“Gordana Crnković has written an absolutely delightful and inspiring book on an oddly neglected topic: the literature and film of the so-called ‘Second World’—Eastern Europe, during its post-World War II years behind the Iron Curtain. Far from being a dark and despairing response to the various forms of repression then current, this is a literature of pleasure, warmth, energy, humor, and the overcoming of obstacles, political and otherwise. Crnković has chosen key novels and films to show us what we have been missing. Her enthusiasm and keen analytic powers endow the fiction and film in question with the special aura of a mini-Renaissance—one unmatched in the ‘First World’ of the Cold War.”

Marjorie Perloff, Sadie Dernham Pack Professor of Humanities, Emerita, Stanford University, USA, and author of The Edge of Irony: Modernism in the Shadow of the Habsburg Empire

“Gordana Crnković writes with such gentle delight, such a captivating capacity to explore and explain, such a vigorous understanding of the way film unfolds in front of the viewer and inside their head that you want to grab the camera and start filming then and there.”

Milcho Manchevski, Academy Award-nominated writer, director, and photographer

“Gordana Crnković’s passion for literature and film shines through all these essays. In each of the 15 shorter ones she has penned a charming love letter to the film or book in question, and in each of the five longer ones she provides the deeper sort of scholarly (but still highly readable) analysis for which she is well known. Overall, she has done a great service to these outstanding artists of what used to be ‘Eastern Europe’ in bringing them to our attention.”

Ronelle Alexander, Professor Emerita, University of California, Berkeley, USA

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