization of the very notion of "home" (*Heimat*) inherent in this mode of existence. "Home" is not fixed in any one space or geographical location. Rather, it is anywhere and everywhere that their travels take them — the whole world itself. This song can also be understood as a playful reflection of Lamač's own career of homeless traveling that took him all over Europe and the family's variety show as a mutation of Lamač's own films.

Perhaps an even more directly suggestive symbol than the fairground for Machatý's and (even more so) Lamač's transient lifestyles are the train cars and railway stations that dominate Machatý's films. The thematic invocation of the train is in fact one of the most easily recognizable stamps of Machatý's authorial, accented voice. In terms of visual signification, images of trains, particularly locomotives, are firmly rooted in a modernist tradition that reveres this mechanical wonder as an archetypal symbol of progress.[16] A sequence at the beginning of EROTIKON depicts a train racing towards the city as the camera records the passing landscape through the train window. The pictures and the sense of motion play as an homage to the opening of Walter Ruttmann's BERLIN, SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY (Berlin-Symphonie der Grossstadt, 1927), which portrays the passage of

15) Music by Jára Beneš, words by Fritz Rotter. My translation.
16) Olaf Möller, 'Der Lust ergeben,' *Film-Dienst*, vol. 54, no. 16 (2001), pp. 39–41.

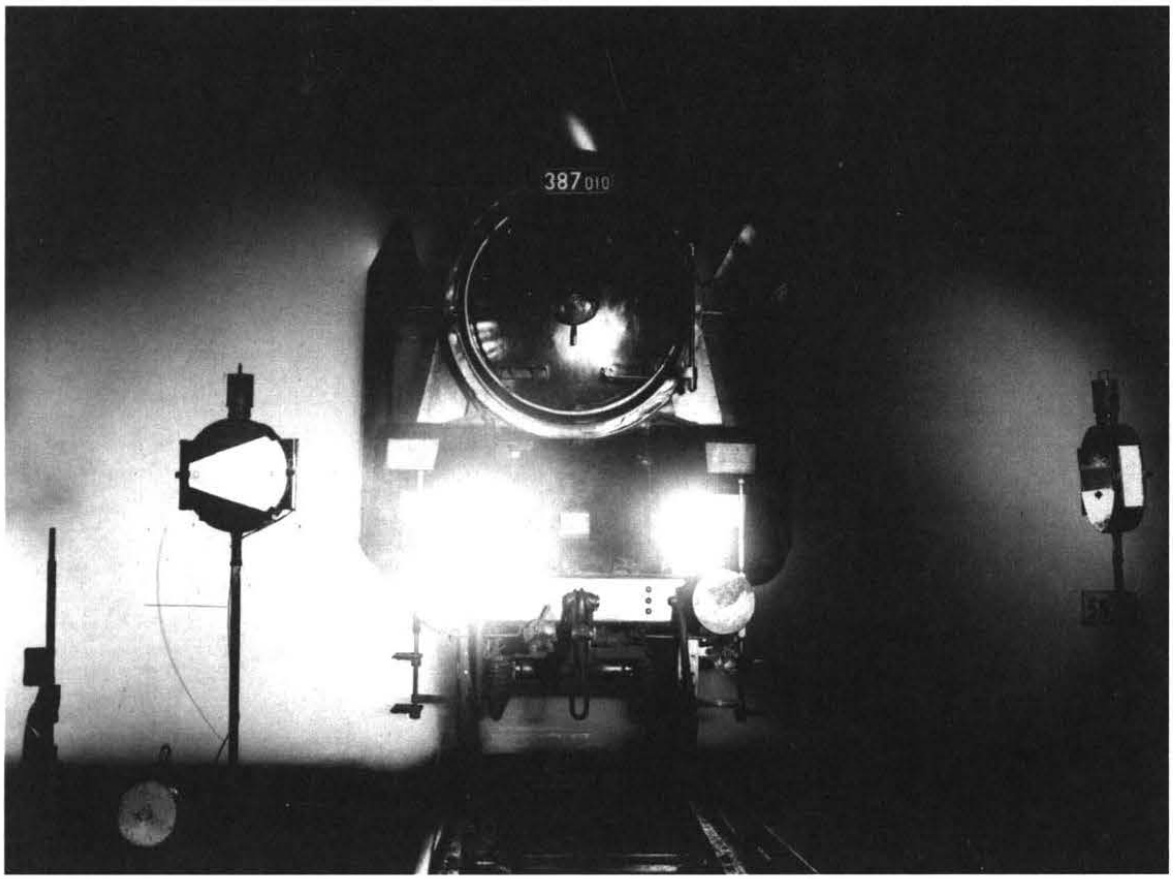

Figure 1. Machatý's authorial stamp: the train as symbol of modernity's energy. From Ecstasy. Photo NFA.

a train from the countryside to the heart of the big city. Like Ruttmann and other modernists, Machatý seems enamored with the train as a symbol of modern civilization and rapid transportation. The railway was an prominent emblem of the cosmopolitan lifestyle of early 20th century: it brought together people of mixed class and national backgrounds, broke down traditional concepts of space and time, and provided access to remote places that had been previously unknown or inaccessible.[17] On a more thematic level, however, trains evoke the concept of travel itself and contribute to the feeling of transience and homelessness that permeates Machatý's oeuvre (fig. 1).

