

THE INITIATIVES, PEDAGOGIES, AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS OF THE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY FILM AWARDS

The origins and objectives of the Hungarian University Film Awards³⁷

Having chosen to discuss films that have been selected as runners-up for the Hungarian University Film Awards (HUFA), I will first introduce this initiative. After months of preparation, in the spring semester of the 2020/2021 academic year courses and film clubs at eight universities in Hungary and Romania were offered for students dedicated to the screening, debating and ranking of six Hungarian films from 2019. The reason why selected films date back to this year is the global pandemic that sent film industries into hibernation all over the world, led to the delay or abandonment of various projects and also seriously affected distribution and premier. To put it bluntly, there were simply not enough new releases in 2020 to create a short list of competing films. The concept of HUFA found inspiration in the European University Film Award (EUFA) established in 2016 with the aim to foster European film culture and the culture of debating. The mission statement of EUFA is as follows: “[I]n times of growing nationalism in Europe and elsewhere we had the idea to look for a common element to foster a European understanding, to search for a common European identity defined by culture, especially by film.” (www.uefa.org) The framework gradually extended and by 2020 there were participating institutions in 25 countries (as opposed to the 13 in the first year) each delegating a student to participate at the deliberation meeting held in Hamburg where national representatives further debated the qualities of the five runners-up for that year’s awards and developed the aesthetic and topical criteria for the award itself. EUFA awards are presented to the winner each December as part of the European Film Awards (EFA) ceremony in the audience awards category.

Hungary has been represented by Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest since the establishment of EUFA and Romania by Sapientia University in Cluj-Napoca since 2017. Faculty members at these institutions have gained considerable insight into the general purpose of the awards and gathered essential know-how about organizing such an event, so it is not surprising that Andrea Pócsik from Pázmány University came up with the idea of HUFA and served as supervisor in its initial year. During the adoption process, the transnational framework was naturally weakened as EUFA’s outspoken stake in “fostering a common understanding, articulating values and ideas, searching for a way

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to understand this world and each other and overcoming national, social and stereotype marks” (<https://www.eufa.org/recap/2nd-european-university-film-award-2017/>) had to be tailored to fit the national framework. Naturally this meant choosing Hungarian films. Instructors participating on behalf of their respective institutions decided to include the following titles in the shortlist for the 2021 awards: *FOMO: Fear of Missing Out* (Attila Hartung), *On the Quiet* (Zoltán Nagy), *Those Who Remained* (Barnabás Tóth), *Tall Tales* (Attila Szász), *Not the family* (Anna Kis), and *The Euphoria of Being* (Réka Szabó). Similar to EUFA, which has featured four documentaries in its five-year existence³⁸, the Hungarian University Film Awards contains two documentaries, the work of Anna Kis and Réka Szabó. The decision to represent this genre somewhat stronger than in the EUFA framework, recognizes its eminence within Hungarian screen culture. Although the status of documentaries somewhat weakened in post-socialist cinema, more recently it has regained popularity among both lay audiences and critics. In addition, documentary cinema has always resonated closely with relevant social issues and forged an intimate relationship with popular public discourses of the day.

The nomination and voting process in both EUFA and HUFA is a two-tier system involving, on the one hand, the selection of the competing films by film scholars from participating institutions and, on the other hand, students ranking the films and choosing the winner. Given this framework, developing the criteria of what qualities the best films should possess needs to take into consideration generational factors. Students in the early adult age might have or rather should hold dear different values, ideas, sensitivities and narratives than their tutors, dominantly of middle-age. I say should have because the outspoken goal of these initiatives is to map up European identity not as something static but ever-changing. The same applies for Hungarian identity as I believe the manner in which we mark out the place of European identity markers within the Hungarian self-image and vice versa is significantly influenced by age factors, whether one was socialised in the late-socialist and early post regime change period or in the decade that followed the EU enlargement in the 2000s. Not only age differences ensure that the criteria for the films are hybrid. Geographical origin is also crucial, although more so in the case of EUFA. From west to east and north to south, there are significant social and cultural differences in Europe. Alternative trajectories of development, life situations and conflicts also exist within a single nation; the HUFA selection lay bare strong cosmopolitan aspirations in society while not turning a blind eye on provincial Hungary. Within both initiatives the local reaches out towards the global, as each film adds a fresh stroke to the multitude of experiences of what it means to belong to a transnational or national community. If this attempt to make contact ever succeeds, it does so because of both the films and the debates they trigger.

