

SCREENING THE SCARS

The Cinematic (In)visibility
of Social Trauma

Edited by
Andreas Hamburger



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About the authors and contributors

Özcan Alper, a Turkish director and screenwriter, was born in Artvin in 1975. His first film, *Autumn*, was shown at more than sixty film festivals around the world and received awards. It was nominated for the European Discovery Award of the Year by the European Film Academy. His second film, *The Future Lasts Forever*, had its world premiere at the 36th International Toronto Film Festival. His third film, *Memories of the Wind*, was supported by Cannes Film Festival Cinefoundation L'Atelier, Rotterdam Film Festival Hubert Bals Fund, and Busan Film Festival Asian Film Market. His film *Dark Night*, which he shot in 2020, was given the Best Film and Best Screenplay awards at the 59th Antalya Golden Orange International Film Festival. In 2021, he adapted Kemal Varol's novel titled *Lovers' Day*, starring Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ, into a movie. The film was released as a Netflix original in September 2022. Özcan Alper's films were shown at more than one hundred festivals around the world and received more than fifty awards. Alper is working on a feature-length animated film project adapted from Kemal Varol's novel *Haw*.

Damir Arsenijević is a full professor of literary and cultural studies at the University of Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is a psychoanalyst

in training and works at the intersection of academia, art, and activism. In his research and art-activist practice, he creates and maintains settings for post-war communities to explore the connections between wartime trauma and environmental violence. He is currently working on a book titled *Poisoned by Peace*, which explores links between environmental violence and ethnic authoritarianism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Friederike Bassenge, a research assistant at the International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, studied psychology in Potsdam and Berlin. Previously, she worked as a neuropsychological research assistant at Charité Berlin, focusing on clinical trials and non-pharmacological interventions for individuals with dementia. At IPU, she is responsible for translating Wolfgang Mertens' *Handbook of Basic Psychoanalytic Concepts* (2022) into English. Additionally, she collaborates with Andreas Hamburger on publications and seminars focused on the analysis of social trauma and cultural themes within the context of film psychoanalysis.

Alen Drljević graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo in 2005. His graduation film *Paycheck* was nominated for the European Film Academy Award for the best short film. His debut feature film *Men Don't Cry* premiered at Karlovy Vary Film Festival's Main Competition Program in 2017, where it won two awards. The film was screened at dozens of international film festivals and won more than twenty awards. He directed three episodes of the feature series *I Know Your Soul*. The first two episodes, which he directed, premiered in the official selection of the 2023 Venice Film Festival.

Andreas Hamburger, psychoanalyst and training analyst (DPG/IPA, DGPT) is professor of clinical psychology and psychoanalysis, International Psychoanalytic University, Berlin. He is author, editor, and co-editor of numerous books, book series, and a journal on his main research topics: psychoanalytic supervision, film psychoanalysis, social trauma. He has been a founding member of the Munich Study Group on Film and Psychoanalysis since 2007 and was founder and speaker of the DAAD-founded network Trauma Trust and Memory / Social Trauma in

Changing Societies, 2013–2023. Recent English books are Hamburger, Hancheva, and Volkan (Eds.), *Social Trauma—An Interdisciplinary Textbook* (Springer, 2020); Pramataroff-Hamburger and Hamburger (Eds.), *From La Strada to The Hours—Suffering and Sovereign Women in the Movies* (Springer, 2024); Hamburger, *Film Psychoanalysis—Relational Approaches to Film Interpretation* (Routledge, 2024).

Camellia Hancheva, PhD is an associate professor of developmental psychology at Sofia University Kliment Ohrid, and founder and director of the master's degree course in child and adolescent and school psychology (assessment and counselling). Her main research interests are in the field of relational psychoanalysis and the application of a psychoanalytic methodology for understanding micro processes of human development within the attachment dyads and macro processes of group and social interactions. Camellia Hancheva is trained as a systemic family therapist and has clinical experience with terminally ill patients and their families and people with traumatic losses. As a part of various research networks, Camellia Hancheva has been a representative for Bulgaria and the co-ordinator of the social trauma course for seven universities in the Balkans and Germany. The ongoing social and academic mission of her work is to explore the impact of social trauma in post-war and post-totalitarian societies and the enhancement of reflexivity, mentalization, and empathy on individual and social levels.

