

Title: Shifting borders and identities in the post-transition Czech road film
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This paper will explore the shifting borders and identities in two Czech road films, Jan Svěrák's *Jízda* [*The Ride*, 1994] and Alice Nellis's *Výlet* [*The Trip*, 2003]. A promising genre for expressing Czech national identity given the various past changes to the Czech(oslovak) frontier, the road film is also a traditionally masculine genre in which power and prowess are linked to one's performance in the driver's seat, and drivers are predominantly men (Laderman). This paper will show that Svěrák and Nellis's films exploit the tradition of the gendered road, while also subverting the canonical associations of the "open road" (i.e., unbridled freedom, limitless mobility) to create a unique post-transition space, where the genre's requisite detours, delays and digressions often go hand in hand with national and sexual deficiencies. Indeed, *The Ride*, framed by the Czech's border with the West, expresses Czech post-transition anxiety about "measuring up" in the language of sexual performance. The Czech drivers are emasculated as their attempt at sexual conquest is thwarted by a more western rival. Nellis's *The Trip*, in contrast, examines the Czech-Slovak border and aptly adopts the metaphor of the dysfunctional family to depict national tensions between Czechs and Slovaks. The gendered constructions of Czech national identity as seen in *The Ride* are often reversed at *The Trip*'s eastern border, moreover: only *after* sufficient emasculation are Czech admitted entry into the Slovak frontier. In sum, this paper will contextualize the Czech road film against the larger backdrop of the road genre while paying particular attention to the interplay between the Czech national borders (east and west), national identity and constructions of masculinity.