For Machatý, the train and the railway station are interstitial spaces where people of different backgrounds and types encounter each other where varying energies intersect. With allegiance to Tolstoy's source novel, The Kreutzer Sonata, Machatý's adaptation begins when passengers on train come to realize that they are sharing their compartment with a murderer, who then relates his tragic story to them. Similarly, in the opening epi-

17) In Ecstasy, the emblematic status of the train lends a significant historic subtext to the film. Carpathian Ruthenia was the most remote and least developed territory in Czechoslovakia during the interwar period. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the government in Prague undertook extensive measures to modernize Carpathian Ruthenia, to raise its economic standards, increase its infrastructure, and generally integrate it with the rest of the country. The railroad was a powerful symbol of this process of modernization.

sode of EROTIKON, the train brings the urban traveler George to the small town where he encounters the young Andrea (daughter of the station master); a meeting that sets off a fateful chain of events ending in his death. George is not only a man from the city who disrupts life in the countryside as soon as he enters it (by seducing the station master's young daughter), but the English spelling of his name and the multiple exotic stickers on his suitcase also mark him as a "foreign" interloper in this rural space. In ECSTASY, the construction of the railroad itself brings an "outsider" into foreign territory, providing the setup for another fateful encounter: Adam is an engineer at work on a railroad project in the remote mountainous region where Eva's father has his estate. He is a harbinger of modernity in this rural setting. His presence here inserts an unexpected element into Eva's life, fulfilling her sexual desires, but also setting a tragedy in motion that ends with her husband's death and a life of solitude for her. Both as a communal space and a bridge across great distances, the railway serves as a powerful symbol for modernity's energy and its disruption of traditional barriers between class, gender, and ethnic groups.

At the Intersection of the Local and the Global

Both Machatý's trains and Lamač's itinerant performers are emblematic of an extraterritorial and transnational tendency in modernity that finds its analogue in the cinematic medium itself. In its early decades, the cinema was revolutionary for the extreme ease with which it traveled across borders that had hitherto severely restricted the dissemination of culture. Indeed, both in terms of exhibition and mode of expression, cinema was in many ways "homeless": it traveled throughout an international network of temporary projection tents (generally as a circus attraction) and was more or less liberated from the regional limitations of spoken and written language due to its reliance on visual expression. Like the itinerant performers of the FAIR PEOPLE song "Wir sind überall zu Haus," early cinema spoke a multiplicity of languages and could skillfully navigate between them.

Each in their own way, Machatý and Lamač had their sights on global audiences from the very beginning of their work in film. It was this ambition that compelled them to traverse the borders of their own national cinema in the first place — setting them on a path that would eventually lead to German cinema. In the 1920s and into the early 1930s, the film industry centered in Berlin stood as a sort of "Hollywood of Europe," drawing talent from across the continent and reaching worldwide markets with its products. The German industry assumed a dominant position in the "Film Europe" movement, a transnational alliance of film companies that aimed to compete with Hollywood through the unification and concentration of their forces.[18] Being the largest and arguably the most influential European film center of the interwar period, it is only natural that the German industry would be a primary target for Lamač's and Machatý's global ambitions.

18) Kristin Thompson, 'The Rise and Fall of Film Europe,' in Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby (eds.), *"Film Europe" and "Film America"; Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange 1920–1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), p. 72.

In the mid-1920s Lamač promoted himself at home with the slogan "Rosteme do šíře, Lamač – Košíře," which roughly translates (albeit losing the rhyme) as "we're expanding, Lamač – Košíře" — with "Košíře" indicating the Prague district where Lamač's film operation was based.[19] As suggested by the Czech word "šíře" (breadth) in the slogan, the ambition was clearly expand *outwards*, rather than upwards — in other words, he did not aim to increase the scale of his domestic production, but to increase the regional scope of his film work. Already by the late 1920s, Lamač was involved in international co-productions that saw him traveling between Prague, Vienna, and Berlin. Whereas the arrival of sound film hampered the international marketability of individual films and solidified the borders between national film cultures, Lamač's transnational influence only increased during this period. He was intensely involved in the production of multiple-language versions for the international market, directing not only Czech and German, but also a number of French versions. His work on MLVs continued until 1937, even though this mode of production had become passé in most areas of American and European cinema by 1933.[20] On the one hand, this can be understood as Lamač's commitment to cinema as an international medium. On the other hand, it is evidence of his shrewd economic strategy to work multiple markets simultaneously while minimizing production costs. His Berlin-based Ondra-Lamač-Film company served much the same purpose. Far from being a bastion of distinctly nationally oriented German films, the company specialized in MLVs and other forms of international co-production. Tim Bergfelder remarks that the German-language Ondra-Lamač Edgar Wallace films of the early 1930s are very much "transnational productions within the wider framework of the 'Film Europe' project of the time".[21] The Berlin location not only afforded Lamač access to some of the most advanced studios and best-loved actors in Europe, but also connected him to the most important distribution hub in the region. Thus, the company did not as much anchor Lamač in Germany as open the doors to national cinema markets around the world. Regardless of the language he was filming in, Germany remained the most important node for securing funding and distributing his products to global audiences.