Hancheva's research interests and therapeutic practice for the last decade have been dedicated to understanding early parent–infant relationships and prevention of adversities in early childhood. Her two books, *Mentalization and Early Stages of Socio-emotional Development* (in Bulgarian, 2019) and *The Child, the Family and the Internal World* (in Bulgarian, 2019), are making a valuable contribution in research and the practical field. She has been a part of the COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) action focused on research of peripartum depression, and was organiser of the final conference for the action. Camellia Hancheva is currently working on building a European research network focused on maternal stress, its prevention and impact on early child development. She is one of the founders of the Mentalization Based Treatment—Bulgaria foundation, and leader of several national projects on the assessment and prevention of suicidal

ideation in university students, screening of mental health and resilience in emerging adulthood, and many socio-cultural adaptations of diagnostic instruments.

Dženana Husremović is a professor at the Department of Psychology at the University of Sarajevo. She has been a member of the Trauma Trust Memory / Social Trauma in Changing Societies network since 2016, in which she has made a significant contribution to the organisation of summer schools and social trauma courses. She is particularly interested in the relationship between social trauma and public policies of education and work. Her professional interests are focused on the career development of young people, the well-being of workers and students, and the development of quality education. She is a participant in numerous Erasmus and Horizon projects, as well as domestic projects aimed at examining the well-being of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dijana Jelača is a lecturer in the Film Department at Brooklyn College. Jelača is the author of *Dislocated Screen Memory: Narrating Trauma in Post-Yugoslav Cinema* (2016) and *Film Feminisms: A Global Introduction* (2019). She co-edited the scholarly volumes *The Routledge Companion to Cinema and Gender* (2017) and *The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia* (2017). Jelača's research interests include feminist film studies; cinema, memory and trauma; and South Slavic film cultures. Her essays have appeared in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *Camera Obscura*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Senses of Cinema*, *Jump Cut*, *Studies in World Cinema*, and elsewhere.

Ajna Jusić has long been a prominent activist and advocate for gender equality, fighting against sexism and sexual violence. As president of the Forgotten Children of War (*Zaboravljena djeca rata*) organisation, which fights for the acknowledgement and legal status of children born as the result of wartime rape, Ajna is a tireless advocate for these children to be granted full rights as Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) citizens. Thanks to Ajna's efforts, the Law on the Protection of Civilian Victims of War in the Federation of BiH (FBiH) was adopted in August 2023. The law redresses decades of marginalisation and provides these

children with increased access to educational opportunities and the labour market, as well as social protections and psychological support. Ajna and her colleagues were instrumental in advocating for the adoption of similar legislation in the self-governing unit of Brcko District.

Cem Kaptanoğlu, Prof, Dr, MD works as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist in Istanbul. He worked as a faculty member at ESOG University Faculty of Medicine between 1992 and 2017. On February 7, 2017 he was dismissed from his position at the university by the government for being a signatory of the peace petition titled “We will not be a party to this crime”. He worked in the field of culture-psychoanalysis at the Institute of Psychoanalytic Studies at Sheffield University in England in 1995. Between 2020 and 2023, he continued his professional studies in Germany as a visiting professor at the Clinic of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy at Ulm University Faculty of Medicine. He is currently working as a psychiatrist-psychotherapist and psychodynamic psychotherapy trainer.

Stephan Komandarev is a Bulgarian director, producer, and scriptwriter. He was trained in medicine and specialised in psychiatry. After this, he graduated in film and TV directing at the New Bulgarian University. His feature film *Directions* was a nominee in the section “Un certain regard” at the Cannes Film Festival 2017 official selection. His previous works include award-winning feature and documentary films, such as *The World Is Big and Salvation Lurks Around the Corner* (2008), the first Bulgarian film shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2010, and the Bulgarian film most widely released film into theatres throughout the world ever, distributed in ninety-three countries. It won thirty-five awards at international film festivals. *The Judgement* (2014) won twelve awards and was nominated the Bulgarian entry to the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2016. He also directed praised documentaries, such as *Bread over the Fence* (2002), *Alphabet of Hope* (2003), *The Town of Badante Women* (2009), *Occupation 1968* (2018), and *Life from Life* (2021). His most recent feature films are *Directions* (2017), *Rounds* (2019), and *Blaga’s Lessons* (2023) the last winning a Grand Prix Cristal Globe, Best Actress Award, and the Grand Prize of the Ecumenical Jury—Karlovy vary International Film Festival.