³⁸ These were *Fire At Sea* by Gianfranco Rosi (2016), *The War Show* by Andreas Dalsgaard and Obaidah Zytoon (2016), *Tarzan's Testicles* by Alexandru Solomon (2017), and *Saudi Runaway* by Susanne Regina Meures (2020).

As this lengthy introduction hopefully clarified, HUFA is a practice-oriented learning environment that requires goal-oriented thinking. As Pócsik contends: “[s]electing a film means considering its “politics and poetics”—how the film’s chosen topic and form represent our social, political and cultural environment in Europe—and estimating what effect it will have on the audience.” (Pócsik, 2017:204) Pócsik sees a clear opportunity in the initiative to experiment with new methodological frameworks in teaching film studies at the academic level, including “the development of debating skills, a proficiency that is underrepresented in the Hungarian educational system with a preference for both the frontal teaching method and the autocratic classroom management strategy.” (Pócsik, 2021:44). Along this line, the mission statement of HUFA aspires to advance student emancipation “by increasing awareness toward new releases of Hungarian cinema, by strengthening critical thinking, by developing expertise in the contemporary films, by advocating in-depth analytical approach to national screen culture, and by developing skills in review writing, and the informed comprehension of film.” (Magyar Filmtudományi Társaság) These knowledges and skills are just as essential to understand any film culture or make historical investigations of cinema as to establish the criteria for the film to be awarded. I will now turn to the selected films and explore, on the one hand, how these titles can be arranged in two groups by their past success and what such grouping of outward-looking and inward-looking films means. On the other hand, I propose to analyse character psychology films and, within those, symptoms of social pathologies.

Insular cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan insularity

The international and national visibility of the films is a factor with reference to which the corpus at hand might be diversified. Three films stand out with their success at festivals. *The Euphoria of Being* has won prestigious awards at the Locarno International Film Festival, the Millennium Docs Against Gravity, the Minsk International Film Festival, the Munich International Documentary Festival, the Sarajevo Film Festival, the Choreoscope International Dance Film Festival and the Trieste Film Festival, in most cases awarded for being the audience favourite. In the international festival circuit, *Those Who Remained* won Anchorage International Film Festival, Palms Springs International Film Festival, Sofia International Film Festival, Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival; in Hungary it won the Hungarian Film Critics Awards and at the Hungarian Film Week it was declared a winner in the categories Best Actor, Best Director, Best Screenplay, and the Grande Prize. *Tall Tales* was presented with awards at the Balkan Panorama Film Festival, the Cinequest San Jose Film Festival, the Hungarian Film Critics Awards, the Hungarian Film Week (Best Makeup, Best Music), the Love is Folly International Film Festival, the Parma International Music Film Festival and received nominations Cleveland International Film Festival, the Pune International Film Festival, and in six categories of the 2020 Hungarian Film Week. At the later *Tall Tales* lost out in each and every category. *Those Who Remained* was also nominated, indicating that the cinematic profession and the critical establishment was more supportive of art film sensitivities than the more sentimental and

commercially successful midcult cinema. The other three films achieved less fame: *FOMO: Fear of Missing Out* secured one trophy at the Hungarian Film Week (in the category of Best Editing), whereas *On the Quiet* received one nomination at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. *Not the Family*, winner of the Budapest International Documentary Festival, can be hardly compared with the above films, since it is a short documentary made for television and no reliable viewer ratings are available about it.

The foreign success of Holocaust and post-war themed films is evident from the above overview of festival reception. This may be both explained by the centrality of this period in the European transnational memory landscape and the recent rise of Hungarian films with this focus. The outstanding success of László Jeles' *Son of Saul* (*Saul fia*, 2015) has sparked a new renaissance of representing the Shoah in this country, most notably in Péter Gárdos' *Fever at Dawn* (*Hajnali láz*, 2015) Ferenc Török's *1945* (2017), Révész Bálint's documentary *Granny Project* (*Nagyi projekt*, 2017), and György Dobray's *Stones* (*Kövek*, 2020). The films of the past years, with focus on physical/mental recovery (*Fever at Dawn*, *Those Who Remained*), exploring notions of guilt, complicity, self-justification, and denial in post-war Hungarian society (*1945*), and laying bare the unofficial, grass-root layer of memory work (*Granny Project*, *The Euphoria of Being*), brought about the post-epic/tragic phase of representing the Holocaust. This memory is less consensus-seeking and politicised, more fragmented and also carries elements of empowerment but, more importantly, it is a symptom of the shifting representational emphasis from the raw experience of destruction/survival in the past to coming to terms with the burden of victimhood in the present. Although a historical film, *Tall Tales* shares a common path with the other two titles. It lacks the epic dimension and grand narrative style of previous historical biopics like *Sunshine* (*A napfény íze*, István Szabó, 1999), *Bridge Man* (*Hídember*, Géza Bereményi, 2002), *The Unburied Man* (*A temetetlen halott*, Márta Mészáros, 2004) *Bet on Revenge* (*Kincsem*, Gábor Herendi, 2017), and finds a delicate balance between historical authenticity, tense narration, and generic appeal. Just like the previous television work of Szász with scriptwriter Norbert Köbli – including *The Ambassador to Bern* (*A berni követ*, 2014), *Demimonde* (*Félvilág*, 2015), and *Eternal Winter* (*Örök tél*, 2018) – it features signature events and archetypical characters of a historical-political era, the enjoyment of which requires little knowledge of national history. As such, it manages national themes in a manner desirable for international audiences. This is what I call *insular cosmopolitanism*.