Lamač's mode of film production is defined by what could be termed a "multi-local" approach. Rather than communicating with a distinct authorial voice, his films seem acutely aware of their target national audience and aim to "speak the local language" as much as possible. Lamač was masterfully able to switch film languages depending on the context that he was operating in, much like the variety performer in Fair People, who claims to converse in "Spanish, French, English, German, and even Chinese" (see song above). Although the general themes and style of his films were highly cosmopolitan in nature — borrowing freely from all manner of international trends — he relied on the possibilities of MLV production to "localize" his products to specific national audiences. This involved translating universal ideas and superficial attractions into local dialects of spoken language, tailoring the jokes to local tastes, and casting actors in order to maximize the appeal of the cast to lo-

19) Luboš Bartošek, *Karel Lamač* (Praha: Český filmový ústav, 1972), p. 1.

20) His last MLV effort was a Czech-German co-production was Grounds for Divorce (Důvod k rozvodu / Der Scheidungsgrund, 1937), which starred Anny Ondra in both versions.

21) Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), p. 145.

cal audiences. In other words, Lamač was less interested in creating a single, universalizing cinematic mode that spoke to as wide an audience as possible than he was in using the apparatus to fashion a multitude of products, each specialized to a distinct target group.

In contrast to Lamač, Machatý openly strived for an international style and approach that would make each of his films accessible (and marketable) to the broadest audience possible. Evidence of this approach can be seen in various aspects of his film aesthetic, such as the use of international casts and the emphasis on images to tell the story, rather than on intertitles or spoken dialogue. As early as 1927, his first major work, THE KREUTZER SONATA, prompted contemporary critics to comment on the "cosmopolitan" nature of Machatý's film style.[22] Some have even suggested that the international success of this film marked a significant "cosmopolitan" shift in Czechoslovak film production, indicating the point at which it began to expand its focus from local audiences to the broader global market.[23] The 1929 silent film EROTIKON was cosmopolitan not only in style, but also in the multinational composition of its cast. In this story of two love triangles linked together by the erotic escapades of one man, each of the five primary actors hail from a different country: George, the male seducer (Austrian Olaf Fjord); a young woman who succumbs to his will (Slovenian Ita Rina); her husband after the affair (Italian Luigi Serventi); a married woman with whom George is having affair (Lithuanian-born German Charlotte Susa); and her husband (Czech Theodor Pištěk). As Jerzy Toeplitz writes in his bitter assessment of EROTIKON, "the casting of foreign actors only increases the cosmopolitan eclecticism inherent in the film form".[24] Toeplitz, writing from a Marxist perspective, is perhaps the most vocal intellectual critic of what he saw as Machatý's "formalistic games" and lack of "solidarity with the people" (*Volksverbundenheit*). Clearly, this demand for "solidarity" suggests a connection or attachment with a specific community, which in this context could even be understood in national terms, since Toeplitz sets this "solidarity" in opposition to what he sees as "cosmopolitanism." Yet, it seems misguided to demand this from a director who was not, himself, geographically or nationally grounded and who was primarily concerned with issues of transit and transition. Indeed, as I suggest here, this lack of grounding in one national or cultural context is a direct consequence of the Central European context from which Machatý arose and therefore a thoroughly natural characteristic of both his transnational impulses as well as his accented voice.

A fundamental impulse at the root of Machatý's creative project was the formulation of a globally intelligible film art. Shortly after the Berlin premiere of SYMPHONY OF LOVE (Symphonie der Liebe a German re-edit of ECSTASY) in January 1935, Machatý was invited to speak at a screening of the film for students of the Berliner Universität.[25] In this speech, he openly declares his desire to make film art that speaks to "simple and humble people" across the world:

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22) See for example 'Die Kreuzersonate [sic.],' *Der Film*, 1 June 1927 (cited in J. Goergen, 'Gustav Machaty's frühe Regiearbeiten für den deutschen und internationalen Markt,' p. 76).

23) Christian Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty: Ein Filmregisseur zwischen Prag und Hollywood*, p. 15.

24) Jerzy Toeplitz, *Geschichte des Films 1895–1933* (Munich: Rogner und Bernhard, 1987), p. 488. Also quoted in C. Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty: Ein Filmregisseur zwischen Prag und Hollywood*, p.16.