Maida Koso-Drljević is a full professor at the Department of Psychology at the University of Sarajevo. She has been a member of the Trauma Trust Memory / Social Trauma in Changing Societies network since 2016. Her primary research interests are related to the neuropsychological assessment of cognitive function in a population of PTSD patients and patients after aneurysm surgery. Prof Koso-Drljević's research on trauma and cognitive functions of the ex-soldiers in Bosnia and Herzegovina contributes to understanding social trauma in post-war societies that are overburdened with traumatic pasts and uncertain futures.

Nadia Kozhouharova is a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist who works with survivors of violence and people who have experienced psychological trauma. She has been working with Animus Association, a centre for victims of violence, for thirty years. She is one of the creators of specialised services for victims of violence and gender-based violence in Bulgaria, such as a hotline for victims of violence, a crisis centre, and programmes for child victims of violence. She is a trainer and supervisor of professionals working with victims of violence. Nadia has an extensive clinical practice and is currently undertaking psychoanalytical training. She is also a member of the Bulgarian "Film and Psychoanalysis" group.

Lars Kraume is a German director and screenwriter, known for his insightful exploration of societal themes and historical events. He studied film-making at the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB). His work spans a variety of genres and formats, from feature films to documentaries. Notably, his film *The People vs. Fritz Bauer* (2015) gained international recognition for its portrayal of post-war justice in Germany, earning him the German Film Award for Best Direction. Kraume's commitment to exploring historical narratives continued with *The Silent Revolution* (2018), a drama depicting the 1956 student uprising in East Germany. In addition to his film work, Kraume has also made an impact in television with projects like *Terror—Ihr Urteil* (2016), a courtroom drama that sparked public debate on moral issues. His latest film, *Measures of Men* (2023), delves into the Ovaherero and Nama genocide, showcasing his ongoing dedication to tackling

important historical subjects through film. With his insightful storytelling and attention to detail, Lars Kraume continues to be a prominent figure in German cinema.

Gamze Özçürümez Bilgili, MD is a psychiatrist and a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. She obtained her medical degree from Hacettepe University School of Medicine (English Section) in 1996. Currently, she serves as a full-time professor at Başkent University Faculty of Medicine, where she is also the chair of the Department of Psychiatry. Additionally, she holds positions as a visiting professor and invited lecturer at the International Psychoanalytic University Berlin since 2017. Her past roles include serving as the secretary-general of the Psychiatric Association of Turkey (PAT) from 2011 to 2013. She is actively involved in the psychoanalytic community as a candidate and member of the Istanbul Psychoanalytic Association, and she established the Neuropsychoanalysis Working Unit of PAT, remaining an active member of the Turkish Neuropsychoanalysis Study Group. Her research and publications span a variety of topics, including psychoanalytic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, social trauma, consultation-liaison psychiatry, psychosomatics, personality disorders, and affective disorders. She is a member of the Migration-Trauma in Transition (MTT) and Social Trauma in Changing Societies (STICS) networks, supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Her contributions to the fields of social trauma, loneliness, and psychoanalysis have been recognised in numerous international scholarly publications.

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Goran Radovanović. Born in Belgrade in 1957, Goran Radovanović graduated in art history from Belgrade’s Faculty of Philosophy in 1982. Between 1977 and 1980 he resided in Munich on a scholarship awarded by the Goethe Institute. Following his return to Belgrade, he has worked as writer and director of both feature and documentary films. He is a member of the European Film Academy, Berlin and the Film Artists Association of Serbia. He has worked as guest professor at EICTV (International Film and Television School), San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba; VGIK, Moscow; Oberlin College, Ohio, USA; ESAP—Escola Superior Artística do Porto, Portugal, and elsewhere. His films were screened and awarded at numerous film festivals worldwide.

Biljana Stanković, PhD is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Her teaching and research focuses on qualitative methodology and critical psychology. She served as a representative for Serbia in the DAAD-funded network Trauma, Trust and Memory / Social Trauma in Changing Societies, and teaches methodology and ethics modules of the international MA Social Trauma Course.

She recently co-edited a book, *Forced Migration and Social Trauma: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from Psychoanalysis, Psychology, Sociology and Politics* (Routledge, 2018), and contributed to the books *Social Trauma—An Interdisciplinary Textbook* (Springer, 2021) and *Sociocultural Trauma and Relational WellBeing in the Eastern European Context* (Springer, 2023).