By contrast, I grasp the three other films with somewhat unified focus and similar audience response both home and abroad with the notion of *cosmopolitan insularity*. Given the widespread interest in the long term effects of traumas, the lack of international visibility for films about sexual harassment seems odd, especially in light of the numerous screen products – including feature films, such as *The Tale* (Jennifer Fox, 2018), *Bombshell* (Jay Roach, 2019), *The Assistant* (Kitty Green, 2019), mini series, like *The Loudest Voice* (2019), *Unbelievable* (2019), furthermore series, including *Big Little Lies* (2017-2019) and *The Morning Show* (2019-) – addressing the topic. Without sweeping scandals of its own, a decentralised funding system lacking powerful men making

essential industry decisions and a greater gender equality, the European film industry regards systematic gender bias as a problem specific to Hollywood.³⁹ This situation alone does not explain why *On the Quiet* and *FOMO: Fear of Missing Out* had little success at international festivals and were seen by fewer people in Hungary than any of the historical films.⁴⁰ Films raising awareness to sexual abuse and cyber bullying with teenage victims are not unprecedented in Hungarian cinema, as Mihály Schwechtje' critically acclaimed *I Hope You'll Die Next Time (Remélem legközelebb sikerül meghalnod :)*, (2018) enjoyed a steady following on Netflix despite receiving no state founding. It is important to note that sexual abuse is linked exclusively to school environment, an obvious and artistically safe location to explore the psychological and moral dimensions of harassment. Being a space of many potential conflicts, may those arise from misbehaviour, sexual awakening, social and cultural differences or the struggle between the individual and the community, the school is an ideal location for films to discuss different types of social pathologies. Only in the past few years, some memorable films generating widespread debate made educational institutes their key location, such as *And Then We Danced* (Levan Akin, 2019), *Another Round (Druk)*, (Thomas Vinterberg, 2020), and *Cuties (Mignonnes)*, (Maimouna Doucouré, 2020). I do not think that the hot issues of these works – teenage homosexuality, alcoholism caused by occupational burnout, and the social-media induced sexualization of young children – are more important than sexual harassment, nevertheless quality screenplays, high production values and intense acting are essential for social commentary to be effective. Unfortunately, the two Hungarian films fall short with regard to these and feel unfinished. They promise more than what they actually achieve and eventually revert to the well-tested coming-of-age narrative formula and with serious conceptual flaws, as I will detail later, fail to join the ranks of arresting social problem films. Overburdened with conceptual deficiencies, a problem not unknown in Hungarian cinema, *On the Quiet* and *FOMO: Fear of Missing Out* mismanage global themes and, by reversing the pattern between insularity and cosmopolitanism, come through as works of cosmopolitan insularity.

Trauma as the common thread of social commentary

The Euphoria of Being, *Those Who Remained*, and *Tall Tales* explore traumatic aspects of Hungarian history with victimhood serving as the underlying motif of each film. The protagonist of Réka Szabó's documentary *The Euphoria of Being* is Éva Fahidi, a

³⁹ According to Scott Roxborough and Rhonda Richford, the long-standing cult of the auteur in European cinema has led to a film culture in which one's professional integrity as director is regarded to be more important than the moral integrity of the same person. As such, as the authors contend that "the debate about how to move forward in Europe is far more contentious than in the U.S., where the Time's Up and NoMeToo movements created a cultural flashpoint that demanded immediate change" (2018, n.pag.).