25) The title of the German release highlights the importance of music over dialogue and the attempt to emulate musical emotion through the lyrical assemblage of images. Furthermore it also directly evokes Walter Rutt-

> Individual nations built their national theaters and had their national literature. But today, all citizens from all corners of the earth want the same art and the same entertainment: they want their film. Film has become the standard form of entertainment in the 20th century. An American film touches a young female typist in a Ford factory in the same way that it touches a female worker at a macaroni factory in Naples, a young woman at the ticket booth in Schlesinger's Theater in Cape Town, or a female student of the Economic Academy in Tokyo. German films have had great success from the northernmost extremes of Europe to the farthest edges of the Balkan Peninsula, from the wide American west to the depths of the Orient. It brings a feeling of joy to work on such an art form.[26)]

Clearly, this attempt at an international film language was hindered by the coming of sound, and with spoken language — the factory worker in Naples will not be as touched by a film if she does not understand the language spoken in it. In this context, the innovative approach to sound in ECSTASY can be understood not just as "experimentation for experimentation's sake," but also as both a mode of address and a distribution strategy — for by keeping the spoken parts in ECSTASY to a minimum, Machatý increased the international potential of the film. On the one hand, without relying on the crutch of dialogue, ECSTASY mobilizes more universally intelligible means (visual images, montage, and music) to relate the narrative and communicate emotions. On the other hand, the dearth of dialogue greatly facilitated the process of post-production overdubbing, allowing the original sound recording to be easily written over with dialogue in foreign languages.[27)] The film was produced simultaneously in German, Czech, and French language versions, which became the source for a number of overdubbed edits worldwide.[28)] This was the only time that Machatý simultaneously created different language versions of one film, although his mode of operation was quite different from normal MLV production: instead of filming lengthy sequences multiple times with different actors working from various scripts, the basic raw film material was essentially the same for each film, and the versions were created in post-production my means of overdubbing and editing.[29)] (The French

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mann's Avant-garde masterwork BERLIN, SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY, thereby making explicit the genealogy of Machatý's semi-experimental film (which was clearly influenced by Ruttmann).

26) Gustav Machaty, 'Des Filmes Größe und Not.'

27) Limiting the amount of spoken language also aided the integration of multi-national actors into one filmic diegesis, by eliminating the potential for different accents to become evident in their speech. As with EROTIKON, the main cast of ECSTASY, also came from diverse backgrounds: Austrian Jew Hedwig Kiesler (later famous as Hedy Lamarr) as Eva, German Aribert Mog as Adam, Croatian Zvonimir Rogoz as Eva's husband Emil, and Prague-born, German-speaking actor Leopold Kramer as Eva's father. Rogoz, for example, speaks only a handful of lines throughout the entire film, usually consisting of isolated words (e.g., "Eva!", "dich," "ja," "nein" etc.) thereby rendering his Croatian accent undetectable.

28) The Czech version features all the same actors in the main roles as in the German version, yet in most cases Czech speakers overdub their dialogue. The only exception was Rogoz, who could speak Czech, and therefore replayed all of his speaking scenes for the Czech version. The French version retained Kiesler and Rogoz, but employed French actors in the roles of Eva's lover (Pierre Nay) and her father (André Nox). It is likely that this alteration was part of a strategy to increase the international marketability of the film by casting actors familiar to French audiences.

29) For a detailed analysis of the differences between these three language versions and other international edits, see M. Bregant, 'Příběh živlů se třemi mezihrami (Extase)/ Eine Geschichte der Elemente mit drei

version displays the highest amount of variation, since it replaced two of the main roles with French actors, thereby necessitating that each their scenes be filmed multiply.) However, regardless of the language used in any particular version, the dialogue plays only a minimal role. For Machatý, the overall cinematic language and its universal appeal were far more important than the spoken dialogue.

In the speech quoted above, it is evident that the primary models for Machatý's vision of an international film language are Hollywood and Germany — indeed, he shifts effortlessly from one to the other in praising the global reach of cinema. Yet despite Machatý's years in Hollywood, the German film industry was, from his Central European perspective, the gateway to the global market. Although THE KREUTZER SONATA and EROTIKON represented Machatý's breakthrough in Germany and Austria, it was his 1933 film ECSTASY that garnered him overwhelming international attention. Surrounded by scandal, ECSTASY was awarded the top prize at the Venice Film Festival in 1934, becoming the first Czechoslovak film to achieve such high international accolades.[30] This was the first sound film that Machatý directed in a language other than Czech, and the choice of predominantly German-speaking actors would suggest that his main target audiences were in Austria and Germany.[31]

In spite of this, ECSTASY failed to establish Machatý's career in Germany, where he was severely hindered by the moral sensitivities of the Nazi regime and ultimately thwarted by their racial politics. At the time that NOCTURNO was made, ECSTASY was still in the process of being reworked into a film acceptable to the Reich censors (being eventually redubbed SYMPHONY OF LOVE). At this stage, the censors seemed less concerned about the matters of formal experimentation or the non-Aryan backgrounds of Machatý and Kiesler than with the questionable morality of the film.[32] Machatý had his eyes on German distribution for NOCTURNO as well, even if it would require severe alterations similar to those carried out on ECSTASY.[33] However, the film was never granted approval by Nazi censors,

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Zwischenspielen (Ekstase)'; and Joseph Garncarz, 'Ekstase ohne Ende. Variationen eines Films,' in A. Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase*, pp. 147–190; as well as the comparison of dialogue lists in A. Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase*, pp. 465–478.

30) See Francesco Bono, 'Exstase am Lido: Chronic eines Skandals,' in A. Loacker, *Ekstase*, pp. 115–146.