Svetlozar Vassilev is professor and head of the Bulgarian Institute of Human Relations at New Bulgarian University, training and supervising psychoanalyst with the Bulgarian Psychoanalytical Society. He has authored the book *Psychoanalysis of the Film Experience* and edited *Contemporary Kleinian Psychoanalysis*, the Bulgarian translation of *Envy and Gratitude* by Melanie Klein, as well as more than a dozen books in the field of psychoanalysis. Dr Vassilev is the chair of the IPA Film and Psychoanalysis Group and the Bulgarian consultant of the European Psychoanalytic Film Festival.

Jasmila Žbanić is an Oscar- and BAFTA-nominated director. In 1997, together with her friends, she founded the artists' association "Deblokada", through which she produced, wrote, and directed her feature film *Grbavica*, awarded the Golden Bear at Berlinale 2006, and best film at the American Film Institute (AFI) awards. *Quo Vadis, Aida?* premiered at Venice Film Festival, and besides multiple other awards, this movie received Independent Spirit Awards for Best International Film, European Film Academy Award for best film, director, and lead actress, as well as nominations for the Oscar in the category Best International Feature Film at the US Academy Awards, and two BAFTA Awards. She directed one episode of the acclaimed HBO TV show *The Last of Us*. Venice Film Festival presented her TV show *I Know Your Soul* in 2023.

Introduction: Cinematic art and the void

Andreas Hamburger

What is the role of cinematic art in the representation and social processing of traumatic historical events? Cinema itself has posed this question prominently in the aftermath of World War II and the Shoah, and scholars have written insightful books on trauma representation, from Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) to Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2004) and Judith Butler's late answer *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (2016). Among the most referenced books is Cathy Caruth's seminal *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), which among examples from literature also discusses a film, Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959). She based her argument on a rereading of Freud's theory of repetition compulsion as the language of trauma (1920g). Other than Freud, who struggled to capture the clinical phenomenon of repetition compulsion in war veterans which seemed to contradict the pleasure principle, Caruth substantialised the concept of trauma, claiming that the traumatic experience is inherently irre-presentable; and this position has become a widely accepted topos in the increasing trauma discourse ever since.

Often, in this debate, psychoanalytic terms and concepts are used and applied to film theory, such as Freud's *Nachträglichkeit* ["deferred action"]

or “après-coup”], and, of course, psychoanalytic trauma theory. The present volume tries to address this question again but also to give it a different twist: it focuses on a dialogue between film scholarship and a more practical than theoretical psychoanalysis, and at the same time aims to give a voice to diverse cultures of trauma cinema from Germany, South-Eastern Europe, and Turkey. Which, as the reader will see, is not without conflict.

The first part of this book will explore the topic of film and trauma from different theoretical perspectives. It starts with an introductory chapter, “The Elephant and the screen: Cinema in the aftermath of social trauma” (Hamburger, 2024a), which discusses the definition of social trauma and post-traumatic cinema mainly (but not only) through examples from German film history. Dijana Jelača (2024) and Tatjana Petzer (2024), both outstanding experts in South-East European film history, will widen the scope and discuss the topic of film and trauma from the perspective of film scholarship.

In the second part of the book, we will exemplify our findings with the above-mentioned films and their psychoanalytical interpretations, accompanied by interviews with the film-makers. The section will be opened with an introductory chapter on film psychoanalysis and trauma movies (“Filming history, filming trauma: Relational psychoanalysis of cinematic art in the post-traumatic void”, Hamburger, 2024b)

It is not by chance that we selected the five national cinematic cultures that will be addressed in the present book. Since 2012, an interdisciplinary group of researchers from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Germany, and Serbia, later joined by colleagues from Turkey, had been studying the psychosocial consequences of post-war and post-dictatorial societies (Delić et al., 2014; Hamburger & Scher, 2018).¹ We researched processes of attachment, mentalization, and trauma recognition as well as the impact of social traumatic pasts on psychotherapy, development, education, and migration (Hamburger, 2018; Hamburger et al., 2018a, 2019, 2020).

In our decade of collective work, we also addressed the cultural mechanisms of othering and the conspiracy of silence (Hamburger et al., 2018b). Film plays a significant role in such a societal negotiation

¹With the support of the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD, managed by Carmen Scher and her International Office at IPU. Over the years, our staff from these countries shared their research with more than 900 students in our eleven summer schools (Hancheva et al., 2018; Scher & Malmheden, 2021).

of the traumatic past—or, in the constructing of it. In 2013, we offered a first summer school on film and social trauma in Sozopol, Bulgaria, where we discussed Charlie Chaplin's *The Immigrant* (1917) (with Vivian Pramataroff-Hamburger), as well as Danis Tanović's *Triage* (2009), Kamen Kalev's *Iztochni piesi* [*Eastern Plays*] (2009), and Florian Henckell von Donnersmarck's *Das Leben der Anderen* [*The Lives of Others*] (2006) (with Camellia Hancheva and Svetlozar Vassilev).