⁴⁰ Charlène Favier's debut feature film *Slalom* (2020) did better at festivals, was even included in the EUFA 2020 shortlist, yet failed to do well at the box office.

Holocaust survivor in her nineties, the author of two memoirs, an activist, and, as the film testifies, the participant of a movement theatre performance titled *Sea Leander*. Being not only one of the last remaining survivors of Auschwitz-Birkenau but a skilful speaker, one who despite her advanced age is in full control of her intellectual capacities, a traditional talking head documentary with Fahidi would have in itself become a significant contribution to Shoah-themed cinema. The film however documents the rehearsal process leading up to the performance and, as such, is a *werkfilm*. Bypassing the traditional interview method, Szabó invites Fahidi to share memories in various situations during the rehearsal process. She both verbalises her philosophy of seeking clarity without finding closure – “Trauma is like that. You never get to the end of it. You keep returning to the same point, and in the meantime you live happily” – and, through her entire being, also performs the duality of trauma and euphoria as lived experience. Despite swelling feet, spills of dizziness, and some fractured ribs, she forces her frail body to overcome age and accomplish the movements the stage production requires. Being as performance is more important for Fahidi than the performance of her being, putting her life on theatrical display, and she really finds it difficult to remember the scripted version of her narrative. The question film critic Tamás Soós raises is very relevant “will she be able to memorize for the performance sentences she has uttered thousands of times, yet never in such a condensed and delicate monologue?”

Fahidi displays heightened emotions, a clear symptom of the lack of closure and the impossibility to temper traumas, when she addresses her dead father, reproaching him for the naïve trust that he could save the family either with wealth or by converting to Christianity faith, a false hope the European Jewry shared. Fahidi blames her father for his stubborn predilection to the motherland, an attachment that remained unbroken even after it had plunged into unthinking anti-Semitism and a step-by-step abandonment of the basic rights of its own citizens. At this point, the restless, traumatic mind becomes the voice of social commentary identifying Hungary as a place where, from time to time, vulnerability becomes the central component of identity.

The two feature films are set after WWII, with *Those Who Remained* concentrating on the psychological challenges of Holocaust survivors. The friendship of a middle-aged male doctor, Aladár, and the teenage girl, Klára, is portrayed as the framework to the process of post-trauma adjustment and mourning. Well informed about cognitive mechanisms of recovery, the filmmaker emphasizes the extreme emotional vulnerability of survival and depicts the bond between the protagonists as potentially breaking the social norms of adult-teenager relationship. The film creatively balances between a surrogate father–surrogate daughter narrative and a story of romance, laying bare two strategies of overcoming loss: substitution and avoidance. The post-Holocaust Jewish diaspora, those who remained, hope to return to normalcy by embracing instincts of care, connectivity and familial bonds. Recovery from traumas depends upon recovering trust, the affect that is hard to contain within socially acceptable forms, especially for Klára, who reaches sexual maturity soon after meeting Aladár. Yet, the film cannot be accused of exploiting sexuality, as the numerous examples of haptic moments – such as caressing, kissing, Klára

resting her head on Aladár's lap – are essential within the culture of trust. More so, since the Stalinist regime, building in strength as the story advances, sows the seeds of instinctual mistrust in society. The toxic effect ideological indoctrination has on private life makes it difficult for past wounds to heal. If *Those Who Remained*, in the same vein as Ferenc Török's *1945*, is topical today, it is because of the diagnostic study of national psyche poisoned by mistrust towards a fellow being. Klára, at the end of the film shares none of the optimism upon learning about Stalin's death broadcasted on radio, possibly as a consequence of her traumatic experience of 20th-century Hungarian history, where private happiness is just as ephemeral and fragile as social disunity and sectarianism is permanent.