31) According to Francesco Bono, however, it was the Czech version that was shown at the Venice festival. See F. Bono, 'Exstase am Lido: Chronic eines Skandals,' p. 140. Also note: a French version of the film FROM SATURDAY TO SUNDAY was made, but only by post-synchronization of the original Czech print. Machatý did not originally intend on making a French version.

32) In this context, it is significant to note that censorship issues with the film's morality were not unique to Germany. ECSTASY did not have its London premiere until 1938 (M. Bregant, 'Příběh živlů se třemi mezihrami (Extase)/ Eine Geschichte der Elemente mit drei Zwischenspielen (Ekstase),' p. 50) and was not legally screened in the United States until 1940 after being severely re-edited (see Lucy Fischer, 'Ecstasy: Female Sexual, Social, and Cinematic Scandal'; and Vinzenz Hediger, 'The Ecstasy of Physical Relations and Not Normal Marriage.' Gustav Machaty's Ecstasy in den USA,' in C. Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty*, pp. 176–197).

33) It was not, in fact, unheard of for foreign films that involved Jewish personnel to play in the Reich. There were many cases whereby the identities of Jews involved in the film were covered up or even ignored. See Armin Loacker and Martin Prucha (eds.), *Unerwünschtes Kino: Der deutschsprachige Emigrantenfilm 1934–1937*; Uli Jung, 'Am Ende überwiegt der falsche Mythos. Zur Rezeption von Ekstase,' in A. Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase*, pp. 71–113; and Kevin B. Johnson, 'Čí je to Heimat? Estetika národnosti a politika místa v jazykových verzích filmu *Jana* (1935/6),' *Iluminace*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2008), pp. 69–83.

and even SYMPHONY OF LOVE was pulled from distribution in the Reich immediately after its Berlin premiere, once Machatý's "racial purity" came under closer scrutiny.[34] When Machatý was unable to provide documented evidence of his racial purity, his hopes of breaking into German cinema were finally dashed. Machatý had been effectively banished from Germany before even having the opportunity to work there — becoming an "exile" from a homeland in which he had never lived.[35]

Interestingly, just like its author, ECSTASY too was fated to a "homeless" existence in the interstitial spaces between national cinemas. Indeed, it would seem as if ECSTASY could serve as a prototypical example of an "interstitial cinema," as a cosmopolitan film that does not fit neatly into any one national paradigm, equally claimed and rejected by factions in all national camps. Upon its release in Czechoslovakia, the film encountered a great level of criticism precisely for its "eclectic" and "international" style.[36] In fact, Czech Marxist critic Lubomír Linhart went so far as to criticize ECSTASY for its overwhelmingly "Germanic" character, declaring that neither the film nor its director "express Czech cinematography," indeed that there is "nothing at all Czech in this film."[37]

In fact, ECSTASY contains a number of visual elements that overtly situate the story in Prague and in the mountainous landscape of Central Europe (the mountain sequences were in fact filmed in the Carpathian mountains of eastern Slovakia). Most conspicuous is the long crane shot over the Barrandov terraces on the Vltava river in Prague — the sight of this former well-known landmark would have immediately stood out as a signifier of the city to those familiar with it (fig. 2). Furthermore, the climactic suicide scene set in a rural inn particularly evokes Carpathian culture with the appearance of a musical group, whose gypsy-influenced style prominently features a violin and a cimbalom (fig. 2). These details might strike the modern viewer as simply bits of ornamentation without any deep cultural meaning; however, the particular sense of place that the film evoked was not entirely lost among contemporary viewers. In his review of SYMPHONY OF LOVE, one Berlin critic took issue with the failed attempt to "Germanize" a film that is so clearly tied to the Czech landscape and people.[38]

Machatý himself felt that the distinctive regional milieu was not merely decoration, but an essential part of the story. In the early 1960s, when a New York company proposed that the remake of ECSTASY be filmed in Greece, Machatý responded vehemently, "You cannot just transplant Othello to Glasgow, or Hamlet to Sicily. Well, admittedly, anything

34) Machatý's mother was Jewish. She was murdered in Treblinka in 1942. Loacker indicates that SYMPHON OF LOVE only ran in German theaters for several days after the premiere before being pulled from distribution. A. Loacker, 'Gustav Machatý's Leben,' in A. Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase*, p. 367.

35) Apparently, though, in early 1935 (prior to the investigation of his racial background and the censor's ban of NOCTURNO), Machatý had in fact successfully secured a provisional contract with Ufa and was slated to direct a film with Lída Baarová. See A. Loacker, 'Gustav Machatý's Leben,' pp. 366–367.

36) Jiří Horníček, 'Ekstase — Produktion und Rezeption in der tschechischen Presse,' in A. Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase*, p. 61–68.

37) Quoted in A. Loacker (ed.), *Ekstase*, p. 382, which in turn cites Jaroslav Brož and Myrtil Frída, 'Gustav Machatý. Legenda a skutečnost 2,' *Film a doba*, vol. 15, no. 5 (1969), p. 265.