When our project drew to a close in 2022, we decided to turn again to cinematic art as an important domain of post-traumatic social discourse. But here we also inadvertently met with an obstacle. While starting to organise our eleventh summer school as a film festival in Sarajevo, in cooperation with the almost legendary Sarajevo Film Festival (which had been founded while still under the Serbian siege), we were in for a surprise. Colleagues from the former warring parties Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, more precisely Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Serbs, who were well acquainted and had even become friends with each other, suddenly got into an insoluble dispute about which films could be shown, when, and where. The originally planned location for the summer school, Sarajevo, was suddenly called into question: one of the Serbian professors feared that Serbian students might risk being indicted in Bosnia if openly speaking their minds (meaning that they might argue that the mass murder of Bosniaks in Srebrenica hadn't been an act of genocide). Although this professor was the only one, even in the Serbian group, who had this concern, we had to realise that there was a political conflict overshadowing and invading our discussions. Shortly before, the high commissioner for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, had engaged in a public confrontation with Milorad Dodik, president of Bosnia and Herzegovina's constituent entity Republika Srpska. Dodik had provocatively stated that, despite the ruling of the International Criminal Court (ICC), he did not consider the mass killing in Srebrenica to be a genocidal act. Eventually, Inzko had used his legislative power enshrined in the Dayton Agreement to penalise denial of the genocide. Although this new law explicitly criminalises only the seditious intent of such public statements (High Representative, 2021) and although a real prosecution was extremely unlikely (and has not yet occurred even in one single case, Grebo, 2023), the colleagues' concerns could not be dispelled, and so we didn't find a solution other than to move our summer school to Berlin—to supposedly safer territory.

For me, the experience was quite puzzling. Was it possible that the colleague was right, and Serbian students could be expected to deny the genocide of Srebrenica? Did they really need protection from a perceived attack by a Bosnian–Western opinion alliance, of which I would be a part? I tried to argue that the genocide in Srebrenica had been established beyond doubt by the International Criminal Court, but had to learn that, as a fact, the ICC is widely regarded as a laughing stock in Serbia and the Republika Srpska. There is, I was told, a saying: “It’s as true as The Hague.” I really had to ask myself, as the project leader, how much social reality I had simply blanked out.

What had our ten years of working together achieved even within our own ranks? In our first joint paper with the programmatic title “Academic model of trauma healing in post-war societies” we had stated:

We come from different cultures, but we share similar aspirations, being inclined to a thorough understanding instead of quick judgments, to dialogue instead of quarrel, and to reflection instead of projection. If trauma causes the disintegration of linking processes within the psyche, such that overwhelming traumatic experiences cannot be integrated into an affect-connected longtime memory, but circulate like errant fighters in the jungle of a fragmented autobiography—then what helps is acknowledgement, respect, and connection by naming the truth. (Delić et al., 2014, p. 78)

Had we really skipped the first necessary step in overcoming social trauma, acknowledgement, hushed it up, and gone on to the research agenda? How could I take it for granted that our close cooperation would prevent us from slipping into what for me seemed like prejudice and a distorted image of history? It seemed that my expectations from a German perspective did not readily fit those from other countries.

And this disparity did not only apply to the whereabouts of the conference—it continued in the choice of the movies. As a rule, each country’s staff members could nominate a movie they found to be pertinent to the country’s social trauma. There wasn’t much of a doubt for most countries, but it seemed very hard to find any Serbian film that

addressed Serbia's own active involvement in the Yugoslavian Wars.² A first proposal by some of the Serbian colleagues, Ognjen Glavonić's *Teret [The Load]* (2018), which tells the story of a truck driver who finds out that he unwittingly transported corpses from the Kosovo war, was rejected by the same concerned colleague for painting too negative a picture of Serbia. Eventually, the Serbian delegation chose Goran Radovanović's *Enklava [Enclave]* (2015), a film about a boy from a Serbian enclave in Kosovo and his being threatened. Camellia Hancheva from Sofia University wrote a psychoanalytical interpretation of *Enklava*, while Biljana Stanković from Belgrade University conducted the interview with the director.³