Attila Szász's *Tall Tales*, not unlike his previous historical and period pieces made with Norbert Köbli for television, focuses on opportunism, a character flaw that disrupts moral integrity and puts people in the service of higher powers in order to survive. With cleverly written, tight dramatic structure and solid cinematography reminiscent of political thrillers, the film offers both a universal reading of human weakness and claim credit as a subtle period study. Set immediately after WWII, the character study of Hankó, a con-man making a living from bringing hope or closure to families with male members lost in the war; Judit, a beautiful, clever and emancipated woman; and Bérces, her violent husband and suspected war criminal who unexpectedly returns after having been considered deceased, develops into a traditional love triangle. The exploration of post-war male opportunism and the desperate attempts to conceal true identities from the authorities in a Soviet-occupied Hungary is complicated by tense melodrama with unmistakable references to James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, a novel previously adapted in Hungarian cinema by György Fehér with the title *Passion (Szenvedély, 1998)*. After suffering much physical and psychological terror from the husband, Judit and Hankó stand up to Bérces even if by violent means. Their refusal to repress is presented as a symbolic act of starting anew, a precondition to begin a more meaningful life. As a period study, *Tall Tales* is just as subtle as *Those Who Remained*. If Tóth's film highlighted rationing, the relocation of upper-middle class families, and the creation of circuits of informant by the secret police as the historical conditions of life in the late-1940s, Szász makes reference to widespread anxieties of families waiting for news about loved ones, the pragmatism of Soviet occupying forces, and the role of Hungarian officers in war crimes. Lacking to offer a coherent historical interpretation, the "period studies" aspect of the two films can, at most, create a historical atmosphere for exploring the traumatized mind in an art film (*Those Who Remained*) and a psychologically realist depiction of family violence in a midcult film (*Tall Tales*).

As previously mentioned, *On the Quiet* and *FOMO: Fear of Missing Out* are set in contemporary settings and with a focus on the younger generation □ these titles explore victimhood with regard to sexual abuse and underprivileged rural teenagers. Beside the recent global attention to sexual harassment in the wake of the NoMeToo movement, scandals in certain Hungarian theatre companies also give relevance of the problems raised in the films. More specifically, the sexual abuses committed by reknown director Péter

Gothár in József Katona Theatre led to the termination of his contract by the director of the company Gábor Máté. *On the Quiet* stars Máté in the role of Frigyes, a charismatic head-instructor of a music school accused of non-consensual bodily intimacy by Nóri, an underage student. In the ensuing drama, Dávid, the talented leading violinist of the orchestra, first disregards the accusations, but as more proof of the possible abuse surface, gradually loses unconditional faith in his mentor and friend, and confronts Frigyes with his frustration and discontent. Portraying the relationship between Frigyes and Nóri in the grey zone between paedophilic attachment and companionship built on the desire for human warmth, the sexual harassment narrative is consciously ambiguous. Instead of morally judging the characters or offering a casual conclusion, the film explores, as Bálint Kovács contends, “how deep the spirit of denial and instinctual rejection runs in the social consciousness...how we quietly pass along things that will quietly destroy someone’s life for good.” (Kovács) I share this assertion, and believe that in the focus of the film is the culture of denial, present in all walks of life, equally among intelligent, hard-working, ambitious teenagers with respect for teachers. Intelligence, hard-work, and ambition become self-defeating qualities when silently acknowledging paternalism. In this context I find the position represented by Gábor Máté with regard to institutional scandals problematic. At an open forum he suggested to take into consideration other factors than the victim’s traumatic experience of the harassment, most notably the public defamation of institutional image (Móra). He urges us to believe that institutions can effectively and properly handle cases of sexual abuse within their own four walls. Whereas this might be true for autonomous institutions, it still leaves uncontested the deep rooted social pathology of paternalism.

If *On the Quite* is the quiet and mindful version of NoMeToo inspired cinema, *FOMO* is the very opposite. With four verbose high-school students in the centre, using dynamic cinematography and catchy sound tracks, the film delves into the high-octane prank culture, the dominantly male social media genre of mean-spirited laughs, that takes the “who cares” attitude to a dumb extreme. The introductory part of the film draws attention to this media phenomenon by offering a montage of YouTube prank videos produced by the four friends. Hartung’s social commentary would have been more self-reflective and honest, had he chosen to explore this somewhat controversial genre (with roots in both MTV’s infamous animated comedy series *Beavis and Butthead*, the comedy TV show *Jackass* and its numerous clones), controversial for its being repulsive yet enjoyable, for championing juvenile directionless and apathy, and also because it is a symptom of the twisted cultural logic of breaking social taboos in order to gain social acceptance.

The central incident of the story involves one of the boys, Gergő, having and filming an unconsented sexual act with his classmate, Lilla, who has knocked herself unconscious from alcohol at a wild house party. This is no longer a prank but rape. After the video is leaked and he becomes a suspect, Gergő takes the bumpy road of penitence in the busy Budapest night. I regard such treatment of sexual abuse and atonement problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, *FOMO* embeds the narrative in the somewhat didactic coming-

of-age story of how Gergő transforms from an irresponsible yuppie into a conscientious young man, ready to take responsibility and blame for his actions. On the other hand, the film altogether lacks the female victim's point of view and in presenting rape as a precursor of social and intellectual maturity, it sends out a quite alarming message. I do not wish to contest Hartung's inclination to criticise the patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, yet I think the film upholds gendered discourses in presenting no other angle on the events other than that of the male protagonists. Why is Lilla deprived of any empowerment or a coming-of-age experience? Why does it matter if Gergő liberates himself from the toxic heritage of an oppressive and morally corrupt father when the film vindicates a paternalistic control of the viewer?