38) "Symphonie der Liebe," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 9 January 1935, p. 6. Full quote: "In der Bearbeitung wird der Versuch gemacht, die Handlung nach Deutschland zu verlegen. Nicht zum Vorteil des Filmes, der in tschechischer Landschaft und unter ihren Menschen spielt."

Figure 2. Left: Prague landmark — the Barrandov terraces. Right: A typically Central European musical ensemble with violin and cimbalon. Both from ECSTASY. Photo NFA.

is possible — but ECSTASY was and remains conceptually tied to *Mitteleuropa*, Vienna, Austria."[39] Interestingly, the director himself is ambiguous in assigning the film to one specific national context. His suggestion that the film is conceptually tied to "Vienna" is curious since there are neither exterior shots of the city, nor explicit indicators of a Viennese context in the film. In juxtaposition to Machatý's suggestion of a specific urban location, though, is the indication of a transnational regional context: *Mitteleuropa*.[40] This suggests a cultural setting that is not defined according to a strong national allegiance, but by its highly multi-ethnic character. This invites us to speculate whether Machatý's invocation of "Austria" here refers to the German-speaking nation-state formed after World War I or rather suggests the spirit of the Habsburg Empire that fostered a trans-regional identity that united various national and linguistic groups. Thus conceptualizing ECSTASY as an "Austrian" film — that is as a "middle European" film — can help account for its ambiguous positioning, and the difficulty that arises when attempting to assign it to one specific national context.

ECSTASY's outsider status is not, of course, unique. Indeed, it is emblematic of Machatý's career and his filmic output more generally. Curiously, the director is not even entirely "at home" in his own native cinema. As Ivan Klimeš has asserted, "In truth, Gustav Machatý occupies a somewhat peculiar and exceptional (*eigenartige und aussergewöhnliche*) position in the history of Czech cinema".[41] In other words, his "accent" is not restricted to one national context — his voice seems to carry the same distinct accent whether it is heard in the context of Czech cinema or in the context of German/Austrian cinema. Yet, while Austrian and Czech scholars equally admit Machatý's marginal position within their

39) From a letter by Machatý to Paul Kohner, 22 June 1963, qtd. in C. Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty*, p. 45. According to the treatment that Machatý wrote for the remake of ECSTASY, the film was to be overtly set in Austria around in the first decade of the 20th century. The treatment specifically places the action in Prague (Troja chateau and the main train station), Vienna, and a Southern Bohemian castle among other locations.

40) In my interpretation, Machatý uses the term *Mitteleuropa* here primarily to reference the geographic region between East and West Europe but also to evoke the multi-national and poly-cultural ideal of unity associated with the Habsburg Empire. Thus, his meaning is very different to the Prussian, pan-German hegemonic concept promoted by the German Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

41) Ivan Klimeš, 'Der junge Machaty kommt zum Film,' in C. Cargnelli (ed.), *Gustav Machaty*, p. 61.

respective national cinemas, both camps also retain a solid investment in the man and his films — and arguably both are equally justified in so doing. Indeed, regardless of his Czech origins and consistently close ties to the Czechoslovak film industry for most of his career, Austrian scholarship can boast a direct claim on Machatý since his estate presently resides within the collection of the Filmarchiv Austria in Vienna. Furthermore, the recent swell of interest in Machatý's life and work within Austrian cinema studies has done much to strengthen the perception that he is an "Austrian director."[42] Even so, there is no denying that as much as Machatý contributed to Austrian cinema, he also contributed to Czech cinema. Indeed, in the opening lines of his contribution to the Filmarchiv Austria's volume on ECSTASY, Armin Loacker openly states that the film is not explicitly Austrian at all, but Czech. However, even this reversal of national identification does not do full justice to the complex position that the film occupies. Indeed, as I have shown, the case of ECSTASY vividly illustrates the "homeless" nature of Machatý's cinema — like the director himself, most of his films exist in a sort of no man's land in the border regions between various national cinemas, marked by traces of Austrian, German, and Czech culture, yet belonging definitively to none. This is an extraterritorial body of films that frustrate any attempts to conceptualize according to traditional notions of national cinema.

It is perhaps useful at this point to return to Machatý's seemingly paradoxical claim that his "homeless" film (ECSTASY) is intrinsic to Central Europe and Austria in particular. What I am suggesting here is that the Central European context itself generated a certain sense of extraterritorial "homelessness." An identity split between local and global, between ethnic nation and empire was an inherent part of the Austro-Hungarian experience, and the effects of this worldview lingered on after the fall of the Habsburgs. Indeed, there is much to suggest that this unique sense of "in-between" is a defining characteristic of "Austrian cinema," at least during the first half of the 20th century, and many of my observations on the motifs of wandering, extraterritoriality, and homelessness in the films of Machatý and Lamač can be extended to Austrian cinema in general. According to Frieda Grafe, "Austrian film history is a phantasm, because it is not tied to a fixed place; its cinema is a kind of film without a specific place."[43] Thinking in these terms, Lamač and Machatý can perhaps be described as typically "Austrian" directors of the period precisely *because of* the "extraterritorial" and "cosmopolitan" nature of their work.