The confusion described above is certainly a result of my own cultural partiality. In Germany, after a first phase of denial, the position prevailed that social trauma must first and foremost be acknowledged by the society of the perpetrators; but this view on the past is not unanimous and parts of German society tend to enjoy movies where the war is depicted as a "normal" adventurous background (Hamburger, 2024a, this volume). As a prominent example of the demand for acknowledgement and breaking the conspiracy of silence, Lars Kraume's *Der Staat gegen Fritz Bauer [The People vs. Fritz Bauer]* (DE 2015) will be discussed (Hamburger, 2024c), accompanied by Friederike Bassenge's interview with the director (Kraume & Bassenge, 2024).

Other countries from our network have also developed differently. Bosnian films from the 2000s onwards transformed from "exclusively 'blaming the other' (concrete ethnic others) to 'blaming all'—proclaiming, much more vaguely, that everyone involved in the war should be considered guilty" (Levi, 2007; see also Tatjana Petzer's (2024) and Dijana Jelača's (2024) contributions to the present volume). In this volume, Bulgarian psychoanalyst Nadia Kozhouharova (2024) will analyse Jasmila Žbanić's *Grbavica [Esma's Secret: Grbavica / Grbavica: Land of My Dreams]* (2006), a film about the fate of a Bosnian girl born of a

² As further research has brought forward some examples, I will come back to this in the epilogue (Hamburger, 2024d).

³ The film analyses in this volume were generally written by analysts from a country other than that of the film, while the interviews with the directors were conducted by colleagues who shared their native tongue and culture.

war rape and overcoming the social isolation within her own society. The film analysis is accompanied by Damir Arsenijević's conversation with the director (Žbanić & Arsenijević, 2024) and an interview with Ajna Jusić, a Bosnian psychologist and activist for war rape children, conducted by Diana Husremović (Jusić & Husremović, 2024). While this film already opens a path to mutual acknowledgement, another outstanding example of cinematic reconciliation is Alen Drljević's *Muškarci ne plaču* [*Men Don't Cry*] (BA 2017), which will be analysed by Bulgarian psychoanalyst and film expert Svetlozar Vassilev (2024, this volume).

In Turkey, a tradition of critical and self-critical films exists—only that this cinematic subculture is still under threat, and so are students and professors who openly address certain taboo topics. We felt this quite drastically when preparing for our Berlin film festival. A Turkish film about the Armenian genocide in 1915, that we had selected for our screening, had to be withdrawn because Turkish participants would have been in danger of being blacklisted. And this, as opposed to the Serbian colleague's illusionary fear of students being threatened with arrest in Sarajevo, is a reality.⁴ As a consequence, we agreed on another film, Özcan Alper's likewise thoughtful and brave, but less incriminated *Sonbahar* [*Autumn*] (TK 2008), analysed in this volume by Cem Kaptanoğlu (2024) along with an interview with the director, conducted by Gamze Özçürümez (2024).

Bulgaria, the fifth country in our network, did not experience a lack of film productions with a critical focus on history, and there is no threat to artists and researchers who choose to screen and discuss them. *Sadilishteto* [*The Judgement*] (BG, DE, HR, MK 2014) by Stephan Komandarev is an example of cinema that puts its finger on the wound. It is interpreted in this volume by the German film psychoanalysis expert Vivian Pramataroff-Hamburger (2024), accompanied by Camellia Hancheva's interview with the director (Komandarev & Hancheva, 2024).

⁴ Apart from the official charges under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalises “denigration of the Turkish nation”—the most notable trials were against Orhan Pamuk in 2005, and as recently as October 2023 against eleven former members of the Central Executive Committee of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) (MLSA, 2023)—there are blacklists that can end the careers of academic or administrative staff and journalists.

Different cultures, different wounds, different denials or acknowledgements. What does it mean to “screen the scar”? In our book, we hope to explore some of these questions by turning to the silver screen as a paradigmatic art for cultural negotiation of social trauma.

As a conclusion of this journey, the different ways of dealing with social trauma in the film cultures we visited in this volume will be compared (Hamburger, 2024d). I will come back to my cross-cultural astonishment described above about the extent of unaddressed differences in our own group. Will this comparison lead to a clear-cut result? There is reason for doubt. The elephant is quite a different animal in different rooms.

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