The secondary school for the children of the elite in a fancy neighbourhood of Budapest is in a different social universe than the vocation school in south-east rural Hungary serving as the location for Anna Kis' *Not the family*. In the film, students between the ages 15 and 21 participate in a motivational training carried out with the help of their instructors. The teachers themselves are burnt-out, however the students are in a much worse emotional deprivation and openly reject answering any questions related to their private, let alone their family life (hence the title of the film). This film does not address the topic of sexual harassment openly, nevertheless we indirectly learn that at least one of the teenage girl participants worked in Switzerland as a sex worker. Given the reverse logic of repression to keep silent about the exact psychic content which would need to be verbalised, the film implies that prostitution is present in the community and plays a seminal factor in the disintegration of families because it is a taboo subject. The pledges of the NoMeToo movement to help women come out of toxic silence seem to fall short at the social peripheries and especially for prostitutes who gained hardly any agency within this first-world liberal movement. The teenagers' constant refusal to talk about their social background urges the viewer to hear what they say as signs of a larger absence, symptoms of social pathologies and peripheral existence, in short, expressions of a deeply engraved and self-inflicted muteness. Their denial, well expressed by placing the discussion of the family under taboo, is an active agency as we have seen in so many films about people living in deprivation, dispossession, and poverty from all over the world. It is an agency of shame, not only the embarrassment felt over not attending school regularly, the disgrace of having worked as a prostitute in the West, or remorse over past acts of violence. It is not the shame one feels when committing something against the norm, it is shame that has become the norm. Let there be no misunderstanding: Kis' film does not invent anything novel, basically it repeats what Hungarian sociographic documentary cinema has been saying since the 1960s, it is saying that the culture of poverty is the culture of shame.

Conclusion

Trauma runs as the common thread of social commentary in all six films, and how characters respond to it renders legible different coping mechanisms in different social settings. Cinema plays a seminal role not only in portraying such mechanisms of crisis management in fictional stories and in documentary mediations of real life but in exploring

why some are regarded socially advantageous, while others disadvantageous. *The Euphoria of Being* and *Not the family* share the belief that in successful crisis management traumas are not repressed but accepted, and integrated into the self-image. Put differently, it is not vulnerability but the fear of vulnerability (the fear of being perceived by peers as weak) that fuels the crisis. But while this knowledge might be empowering for the Holocaust-survivor in an urban, intellectual and middle-class social milieu, for the underprivileged youth of countryside Hungary, it is not. If the former talks about the euphoria of being, the other remains silent about the shame of being. By the same token, Éva Fahidi's assertion that Hungary is a place where, from time to time, vulnerability becomes the central component of identity, is an astute observation about 20th-century European history and how to survive regime changes, yet it offers little relief for the juvenile participants of Kis' documentary, for whom vulnerability is a constant factor of identity. The four feature films mark out their discursive territories between these radically different social perceptions of trauma. *Those Who Remained* presents intergenerational romance as a possible way to cope with traumatic survival through repressing it, yet characters eventually give up this possibility and reach acceptance as part of a "trauma community". In *Tall Tales* the trauma originates from a clearly identifiable external source, a violent husband, yet defeating him leaves the wife with permanent physical scars. I suggest considering *Not the family* in connection with the two NoMeToo movement inspired feature films, as, despite their different topical focus, they present the reflex of denial running deep in society. This is all the more alarming in the case of *FOMO* and *On the Quiet*, films that to varying degrees disregard female traumas and, as such, actively contribute to the culture of shame, in which denial seems the least disadvantageous means of coping with traumas.

Working out the criteria of the first Hungarian University Film Awards should not simply mean providing the concept of the winning film by ranking cinema-specific qualities, highlighting merits, and making note of weaknesses. Rather it should involve, on the one hand, mapping out the discursive plane that passes through all six films and, on the other hand, verbalizing the questions they raise in their own distinct voice. These queries need to be considered not only on the narrowly defined field of film studies but regarded as questions we need to ask ourselves and each other in order to understand the social, political, cultural and psychological frames within which identities are formed, connect, and collide. The regions dynamized by such queries is where we will find the criteria for HUFA.

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