Generally speaking, Lamač's and Machatý's German films are not linked to Prague or Bohemia in any direct way, operating in a more cosmopolitan framework. (With its brief depiction of a well-known Prague landmark, ECSTASY stands as an important exception to this general rule, yet even here the overall feeling is of a generically cosmopolitan city than Prague in particular.) At the same time, the directors' the Czech-language films are deeply grounded in Czech national culture and tend towards local settings; many are adapta-

42) The two most important works (A. Loacker /ed./, *Ekstase*; and C. Cargnelli /ed./, *Gustav Machaty: Ein Filmregisseur zwischen Prag und Hollywood*) were published in Vienna. There is also a section on Machatý in Elisabeth Büttner and Christian Dewald, *Das tägliche Brennen: Eine Geschichte des österreichischen Films von den Anfängen bis 1945* (Wien: Residenz Verlag, 2002), pp. 114–121.

43) Original quote in Frieda Grafe, 'Wiener Beiträge zu einer wahren Geschichte des Kinos,' in Christian Cargnelli and Michael Omasta (eds.), *Aufbruch ins Ungewisse: Österreichische Filmschaffende in der Emigration vor 1945* (Vienna: Wespennest, 1993), p. 227.

tions of well-respected works of national literature.[44] In other words, their "nomadic" accent is much more pronounced in German-language cinema than in that of their homeland — and indeed, as discussed earlier, Machatý in particular conceived of German cinema as a model for a sort of universal film language that he could use to liberate his art from the limitations of his Czech national context to reach international audiences. This is not to say that the German-language films of Machatý and Lamač films are entirely devoid of regional specificity or grounding in the German or Austrian national context. The Viennese setting plays a prominent role in Machatý's NOCTURNO, for example. More remarkably, Lamač's German films display a conspicuous penchant for Viennese operetta and occasionally operate with many of the tropes common to the *Heimatfilm* genre that is emblematic of Austrian and Bavarian regional patriotism (eg. THE BAT [Die Fledermaus, 1931], FRASQUITA [1934], THE WHITE HORSE INN [Im weißen Rößl, 1935], WHERE THE LARK SINGS [Wo die Lerche singt, 1936]). Rather, both directors are equally capable of speaking in a "cosmopolitan" voice as in "nationally grounded" voices, and even displaying mastery of national idioms that seem diametrically opposed to each other (e.g., "German" and "Czech").

The oscillation between opposed modes of "national address" is not as unusual or unexpected as one might assume. This tension between national or ethnic loyalties is, in fact, adistinct reflection of the Austro-Hungarian legacy in the region. The political developments of the latter decades of Austria-Hungary had fostered an environment of competing national, regional, and ethnic affiliations. The divisions between these conflicting modes of identity were generally far from clear-cut and many citizens learned to navigate multiple public and private roles in their day-to-day life.[45] There was no inherent contradiction in describing oneself as both "Czech" and "Austrian." Paradoxically, the Austro-Hungarian state was characterized by a profound sense of multinationalism or even transnationalism.

Even Machatý's and Lamač's most important contributions to Czech national cinema can be imagined as intrinsically bound to the Austro-Hungarian context. Both directors were involved in the creation of a series of films based on the famous Czech literary character from Jaroslav Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk* (*Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*) in the late 1920s. It was Karel Lamač who initiated *The Good Soldier Švejk* into Czech cinema, and into world cinema at the same time. He directed the first two installments in the four-film series that featured Karel Noll as Švejk: THE GOOD SOLDIER ŠVEJK (Dobrý voják Švejk, 1926) and ŠVEJK AT THE FRONT (Švejk na frontě, 1926). Gustav

44) Machatý's second sound film NAČERADEC, THE KING OF KIBITZER (Načeradec, král kibiců, 1932) was inspired by a popular novel by Karel Poláček. Lamač's adaptations of "great" Czech works include: OLD MAN BEZOUŠEK (Pantáta Bezoušek, 1927), adapted from the novel by Karel Václav Rais; CAMEL THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE (Velbloud uchem jehly, 1926), based on the play by František Langer; and THE LANTERN (Lucerna, 1925, 1938), based on the play by Alois Jirásek. Likewise, he filmed Jara Beneš's famous Czech operetta ON THE GREEN MEADOW (Na tý louce zelený, 1936) and wrote an original screenplay for his film KAREL HAVLIČEK BOROVSKÝ (1925), about the life of the Czech national Revivalist.

45) See, for example: Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*; Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*; Scott Spector, *Prague Territories*; and Jiří Kořalka, 'Nationality Representation in Bohemia, Moravia and Austria Silesia 1848–1914,' in Geoffrey Alderman (ed.), *Governments, Ethnic Groups and Political Representation* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 85–122.

Machatý got involved in the project later, directing the final film in the series, ŠVEJK IN CIVILIAN LIFE (Švejk v civilu, 1927).[46] Almost two decades later while in British exile, Lamač supplied a further, highly intriguing installment in the Švejk mythology in the form of the English-language film SCHWEIK'S NEW ADVENTURES (a.k.a. IT STARTED AT MIDNIGHT, 1943). This topical updating of the Švejk story fed fantasies of Czech patriotism and resistance with its depiction of Švejk taking on the Nazi occupiers of his homeland. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson have credited this silent series of Švejk films with helping to create a Czech "national film tradition".[47] Yet, as much as these films are distinctly Czech in perspective, the cultural context that they inhabit is undeniably "Austrian." Švejk's uniquely "Czech" character only arises in contrast to the dominant Austro-Hungarian culture, as a marker of difference, as an accented voice within a Central European context governed by a generally Germanic paradigm with its figurative center in Vienna.

I have argued above that we can attribute the "nomadic" or "transient" accent in the German films of Lamač and Machatý to their transnational and interstitial mode of production. What I am suggesting here is that this accent derives not only from the confrontation between a "German" host culture and a "Czech" home culture, but rather belongs to a more complex constellation of competing identities and allegiances that is typical to (post) Habsburg Central Europe. In other words, these accented voices express the heterogeneity, multiplicity, and contradictions inherent to the region they come from. To a great extent, the label "Central Europe" itself suggests a region that is defined in terms of transnationalism and multiculturalism. Indeed, aside from Lamač and Machatý, this region produced a number of filmmakers that are in some way "interstitial," divided between various modes of ethnic and national belonging.

Many of the most well known "Austrian" directors from the 1920s through 1950s (e.g., Pabst, Ulmer, Billy [Samuel] Wilder, Michael Curtiz [a.k.a. Mihály Kertész]), for instance, hailed from territories outside the post-World War I borders of Austria. Yet these and other Viennese-born directors such as Fritz Lang, Joseph Sternberg, Otto Preminger, and Erich von Stroheim tend to be lumped together with other "German" filmmakers, without concern for possible regional and historical distinctions. Furthermore, for many of these individuals, a sense of Jewish identity prevails over any sense of national or regional grounding. Strictly in terms of geographic origin, Lamač and Machatý can be categorized together with well-known directors G. W. Pabst and Edgar Ulmer, who also have roots in the historic Czech lands of Austria-Hungary. Pabst's childhood home was in the northern Bohemian town of Roudnice (Raudnitz in German) about 60 kilometers north of Prague. Ulmer was born into a Jewish family living in the heart of Moravia in the city of Olomouc (Olmütz), which was home to a significant German-speaking Jewish community prior to World War II. On the surface, it is simple geographic affinity that binds Pabst and Ulmer with Lamač and Machatý, who were both born in Prague — yet I would argue that the af-

46) Between Lamač's films and Machatý's film was SCHWEIK IN RUSSIAN CAPTIVITY (Švejk v ruském zájetí, 1927), directed by Svatopluk Innemann, who would later work on the Czech-German MLV SWEET SIXTEEN (Sextánka/ Arme kleine Inge, 1936).

47) David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film History: An Introduction* (New York et al: McGraw-Hill, 1994), p. 270.

finities run deeper. The overarching common factor that unites all of these directors is the way that their films (as well as their careers) tend to evade simple classification in terms of geographical or national categories. Both Pabst and Ulmer have been discussed as being "extraterritorial" and "homeless," respectively.[48] As I have demonstrated, the Czech directors Karel Lamač and Gustav Machatý fit into a similar paradigm of accented cinema, in terms of personal biography as well as of filmic themes. Like Ulmer and Pabst, both Machatý and Lamač boldly display the hallmarks of transculturation characteristic to the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is precisely the sense of "homelessness" and transience, moving fluidly across ethnic, linguistic, and national boundaries, that makes their work so prototypical to Central European culture as it existed under Habsburg rule and in the decades immediately following the end of the empire.

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48) See: Eric Rentschler (ed.), *The Films of G. W. Pabst: An Extraterritorial Cinema* (New York and Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990); and Noah Isenberg, 'Permanent Vacation: Home and Homelessness in the Life and Work of Edward G. Ulmer,' in Sabine Eckmann and Lutz Koepnick (eds.), *Caught by Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 175–194.

SUMMARY

Central European Accents

The Homelessness of Gustav Machatý and Karel Lamač

Kevin B. Johnson

This article considers the careers of Gustav Machatý and Karel Lamač with particular attention to their position as unfixed filmmakers who navigated various registers of ethnic and national identity in the intersections between Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Austria. The Prague-born Machatý and Lamač were the two most internationally recognized Czech directors of the interwar period, a status that was achieved primarily through their work in German-language cinema. Borrowing from Hamid Naficy's descriptions of "accented cinema," the article conceptualizes Lamač and Machatý as "nomadic" or "transient" filmmakers who consistently operated in an indistinct realm between regional specificity and extraterritorial generalities. Throughout their careers each of them cultivated his own cosmopolitan style, while also maintaining loyalties to certain regional and national patterns. Ultimately, the article seeks to understand these distinct cinematic voices as expressions of the heterogeneity, multiplicity, and contradictions inherent to those areas of Central Europe still bearing the legacy of the Habsburg Empire, which incorporated a patchwork of vastly different regional and ethnic cultural "accents" that nevertheless shared an overarching sense of unity.